

## Research paper

# Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer-Based Brand Equity for Tourism Destination

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### Abstract:

Background: Destination branding and social media strategy may be a major and strong marketing and promotional tool for destination marketers. Today tourism is greatly affected by the social media platforms. Besides being a major source of information, these tools can facilitate interaction process among tourists and provide them with customized and personalized offers. These activities can ultimately lead to enhanced destination brand equity. Purpose: The present study attempts to investigate the impact of social media marketing on consumer-based brand equity components for tourism destinations. Method: The sample of the study totaled 149 visitors from Isfahan. Online questionnaire and convenience sampling method were used to collect data. The research hypotheses were tested using smart PLS software. Findings: The results show that there is a statistically positive and significant impact of the social media marketing on destination brand awareness, destination brand image, destination brand quality and destination brand loyalty. Conclusion: As the results show, social media marketing is an effective marketing tool to improve tourism marketing that in turn can enhance destination brand equity. These results are beneficial for tourism destination marketers and managers. Social media marketing as a prominent marketing tool can strengthen destination brand equity and potentially influence tourists' behavior.

**Keywords:** Consumer-based brand equity, Isfahan, tourism.

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## **Introduction**

The tourism industry is a critical factor to the global economy and the choice of a country as a tourist destination can absolutely lead to getting more income, employment, and economic growth, and it eventually can make strengthened competition for tourism between different destinations (Phung Dam, 2018). ). As Khuong & Phuong (2017) have said tourism is one of the most important economic segments, contributing to the growth and development of a country. The tourism industry can create abundant economic benefits for the countries and also the local areas, because it can create jobs for hundreds of millions people, directly or indirectly in any activities concerned with the tourism, such as hotels, restaurants, stores, transportation, etc. (Riorini, 2017).

Tourist destinations are like products, competing to catch more tourists by improving their distinctions and competitive advantages (Mratin et al, 2018). As one of the main factors creating a sustainable competitive advantage is having a powerful brand, there is an intense competition among tourist destinations promoters and marketers to create competitive advantage (Castañeda-García et al, 2019). As Taskin et al (2017) said, having a strong brand for tourist destination is essential to differentiate and getting competitive advantage in a global market. In fact, making more people visitors and especially loyal ones, is the purpose of destination branding and according to Kim & Lee (2018) one of the main issues in destination marketing to differentiate and increasing competitiveness, is branding. So, DMOs, consider branding an important and powerful tool to differentiate their tourist destinations from other competitors (Chen et al, 2020). Destination marketers are now aware of the position and importance of brand equity to promote their tourist destinations (Ali et al, 2016).

The tourism industry in Iran has a high capacity for growth and development. Iran has many ancient, historical and natural attractions that annually attract tourists from all over the world. Isfahan is one of the most important and well-known cities in Iran. This city is one of the valuable archaeological centers. Having many tourist attractions, Isfahan has always been one of the most attractive destinations for domestic and foreign tourists. This research was conducted among inbound tourists of this city. Iran, despite its many potential capacities and wonderful tourist attractions, has a

small share of world tourism. One of the reasons for this poor contribution seems the failure in tourism destinations marketing.

The present study argues that, using new marketing tools can be an effective way to help tourism marketing and one of the most effective marketing tools for destinations is social media marketing.

Today, the importance of an effective marketing strategy for destination has been increased, due to the progressive competition in tourism industry. So, competitiveness is a necessity for tourist destinations (Phung Dam, 2018). On the other hand, communication, nowadays, is extremely affected by the emergence of internet and new technologies (Khajuria, & Rachna, 2017). Companies widely utilize social media to retain the tourists' emotional connections to the products. Marketers can apply social media as a unique source of market information and their customers' voice and comprehend their opinions and experiences about the tourism services and products (Chang et al, 2017).

Phung Dam (2018) believed that destination branding and social media strategy may be a major and strong marketing and promotional tool for destination marketers (Phung Dam, 2018). Social media marketing is important in making strong brand equity (zollo, 2020) and as one of the major components of marketing mixture, can be used to promote products and services and acts as a very significant tool that facilitates communications between customers and marketers (Chakraborty, 2019). As Garanti & siaw (2019) mentioned, the growing significance of social media in the firm marketing strategy has intensified and many companies use this medium for reaching to their consumers (Garanti & siaw, 2019). DMOs for being successful in their destinations branding need to comprehend the effectiveness of social media in improving their customers' involvement, trust and loyalty and it can be said that those who neglect this issue , will lack a unique competitive advantage (Phung Dam, 2018). Using social media in tourism may increase destination branding development and enhance customer commitment (Barreda, et al, 2020).

## **Literature Review**

### **1.Social media marketing**

In the past decade, the fast development of the internet has provided consumers with some new opportunities. In addition to applications such as searching for information and communicating without

boundaries, they can also express their thoughts, opinions and feelings through social media (Funde, 2016). Pham & Gammoh (2015) believe that there is no common agreement on the definition of social media marketing. Definition from Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) is the most popular one: “a group of Internet-based applications that built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Jayasuriya et al, 2017; Funde, 2016; Olanrewaju et al, 2020; Ibrahim, 2019). Chege (2017) argue that the way the brands and consumers interact, has changed through Social media. In this new context, customers are the co-creators of brand messages and are also such as a trustworthy promotion channel. Through the virtues of web 2.0, the authority to control content, timing, and frequency of messages and conversation has delegated to public instead of brand (Habibi, et al, 2016).

Consumers utilize social media to publish their experiences with other consumers, companies and online communities through reviews, likes, posts etc. (Jacobson et al, 2019). Internet due to different forms of media, has transformed the traditional human interactions and created new opportunities for communication. Consumers nowadays no longer pay attention only to product features; but, getting impressive experiences is also important to them. (Chen & Lin, 2019). Social media as the most popular communication tool for both service providers and consumers (Younhee ha & Lee, 2018) have changed the way people interact with their sweet-hearts and their favorite brands and in fact, it has changed the people’s lifestyle on the whole (Habibi et al, 2016).

Social media is also an effective marketing tool contributed to the marketing strategy of a company; in particular in the issues and matters relevant to communication, consumers’ engagement and customer relationship management (Alalwan et al, 2017). Through social media, businesses can create their own brand profiles to present online information about their products and services and their own offers in an easy and inexpensive manner (Bilgin, 2018) and as Zahoor et al (2016) said social media is a new paradigm in marketing that has provided opportunity for businesses to retain their persistent and value added relationships with consumers. Social media marketing that as Mujahid Hilal (2019) said is younger than the other marketing communication tools, is considered as the process that enables promotion of products

or services through social media (Jayasuriya et al, 2017). Social media marketing can relate brands with customers and can help customers in social interaction and centered networking (Ali et al, 2016) and play a vital role in influencing consumers' feelings and perceptions towards brands (Lai Cheung et al, 2019).

## **2.Brand equity**

The term 'brand equity' as an important marketing tool has been introduced since the 1990s (Dedeoglu et al, 2018). David Aaker (1991) defined brand equity as "A set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that adds to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers" (Dahiya & Barta, 2017; Poturak & Softic, 2019; Sirola & Galloopen, 2019). Aaker also defined brand equity as a "set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name, and symbol" (Sarker et al, 2019). Keller identified brand equity as "the different effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (Chi et al, 2018; Yusaf & Amin, 2017; Yang et al, 2015; Phung Dam, 2018; Rodriguez-Molina et al, 2019; Castañeda-García et al, 2019; Cano Guervos et al, 2020). Two different perspectives of brand equity are financial-based and consumer-based. The financial-based aspect is "the incremental cash flows which accrue to branded products over unbranded products" and the consumer-based brand equity "emphasizes upon the consumers' mindset" (Khajuria, & Rachna, 2017). As Zahoor et al (2016) have mentioned, both Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) have defined brand equity from customer perspective. Keller noted that, from a marketing perspective, brand equity is referred to as consumer based brand equity (CBBE) (Phung Dam, 2018). Keller defined CBBE as "the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of the brand (Phung Dam, 2018 ; Jayasuriya et al, 2017; Yang et al, 2015).

## **3.Destination Brand Equity**

The concept of brand equity appeared in the 1990s and has become a major and important topic in tourism marketing literature (Dedeoglu et al, 2018) and one of the main research topics in destination marketing (Chekalina et al, 2018). As Phung Dam (2018) mentioned since then, brand equity has become one of the major issues in destination marketing literature and CBBE measurement for destinations has

attracted much attention in tourism research. Many of studies that measured consumer-based destination brand equity, suggested a multidimensional concept based on Aaker's (1991, 1996) and Keller (1993) (Huerta-Alvarez et al, 2020). During the past decade, the CBBE hierarchy presented by Aaker (1991, 1996) and Keller (2003) has attracted intensified attention from tourism researchers during the past decade, to measure the effectiveness of branding (Bianchi et al, 2014). Further, Konecnik & Gartner (2007) elevated CBBETD and introduced four dimensions: awareness, image, quality and loyalty as antecedents to it (Yusaf & Amin, 2017). During the past decade, consumer based brand equity has been applied in tourism context and the concept of CBBETD has been an important topic (Yang et al, 2015). The first article presenting CBBE for tourist destinations has published by Konecnik (2006) (Almeyad-Ibanez & George, 2017). The more brand equity can lead to increased sales and price premiums, higher level of customer loyalty, lower costs, and higher purchase probability (Yongho Hyun & Kim, 2019). The most popular dimensions of CBBE for destinations are: brand awareness, brand image, brand quality and brand loyalty; and in some studies perceived value (Castañeda-García et al, 2019). In the current study destination brand equity has been measured with brand awareness, image, quality and brand loyalty dimensions.

### **1.3. Destination Brand Awareness (DBA)**

Aaker (1991) referred to brand awareness as the “ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category” (Bilgin, 2018; Jayasuriya et al, 2017; Sadek et al, 2017; Tasci, 2018). Brand awareness also shows the power of the existence of the brand in customers' minds (Yang et al, 2015).

Destination brand awareness plays a key role in tourists' travel intentions. So, it is essential to understand how we can create tourists' awareness of a destination. The first purpose of destination marketing is to enhance the destination awareness among tourists by advertising and creating a unique destination brand. Tourists' awareness from their past experiences can lead to their future travel intentions (Chi et al, 2018) Destination awareness is defined to have a strong position in tourists' minds (Taskin et al, 2017) and is the first step to create trail and repeat purchase and a means for improving potential tourists' appeal (Yang et al, 2015). DBA is considered as the strength

of visitors to recall a particular destination among similar destinations, and also the ability to distinguish tourist destination from other competitors (Kim & Lee, 2018). Tourists before starting to think of a specific destination as a potential one, must first know of that destination. This matter shows the important role of DBA in visitors' destination choice (Frias-Jamilena et al, 2018).

### **2.3. Destination Brand Image (DBI)**

Tourist destinations use images to increase awareness of visitors of those destination attributes that set that destination apart from others (Chi et al, 2018). Image is anything linked in the tourists' memory to the destination that affects their evaluation of a brand (Phung Dam, 2018). The overall evaluative construct to measure holistic impression of a destination is called destination image (Prayag et al, 2015). According to another definition, destination image is "the perceptions that are composed of associations in tourists' memories (Taskin et al, 2017).

DBI is considered as a set of associations about the place that comprises feelings created by destination functional attributes and activities (Kim & Lee, 2018). Destination image is one of the important factors in preferring a destination over other places, and it is a critical factor to get different positioning over rivals (Jee et al, 2019). As Almeyad-Ibanez & George (2017) stated that, both cognitive and affective evaluation of the brand, affect the overall brand image (Almeyad-Ibanez & George, 2017). The affective image is referred to the emotional responses evoked by a tourist destination. The cognitive aspect is considered as "the perception of the functional and psychological attributes of the destination". The functional component is related to tangible attributes and psychological aspect shows the abstract ones (Stojanovic et al, 2018). Bianchi et al (2014) considered brand image as an essential factor affecting destination choices and tourists' behavioral intentions and mentioned that it is a factor playing an important role in tourists' travel decisions. Destinations to get awareness for their attributes setting them apart from rivals, use images in their promotional programs (Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011). This image can positively affect tourists' on-site experiences during their trip (Prayag et al, 2015).

### **3.3. Destination Brand quality (DBQ)**

Perceived quality means “customers’ overall impression of the products or services comes under a particular brand name” (Jayasuriya et al, 2017) and also shows “the perception of the superiority of the product compared to others in the same category or close substitutes” (Sadek et al, 2017 & Bianchi et al, 2014). Destination brand quality is related to the perceptions of quality of specific attributes for a tourist destination brand (Bianchi et al, 2014 & Yang et al, 2015). A destination quality brand also represents the tourists’ perception concerning the possibility that a tourist destination can meet their expectations. In this context, destination environmental factors are usually addressed in measures of perceived quality destination environmental factors (Chi et al, 2018). Destination brand quality can positively influence tourists’ attitude and their future behavioral intentions toward the destination (Dedeog˘ lu et al, 2019). Yousaf & Amin (2017) also called destination perceived quality as a key component of destination brand. It should be noted that perceived quality is not the actual quality of the products or services rather, the consumer’s subjective evaluation of them (Poturak & Softic, 2019).

### **3.4. Destination Brand Loyalty (DBL)**

Brand loyalty shows their consumers’ strong attachment and commitment to repurchase their preferred products and services on a continuous basis in the future. Loyal customers are not easily influenced by competitors’ strategies and advertising (Sadek et al, 2017). Brand loyalty is also as the positive attitude that someone has and is repeated over a period toward a brand” (Taskin et al, 2017). As Aaker (1992) said due to the fact that brand loyalty can ultimately convert into a profit stream, it must be considered in evaluating a brand and while placing a value on it. Loyalty is behavioral or attitudinal. In tourism context, behavioral loyalty is related to the repeat visits to a destination, and attitudinal loyalty shows consumers’ positive attitudes towards a destination that demonstrates their intention to revisit and word of mouth recommendations to others” (Phung Dam, 2018). If a destination has attributes match to the tourists’ expectations, it shows attitudinal loyalty dimension but behavioral loyalty comes from previous travel and is tied to tradition. The loyalty can be measured through repeat purchase and repeat visitations (Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011).



### **Social media marketing and brand equity**

Nowadays competitiveness power due to the intense competition in tourism industry and evoking interest in effective marketing strategies, has become a major requirement for tourism (Phung Dam, 2018). Fast penetration of social media into people life-style and society on the whole, has compelled firms to apply these media as a part of their whole marketing programs and strategies (Funde, 2016). Firms through past decade have spent many efforts on the management of social media to make interactive communications between brands and users, create consistent relationships with them, and also provoke brand loyalty (Yoshida et al, 2018). As Zahoor et al (2016) stated SMM is a major antecedent for brand equity in the age of Web 2.0 and co-creation and Social media marketing strategies positively influence brand equity (Pham & Gammoh, 2015). As Huerta-Alvarez et al (2020) pointed out companies may utilize opportunities of social media channels to make strong relationships with their customers through online social communities, then transform the impact of these channels on consumer based brand equity.

Barreda et al (2020) noted that in a travel context, social media platforms as the supreme technological advance in recent years have intensively changed the way people conduct business in the tourism context. Creating brand awareness through different media presentation, such as the internet, television, social media etc. is imperative for firms (Phung Dam, 2018). Consumers are encouraged to deliver and publish brand information and content via social media involvement activities. These activities also reinforce interactions between brands and their customers. These interactions may provide customers with information about brands, increase their strength to bring the brand to minds, and eventually increase brand awareness (Lai Cheung et al, 2019).

The findings in a study by Stojanovic et al (2018) confirmed a positive effect of the intensity of social media use on destination brand awareness. They stated that the users of social networks are exposed to various kinds of information and content about tourist destinations. They share this information (such as photos, videos, reviews, etc.) with others. These activities positively influence destination brand awareness especially when making the travel decision.

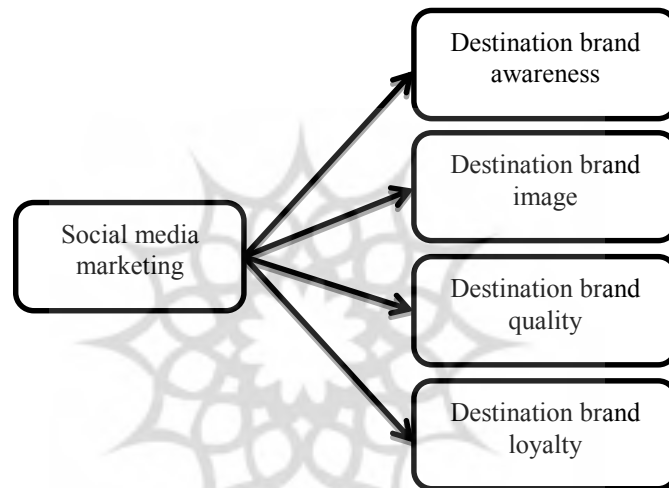
Previous studies have demonstrated that social media networks and

platforms can lead to E-WOM and this interaction and communication among the users influence brand equity (Alam & Mustafa Khan, 2015). As Lai Cheung et al (2019) stated that, customized and tailored social media marketing can impact creating brand awareness and especially when it is combined with entertainment, it is more expected to improve brand awareness and it can also create powerful and unique brand associations in customers' mind. Marketeers, given the increasing significance of social media in marketing, are intensively applying social media marketing activities and efforts to communicate brand-related information and messages to create a powerful brand image in consumers' memory. If companies can increase consumers' brand awareness and brand image by improving their engagement on social network sites, they can enhance brand loyalty, too (Pham & Gammoh, 2015). The results of a study conducted by Trung Vinh et al (2019) indicated that firm-created content had a direct and positive impact on different dimensions of brand equity. Garubor et al (2017) has also found that firm-created social media communication can positively impact brand awareness, associations, perceived quality and behavioral loyalty, but personal involvement inventory has positive effect on WOM and commitment. Bilgin (2018) in his study investigated the impact of social media marketing activities on brand awareness, image and loyalty. The results of his study demonstrated that social media marketing activities affect brand image and loyalty and the most obvious effect was on brand awareness. As Zahoor et al (2016) have stated in their research, brand online communities can increase their social media users' loyalty. Consumers are more influenced rather by electronic word of mouth than traditional advertising media. Electronic word of mouth has also positive impact on brand awareness and associations.

Huang et al (2018) in a research trying to investigate the effect of social media interactivity on brand loyalty found that, media richness had a positive and significant impact on brand loyalty, and responsiveness influences their knowledge gains and sense of membership, that in turn will influence brand loyalty indirectly. As they mentioned, organizations should comprehend that the social networking sites are beneficial for presenting various kinds of experience to their customers. By promoting multi-media to share experience, Social media users' loyalty is enhanced through

promoting multi-media to create and share experience (Huang et al, 2018). The results of the study conducted by Sheela & Sneha (2017) revealed that the major driver of brand loyalty is profitability of social media campaigns, followed by relevant content, content popularity and presence on different social media platforms. Different social media platforms and applications provided by brand positively influence consumers brand loyalty.

According to the literature review and empirical evidence in the aforementioned studies, the research model is proposed as below:



**Figure1. Conceptual Model**

According to the above model, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Social media marketing has a positive impact on destination brand awareness.

Hypothesis 2: Social media marketing has a positive impact on destination brand image.

Hypothesis 3: Social media marketing has a positive impact on destination brand quality.

Hypothesis 4: Social media marketing has a positive impact on destination brand loyalty.

## Research Methodology

### Sampling, Data Collection & Measurement

The survey used for the empirical study was performed on inbound tourists who had experience visiting Isfahan in 5 past years. Online questionnaire has been applied in obtaining research data by convenience sampling method. Respondents' answers have been measured using the 5-point Likert scale (5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree). A total number of 149 valid questionnaires were gathered. To analyze the research hypotheses, a partial least square and structural equation modeling (PL-SEM) was also applied.

## Findings

### Demographic Profile

Demographic characteristics of respondents appear in table 3. Based on the analysis of our research findings, %49 of respondents were men and %51 were women, %19.5 had associate degree or below, %31.5 BA, %49 MA and higher. Similarly, %50.3 were 30 years old or below, %28.6 were 31-40, %14.1 were 40-50 and % 4.7 were 50 and above.

**Table1. Demographic characteristics of respondents**

Profile category	percentage (%)	
Gender	Man	49
	Woman	51
Age	30 & below	50.3
	31-40	30.9
	41-50	14.1
	51 & above	4.7
Education	Associate & below	19.5
	BA	31.5
	MA & higher	49
Total	-	149

### Description of Study Variables

Table 2 shows the values of means and standard deviations for all variables.

**Table2.Descriptive statistics**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number
SMM	4.11	0.49	149
DBA	4.23	0.53	149
DBI	4.11	0.59	149
DBQ	3.94	0.54	149
DBL	3.62	0.75	149

SMM: Social media marketing, DBA: Destination Brand awareness, DBI: Destination Brand image, DBQ: Destination Brand quality, DBL: Destination Brand loyalty  
As table (2) shows, the means for variables are from (3.62) to (4.23). The highest mean belongs to brand awareness with (4.23) and standard deviation (0.53), and the brand loyalty has the lowest mean with (3.62) and standard deviation (0.75).

### Normality

In this study to analyze the normality of research data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied. As the results in table 3 demonstrate, with regard to ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ), our research data are not normally distributed.

**Table3. Normality test**

Variable	K.S coefficient	sig
SMM	0.16	0.000
DBA	0.17	0.000
DBI	0.16	0.000
DBQ	0.17	0.000
DBL	0.13	0.000

### Reliability and validity

To analyze the internal consistency of our constructs, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and composite reliability (CR) were adopted. The average variance extracted (AVE) was also applied to assess the convergent validity. Table 4 shows the results of testing reliability and validity. And table 5 reveals the results of discriminant validity.

**Table4. Reliability and convergent validity**

Variable	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
SMM	0.86	0.89	0.52
DBA	0.70	0.80	0.64
DBI	0.86	0.90	0.53

Variable	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
DBQ	0.79	0.85	0.54
DBL	0.82	0.89	0.73

**Table5. Discriminant validity**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
SMM (1)	<b>0.72</b>				
DBA (2)	0.65	<b>0.74</b>			
DBI (3)	0.60	0.64	<b>0.80</b>		
DBQ (4)	0.56	0.58	0.72	<b>0.83</b>	
DBL (5)	0.63	0.56	0.57	0.71	<b>0.85</b>

**Structural Model****Analysis of research model fit**

To test the quality of research model,  $R^2$  (R square), GOF (Goodness of fit), CVR (construct cross validated redundancy) and CVC (construct cross validated communality) were used and as the results in table 6 show, quality and fitness of the research model are confirmed.

**Table6. Model fitness indices**

Variable	CVC	CVR	$R^2$	GOF
SMM	0.37	-	-	1.60
DBA	0.16	0.21	0.42	
DBI	0.45	0.21	0.36	
DBQ	0.32	0.19	0.40	
DBL	0.43	0.21	0.31	

**Analysis of research hypotheses**

Figure 1 has shown the results of standardized structural model and Figure 2 has shown the results of T-value model. According to the path analysis results:

The effect of social media marketing activities on destination brand awareness is significant at high level ( $\beta = .65$ , CR = 7.47,  $p < .001$ ).

The effect of social media marketing activities on destination brand image is significant at high level ( $\beta = .60$ , CR = 6.70,  $p < .001$ ).

The effect of social media marketing activities on destination brand quality is significant at high level ( $\beta = .63$ , CR = 7.52,  $p < .001$ ).

The effect of social media marketing activities on destination brand quality is significant at high level ( $\beta = .63$ , CR = 7.52,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 7 shows the results on a small scale.

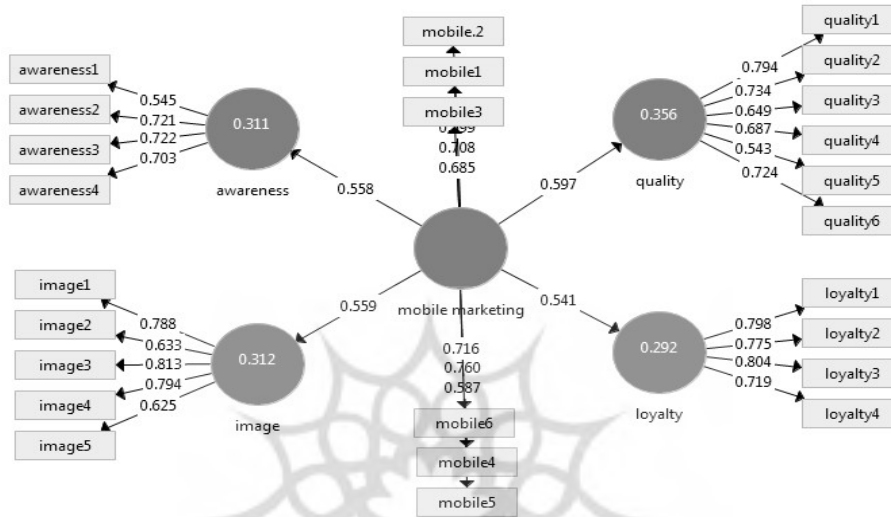


Figure1. Standardized model

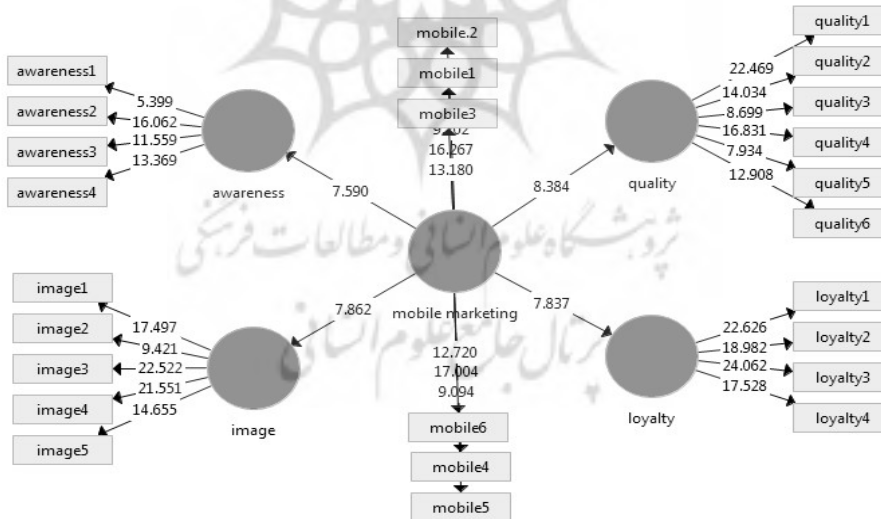


Figure2. T-value model

**Table7. Results of Hypotheses**

Path	Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T-statistic	Result
SMM-DBA	1	0.65	7.47	Confirmed
SMM-DBI	2	0.60	6.70	Confirmed
SMM-DNQ	3	0.63	7.52	Confirmed
SMM-DBL	4	0.56	6.98	Confirmed

### Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of social media marketing on consumer-based brand equity for tourism destinations in Iran, Isfahan. As the obtained results show social media marketing influences destination brand awareness, destination brand image, destination brand quality and destination brand loyalty positively and significantly. Findings of the analysis show that using social media marketing by destinations can strengthen their brand equity. These results confirm that social media marketing should be considered as an effective marketing tool especially for tourist destinations, as this tool can enhance brand performance. Nowadays social media is the main source of information. So this tool can provide consumers with the latest news about a destination and increase destination brand awareness. E-WOM in social media can also positively enhance destination brand awareness and destination brand image. Tourists' engagement and communicating brand-related message about destination in social media platforms can build a favorable brand image and enhance brand perceived quality. Using social media, tourists have the opportunity to interact with others and share their travel experiences with them. These activities lead to their enhanced loyalty to the destination brand. Having this in mind, destination brand managers should attempt to provide tourists with customized services in accordance with their personal preferences. They should bear in mind that social media marketing as a prominent marketing tool can strengthen their destination brand equity and potentially influence tourists' behavior.



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