

THE INFLUENCE OF SATISFACTION ON LOYALTY AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP QUALITY ON SATISFACTION AND DESTINATION IMAGE (CHABAHAHAR PORT TOURISTS, IRAN)

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has experienced a continuous growth in recent decades. Modern tourism has become a driving force for regional development and has included an increasing number of new tourist destinations. The present article seeks to investigate the effect of tourism experience on loyalty with respect to the mediating role of satisfaction, quality of customer relationship and image of destination. This is an applied survey research and descriptive in terms of methodology. The statistical population includes individuals who have traveled at least three times for the purpose of tourism inside and outside the country during the year and since the number of these people were high; the convenience sampling was used to collect the data. After distributing 384 questionnaires among the statistical population, 373 questionnaires were collected, and the obtained data were analyzed. Results of the analyses of the data using Structural Equation Modeling and Partial Least Squares method suggested significant and positive effect of experience on satisfaction, loyalty on destination, loyalty on ecotourism and image of destination. Furthermore, results suggested a significant and positive effect of destination image on destination loyalty, loyalty to ecotourism and satisfaction, satisfaction on customer relationship quality, loyalty to destination and to ecotourism, while the effect of satisfaction on loyalty to ecotourism was not confirmed.

Keywords: *Tourism, Experience, Destination, Loyalty, Satisfaction, Image.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourists evaluate their experiences based on expectations derived from the projected (re)presentations of destinations, and there are usually discrepancies between expectations and experiences. While there are images perceived by tourists before the visit, the experience itself is the essential image source. Visitors' satisfaction and loyalty come from experience and are incorporated into the destination image (Marine-Roig, 2021). A positive destination image is always one of the key components in the strategies of destination marketing. Through appropriate marketing relationships and positive word of mouth, the marketers can create a positive destination image to absorb a tourist for their destination. However, the destination image is active and can be modified during different stages of tourism experience (before the travel, during the travel and after the trav-

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el). After a tourist experiences traveling, his destination image is highly likely to be modified (Lee et al. 2015). A positive image may turn into a negative travel experience due to some negative travel experiences (Schmidt & et al, 2015). In other cases, the extent of negativity of the destination image of a negative destination or neutral before travel is intensified in comparison to its image after travel (Lee et al, 2015). Therefore, the destination users should identify what experiences should be presented to develop a positive image. If the positive destination image is not developed, it is possible that tourists are categorized positively and disseminate negative words of mouth which affects negatively on destination image of potential tourists (Tseng et al, 2015).

The management of a positive destination image after travel even for tourists is even more appealing to the marketers in the corner tourism destinations, because the image of destination should be not only desirable, but also “green” which is known as the core of ecotourism. In addition to this, the experiences of ecotourism should not only focus on the “green” aspects, but also requires features like other types of tourism. However, it is not practical to incorporate everything in an experience and it is difficult to balance between the “green” aspects and other aspects (Walter, 2013). The destination image has widely been investigated in previous studies which emphasize on the image before travel and its effects on travel decisions (Assaker et al, 2011). However, the way of creating the destination image after travel and its way of creating by means of tourism experiences has less been studied (Kim, 2018). As a result, the present research adds to the importance of destination image after travel and fills the gap of lack of studies regarding the effects of tourism experiences of the tourists. Most of the previous studies have related the experience and image separately to the behaviour. Some of the studies have investigated the relationship between experience, satisfaction and loyalty (Ali et al, 2016; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013). Kim (2018) has only studied the emotional experiences. The experience, however, can be multidimensional, including emotional dimension (Ting et al., 2021).

Today, tourism is considered as a leading industry in the world and many countries including Iran’s neighbour countries have invested largely in this regard. Given that Iran has a large and various tourism capacities, this capacity can be used to promote the non-oil revenues which will clearly contribute to the economy of the country greatly. Many domestic and foreign tourists visit different parts of the country every year, but this is not enough, and the tourism capacity of the country is so high that requires the governments’ special attention for big investments in this respect. Particularly, regarding ecotourism, Iran has many ecotourism destinations and has the potential attraction of a large number of domestic and foreign tourists’ attraction. Therefore, according to the above, the main question of the present research is as follows: what is the effect of tourism experience on loyalty given to the mediating role of satisfaction, quality of customer relationship and destination image of the coastal region of Makran in Chabahar Port? The statistical population of the present research includes people who travel at Chabahar City at least one time a year for the purpose of tourism. Although the previous studies have examined the direct relationship between the quality of tourism services and loyalty to the tourist destination, little efforts have been devoted to examining the mediating effect of the mental image of the tourist destination on such a relationship. Furthermore, almost no study has been done about the tourist potentials of such a deprived and remote city like Chabahar.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Tourism experience

Wherever the tourists pass on their way to their destination, it can be considered as a travel experience, behavioral, perceptual, cognitive, emotional, implicit or explicit experience (Travar et al, 2022). Through interaction with tourism destination suggestions, tourists make unique tourism experiences, reflecting their mental status during these interactions. The tourism experience has been investigated from different perspectives. An example is the experimental marketing approach of Schmidt. According to Jebbouri et al. (2022), the mar-

keters should have a logical and emotional look at the consumers. Therefore, they should make experiences including aspects of the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell), emotional (inner feelings and emotions such as the problem-solving experiences) and thought (social experiences with others). This framework had largely been used in tourism studies (Hernández-Lobato et al., 2006).

Efforts have been made to understand experiences in the field of ecotourism. Mazloomi Soveini and Gaspar (2022) found that the ecotourism experience includes interactional aspects, novelty, comfort, stimulation, personal safety and negative aspects. Ghorbanzadeh et al. (2021) found that ecotourism includes aesthetic, emotional and practical aspects which can be identified in two frameworks like experience aspects. According to Shirmohammadi and Shirzadi (2021), it needs to examine together the existing aspects of the two frameworks to better understand the ecotourism experiences. Though, the integration of both frameworks has been conceptually endorsed.

The destination image

The destination image is defined as the sum of peoples' beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. The destination image is active and it is modified with the experience of people (Kanwel et al, 2019). The destination image has feature-based and holistic dimensions. The former is the perception of individual features (perspective, price level and facilities), while the latter is suggestive of a mental image (illustration) from a destination based on public feelings and general perceptions. Yet, it is perceived as a product in terms of features and illustration. It is necessary to mention that all of the above is true about the destination (Ting et al, 2021).

The destination image is affected by the tourism experience. While visiting a tourism destination, the tourists confront new, lively, and double information about the destination which is often more powerful than the received secondary sources of information before visiting (like word of mouth and marketing relationships). In this way, the perceptions are modified and more stability and loyalty can be anticipated. Few studies have approved this image modification; however, these studies have not investigated the effect of tourism experience on the image (Assaker et al., 2015).

Tourism Services Quality

Travel and Tourism is the largest service industry with huge growth in the market. Tourism is the main source of income in many nations. The tourism industry is highly competitive. There are several factors to sustain as the best travel agency company in the industry. It is a combination of composite services like attraction, transport, accommodation, and entertainment which provide tourist satisfaction (Prayag, 2008). Each service is delivered by different service providers like hotel companies, airlines, travel agencies, etc. The tourist product can be analyzed in terms of its attraction, accessibility, and accommodation. Among all the factors quality service is the most significant factor (Xu and Lu 2020).

The concept of quality is explained in hospitality management as “the consistent delivery of products and guest services according to standards.” Consumers intend to pay more if the hospitality services meets or exceeds their expectations. The level of quality service is an important factor in the experience that guests receive during their visits to lodging operations. A quality service-oriented company main aim is to retain the existing customer and encouraging new consumers (Han et al 2021).

The Tourists Satisfaction

Satisfaction of tourists is one of the most important factors that guarantee future profit growth. Nowadays, many organizations have considered tourist satisfaction as an important criterion for measuring the quality of their

work. The tourist's satisfaction is achieved by designing appropriate processes such that services provided meet the expectations of the tourists (Stavrianea & Kamenidou, 2022). Studying of tourism literatures shows that the satisfaction of tourists from a destination/place is an important factor in selecting a destination which means that if the tourists are satisfied with their journey to a destination, they are expected to return or to offer the destination to others. Tourist satisfaction has become a substantial subject for most service industries (Mirhashemi, 2019).

Satisfaction and loyalty are not uncommon in tourism studies. In the 1970s, as the concept of "marketing" became more pervasive in the tourism industry, the concept of "tourist satisfaction" was pioneered which is the result of comparing tourists' expectations before travel with their experience. Since then, many scholars have provided other concepts of satisfaction, mainly from the expectation theory and the emotional nature of experience (Asnawi et al., 2022). Similarly, the concept of tourist loyalty also comes from marketing and mainly consists of behavioral and attitudinal loyalty. Loyalty reflects the comprehensive evaluation of a destination's products and services, including a tourist's preference for the destination. Moreover, currently, in tourism studies, revisit intention and WOM recommendations are the most common indicators to measure loyalty (Shirmohammadi & Shirzadi, 2021).

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Recent studies have shared new insights into the relationship between experience and destination image after travel, although neither has included Pin, Gilmore, and Schmidt models. For example, Prayang et al. (2017) found that emotional experience (enjoyment and love) has a positive effect on destination image. Also, nostalgia (kind of emotional experience) affects the destination image (Akgün et al, 2019). Furthermore, Tan et al. (2017) concluded that aesthetic experience, entertainment and education have had a greater impact on feature-based destination image than effective destination image. Finally, by tracing the destination image during the journey using smart phones records it is found that emotion, immersion in local culture and social interactions have a positive impact on the destination image. It seems that the presence of the tourists and degree of their visits (number of places visited and length of visit) can also affect the destination image (Kim, 2018). Therefore, according to the above, it can be said that:

H1: The tourism experience positively affects destination image.

Satisfaction is often an evaluative (cognitive) judgment that results from the comparison between expectations and experience (perceived performance) (Kim, 2018). However, others have argued that satisfaction is an emotional response to consumption (Loi et al., 2017). Zhou et al. (2022) manifested that satisfaction has cognitive and emotional aspects and some recent investigations on tourism have employed satisfaction with the same method in their studies. Most of the researchers suggest that experience precedes satisfaction. They argue that it is experience that determines satisfaction, not the comparison between experience and expectation. A number of studies have found a positive relationship between experience and satisfaction. Tourism experience has a positive relationship with travel satisfaction.

H2: Tourism experience has a positive effect on travel satisfaction.

H3: Destination image has a positive effect on travel satisfaction.

Loyalty

Customer loyalty is generally defined as a psychological commitment to buy a good product/ service in the future which in turn leads to the repetition of purchasing the same brand despite of the situational effects and marketing efforts which have the ability of changing behaviour (Alzaydi, 2021). Since the destination loyalty is important to get success in destination attractiveness, however, the prerequisites of loyalty to the destination have been extensively investigated (service quality, satisfaction, involvement, previous experience, place belong-

ing and perceived value). Among these, satisfaction is one of the most important determining factors (Asgarnezhad Nouri et al. 2019). Image affects the consumers' attitudes (Yu et al. 2018) and subsequently affects their loyalty to the product and brand. There is a widespread agreement on this issue that the tourism experiences and destination image affect directly and indirectly loyalty to the destination (Assaker et al. 2011; Prayag et al. 2017).

H4: Travel satisfaction affects positively loyalty to the destination.

H5: Tourism experience affects loyalty to the destination.

H6: Destination image affects loyalty to the destination.

However, it is difficult to improve loyalty to the destination (Kim et al. 2012) and the impact of destination loyalty has been questioned (Assaker et al. 2011). Tourists travel to escape the material world and search for new things. Even, very satisfied tourists often visit one destination. This is also true regarding ecotourism. Thus, another loyalty construct (loyalty to the ecotourism) defined as the tourists' intention to visit other ecotourism destinations, is addressed here. From ecotourism perspective, tourism destination may be considered as a possible product class. Tourists with a positive tourism experience, an ideal destination image or high satisfaction after visiting an ecotourism destination tend to discover other ecotourism destinations and they may be loyal to this tourism class (Ting et al. 2021).

H7: Travel satisfaction affects positively loyalty to the ecotourism.

H8: Tourism experience affects positively loyalty to the ecotourism.

H9: Destination image affects positively loyalty to the ecotourism.

The quality of the customer relationship management

Customer relationship management is not a new concept in the marketing. Rather, it is based on the three aspects of the marketing management including customer orientation, relationship marketing and database marketing. In fact, customer relationship management is a strategy, not a solution which can create many competitive advantages if it is implemented in a cooperative environment (Faridi Foshtomi et al., 2021). The customer relationship management refers to the activities which companies perform to identify, attract, develop and retain profitable customers and they do this by providing the suitable goods at the proper time and with the proper cost (Turian et al. 2008). According to the relationship marketing theory, the concept of the customer relationship management is based on this assumption that the development of the customer relationship is considered as the best method to retain him and create loyalty and the loyal customer profit is more than non-loyal customers (Siregar et al. 2021).

Mahmoodi et al (2016) believe that there is a significant and positive relationship between the customer relationship management and customers' loyalty; thus, establishing proper relationship with the new customers and increasing the level of amenities is one of the most important customer attraction and retention factors in tourism centres. They stated that customer relationship management has a positive and significant effect on relationship quality. Also, the quality of the relationship significantly and positively affects the use of services, loyalty, advertising, and willingness to return.

According to the findings of Niadzapour and Khajehzadeh (2016), the relationships between the customer satisfaction, the quality of services, and customer value through the customer relationship management quality on customer loyalty are positive and significant. Also, based on their findings, the indirect effect of the customer satisfaction on customer loyalty through the quality of customer relationship management is stronger when the brand image is strong. Given the above and this issue that in most cases by loyalty in tourism industry it is loyalty to the tourism centre and also the point that in the present article loyalty includes loyalty to destination and loyalty to ecotourism, it can be said that:

H10: Satisfaction has a positive effect on the quality of customer relationship.

H11: The quality of customer relationship has a positive effect on loyalty to the destination.

H12: The quality of customer relationship has a positive effect on loyalty to the ecotourism.

Given the research hypotheses, the conceptual model of the research is presented in figure 1:

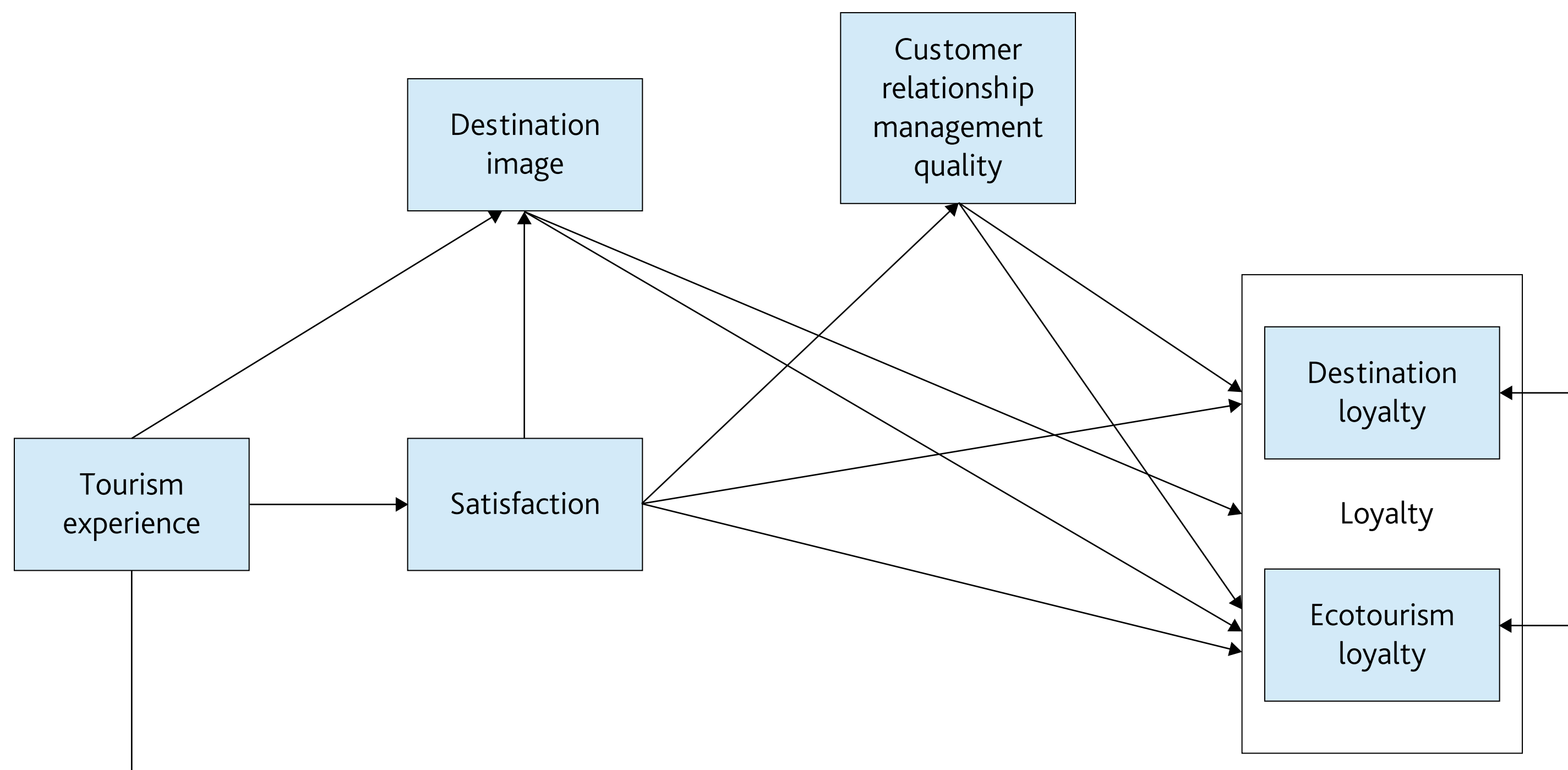


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the research

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present article is of applied type in terms of the purpose and descriptive-survey research in terms of the method. The statistical population of the research includes individuals who have traveled at least three times for the purpose of tourism inside and outside the country during the year and since the number of these people were high; the convenience sampling was used to collect the data. After distributing 384 questionnaires among the statistical population, 373 questionnaires were collected, and the obtained data were analyzed.

Demographic characteristics

Demographic characteristics include sex, age and education which are presented in the table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics

Items		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Female	210	55.30
	Male	163	44.70
	Total	373	100.00
Age	30>	130	36.85
	30-40	200	51.62
	40-50	43	11.53
	Total	373	100.00
Education	High School	131	25.12
	Associate and bachelor's degree	211	66.87
	Master and above	31	8.01
	Total	373	100.00

As can be seen from the data in table 1, more than 55% of the respondents were female and more than 4% of them were male. In addition, more than 36% of the respondents were above 30 years age, more than 51% of them between 30 to 40 years age, and more than 11% of them between 40 to 50 years age. Moreover, the education degree of more than 25% of the respondents was high school diploma, more than of 66% them had associate and bachelor degree, and more than 8% of them had master and above degree.

Validity and reliability of the research

A 47-item questionnaire was designed in a 5-point Likert scale. To measure the reliability of the questionnaire, an initial sample including 30 questionnaires were pretested. Then, using the data obtained, Cronbach's alpha was calculated using SPSS statistical software. Reliability coefficients, components and variables of the questionnaire have been presented in the table below. Expert survey (face validity), Confirmatory factor analysis, Convergent validity and Divergent validity were used to evaluate the validity of the questionnaire. Given that the obtained values are higher than at least 0.6, it can be said that the questionnaire has good reliability (Nunnally, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factor loadings of the research variables have been shown in figure 2 (the coefficients between latent (oval) and observed (rectangular) variables). All of the factor loading values are higher than 0.5. Therefore, the alignment of the questionnaire items to measure the variables can be considered valid at this stage. In fact, these results indicate that the questionnaire measures what it is intended to measure. So, the relationship between the constructs or latent variables can be preferable as evidence. An index with a higher factor loading has a higher importance compared to the other indicators.

Validation of the measurement models

Significance of the coefficients and parameters obtained from confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation model has been outlined in figure 2. A 5-point Likert scale, rating from strongly disagreed to strongly agreed, has been used. To measure the variables of experience, satisfaction, destination image, destination loyalty and ecotourism loyalty, 2, 3, 8, 4, 26 questions taken from Ting et al (2021) were used respectively. Regarding the quality of customer relationship, 4 questions were used.

In this figure, coefficients or factor loadings are divided into two classes: the first class named first rank measurement model refers to the relationship between components and their items (relationship between oval and rectangular) and the second class is the relationship between the latent variables (path coefficients) and is used to test the hypotheses.

Figure 2 shows the model when the coefficients are significant. All of the coefficients have been tested at the significance level of 95%. As the figure shows, all t values are higher than absolute value of 1.96. Thus, it can be said that all the relationships between (latent and observed) variables are significant. (It is necessary to mention that two items are omitted due to factor loadings less than .5 ($R < .5$)).

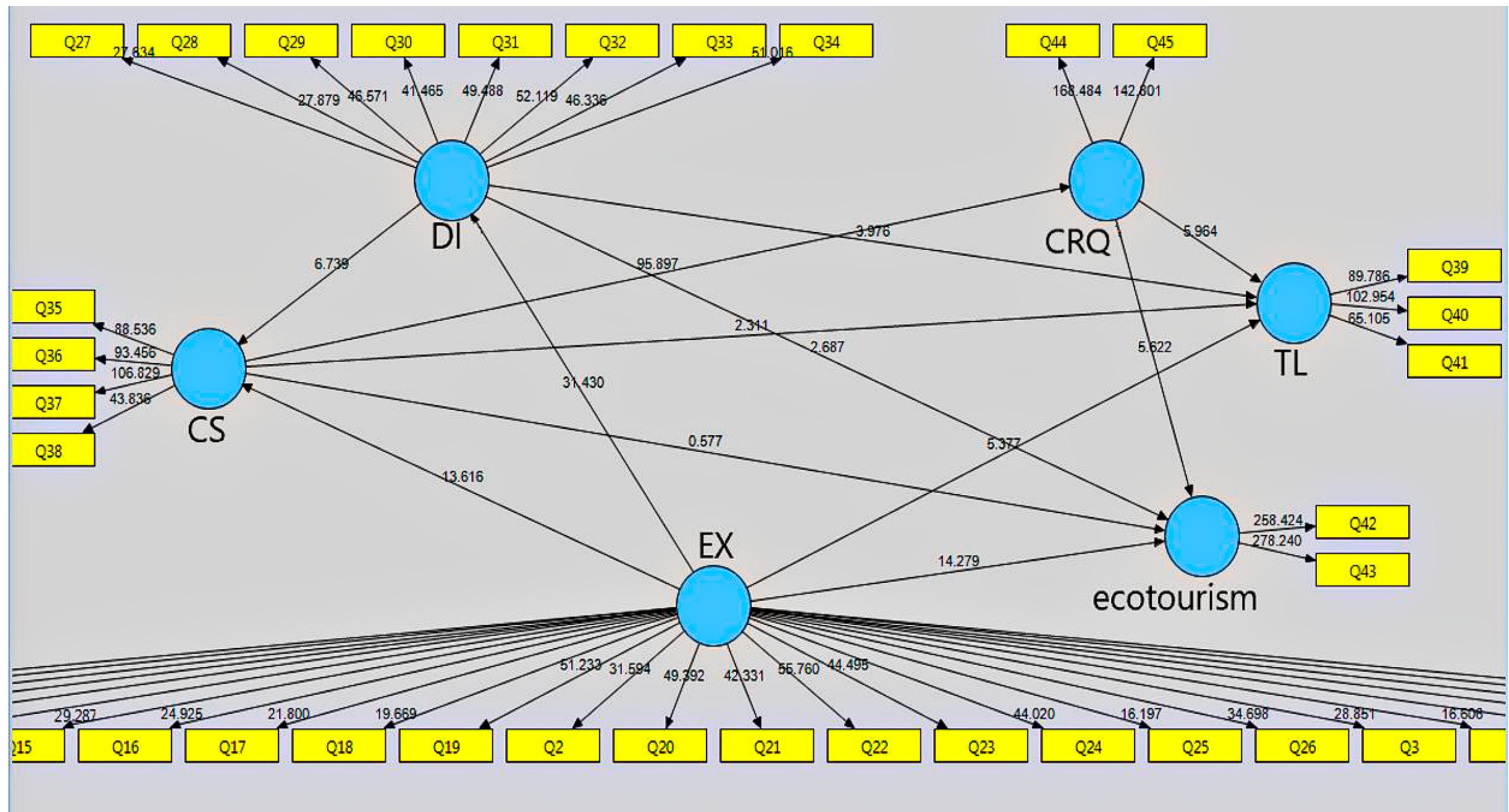


Figure 2. t values of the research model

Convergent validity

To evaluate the convergence validity, the following values have been calculated so that if the conditions listed in table 2 are met, it can be said that the construct validity is established.

Construct reliability

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Table 2. Conditions for establishment of construct reliability and validity (Hair et al., 2006)

Permissible limit	Index
Reliability	CR>0.7
Convergent validity	Factors loading significance
	R>0.5
	CR>AVE
	AVE>0.5

As can be seen from the table 2, to measure the convergent validity, factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability or construct reliability are taken into account. Average variance extracted represents the average variance shared between each latent variable with its item. In fact, it can be said that AVE is one percent of explained variance among the items. The AVE should be higher than at least 0.5, so that one of the convergent validity criteria is confirmed. According to Putri et al. (2021), composite reliability should be greater than 0.7, which indicates the adequacy of internal convergence.

Table 3. Validity, reliability indices and determination coefficients

Variables	AVE	CR	Determination Coefficient	Cronbach's Alpha
Quality of the customer relationship management	0.838	0.912	0.755	0.807
Destination image	0.576	0.915	0.483	0.895
Destination loyalty	0.732	0.891	0.820	0.817
Ecotourism loyalty	0.908	0.952	0.923	0.899
Experience	0.675	0.959		0.955
Satisfaction	0.736	0.918	0.612	0.880

The table 3 shows convergent validity, reliability and fitness of the model indices. In fact, convergent validity means that indicators of each construct provide a good separation in terms of measurement compared to other model constructs. In other words, each indicator measures its construct only and the combination of the indicators is such that all the constructs are well separated from each other. The AVE manifested that all constructs have AVE above 0.5. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha Composite Reliability Indicators (CR) were estimated to be at least above .7 indicating the reliability of the questionnaire.

Divergent validity

Divergent validity manifests that if a construct is different from other constructs or not. To calculate the divergent validity, the second root of AVE should be calculated. This value should be higher than the correlation value of other constructs (Yang et al. 2010). Original diameter values in table show the second root of AVE and other values indicate the correlation between constructs. According to the table, all constructs comply with the desired conditions and therefore it can be said that the constructs have divergent validity.

Table 4. Results of the divergent validity

Variables	CRMQ	Destination image	Destination loyalty	Ecotourism loyalty	Experience	Satisfaction
Quality of the customer relationship management	0.915					
Destination image	0.826	0.759				
Destination loyalty	0.900	0.671	0.856			
Ecotourism loyalty	0.911	0.696	0.839	0.953		
Experience	0.900	0.695	0.851	0.952	0.822	
Satisfaction	0.869	0.674	0.792	0.772	0.754	0.858

As can be seen from the table 4, cronbach's alpha for all constructs is above 0.7, which indicates high convergent validity and also indicates that the constructs (hidden variables) have high validity for model fit. Also, the composite reliability values for all constructs are above 0.7 was reported that indicates the constructs of composite reliability are suitable. To check the convergent validity, the index of the average variance extracted has been calculated. Convergent validity exists when the composite reliability is greater than 0.7 and the AVE is greater than 0.5. Also, the composite reliability must be greater than the AVE. In this case, the validity convergence condition will be exist. According to Table 4, all 3 conditions above are met, so the questionnaire has convergent validity.

Results of the hypohese tests

To test the hypohese, Strucutral Equation Modeling and Partial Least Squares through PLS software were used. Given the obtained results in figure 2 and table 5, since all of the calculated path coefficients are positive and higher than zero and $t > 0.196$ for each of the paths (except hypothesis 7), it can be said that all of the research hypohese (except the 7 hypohese) are confirmed.

Table 5. Results of testing hypohese

Hypohese	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Path coefficient	t value	Result
H1	Experience	Destination image	0.691	31.430	Confirmed
H2	Experience	Satisfaction	0.553	13.616	Confirmed
H3	Destination image	Satisfaction	0.291	6.739	Confirmed
H4	Satisfaction	Destination loyalty	0.096	2.311	Confirmed
H5	Experience	Destination loyalty	0.271	5.377	Confirmed
H6	Destination image	Destination loyalty	0.142	3.978	Confirmed
H7	Satisfaction	Ecotourism loyalty	0.016	0.577	Not confirmed
H8	Experience	Ecotourism loyalty	0.672	14.279	Confirmed
H9	Destination image	Ecotourism loyalty	0.082	2.687	Confirmed
H10	Satisfaction	Quality of the customer relationship management	0.869	95.897	Confirmed
H11	Quality of the customer relationship management	Destination loyalty	0.456	5.964	Confirmed
H12	Quality of the customer relationship management	Ecotourism loyalty	0.387	5.622	Confirmed

As it can be seen from the table 5, the significant statistical values for all hypoheses are greater than the value of 1.96. Therefore, all 12 research hypoheses are confirmed according to the above table.

Fitness of the model

Goodness of fit index (GFI) indicates the agreement of the quality of the strucutral model and measurement model and equals to:

$$GOF = \sqrt{AVE} \cdot \sqrt{R^2} \quad (1)$$

in which \overline{AVE} and $\overline{R^2}$ are the average of AVE and R^2 . $GFI > 0.4$ shows the fitness of the model. In the present article, GFI equals to 0.731 and it is higher than 0.4, indicating a suitable fitness of the model. This implies that the questions are correlated with the constructs.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of the research, it can be said that tourism experience is a factor that reinforces the tourism. Tourism experience leads to the promotion of tourism destination image, the tourist satisfaction and finally loyalty to the destination and ecotourism. Meanwhile, the role of customer relationship quality is an important one. What destination image is provided to the tourists and how to advertise and introduce the

tourism destination can all and all be effective in creating destination loyalty and promoting customer satisfaction. The present article seeks to investigate the effect of tourism experience on loyalty with respect to the mediating role of satisfaction, quality of customer relationship and image of destination. In the present study, twelve hypotheses were tested with the method of structural equations.

In the first and second hypotheses of the research, it was claimed that tourism experience positively affects destination image and tourism experience has a positive effect on travel satisfaction. The results of the path analysis showed that the significant number is equal to 0.691 and 0.553 respectively, which is more than 0.5. Therefore, the first and second hypotheses were confirmed. The path coefficients for these hypotheses are 0.885 and 0.895 respectively, which show that tourism has a positive and significant effect on tourists' satisfaction with a coefficient of 31.430 and 13.616 respectively. This result is consistent with the studies done by Alzaydi (2021), Asgarnezhad Nouri et al. (2019), Heidarzadeh et al. (2018), Yu et al. (2018), Prayag et al. (2017), and Assaker et al. (2011).

In the 3, 6 and 9 hypotheses of the research, it was claimed that destination image has a positive effect on travel satisfaction, destination image affects loyalty to the destination, and destination image affects positively loyalty to the ecotourism respectively. The results of the path analysis showed that the significant number is equal to 6.739, 3.978 and 2.687 respectively, which is more than 0.5. Therefore, these hypotheses were confirmed. The path coefficients for these hypotheses are 0.826, 0.900 and 0.911 respectively, which show that loyalty has a positive and significant effect on the destination and ecotourism with a coefficient of 6.739, 3.978 and 2.687 respectively. This result is consistent with the studies done by Zhou et al. (2022), Kim (2018), and Loi et al. (2017).

In the 4 and 7 hypotheses of the research, it was claimed that travel satisfaction affects positively loyalty to the destination and travel satisfaction affects positively loyalty to the ecotourism respectively. The results of the path analysis showed that the significant number is equal to 0.792 and 0.772 respectively, which is more than 0.5. Therefore, these hypotheses were confirmed. The path coefficients for these hypotheses are 0.096, and 0.016 respectively, which show that travel satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the loyalty to the destination and ecotourism with a coefficient of 2.311 and 0.577 respectively. This result is consistent with the studies done by Alzaydi (2021), Ting et al. (2021), and Shirmohammadi and Shirzadi (2021)

In the 5 and 8 hypotheses of the research, it was claimed that tourism experience affects loyalty to the destination and tourism experience affects positively loyalty to the ecotourism respectively. The results of the path analysis showed that the significant number is equal to 5.377 and 14.279 respectively, which is more than 0.5. Therefore, these hypotheses were confirmed. The path coefficients for these hypotheses are 0.271, and 0.672 respectively, which show that tourism experience has a positive and significant effect on the loyalty to the destination and ecotourism with a coefficient of 0.826 and 0.911 respectively. This result is consistent with the studies done by Ting et al. (2021), Shirmohammadi and Shirzadi (2021), Heidarzadeh et al. (2018) and Kim et al. (2012).

In the 10 to 12 hypotheses of the research, it was claimed that satisfaction has a positive effect on the quality of customer relationship, the quality of customer relationship has a positive effect on loyalty to the destination, and the quality of customer relationship has a positive effect on loyalty to the ecotourism respectively. The results of the path analysis showed that the significant number is equal to 95.897, 5.964 and 5.622 respectively, which is more than 0.5. Therefore, these hypotheses were confirmed. The path coefficients for these hypotheses are 0.869, 0.456, and 0.387 respectively, which show that satisfaction and the quality of customer relationship has a positive and significant effect on the loyalty to the destination with a coefficient of 0.858, 0.915 and 0.915 respectively. This result is consistent with the studies done by Shirmohammadi and Shirzadi (2021), Rahmiati et al. (2020), Heidarzadeh et al. (2018) and Niadzapour and Khajehzadeh (2016).

At the end, it should be mentioned that during the implementation of this research, the most important and obvious limitation of the researcher was the low willingness of tourists to participate in the research and to complete the questionnaires, which required a lot of time and energy to obtain their consent to complete the questionnaires. On the other hand, this research was conducted in Chabahar city and its results cannot be generalized to other cities and tourist destinations. Therefore, it is recommended that this research be conducted in other tourist areas of Iran and its results be compared with the results of the current research.

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