

## **Presenting the Particular Value Model of the Green Brand from the Point of View of Sports Tourists on the Island of Kish**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the factors affecting the formation of the green brand in sports tourism in Kish Island. Two standard questionnaires on a 5-point Likert scale have been used. The statistical population of this research is 550 sports tourists who traveled to the target destination to participate in a training camp, an event, or a sports competition, and the statistical sample of the research was determined by the available method according to the Morgan Table of 225 people. Content validity was used for validity, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used for reliability. The component of awareness of the destination brand can predict sports tourism in the tourist destination of Kish ( $t=7.34$ ). The brand image component of the destination has the ability to predict sports tourism in the tourist destination ( $t = 8.12$ ). The perceived quality component of the destination brand can predict sports tourism in the tourist destination of Kish ( $t = 8.23$ ). The component of the perceived value of the destination brand can predict sports tourism in the tourist destination ( $t = 8.35$ ). All the components of Green Brand Equity (GBBE) can predict sports tourism in the tourist destination of Kish.

**Keywords:** Sports tourism; green brand; tourism development model; Kish Island.

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## **1. Introduction**

Tourism place is used for particular purposes such as attracting tourists, helping the country's economy, employing talented human resources, and other purposes. Meanwhile, brand and unique brand value are increasingly borrowed from the business world. Marketers in the field of tourism expressed a discussion of branding in tourism, based on which different tourism spaces will have separate identities. Brand in tourism is a new phenomenon and was used in important tourist destinations in the 1990s (Alhaddad, 2014). The unique value of the brand is a combination of all the features such as services, products, events, holding competitions, training, etc. which differentiates between competitors. Brand equity is divided into two categories, which include customer perception of the brand, which is in the form of brand awareness, brand association, brand quality, and brand image, and the second category includes customer behavior, which includes customer loyalty to the brand. Today, substantial brand equity is an essential factor in influencing tourists' perception of the destination brand. In fact, success in brand management comes from understanding and proper management of brand equity, and in this way, strong characteristics can be established. He created a brand that can be influential in the decision-making of sports tourists to choose a tourist destination. International statistics show that the tourism industry is constantly growing; according to the statistics of the World Tourism Organization, in 2010, the number of international tourists reached 940 million people, and the income from this industry exceeded 919 billion US; E.S.;PP dollars. Therefore, nowadays, many countries get their primary income from this industry (Chen et al., 2019).

Basically, the researchers are looking to answer the question, what are the variables affecting the formation of the green sports tourism brand for Kish Island?

## **2. Literature review**

According to the reports of the World Tourism Organization, Turkey was able to increase its foreign exchange income from 6.9 billion dollars in 2006 to 18.5 billion dollars in 2007. This western neighbor of ours, by attracting 25 million people and earning 22 billion dollars in 2008, ranked 8th among ten tourist-friendly countries in the world, in 2010, by attracting 27 million tourists, it ranked 7th among 10 tourist-friendly countries from itself (Cho et al. 2019). Investment in the tourism industry has become very important due to the very high volume of income along with the very shallow use of resources in our country, as an alternative income to non-oil exports, it can be of double importance for our country (Nobakht Ramezani et al. 2019). In its statistics report, the World Tourism Organization presented 1.6 billion tourists

for the year 2020, which means 2 trillion dollars a year and something like 5 billion dollars a day, which will be the cost of tourists traveling around the world, this figure it is several times the oil income of OPEC member countries (Colladon et al. 2020).

Also, investigating tourism trends in different countries shows the growth of a modern phenomenon called sports tourism (Das' 2020). The countries of Spain, Australia, America, and France are among the successful countries in the field of sports tourism, and in Turkey, a good investment has been made for the establishment of sports team camps, and Turkey is considered a good destination for the establishment of sports team camps (Meanwhile, the World Tourism Organization announced in 2004 that 55% of German people's trips abroad and 52% of Dutch people's trips are sports. On the other hand, having a successful tourism brand can be very effective in attracting tourists and, as a result, increasing income from the tourism industry and economic prosperity in a tourism destination. Various factors are effective in building a destination brand, and all these factors should be taken into account to succeed in attracting tourists and the economic prosperity of the destination by having a successful tourism brand. Also, the development of the sports tourism industry is of great importance for any destination, and the special value of the customer-oriented brand of tourist destinations in positioning, marketing and planning is necessary for developing this industry. With increasing competition in global tourism markets, tourist destinations can achieve a sustainable competitive advantage by increasing the number of new tourist visits. Repeat visitors are a constant market for a destination as and a source of free advertising in the form of word of mouth to their family members and friends (Chow et al. 2018). Therefore, today, the tourism industry is a dynamic industry with unique characteristics that has been able to occupy an important part of the economic and non-economic activities of developed and developing countries); and bring many benefits to the communities, including creating employment and setting up and using economic capital (Obilo et al. 2021). Therefore, tourism destination marketing specialists and managers should try to increase their share of revenues and other benefits of this expanding global industry by creating a brand for destinations and strengthening it (Priporas et al. 2015) and considering that the resources Natural and cultural, infrastructure, social and economic environment, weather, social conditions, food tastes and destination culture are factors that determine how to evaluate a destination (Gomez et al' 2015). Therefore, like the competition in consumer goods, tourist destinations must convince their customers that they can offer a combination of benefits that no other destination can offer (Huang and Cai, 2015). Because in today's competitive markets, a brand is no longer just an efficient tool in the hands of managers, but a strategic imperative that helps organizations create more value for

customers, and according to Doyle (2001), the second asset is considered important for a company or organization after customers (Krystallis, 2014). Based on the results of a study that Aker conducted in 1991 under the title of "brand equity management, during which, for the first time, the dimensions of brand equity from the customer's point of view, which include: brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived brand quality, It is a brand, or the brand association, introduced. Koncnik and Gartner (2007), along with substituting brand image for brand association, first studied Aker's brand equity model about, too, with, concerning tourism destinations. Finally, Bo, Busser, and Baloglu (2009) went one step further. Then, they added the perceived value of the destination brand to Kotechnik's model (2007), which is derived from Aker's model (1991), and the dimensions of the special value of the green brand of tourist destinations are awareness of the destination brand, image of the destination brand, and perceived quality of the brand. Destination, the perceived value of the destination brand and loyalty to the destination brand; finally, finally, the dimensions of the special value of the destination brand were identified (Gibson et al, 2018; Aaker, 1991). However, one of the important ways of finding a destination that has been researched and is effective in achieving a competitive advantage in the minds of customers is the special value of the green brand. The special value of the green brand is a strategic role and an important competitive advantage that is considered in marketing decisions (Tasci, 2020). The special value framework of the green brand (environmentally friendly) is used today in tourism and customer attraction in tourist destinations (Roy et al, 2018). One of the benefits of the special value of the green brand is the ability to reduce environmental costs. It also helps the interaction between humans and the environment and preserves natural resources (Chen et al. 2019). Therefore, considering the importance of the special value of the green brand in sports tourism destinations, and the city of Kish has beautiful natural landscapes, healthy air, beautiful beaches with many sports and entertainment facilities, the presence of luxury shopping centers and famous sports brands. Unfortunately, no study has been conducted regarding the special value of the green brand of this sports tourism destination. As a result, this research seeks to examine the structural model of the effect of green brand equity on sports tourism in Kish, taking into account the dimensions of the specific value of the green brand.

### **3. Research Method**

Introduction of the study area: the study area of this research is Kish Island. The area of this island is 91.5 square kilometers, which overlooks Iran from the north, the Strait of Hormuz from the east, the United Arab Emirates from the south, and Bahrain, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia from the west. The climate of

Kish is tropical and dry. Humidity is around 60% most of the year. Sunny hours on the island are approximately 3100 hours per year (Environmental Status of Kish Island. 2019). A series of water sports, such as diving, jet skiing, water skiing, flyboarding, kiteboarding, surfing, sailing, fishing, etc., can be done on this island (Figure 1). There are also a variety of historical and natural attractions on this island, which welcomes a large number of tourists every year. Validity was checked using content validity with a survey of sports marketing and management professors and experts, and reliability was checked using Cronbach's alpha test.

**Table 1.** The values of mean values, standard deviations, and Cronach's alpha coefficient of research questions

factors	cronbach alpha	standard deviation	average	the questions
awareness of the green brand	0/82	0/44	1/68	4
green brand image	0/79	0/36	1/74	4
perceived quality of the green brand	0/83	0/29	1/64	4
the perceived value of a green brand	0/80	0/51	1/52	4
brand loyalty	0/81	0/38	1/39	4
brand equity	0/84	0/61	-	20
sports tourism	0/82	0/53	1/62	12

**Source:** Research findings

As shown in Table 1, the reliability coefficient for each research is above 0.70, so these factors are required to measure the reliability. In Table 1, the mean values, standard deviation, and reliability of research items were obtained according to Cronach's alpha test.



**Figure 1.** Location of the study area (drawing authors)

Research methodology this is descriptive-analytical and applied research that was conducted in the field using a questionnaire. In this study, research information was collected by two standard questionnaires, including the unique, exceptional, particular, extraordinary value of the green brand of sports tourists (Anselmisson et al.,2017<sup>4</sup>) and the destination of sports tourism (Chow et al.,2016<sup>5</sup>). The questionnaires used were: π The unique, particular, exceptional value of the green brand (Anselmisson et al.2017). This questionnaire has 20 items, and its purpose is to examine the unique, exceptional, particular, and extraordinary value of the brand, which has five components: awareness of the green brand, image of the green brand, perceived quality of the green brand, and perceived value of the green brand, And loyalty to the green brand is valued as a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree, strongly disagree). π Sports tourism destination (Chow et al.<sup>5</sup> 2016): This questionnaire has 12 items, and aims to investigate the sports tourism destination, which is evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree, strongly disagree). The research variables are:

Awareness of the tourist destination brand: Aker (1991), that awareness of the tourist destination brand is the customer's ability to remember and recognize a destination, and Aker (1996), stated that the tourist destination brand is the presence of the brand of that destination in mind Is a consumer (Krystallis, 2014)? The brand image of a tourism destination: Aker (1991), considers the mental image synonymous with the customer's associations with the brand and states that mental image is whatever the consumer associates with a brand in his mind. (Gibson et al et al<sup>4</sup> 2018). Perceived quality of tourism destination brand: Aker (1991) defines perceived quality as the customer's understanding of the overall or superior quality of the product or service according to the intended purpose compared to other options (Asamoah, 2014). The perceived value of the tourism destination brand: The tourist's perceived value of the destination brand is defined as the value received by the tourist in the destination compared to the expenses incurred for travel to that destination (Foroudi, 2018). Loyalty to the tourism destination brand: Aker (1991), has stated that the increase in customer brand equity leads to an increase in customer loyalty; Because when the unique, exceptional, extraordinary, particular value of a product's brand increases, customers are more willing to continue buying the products of that brand and pay higher prices for it (Leicht, 2018). In particular, this concept is considered in the tourism industry as "the intention to revisit the tourist destination or to recommend it to others" (Mainardes et al<sup>4</sup> , 209).

Sports tourism: Sports tourism means the experience of traveling to participate in or watch sports events and activities. In other words, sports tourism refers to trips that include watching a sports competition or participating in such competitions. Sports tourism is one of the subcategories of tourism and tourism industry (Prince, 2022). Tourism destination: A tourist destination is a collection of tourism products and services that, as a name (destination brand), plays a significant role in the formation of different experiences for visitors, and this experience is based on the visitor's travel plan, background Cultural identity, the purpose of the visit and their past experiences are formed (et al.2016). The statistical population of this research was made up of sports tourists who traveled to the target destination (Kish) to participate in a training camp, an event or a sports competition. The inquiry of different sports federations of 550 people was considered the sample size. Therefore, according to Morgan's table, the number of the statistical sample of the research was 225 people according to the available method. Descriptive statistics (prevalence, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation and structural equations) were used to analyze the collected data. Also, fit indices were used to check the proposed model. It should be noted that all statistical steps were analyzed using SPSS24 and LISREL8 software.

#### 4. Results

**Table 2.** Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality of data

variable	significance level	standard deviation	average
brand equity	0/76	13/37	58/29
sports tourism	63/0	22/59	63/18

According to Table 2, the results of the normality of the variables show that according to the higher level of significance, the research variables have a normal distribution.

**Table 3.** Summary Pearson correlation analysis hypothesis

variable	sports tourism	
	p	r
awareness of the green brand	0.000	<b>.330**</b>
green brand image	0.000	<b>.311**</b>
perceived quality of the green brand	0.000	<b>.387**</b>
The perceived value of a green brand	0.000	<b>.476**</b>
brand loyalty	0.000	<b>.607**</b>

**Source:** Research findings

As you can see, the correlation matrix is presented for two variables: green brand awareness and sports tourism. The correlation  $r$  between green brand awareness and sports tourism is 0.33, and these values are significant at the significance level of 0.01. Also, these results show that there is a positive and significant correlation between awareness of the green brand and sports tourism, so the claim of the influence of the awareness of the destination's green brand on sports tourism in the tourist destination of Kish is confirmed and the null hypothesis is rejected. As you see, the correlation matrix is presented for two variables: green brand image and sport tourism. The correlation between green brand image and sports tourism was 0 / 31, which is significant at the significance level of 0 / 01. The results also showed a positive and significant correlation between green brand image and sports tourism, so the claim of the influence of destination brand image on sports tourism in Kish Island is confirmed, and the null hypothesis is rejected. As you see, the correlation matrix is presented for two variables of the perceived quality of green brands and sport tourism. The correlation between the

perceived quality of green brands and sports tourism is 0.38, which is significant at the significance level of 0/01. The results also showed a positive and significant correlation between the perceived quality of green brands and sports tourism, so the claim of the effectiveness of perceived quality of destination on sports tourism in Kish island is confirmed, and the null hypothesis is rejected ..As you see, the correlation matrix is presented for two variables of the perceived value of green brands and sports tourism. The correlation between the perceived value of green brands and sports tourism was 0 / 47, is significant at 0/01. the significance level; these results indicate a positive and significant correlation between the perceived value of green brands and sports tourism, so the claim of the perceived value of destination brands on sports tourism in Knish Island is confirmed and the null hypothesis is rejected as you see, the correlation matrix for two variables of loyalty to the green brand and sports tourism is presented .according to the results of table 7, the correlation between green brand loyalty and sports tourism was 0 / 60 and these values were significant at 0 / 01. the results also showed a positive and significant correlation between green brand loyalty and sports tourism. Therefore, the claim of the influence of loyalty to the green brand of destination on sports tourism in Kish is confirmed, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

**The Goodness of Fit Model**

The fit indices of the proposed model are shown in Table 8.

**Table 4.** The proposed model fit index

	AGFI	IF	CFI	NNFI	PNFI	RMISEA	X <sup>2</sup> /df
archetype	0/9	0/92	0/93	0/9	0/73	0/66	2/5
desired value	0/9>	0/9>	0/9>	0/9>	0/5>	0/8<	<3

Source: Research findings

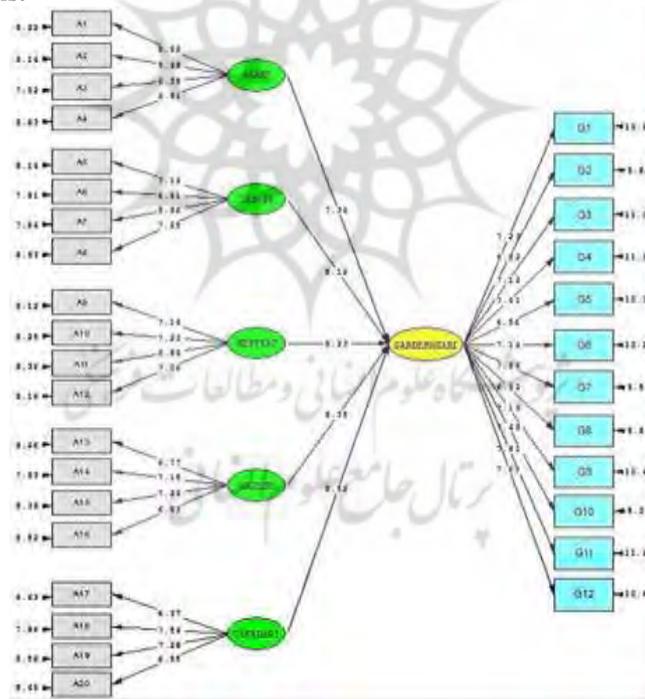
According to the results obtained regarding the model fit indices in the above table, all the indices are reported at the optimal level. Therefore, factor analysis can be performed on these data. According to the results obtained from the factor analysis model of the specific value of the green brand (GBBE) of sports tourists in the tourist destination of Kish, all the items have favorable factor loadings. It should be noted that in confirmatory factor analysis, the factor loading must be above 0.3. In other words, the questions whose factor load is less than 0.3 are not meaningful, and the relevant question should be removed and not go to the analysis stage.

**Table5.** Results of customer-oriented brand equity model (CBBE)

hypothesis	result	t-value	R <sup>2</sup>	standard coefficient (r)
awareness of the green brand of sports tourism	ok	7/34	0/81	0/84
the green brand image of sport tourism	ok	8/12	0/84	0/81
hypothesis	ok	8/23	0/82	0/79
awareness of the green brand of sports tourism	ok	8/35	0/85	0/83
the green brand image of sport tourism	ok	8/52	0/88	0/85

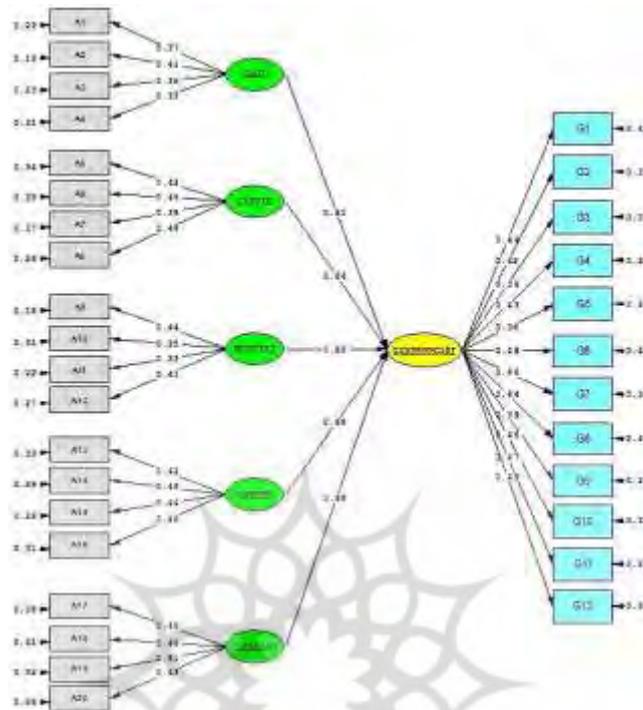
**Source:** Research findings

The following diagrams show confirmatory factor analysis to fit the structural model of green brand equity (GBBE) of sport tourists in knish tourism destinations.



Chi-Square=9126.43, df=923, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.060

**Figure 2.** Confirmatory factor analysis model (Standard)



Chi-Square=9126.43, df=923, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.060

Figure 3. Confirmatory factor analysis model (meaning test t)

### 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Considering that the path coefficient between brand awareness and sports tourism is equal to 0.81, the statistical value of t (significant coefficient) for these two is equal to 7.34, and because these values are more than 1.86, the first research hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, the component of awareness of the destination brand can predict sports tourism in the tourist destination of Kish. This result is consistent with the research results of (foroudi, 2018). Therefore, according to this result, it should be said that the most critical issue in the development of sports tourism related to the natural sports attractions of a region is to have sufficient knowledge about them, and the first step for effective planning is to have regular and accurate information about them. With the natural sports attractions of the region, it is to exploit their potential conditions. Therefore, with the increase in tourists' information about tourist destinations, new choices become available for them, and they get new opportunities to acquire unique businesses. Considering that the path coefficient between brand image and sports tourism is equal to 0.84, the statistical value of t (significant coefficient) for these two is equal to 8.12, and

because these values are more than 1.86, the hypothesis second, the research is confirmed. In other words, the brand image component of the can to predict sports tourism in the tourist destination of Kish. This result is in agreement with the research results of Tajzadeh and Esmail-Mosharafi (2015), Raghimi (2018), and Ilbeigi et al. (2019), which are consistent. Therefore, according to this result, it the brand image of the destination has been confirmed in many researches as one of the dimensions affecting the unique value of the brand. According to the researchers, the brand image of a tourist destination has an important role and influence in the decision-making process. Determining the behavior of tourists before, during, and after the trip, the choice of destination plays a significant role in the level of tourists' satisfaction with the trip. Therefore, the importance of studying the image of the destination brand is for two reasons: first, the perception of the destination affects the buying decision behavior of potential tourists, and second, the perception of the destination affects the level of satisfaction of tourists with their travel experience. According to the results of the research, from the point of view of the samples, Kish sports tourism destination has beautiful nature and landscapes, favorable weather, and hospitable staff and people, and this has made a favorable brand image for tourists of this destination. One of the reasons for this is the proximity of this city to the Persian Gulf and the existence of sports-recreational complexes. Also, Kish includes different ethnic groups with different cultures who live peacefully together. Therefore, they quickly establish a relationship with tourists and welcome them. Considering that the path coefficient between the perceived quality of the brand and sports tourism is equal to 0.82, the statistical value of t (significant coefficient) for these two is equal to 8.23, and because these values are more than 1.86; therefore, the third hypothesis of the research is confirmed. In other words, the component of the perceived quality of the destination brand can predict sports tourism in the tourist destination of Kish. Also, this result aligns with the research results of Brexendorf and Keller, 2017. Therefore, according to this result, it should be said that the perceived quality of the destination brand has been confirmed in many researches as one of the important and influential dimensions of the special value of the brand. Then, the perceived quality of the destination brand is an important factor in strengthening the special value of the brand in the tourism destination. The perceived quality of the destination brand can create value in five ways and affect the special value of the tourist destination brand (a reason to buy, differentiation, overpayment, willingness of distribution channel members to use products with higher perceived quality, and brand development). Also, according to its perceived quality, a strong brand has more ability than a weak brand for success and development. Positive variables such as the quality of welfare and

accommodation centers, the quality of organizing competitions and travel information, the quality of easy access, and the quality of health services and services related to food and beverages, facilitate repeat visits. The quality of services has a major contribution to satisfaction, and the desire to return, and the result is the loyalty of sports tourists to the destination. Considering that the path coefficient between the perceived value of the brand and sports tourism is equal to 0.85, the statistical value of t (significant coefficient) for these two is equal to 8.35 and because these values are greater than 1.86; therefore, the fourth research hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, the component of the perceived value of the destination brand can predict sports tourism in the tourist destination of Kish. Also, this result is consistent with the research results of (2020), (2018), (Kouzegar Kalegi et al. et al'2018) (and Rosie 2019). Therefore, according to this result, it should be said that today, the role of the perceived value of the brand is considered a vital element for consumers and marketers, and this is because the perceived value of the brand is one of the strongest forces in destination tourism. The importance of the perceived value of the destination brand has been considered in many works in recent years. Providing the best possible value to sports tourists is an important issue for service tourism destinations in the current competitive market. Companies that can provide valuable products and services from the point of view of customers will gain an important competitive advantage. However unfortunately, despite the importance of the subject, it can be seen that the perceived value of the destination brand is not placed in the center of gravity of marketing efforts in understanding the customer's behavior. Considering that the path coefficient between brand loyalty and sports tourism is equal to 0.88, the statistical value of t (significant coefficient) for these two is equal to 8.52, and because these values are more than 1.86 The fifth research hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, the component of loyalty to the destination brand can predict sports tourism in the tourist destination of Kish. This result is in line with the research results of Su & Chang (2018), Raghimi (2018), and Taylor (2016). Therefore, according to this result, it should be said that loyalty to the brand is an important factor in strengthening the special value of the destination brand. The Loyalty of the tourist destination should be examined over time, which means that regular visiting behavior should be considered. In this way, behavioral loyalty can be considered a reasonable and suitable predictor for the future choice of destination. According to the research results, tourists have a pleasant feeling in the destination of Kish, and their presence is one of their priorities for sports tourism. In addition, tourists visit these destinations and recommend them to others. One of the reasons for this is the availability of sports facilities, and the presence of famous athletes and teams (Fallah et al., 2014). For this purpose, many sports tourists from all parts of the country are attracted to this island to participate in sports activities

and visits, holding camps and important sports competitions, so there may be conditions for its use in some provinces. Not be also, due to the existence of various sports facilities, a tourist has the possibility to use his favourite sports in this destination' for example, a tourist in Kish can go water skiing and sailing in one day, as well as watch Beach volleyball matches go to the sports complex. In the end, it can be concluded from the results of this hypothesis (sixth hypothesis) that all the components of Green Brand Equity (GBBE) can predict sports tourism in the tourist destination of Kish, or other words, according to the results of the research hypothesis, it is confirmed, and the null hypothesis is rejected.

Since the number of tourist places in the tourism industry is high, knowing the brand of tourist destinations is very important to facilitate the decision-making process of tourists. Therefore, despite the desirability of the programs in order to make tourists aware of the destination brand, it is possible to pay more attention to planning and using the sports tourism capacities of the destination (Kish) and more emphasis on the media for information. Informing the tourists was more active and result, created a higher value for the brand of tourist destinations. Therefore, perceived value is one of the motivational factors that attract tourists to a specific destination. In this way, if, according to tourists, the proportionality of the costs of traveling to the destination is low compared to the benefits of visiting it, they will travel to that destination. Therefore meeting the needs of tourists satisfying them and creating a favourable mental image of sports destinations, it makes them dependent and loyal. Therefore, with proper marketing activities to create loyalty of tourists to the destination brand, it is possible to determine from the point of view of marketing in which characteristics loyalty is formed and what factors in the formation of tourist loyalty. It is effective as a tourist destination. Every person with a positive attitude towards a tourist destination, even if they do not visit it anymore, can play a role in positive word-of-mouth promotion of the destination to others. Finally, the following suggestions can be made in order to develop the green tourism brand in Kish Island:

- With the appropriate activities and programs to create a favourable brand image for tourists of the destination brand, a good brand image can be created by using more carefully trained employees to deal with tourists and provide a beautiful, and attractive environment and Created tourists, to increase the perceived quality, loyalty and repeat visits and thus create high value for the sports tourism destination brand.
- Emphasizing the protection of environmental aspects and the development of ecotourism in Kish Island. Considering the power of tourists in choosing destinations with higher service quality and

lower costs, it is necessary to pay attention to monitoring and control measures and also to adopt appropriate pricing policies by destination management.

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