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Developing brand equity through online and offline marketing: an investigation in hotels of Tehran

Çevrimiçi ve çevrimdışı pazarlama yoluyla marka değerinin geliştirilmesi: Tahran otellerinde bir araştırma

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to measure the relationship between online marketing (during the buying process, including information retrieval and reservation) and offline experiential marketing (during the stay) with equity at the hotel. In addition, this study attempts to determine whether there is a significant relationship between online hotel experience and subsequent hotel experience in offline mode. For this purpose, 384 people have randomly been selected among the customers of 4-star hotels in Tehran (unlimited). The main tool for data collection is a questionnaire and, to evaluate the model and research hypotheses at the inferential level, the method of path analysis and structural equation modeling has been used. The SPSS 25 and PLS 3 software were used to analyze and use the above tests. The research findings showed that offline experiential marketing of hotel customers has a significant effect on the special value of the hotel branding and also online marketing of hotel customers not only has a significant effect on the special value of the hotel branding but also on offline experiential marketing of customers.

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, çevrimiçi pazarlama (bilgi alma ve rezervasyon dahil olmak üzere satın alma sürecinde) ve çevrimdışı deneysel pazarlama (konaklama sırasında) ile otelin marka değeri arasındaki ilişkiyi ölçmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Buna ek olarak, bu çalışma, çevrimiçi otel deneyimi ile sonraki otel deneyimi arasında çevrimdışı moda anlamlı bir ilişki olup olmadığını belirlemeye çalışmaktadır. Bu amaçla Tahran'da bulunan 4 yıldızlı otellerin turistleri arasından rastgele 384 kişi (sınırsız) seçilmiştir. Veri toplama için ana araç bir ankettir ve modeli ve araştırma hipotezlerini çıkarımsal düzeyde değerlendirmek için yol analizi yöntemi ve yapısal eşitlik modellemesi kullanılmıştır. Yukarıdaki testleri analiz etmek ve kullanmak için SPSS 25 ve PLS 3 yazılımı kullanılmıştır. Araştırma bulguları, otel müşterilerinin çevrimdışı deneysel pazarlamasının otel markasının özel değeri üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğunu ve ayrıca otel turistlerinin çevrimiçi pazarlamasının sadece otel markasının özel değeri üzerinde değil, aynı zamanda çevrimdışı deneysel değer üzerinde de önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermiştir.

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1. Introduction

In most of the developed countries of the world, social networks have been widely used and have covered almost all aspects of people's lives. The organizers of these networks have been able to use these tools in the best way. In the same way, the producers of products and services have been able to use them. So, they gain brand equity and enhance customer response (Kaplan and Henlin, 2017).

Social media offers new ways of communicating to businesses and consumers. Businesses can overcome the geographical constraints of consumers by creating a public space on the Internet where customers can interact with each other. Today, brand communities have greatly expanded in social media (Khosravi et al., 2015).

However, in Iran, online and offline experiential marketing through information technology and social media facilities have not been able to find their desired place in people's lives. Apart from this, culturalization has not been done in this field, and producers of products and services cannot use the media properly and a lot. Offline experiential marketing monitors the customer's experience during the stay and online marketing monitors the customer's satisfaction with the interaction with the hotel website. Thus, despite the competition between Iranian companies in attracting customers, these companies still do not use the Internet, especially social networks, to attract customers. The reason for this could be the ignorance of the manufacturers of this tool. This has become a major problem in customer's response and brand equity on social media (Mousavi and Kenareh Fard, 2020).

Also, when measuring the empirical results of tourism, it is important to note that brand value is critical to evaluating the effectiveness of marketing efforts. To achieve a fair value, a feature must be positively valued by the consumer. So, brand strength is the result of consumer visibility over the period under review. Therefore, consumer experiences have a great impact on brand value (Farhangi et al., 2018).

So, the question of how to use social media on brand equity is still unresolved. Our country's hotel industry, and especially the four-star hotels in Tehran, is not very familiar with online or offline social media marketing. As a result, in comparison with neighboring countries such as Turkey, UAE, etc., they encountered with problems in introducing their brand. Therefore, according to this research, studying the effect of online and offline social media marketing on brand equity (Case study: customers of four-star hotels in Tehran) can provide a good insight for organizations to enable them to predict the future behavior of customers with the help of this information and also to have a better understanding of their brand position among customers and rivals. It can also enable them to make better decisions about improving their marketing programs, including their advertising campaigns. The results show that the experience during the hotel stay, unlike the online shopping experience, affects the hotel brand equity. However, the online experience has a significant impact on the hotel stay experience. There is no study in the hospitality sector that jointly analyzes the role of online and offline tourist experiences and their roles in helping commercial stocks. Knowing the previous concepts allows hotels to focus on marketing efforts in order to increase brand value.

Based on the presented concepts, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: *Offline experiential marketing has a significant effect on brand equity.*

H2: *Online experiential marketing has a significant effect on brand equity.*

2. Theoretical Background

Experiential marketing is a new marketing concept that focuses on creative and innovative ways to appeal customers' senses, feelings, intellects, curiosities, and self-images rather than to rational, utilitarian notions of value. Schmitt (1999) contrasted traditional marketing's product-oriented focus on functional features and benefits with experience marketing's customer-oriented focus on experiences. Schmitt argued that customers do not ever engage in rational choice, but are just frequently driven by emotions. Nowadays, customers need products, communications, and marketing campaigns that dazzle the senses, touch their hearts, and stimulate their minds. They need products, communications and campaigns that they can relate to and also incorporate into their lifestyles. They need products, communications, and marketing campaigns to deliver an experience (Schmitt, 1999). To further explore recent research in this area, we review:

Ismaili and Taheri (2020), in their research entitled "Evaluating the impact of online communities on customer loyalty to the brand in social networks" to examine the impact of online communities on customer's loyalty to the brand and to study the relationship they discuss the theoretical foundations between online communities and loyalty and describe their variables. The results of this study showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the variable of online societies and its components with the criterion variable, i.e. customer loyalty. There was also a significant difference between male and female scores in the variables of online communities, ease of use, customer loyalty and reliability. Mousavi and Kenarehfarid (2020) in their research entitled "The impact of social media on the characteristics of the brand society, value creation methods, trust and brand loyalty (a case study comparing the (iPhone's mobile phone) and Samsung (Galaxy))". The results of the present study included 20 hypotheses that after testing the hypotheses and statistical analysis performed at 95% confidence level, eighteen hypotheses were approved and two hypotheses were rejected for Apple customers, and sixteen hypotheses were confirmed for Samsung customers. And four hypotheses were rejected. Ben Brahim (2016) in his research entitled "The effect of online advertising on the intention to buy Tunisian consumers" on the impact of online advertising on consumer behavior has been little studied and research on this issue has achieved mixed results. The results of this study show that the value of online advertising depends on its effectiveness. They also state that the credibility and value of online advertising affects consumers' attitudes toward this type of advertising. Farhangi et al. (2015) in his research entitled "Analysis of the impact of social media on customers' attitudes toward the brand and the intention to buy from the company: a case study of Iran Khodro Company" analyzes the impact of social media on customers' attitudes toward the brand and intends to buy the products of Iran Khodro Company using the theory of planned behavior. Some findings show that increasing the traditional advertising of Iran Khodro Company and social media leads to a positive attitude of customers towards the company's brand, but the impact of social media is more than traditional advertising. In addition, the attitude towards the brand leads to the purchase of the company's products.

2.1. Offline experiential marketing

Based on the previous offline experiential marketing research, a scale of 12 items was developed revolving around the following four dimensions: behavioral, sensory, affective and intellectual. The behavioral dimension

refers to physical actions and behaviors stimulated by a place or environment. The sensory dimension is perceived, among others, through the senses and includes decorative and architectural elements, lighting, fragrances, flavors, sounds and music. The affective dimension, in turn, is related to the feelings and attitudes evoked by a brand that gives rise to emotions such as moods or feelings (Brakus et al., 2009). Finally, the intellectual dimension arises when the proposals of design, leisure activities, advertising or interaction with employees help to stimulate the curiosity and creativity of the consumer, leading to thought and reflection. Hence, Brakus et al.'s (2009) proposal of dimensions for the offline service experience, in addition to being more complete, is widely cited in recent literature.

2.2. Online experiential marketing

Experience in an online environment is defined as a global experience resulted from consumer interactions with different contexts in which the tourist seeks to find hotel information (Novak et al. 2000). The online shopping process, in turn, can be divided into three important steps in relation to the development of consumer experiences: information retrieval, purchasing, and product delivery (Rose et al., 2011). The usability dimension includes different user experience during web browsing , and application of virtual tools.

2.3. Brand equity

The Institute for Marketing Science defines brand equity as a set of associations and behaviors in brand customers, channel members, and parent companies that allow a brand to have a higher revenue or higher profit margin than when it has no brand. The issue gives the brand a strong, stable and distinctive advantage over competitors (Lindman, 2004).

3. Conceptual Framework

After reviewing research and studies in this field, three variables including: offline experiential marketing, online marketing and brand equity are considered as important variables; because it combines the feeling of satisfaction of customers with a pleasant feeling of online shopping confidence and its ease, and therefore in such circumstances, the brand equity is promoted. In this regard, in this study, the factors affecting brand equity and the relationship between the three components of offline experiential marketing, online marketing and brand equity has been studied and tried to examine the extent of this impact and the type of causal relationship in the statistical population studied. Based on what has been said, Figure 1 shows appropriate relationships under analysis. The conceptual model in this research is adapted from the conceptual model of Garcia et al. (2018) and its purpose is to study the impact of online and offline experiential marketing on brand equity. In this research, online and offline experiential marketing are considered as independent variables and brand equity as dependent change.

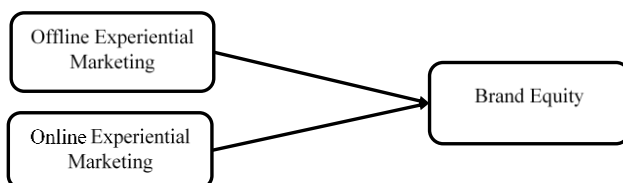


Figure 1. The conceptual model

4. Methodology

The method used for this research is descriptive and a survey administered. In this research, data are collected based on the problem and purpose of a source. The source of data collection is customers of Tehran's four-star hotels (unlimited). A questionnaire was used to collect data and the available (random) non-random sampling method was used. The sample size is 384. In this study, a questionnaire (Castanda Garcia et al., 2019) was used to evaluate and test the effective variables in the research topic. The number of questions in the questionnaire was a total of 40 questions with 5-choice answers from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" in the form of a customer survey questionnaire.

Table 1. Description of the variables examined in the questionnaire

Questionnaire item distribution table				
Row	Variable	Dimensions	Questions	Number
1		Axial dimension	1-4	4
2	Online Experiential Marketing ¹	The hedonistic dimension	5-8	4
3		Social dimension	9-12	4
4		Applicability dimension	13-16	4
5		Sensory dimension	17-19	3
6	Offline Experiential Marketing ²	Emotional dimension	20-22	3
7		Behavioral dimension	23-25	3
8		Mental dimension	26-28	3
9		Brand loyalty	29-30	2
10	Brand Equity ³	Perceived quality	31-35	5
11		Brand awareness	36-38	3
12		Brand associations	39-10	2

Source: Namibisan and Watt, 2011¹, Brax et al., 2009², Kim et al., 2008³

In this study, among the various methods of determining the validity of the measurement, face validity, content and construct validity were used. Since the questions are questionnaires, it has content validity. To measure face validity, it was used by professors and experts. As a result, its structural defects were identified and necessary corrections were made to meet the apparent validity. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to assess the validity of the structure. Confirmatory factor analysis for the present study was performed by PLS software. The results of factor analysis showed that the regression weight of the variables in predicting all items at 95% confidence level has a significant difference with zero. Therefore, none of the items were excluded from the analysis process. The significance of items and dimensions is that the level of significance for them is below 0.05. Therefore, finally, 12 items of the questionnaire were analyzed. To calculate Cronbach's alpha and the reliability of this research, "SPSS 25" software was used, which can be claimed that the tool has good reliability.

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the main research variables

Variable Name	Cronbach's alpha variables
Offline Experiential Marketing	0.86
Online Experiential Marketing	0.77
Brand Equity	0.86

"SPSS 25" and "PLS" software were used to analyze the information obtained in the present study. Due to the non-normality of the data and the insensitivity of PLS software to it, PLS 3 software has been used to test the hypotheses.

According to the analysis of the data studied in the study, in terms of gender component, 42.5% of respondents were men and the other 57.5% were women. On the other hand, the largest number of participants in this test was in the age group of 20 to 30. This is while the level of education of the respondents covers a wide range and includes from the undergraduate level to the doctoral level. Among these, the largest share has been allocated to holders of Graduate with about 50 percent. In terms of job components, 18% have governmental jobs and 82% have freelance jobs, and in terms of respondents' monthly income, the largest share includes the range of \$3,000 - \$5,000 with a percentage of 30.5%.

Table 3. Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample

Variable	Categories	(%)
Gender	Male	42.5%
	Female	57.5%
Age (years)	20-30	36%
	31-40	25%
	41-50	15%
	51-60	13%
	More than 60	11%
Education	Undergraduate	20%
	Graduate	50%
	Master	17%
	PhD	13%
Job	Government jobs	18%
	Freelance jobs	82%
Income	Under \$ 3,000	25.5%
	\$ 3,000 - \$ 5,000	30.5%
	\$ 5,000 - \$ 10,000	21.5%
	Over \$ 10,000	22.5%

5. Results

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to test the assumption that the data were normal. In fact, this test has been evaluated as a good fit for comparing a theoretical distribution with a distribution (Habibi, 2013). Kolmogorov et al. and Smirnov believe that it is a simple non-parametric method to determine the homogeneity of experimental information with selected statistical distributions, so Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is a method to determine the normality of the frequency distribution of the collected observations (Farbod et al., 1397). When checking the uniformity of the data, the null hypothesis based on that the data distribution is uniform and is tested at the error level of 0.05. In this case, there will be no reason to reject the null hypothesis. In other words, the distribution of data will be uniform. The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Check the normality of variables

Variable	Brand Equity	Offline Experiential Marketing	Online Marketing	Total
Z	0.09	0.10	0.13	0.08
Significance level (Sig)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Result	Non-normal	Non-normal	Non-normal	Non-normal

As reported in Table 4, the significance level is less than 0.05, so it can be said that the distribution of data related to variables is different from the normal distribution. Thus, due to the non-normality of the data, PLS 3 software has been used to test the hypotheses.

Convergent validity indicates a correlation between high factor loads, and the higher this correlation, the greater the assurance that the questionnaire has measured correctly. For convergent validity in this study, the extracted mean variance index (AVE) was used, the acceptable rate of which is 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Based on the results, because all the extracted mean variance values are greater than 0.5, they have good convergent validity. Table 5 shows the mean values of variance extracted for each variable.

Divergent validity is measured by the cross-factor loading method. In this method, the degree of correlation between the characteristics of a structure with that structure and the degree of correlation between the characteristics of a structure with other structures are compared. Fornell and Larcker (1981) method was used to evaluate the divergent validity. According to this method, the square root of AVE values is compared with the correlation of structures. If the AVE root for each structure is greater than the correlation of one structure with other structures, the divergent validity of the structures is confirmed (Hensler et al., 2009). To check the diagnostic validity, the outputs of PLS 3 software have been used. These values are shown in Table 5. The values on the principal diameter of the matrix (the root mean of the extracted variance) are greater than all the correlation values between the variables. The result is that all the studied variables have diagnostic validity.

Table 5. Divergent (diagnostic) validity

	Brand Equity	Offline Experiential Marketing	Online Marketing
Brand Equity	0.71		
Offline Experiential Marketing	0.69	0.70	
Online Experiential Marketing	0.63	0.6	0.71

To evaluate the reliability at the application level, the software has three indicators or criteria for evaluating the reliability of a reflective measurement model:

- Cronbach's alpha
- Reliability of each observable variable (reliability of references)
- Composite reliability or p Delvin - Goldstein (Mohsenin and Esfidani, 2014).

Cronbach's alpha is a traditional indicator of the reliability of observable variables and indicates the internal consistency of the questionnaire questions. Cronbach's alpha values for each variable are given in Table 5. As can be seen, all Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.7, which is in a good range of reliability. In addition, the total reliability of the questionnaire based on the output of SPSS 23 software, the value of 0.887 has been reported, which indicates the good reliability of the tool for measuring variables.

Factor loads for each latent variable are listed in the column for that variable in Table 6. If this value is above 0.3, there is no need to remove it from the model (Momeni and Qayyumi, 2011).

Due to the rigor of Cronbach's alpha index, another index called composite reliability (Delvin-Goldstein p) is used to examine the internal consistency of the measurement model. Developed by Wertz et al. in 1974, this index is superior to Cronbach's alpha. Because the Cronbach's alpha index assumes that the observable variables of each measurement model have the same weights, in fact, it equates to their relative importance, but in the combined reliability index this assumption does not exist. In fact in reliability combination the factor loads of the items are used when calculating, the same change in the method of calculating the composite reliability values more and better than Cronbach's alpha. The criterion of this index to examine the internal consistency of the measurement model is 0.7 and above (Mohsenin and Esfidani, 2014).

Table 6. Factor load values, convergent validity, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability

Item	Variable	Variable item	α	AVE	CR
Online Experiential Marketing	Q1	0.55	0.77	0.51	0.74
	Q2	0.60			
	Q3	0.72			
	Q4	0.30			
	Q5	0.32			
	Q6	0.56			
	Q7	0.59			
	Q8	0.38			
	Q9	0.41			
	Q10	0.71			
	Q11	0.64			
	Q12	0.55			
	Q13	0.52			
	Q14	0.42			
	Q15	0.33			
	Q16	0.36			
Offline Experiential Marketing	Q17	0.49	0.86	0.50	0.88
	Q18	0.48			
	Q19	0.65			
	Q20	0.65			
	Q21	0.64			
	Q22	0.57			
	Q23	0.65			
	Q24	0.71			
	Q25	0.60			
	Q26	0.59			
	Q27	0.71			
	Q28	0.73			

Brand Equity	Q29	0.65	0.86	0.51	0.89
	Q30	0.68			
	Q31	0.62			
	Q32	0.66			
	Q33	0.65			
	Q34	0.69			
	Q35	0.60			
	Q36	0.47			
	Q37	0.56			
	Q38	0.64			
	Q39	0.78			
	Q40	0.61			

One of the indicators of relationship confirmation in the structural model is the significance of path coefficients. The significance of path coefficients is a great complement to the direction of the model beta sign. If the value obtained is above the minimum statistic at the confidence level, that relationship or hypothesis is confirmed. At the significance level of 90%, 95%, and 99%, this value is compared with the minimum statistics of 1.64, 1.96, and 2.58, respectively (Mohsenin and Esfidani, 2014). As can be seen, Figure 2 shows the T-statistic values. The basis for rejecting or confirming the hypotheses will be based on the 95% confidence level.

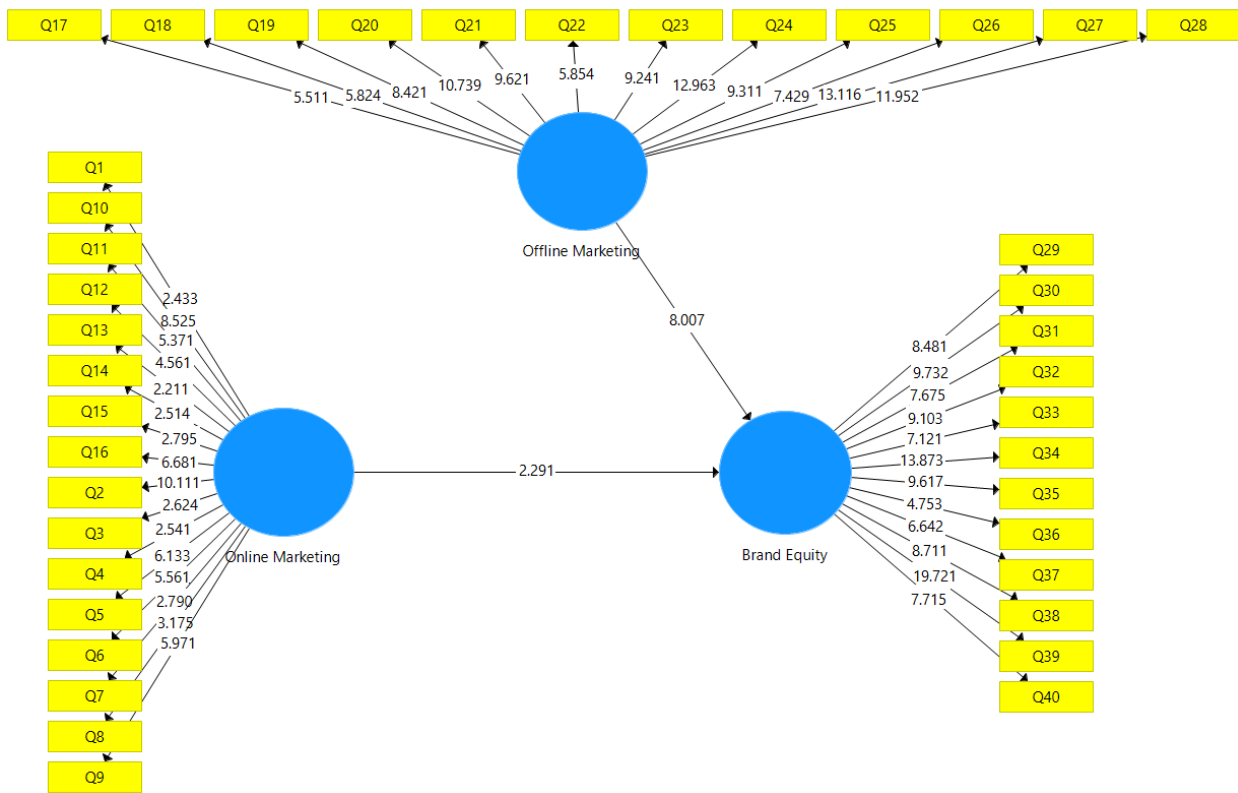


Figure 2. Significance of path coefficients (t-statistic)

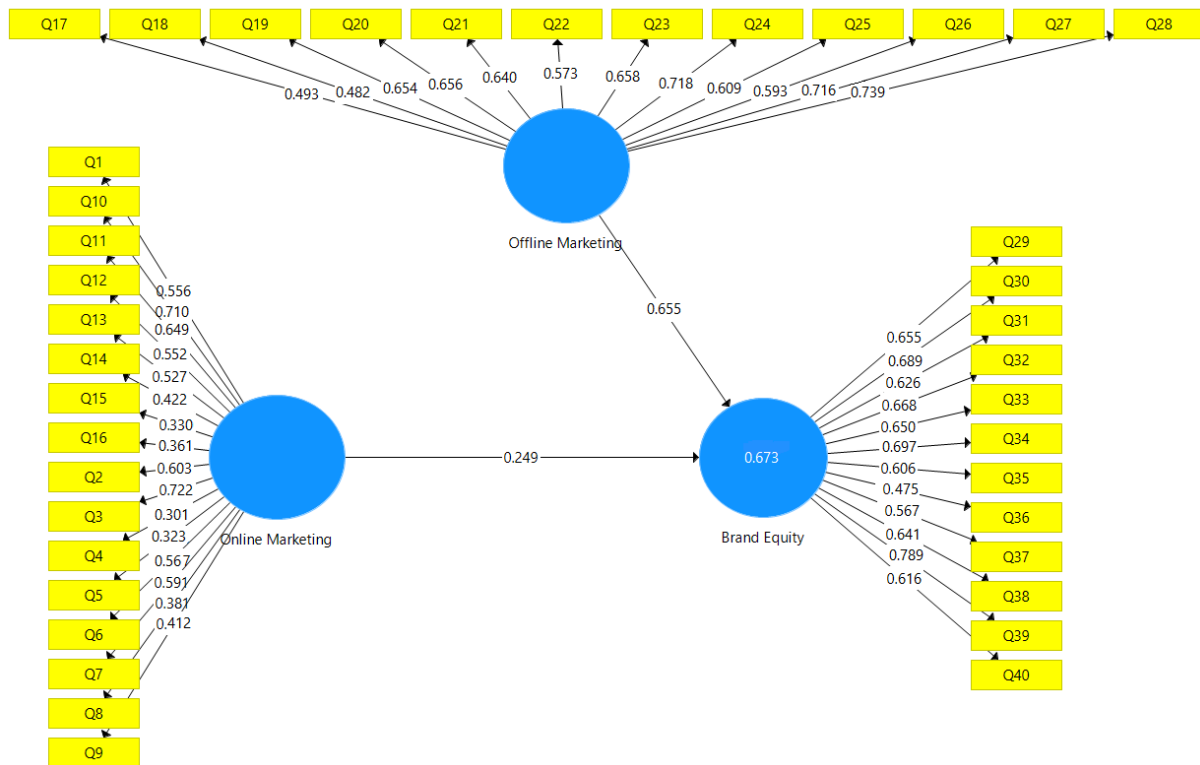


Figure 3. Structural path coefficients

As can be seen, Figure 2 shows the structural path coefficients. Path coefficients are the same as the standardized beta in linear regression. Path coefficients should be considered in terms of size, signal and significance. Positive path coefficients (positive beta) indicate a direct relationship between the endogenous and exogenous latent variables. In contrast, negative path coefficients (negative beta) indicate inverse relationships between latent endogenous and exogenous variables. This value in terms of size indicates the strength of the relationship that with the establishment of indirect relationships decreases the magnitude of a beta coefficient (Seyed Abbaszadeh et al., 2012). As can be seen, Figure 3 shows the standard estimation coefficients, which show the extent to which each variable affects the other.

Hypothesis 1: *Offline experiential marketing has a significant effect on brand equity.*

As can be seen in Figure 3, the impact factor of the offline experiential marketing variable on brand equity is 0.65, and because this value is positive, it indicates the direct effect of the offline experiential marketing variable on brand equity, and according to Figure 3, which shows significant coefficients. The value of T statistic is reported to be 8.00 and because this value is more than 1.96, it can be said that offline experiential marketing has had a significant effect on brand equity at the 95% confidence level. Therefore, it can be said that the first hypothesis of the research has been confirmed.

Hypothesis 2: *Online experiential marketing has a significant effect on brand equity.*

As can be seen in Figure 3, the coefficient of effect of online marketing variable on brand equity is 0.24 and because this value is positive, it indicates the direct effect of online marketing variable on brand equity and according to Figure 3, which shows significant coefficients the value of T statistic is 2.29 and because this value is more than 1.96, it can be said that online marketing has had a significant effect on brand equity at the 95% confidence level. Therefore, it can be said that the third hypothesis of the research has been confirmed.

Table 7. Hypothesis test results

Hypothesis	T-hypothesis	Path Coefficient	Result
Offline Experiential Marketing → Brand Equity	8.00	0.65	Significant
Online Experiential Marketing → Brand Equity	2.29	0.24	Significant

Another test to evaluate the reflective measurement model is its quality test. The quality of the measurement model is calculated by the cross-validity subscription index (CV Com). This index actually measures the ability of the path model to predict observable variables through the values of their corresponding hidden variables. This index measures the quality of the measurement model using the BF statement at each step for a reflective measurement model. If this indicator shows a positive number, the reflective measurement model has the required quality. To check the quality of the whole measurement model, take the average of this index and if it is positive, the whole measurement model has a suitable quality (Mohsenin and Esfidani, 2014). The subscription index (CV Com) values are given in Table 8. Because all of these values are positive, the quality of the structural model is evaluated as good.

Table 8. Common values

Variable	Communality Index -SSE / SSO1= 2Q
Brand Equity	0.29
Offline Experiential Marketing	0.28
Online Experiential Marketing	0.12

The basic criterion for evaluating the endogenous latent variables of the path model is the coefficient of determination. This index shows what percentage of changes in the endogenous variable is made by the exogenous variable. The values of 0.67, 0.33 and 0.19 for the endogenous latent variables in the structural path model are described as significant, moderate and weak, respectively, but if the endogenous latent variable is affected by a small number (one or two) if the variable is exogenous, the average values of the coefficient of determination are also acceptable (Mohsenin and Esfidani, 2014). The value of the coefficient of determination R2 for the endogenous variables of the research is reported in Table 9.

Table 9. Determination coefficients

Variable	Determination Coefficient	Assessment
Brand Equity	0.67	Significant

Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) is applied as an index for the complete model fit to verify that the model sufficiently explains the empirical data (Tenenhaus et al, 2005). The GOF values lie between 0 and 1, where values of 0.10 (small), 0.25 (medium), and 0.36 (large) indicate the global validation of the path model. A good model fit shows that a model is parsimonious and plausible (Henseler et al, 2016). The GOF is calculated by using the geometric mean value of the average communality (AVE values) and the average R2 value(s), and the GOF of the model is calculated by Equation (1) (Tenenhaus et al, 2005). The mean of coefficients of determination was 0.67 and the mean of common values was 0.23.

$$GOF = \sqrt{\text{Communality} \times R^2} \tag{1}$$

$$GOF = \sqrt{0.23 \times 0.67} = 0.39$$

It was calculated from the above formula that the GOF index for this study model was measured as 0.39. It shows that empirical data fits the model satisfactorily and has substantial predictive near to large in comparison with baseline values.

6. Conclusions

In this section, after explaining the results of the hypotheses in the statistical analysis of the research, the degree of convergence and divergence of each hypothesis with similar research is discussed.

The first hypothesis examined in this study is; Offline experiential marketing has a significant effect on brand equity.

In this hypothesis, because its t-statistic was equal to 8.00, it was confirmed because its coefficient is more than 1.96. Therefore, offline experiential marketing of hotel customers has a positive and significant effect on the hotel brand equity, and as a result, this hypothesis was confirmed after statistical analysis of research data. The result of this hypothesis is consistent with the research of Nasiri Kalki (2019), Mousavi and Kenareh Fard (2020), Shirkhodai et al. (2017). In external sources, the

research of Garcia et al. (2018), Siri Sim et al. (2012) and Tashkin Dirsian (2010) confirmed the result of this hypothesis. Based on the results of this study and the results of other studies, it can be said that this marketing, which includes the provision of key activities related to the senses, has led to the production of emotional, cognitive, and communication value among customers and provides a good condition for it has provided customers and this has led to loyalty to the hotel. This means that the use of stimuli with the senses of customers, instills a desirable and effective social image in customers, encourages people to use the desired services and ultimately increases the special value of the hotel brand.

The second hypothesis examined in this study is: Online experiential marketing has a significant effect on brand equity.

In this hypothesis, because its t-statistic was equal to 2.29, it was confirmed because its coefficient is more than 1.96. Therefore, online marketing of hotel customers has a positive and significant effect on the hotel brand equity, and as a result, this hypothesis was confirmed after statistical analysis of research data. The result of this hypothesis is in line with domestic research with cultural research et al. (2018), Shirkhodai et al. (2017), Mohammadian et al. (2012), Rostami et al. and is coordinated. In external sources, Garcia et al. (2018), et al. (2018), Brahim (2016), Eun (2015), Zheng et al. (2015), Ballack Rischen et al. (2014) confirmed the result of this hypothesis. Based on the results of this study and according to the results of other studies, it can be said that increasing advertising on social media leads to a positive attitude of customers towards the company's brand. Service evaluation, during online use, has direct and positive effects on brand equity. Therefore, improving brand equity can be achieved through investing to improve the online service experience. Confirmation of this hypothesis means that the information on the hotel website provides a good environment for customers, and this leads to loyalty to the hotel and its recognition among other competitors.

7. Suggestions

In the current situation (Covid 19) one of the ways to encourage customers to travel and use the hotel services is to offer a special offer discount. Therefore, it is suggested that hotels consider discounts for their rooms or provide hotel facilities and services as a gift and free of charge to those who book rooms in hotels.

It is recommended that hotels, in the outbreak of the Covid 19, allow travelers to cancel their reservation even one day before the trip and not pay the amount received as cancellation damages or accept a very small percentage.

It is recommended that hotel managers be flexible in the departure and arrival times of the hotel in quiet and crowded times, free use of sports facilities, free Wi-Fi, free tea and coffee making for customers or free flowers and fruits in the room, facilitate and pay attention to booking speed during busy days, allocating custom and custom-made rooms, and customized transfers for customers. In fact, the above will be useful in conveying the feeling and experience of customers and sharing it on social networks.

It is suggested that activities such as creating a digital marketing unit in hotels for active and continuous presence and integrated marketing activities in cyberspace and monitoring and daily analysis of customer opinions in these spaces (such as Telegram, Instagram, Facebook) as well as a suitable media network are useful. Social media in any country (WeChat in China or Emo in Cuba or Zalo in Vietnam, etc.), daily and ongoing customer satisfaction assessment and feedback through various methods such as online questionnaires on the website and analysis and

consideration service delivery, staff training in line with customer orientation, including in-service training on service quality, staff motivation, foreign language training for staff should be considered by hotel marketing managers.

It is recommended to inform their customers about the benefits and advantages of the service and inform them with appropriate advertisements, thereby stimulating the emotions of the customers.

It is suggested that the website provides complete information about the services that are to be provided to the customers and the facilities that are available to them.

It is recommended to provide highly specialized training platforms for hotel agents and increase the quality of services provided to customers.

It is suggested that in order to increase the positive impact on brand equity creating appropriate incentives to make the process or product and service very attractive and desirable, areuseful.

It is recommended that a well-designed and user-friendly website be prepared to attract the attention of potential selectors and that the information and instructions on the website be in different languages so that the choice is comfortable.

It is suggested that hotels create a suitable and secure space for (internet) customer communication and a favorable system response by operators in order to gain customer trust and re-desire, which provides the conditions for the presence of new customers.

It is suggested that hotels create a favorable physical space (waiting lobby) and a suitable internet space in order to answer the necessary questions and requests required by the customer with appropriate and correct information in compliance with existing standards, which will satisfy online and offline customers.

It is recommended that hotels pay attention to the regular coverage of staff and hotel service providers and the kindness of network operators when responding and coordinating with customers (online), which is an effective factor in satisfying the desired customer.

It is recommended that hotels eliminate intermediaries between the traveler and the hotel, assure the traveler of the booking confirmation and also eliminate human and user errors in the hotel, especially during the busy seasons, from the reservation software (without any restrictions) to manage any volume of booking requests in the shortest possible time.

Yazar Katkı Oranı Beyanı

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Çatışma Beyanı

Çalışmada yazarlar arasında çıkar çatışması yoktur.

Destek Beyanı

Bu çalışma için herhangi bir kurumdan destek alınmamıştır.

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