

Designing a Marketing Model for Winter Sports Tourism in Ardabil Province

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Abstract

Purpose: The sports industry is forced to use new marketing methods to stay ahead of other industries. Winter sports tourism marketing is currently one of the world's most profitable and competitive industries. In this regard, attention should be paid to the country's sports tourism opportunities and challenges, attracting capital and tourists.

Methods: In this research, we aim to present a practical model for the marketing of winter sports tourism in Ardabil province by extracting all the factors and indicators that are effective in marketing winter sports tourism. The research approach is a mixed type. For this purpose, firstly, the effective components and items of sports transformation were identified in the qualitative part using the Delphi technique reviewing valid texts, and the panel of experts. In the second step, the final research model was confirmed and fitted using the quantitative approach, exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis,. In the qualitative section, 17 university professors and active experts were included in studying sports tourism through targeted sampling in the expert panel section. In the quantitative part, 426 people from the bosses and managers of sports clubs and sports boards were included in the study by available sampling method. The instrument's content validity obtained in the qualitative section was evaluated by CVR and CVI indices, and the construct validity was assessed by exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Its reliability was evaluated by Cronbach's alpha coefficient in the quantitative section.

Results: Based on this research, eight mixed components—marketing, geography and infrastructure, economic, competitive, political and legal, cultural and social, environmental, and management and planning—affect winter sports tourism marketing and these factors are identified with 56 items in winter sports tourism marketing.

Conclusion: The research results showed that the mixed components of marketing and the factors of geography and infrastructure are the priorities of winter sports tourism marketing. In general, the findings of this research have a distinct feature compared to the findings of similar studies in the field of sports tourism, and that is the importance and attention to winter recreation, which is more promising in Ardabil province due to its capacities. Using the research model by the trustee organizations can increase the attraction of winter sports tourists. The development of sports tourism will increase the incomes of the residents of Ardabil province.

Keywords: tourism marketing, sports tourism, winter sports, Ardabil province

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Introduction

Tourism is considered one of the most essential activities in the world (Marianji and Abbasi, 2016). This industry has attracted the attention of many countries as an economic sector that drives the development of a destination. The rich income and other side benefits of the tourism industry that some countries have achieved in recent years have made a large number of destinations think about the development of this industry. Therefore, every day, we see the emergence of new destinations in the tourism market, and many are looking for a share of this market (Jafartash Amiri and Pouyanzadeh, 2014). Today, what is important is that tourism does not only mean vacations, relaxation, and fun, and a complete negation of the work life, but it is a positive form of free time that can be enjoyed in the form of natural attractions and the land on which you live (Ziaei and Bakhtiari, 2009). Several factors are influential in the tourism industry, one of the most important of which is the weather, which has always been one factor that attracts or repels tourists to different destinations. Humans choose habitats with the highest level of climate comfort, and tourism is one of the most important human activities in this field (Arbabi et al., 2018). In the meantime, the areas that have suitable mountain locations and snow slopes create ideal conditions for winter tourism and activities and sports. What boosts winter tourism is the right conditions and factors that are relatively related. Among other things, the height of snow and the time it remains on the ground influence this direction (Marianji and Abbasi, 2016). In recent decades, by providing cheap and plentiful services for winter tourists, winter tourism has moved out of the monopoly of the affluent strata. With increasing popularity, it has gained a special place in the mountainous regions of developed countries, so in these countries, snow is considered and called "white gold" (Serbulnet and Nurunnsia, 2007). Implementing of winter tourism projects, activities and sports requires awareness of climate change, especially in mountainous areas. Therefore, the necessity and importance of studying snow climate changes

are felt in these areas' micro and macro winter tourism planning. The most suitable snow depth for this purpose is 30 to 50 cm, lasting at least 100 days. Countries such as Austria, Switzerland, Canada, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand are considered leading winter tourism destinations, some heavily dependent on winter tourism income (Janbaz Ghobadi and Nowrozi, 2015). However, changes in climate in recent years and the shortening of the cold season have caused concerns (Solvía, 2007). Competitiveness in tourism destinations is always a determining factor in attracting tourists and visitors and maximizing their benefits (Navikas and Malakauskaite, 2009). The destination is in a competitive state that can attract and retain tourists, and these competitions are organized and determined by specific causes of tourism and a wide range of influencing factors on tourism service providers. Therefore, many of these competitive efforts are focused on advertising and destination development. Tourism competitiveness is the destination's ability to distribute tourism experiences. These experiences preserve a destination's resources and help maintain the relative position of the market compared to other materials (Berimani et al., 2017). Also, competitiveness can determine the economic sustainability of destination tourism by calculating the amount of employment lost or gained and income opportunities for the destination. In other words, tourism competition promotes culture, economy, and environmental resources in the destination (Ritchie and Crouch, 2005). Studies in the field of competition can be generally divided into three categories. The first category is the researchers, who consider all aspects of competition and provide models to understand the concept better. The next category is researchers who have studied the effect of one or more factors on competitors' destinations. The third category includes studies that used the competition model to evaluate destination competition (Jaafartash Amiri and Pouyanzadeh, 2014).

The proximity of Ardabil city to Mount Sablan,

the cold mountainous climate in most parts of the province (except for the north of the province), the presence of snow, and the length of the cold season and snowy days have placed this province among the favorable areas for the development of winter tourism. Still, it has always faced challenges in this field. Therefore, this research aims to provide a model for winter sports tourism marketing in Ardabil province to increase the competitiveness of this region as a winter tourism destination, to provide practical and useful local information for policy-making and planning, and to direct private and public sector funds to provide winter tourism planners and activists of the province in this area.

Materials and Methods

This study is of applied type. It is also among exploratory studies carried out in a descriptive-analytical-survey manner in two qualitative and quantitative (mixed) sections. To achieve basic concepts such as the effective components in the marketing of winter sports tourism in Ardabil province, library sources, consultation with organizational experts, executives and consulting organizations, databases, websites of international organizations such as the World Tourism Organization, the Council Global travel and tourism and... were used.

Considering that the type of study is designed in a mixed (qualitative and quantitative) manner, the target population of this research was determined in two separate sections as follows.

In the qualitative part, help was taken from the panel of experts to evaluate and determine the marketing model of winter sports tourism in Ardabil province. The target population of this part of the research included all experts, bosses, and managers in the field of sports tourism in Ardabil province.

In the quantitative part of the research, the target population was considered to include heads and sports managers, clubs, and sports boards in the field related to the research.

For sampling the target population in the qualitative part, a purposeful method was used, and the criteria for entering the samples were

executive experience and complete knowledge of people in the field of sports tourism, as well as having a university education. Also, in this part of the research, sampling from experts continued until we reached the point of theoretical saturation. Finally, 17 people were included in the study to participate in the expert panel in the qualitative section.

Considering the geographical extent of the target community in the entire area of Ardabil province and based on the opinion (Kline, 2015), at least 5 times the number of research variables (68 items) has been determined for the sample size. To prevent sample dropout, at least 25% dropout was considered, and finally, 426 questionnaires with all the items and complete specifications were included in the study using a convenience sampling method to perform the quantitative part.

The data collection tool includes information forms from library studies in the qualitative section and the collection of expert panel opinions on these forms, which ultimately leads to the construction of a suitable tool for measuring winter sports tourism marketing in Ardabil province. The instrument's content validity of was finalized, evaluated, and confirmed in this section.

In the quantitative part, demographic characteristics and designed and finalized tools were used in the qualitative part, and its construct validity and reliability were evaluated in this part.

The tool (questionnaire) designed in the qualitative section includes eight components (structure) with 68 variables (items), and scoring was determined using a 5-option Likert scale. Finally, the tool consists of the mixed components of marketing, geography, infrastructure, economic, competitive, political and legal, cultural and social, environmental, and related to management and planning. After evaluating the construct validity and determining appropriate reliability, the quantitative section finalized the questionnaire with 56 items and eight components.

In the present study, descriptive tables were

reported by frequency and percentage indicators for qualitative variables and mean and standard deviation for quantitative variables. Statistical tests and indicators were performed, including Kendall's coefficient of agreement for the reliability of expert panel opinions, Cronbach's alpha for the tool's **Results**

In the fourth stage of the Delphi questionnaire, the same 68 items in the third stage questionnaire were again provided to the experts for the survey. As in the third step, a 5-option Likert scale was used to measure the

reliability in the quantitative target population, exploratory factor analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis. Statistical analyses were carried out by SPSS and Amos software, and the significance level of statistical tests was considered to be 5%.

importance of items. After distributing and collecting the data of the fourth Delphi questionnaire, its results are reported in Table (4-9).

Table 1 Statistical analysis of practical components in the design of winter sports tourism marketing model in Ardabil province (fourth stage of Delphi)

Number	Marketing topics of winter sports tourism	Number of Answers	The average of Answers	T	The significance level of a domain	result
Mixed marketing component						
1	The price of the Alvares ski resort ticket or other winter entertainment	17	4.35	5.01	0.001	confirmed
2	Sports service quality	17	4.65	9.6	0.001	confirmed
3	Eliminating intermediaries to adjust travel and accommodation costs for tourists	17	4.35	4.47	0.001	confirmed
4	Comfort facilities for winter sports tourism	17	4.24	4.56	0.001	confirmed
5	Variety of tourism marketing services	17	4.47	6.41	0.001	confirmed
6	Holding exhibitions, seminars and specialized conferences to promote the attractions of winter sports	17	4.18	3.83	0.001	confirmed
7	Holding advertising campaigns for the development of winter sports events and attractions	17	4.47	7.78	0.001	confirmed
8	The standard of hotels close to the place of winter sports	17	4.24	4.03	0.001	confirmed
9	Flexibility in the payment period of winter sports tourism services	17	4.24	4.03	0.001	confirmed
10	Discounts and special sales conditions in products and services	17	4.53	5.92	0.001	confirmed
11	The formation of belief in the existence of employment and income	17	4.06	2.38	0.015	confirmed

	generation of winter sports tourism					
12	Giving financial rewards and valuable prizes for competitions and tournaments	17	4.41	5.28	0.001	confirmed
13	The credibility and reputation of the Alvares ski resort	17	4.35	4.47	0.001	confirmed
14	Development of various marketing proposals and programs	17	4.59	7.26	0.001	confirmed
15	Manpower fluent in international languages	17	4.41	5.28	0.001	confirmed
16	Agencies offering winter sports trips	17	4.47	5.58	0.001	confirmed
17	Facilitating companies	17	4.71	8.46	0.001	confirmed
Component of geography and infrastructure						
18	Availability of air and ground transportation	17	4.29	3.13	0.003	confirmed
19	The existence of a calm environment away from the big cities	17	4.47	6.41	0.001	confirmed
20	suitable weather for winter sports	17	4.47	6.41	0.001	confirmed
21	There are different areas in the province that are suitable for creating winter sports tourism sites	17	4.53	6.8	0.001	confirmed
22	The existence of Sablan mountain range and its peak for winter climbing	17	4.71	8.46	0.001	confirmed
23	The variety of natural environments and their virginity and diverse geographical landscapes	17	4.24	3.36	0.002	confirmed
24	Recreational centers with capabilities related to international tourists	17	4.35	4.08	0.001	confirmed
25	The winter nature of Ardabil province	17	4.29	3.86	0.001	confirmed
26	Wonders of nature and scenery of the province in winter	17	4.41	4.73	0.001	confirmed
27	Natural attractions such as spas and...	17	4.65	7.8	0.001	confirmed
28	Historical attractions of the cities of the province	17	4.35	5.01	0.001	confirmed
29	Modern attractions of the cities of the province	17	4.35	5.8	0.001	confirmed

Continuation of Table 1 Statistical analysis of effective components in the design of winter sports tourism marketing model in Ardabil province (fourth stage of Delphi).

Number	Marketing topics of winter sports tourism	Number of Answers	The average of	T	The significance level of a	result
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			Answers		domain	
30	Creating new jobs (temporary, part-time and seasonal jobs) and reducing the unemployment rate	17	4.12	3.26	0.002	confirmed
31	Increasing household income by selling local products to tourists	17	4.18	3.45	0.002	confirmed
32	Increasing business income, accommodation centers, restaurants and tourist attraction centers	17	4.18	3.45	0.002	confirmed
33	The total price of accommodation services	17	4.12	2.97	0.005	confirmed
34	Increasing government revenues through tax benefits	17	4.18	2.93	0.005	confirmed
Competitive component						
35	Systematic and regular analysis of competitors' strategies	17	4.24	4.56	0.001	confirmed
36	Analysis of competitors' marketing methods	17	4.35	5.01	0.001	confirmed
37	Satisfactory financial performance compared to competitors	17	4.18	2.75	0.007	confirmed
38	Keeping tourists safe	17	4.29	3.13	0.003	confirmed
39	Pursuing the improvement of the competitive position among other competitors	17	4.06	2.12	0.025	confirmed
40	Privacy status of tourists	17	4.35	4.47	0.001	confirmed
41	Offering goods and services in a new way	17	4.06	2.12	0.025	confirmed
42	Using new technologies in marketing programs	17	4.35	4.47	0.001	confirmed
43	Pursuing the lowest costs in various marketing programs	17	4.24	4.03	0.001	confirmed
Political and legal component						
44	Improving the political situation	17	4.53	5.31	0.001	confirmed
45	Ease of access for tourists from a legal and political point of view	17	4.29	4.24	0.001	confirmed
46	Security of Ardabil province	17	4.47	3.75	0.001	confirmed
47	The government responsible for coordinating policies and planning for tourism	17	4.24	2.94	0.005	confirmed
48	The private sector responsible for commercial development, construction and administration of tourist accommodations	17	4.29	3.86	0.001	confirmed
49	laws in the field of tourism	17	4.53	6.8	0.001	confirmed
50	laws of winter sports service costs	17	4.18	3.45	0.002	confirmed
Cultural and social component						
51	Increasing cultural exchange and interactions between people and tourists	17	4.35	4.47	0.001	confirmed
52	Discomfort of local residents from living in the sports tourism area	17	4.06	2.79	0.007	confirmed
53	Revival of forgotten traditions and ceremonies by local residents	17	4.12	2.75	0.007	confirmed

54	Encouraging local residents to social-cultural activities	17	4.29	4.77	0.001	confirmed
55	Fighting ethnic and racial discrimination and helping to accept socio-cultural differences	17	4.41	3.53	0.001	confirmed
56	Increasing the reputation of the region through the arrival of winter sports tourists	17	4.12	2.75	0.007	confirmed

Continuation of Table 1 Statistical analysis of effective components in the design of winter sports tourism marketing model in Ardabil province (fourth stage of Delphi)

Number	Marketing topics of winter sports tourism	Number of Answers	The average of Answers	T	The significance level of a domain	result
57	Changing the behavior of the people of the region in order to preserve the environment as best as possible	17	4.35	5.01	0.001	confirmed
58	Destruction and damage to the natural landscapes of the region through littering	17	4.18	3.16	0.003	confirmed
59	Destruction of the environment through the construction of facilities for sports tourists	17	4.35	4.08	0.001	confirmed
60	Increase in traffic volume, noise and air pollution in the area	17	4.06	3.08	0.004	confirmed
61	Destruction of the environment around ski slopes and other winter recreation by machines	17	4.12	3.26	0.002	confirmed
62	Maintaining the standard of roads and public facilities thanks to sports tourism	17	4.29	4.77	0.001	confirmed
63	Increasing parks and recreational and entertainment facilities in the region with the motivation of the growth of sports tourism	17	4.12	2.57	0.01	confirmed
Management and planning component						
64	The presence of athletes and popular people and stars of	17	4.41	6.08	0.001	confirmed

	the province determines the level of acceptance of the event					
65	Professionalism of sports in the province	17	4.65	7.8	0.001	confirmed
66	Employing expert, educated and capable human resources	17	4.47	7.78	0.001	confirmed
67	Holding competitions at the right time and with the right quality	17	4.24	4.56	0.001	confirmed
68	Allocation of bank facilities to institutions for the development of sports tourism	17	4.41	5.28	0.001	confirmed

The findings in the above table show that the 68 items in the questionnaire of the fourth stage of the Delphi method, which was given to the experts, and again all 68 items were approved,

and the average of all the items is more than the desired limit (3.5). And it is significant (the t-statistic is more than 1.96, and the significance level is less than 0.05).

Table 2 Kendall's coefficient of agreement (fourth stage Delphi)

Kendall's correlation coefficient	2 chi index	degrees of freedom	sig
0.733	163	67	0.001

The findings in Table 2 show that the correlation coefficient of the fourth stage of Delphi is 0.733, and its significance level is 0.001, which indicates a stronger correlation between the experts' opinions in the fourth stage.

average in the last two stages, the experts' opinions have been stabilized. In addition, the average above 3.5 for all components shows that they are effective in evaluating the winter sports tourism marketing model, and there is no need to remove any components. In Table No. 1, Kendall's correlation coefficient is compared in the last three stages of Delphi.

Since all the items had a slight difference in the

Table 3 Comparison of Kendall's agreement coefficient in three Delphi stages

The number of experts	Kendall coefficient of the second stage	Kendall coefficient of the third stage	Kendall coefficient of the fourth stage
17	0.469 (average correlation)	0.721 (strong correlation)	0.733 (strong correlation)

The findings show that the correlation coefficients of the third stage have increased compared to the second stage, and the correlation coefficient of the fourth stage is slightly higher than the third stage. Considering

that the coefficient of agreement in the third and fourth stages is 0.721 and 0.733, respectively, it can be said that the experts have reached a high consensus regarding the variables of the third and fourth stages. In the

third and fourth rounds, no new items were added to the questionnaire, and no corrections were made. Therefore, a consensus was reached, and the condition for stopping the Delphi process was provided. A total of 68 items were approved, which were used to design the final questionnaire of the quantitative part of the research.

The number of factors and the total variances extracted

In the table below, only eight factors can explain the total variance based on Varimax rotation. These eight factors explain approximately 77.74% of the variability (variance) of the variables.

Table 4 - Varimax rotation

factors	Rotation Sum of Squared Loadings (Varimax)		
	Special quantities	variance	The cumulative percentage
1	16.55	24.34	24.34
2	4.31	9.86	34.20
3	3.79	9.10	43.30
4	3.05	8.02	51.32
5	2.75	7.57	58.89
6	2.07	6.57	65.46
7	1.47	6.29	71.75
8	1.05	5.99	77.74

The results of Table 4 show that each factor was able to explain some percent of the variance of the set of variables. In the output of the table, eight factors have been extracted with an eigenvalue higher than 1. Therefore, from the total of 68 items, they can be reduced to eight conceptual factors. The eigenvalue of the first factor is 16.55, and the eigenvalue of the eighth factor is 1.05.

As can be seen, the first factor accounts for the most significant amount of the total variance, with a variance of 24%.

The graph below shows the contribution of each factor in the total variance. In the diagram below, the number of points with an eigenvalue higher than one indicates the number of factors.

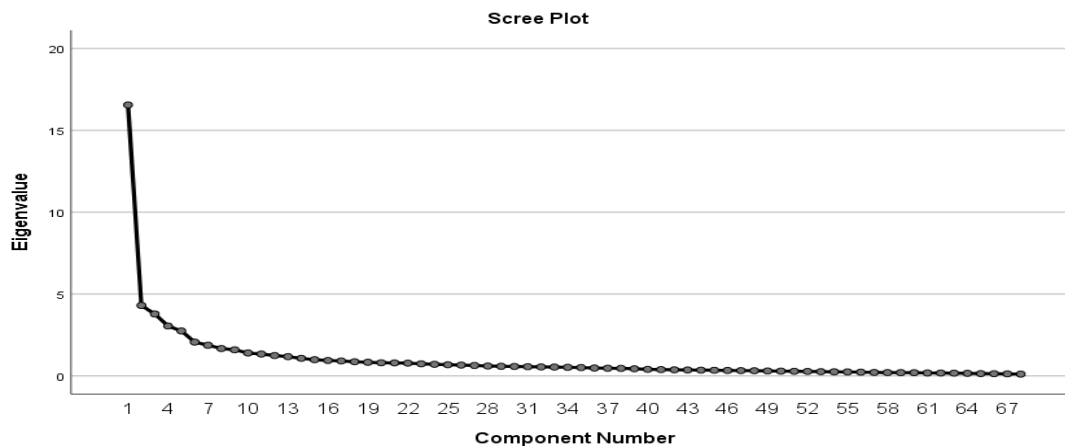


Diagram 1 The contribution of each factor in the total variance (sand diagram)

The table below shows the matrix based on Varimax rotation, which includes the factor loadings of each of the remaining variables after rotation. The variables that have a high factor loading in each factor are shown. The factor load of the variables, which was less than 0.5, was removed in the table below so as not to reduce the validity of the construct. Also, each question is considered in a factor with a higher factor load.

Extracted components

After conducting exploratory factor analysis, the research findings showed that 68 items of this research can be summed up on eight general components, or in other words, they are loaded on these eight components, and meaningful paths have been established between them according to the researcher's expectation. In the content of the questions, the first component includes items about the marketing mix, that is why it is named "marketing mix." The second component contains items related to geography and infrastructure, which is why it is called "geography and infrastructure." The third component includes items related to economic issues, which is why it is named "Economical." The fourth component includes items related to competitive issues; that is why it is called "competitive." The fifth component contains

items related to politics and laws, which is why it is named "political and legal." The sixth component includes items related to culture and society, which is why it is named "cultural and social." The seventh component includes items related to insurance, which is why it is called "insurance," and the eighth component contains items related to management and planning, which is why it is called "management and planning." Other items not included in any of the components or had a weak factor load (factor load less than 0.5) are removed.

Therefore, 56 items in the form of eight components with a total explained variance of 77.74% remain in the research questionnaire. Finally, the score for each dimension of the questionnaire will be as follows:

Construct validity (convergent validity)

To determine the convergent validity of the questionnaire in the quantitative stage, two indices and average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability indices (CR) are used. If the AVE index is greater than 0.5 and the CR index is greater than 0.7, and the CR index is greater than AVE, then the convergence validity can be confirmed (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Kalantari, 2013).

Tabale 5 - AVE Index

variable	AVE	CR
marketing mix	0.580	0.947
geography and infrastructure	0.597	0.937
economics	0.585	0.875
competitive	0.631	0.911
Legal and political	0.605	0.900
Social and cultural	0.606	0.902
environmental	0.585	0.875
Planning and management	0.625	0.893

The results of Table 5 show that the value of the AVE index for all structures is more than 0.5, the composite reliability index of CR is also more than 0.7, and, in all components, the amount of CR is more than the amount of AVE. Is. Therefore, the convergence validity is confirmed.

Evaluation of measurement models by confirmatory factor analysis method

According to the research, separate items were used in the questionnaire to measure "mixed marketing, geography, and infrastructure, economic, competitive, political and legal, cultural and social, environmental and management, and planning." Several indicators

were also reported to determine the accuracy of the measurement models.

In the diagram below, the confirmatory factor analysis model of the research in the standardized factor loading mode is drawn. If the factor loadings in the measurement model are greater than 0.5, the items explain the conceptual variable well.

Tabel 4-6 The final model of winter sports tourism marketing (standardized values)

As can be seen, the factor loading of all the items is more than 0.7; in other words, more the underlying variable explains more than 70 % of the changes in each item.

Table 6 - standardized values

Fit index	normality	Result
X2/df	5 and less	1.47
RMR	Close to 0	0.064
GFI	0/9 and higher	0.937
AGFI	0/9 and higher	0.931
NFI	0/9 and higher	0.901
RFI	0/9 and higher	0.937
IFI	09 and higher	0.919
TLI	0/9 and higher	0.952
CFI	0/9 and higher	0.937
PRATIO	0/5 and higher	0.741
PNFI	0/5 and higher	0.743
PCFI	0/5 and higher	0.712
RMSEA	Less than 0/08	0.077

Investigating the effect of determined components on Winter Sports Tourism Marketing

To evaluate the effect of each of the eight components obtained in the model (Chart 4-6 and Table 4-23), the standardized coefficients of each were tested and analyzed.

The results showed that all the mixed variables of marketing (B=0.81 and P=0.001), geography

and infrastructure (B=0.79 and P=0.001), economic (B=0.68 and P=0.001) P), competitive factors (B=0.76 and P=0.001), political and legal factors (B=0.56 and P=0.001), cultural and social factors (B=0.51 and P=0.001), environmental factors (B = 0.50 and P = 0.001) and management and planning (B = 0.65 and P = 0.001) are effective on the marketing of winter sports tourism in Ardabil province.

Table 7 - Standard coefficient

relation			Standard coefficient	CR	P
marketing mix	→	Winter sports tourism marketing	0.81	9/34	0/001
geography and infrastructure	→	Winter sports tourism marketing	0.79	9/15	0/001
economics	→	Winter sports tourism marketing	0.68	8/03	0/001
competitive	→	Winter sports tourism marketing	0.76	8/83	0/001
Legal and political	→	Winter sports tourism marketing	0.56	6/82	0/001
Social and cultural	→	Winter sports tourism marketing	0.51	6/38	0/001
environmental	→	Winter sports tourism marketing	0.50	6/21	0/001
Planning and management	→	Winter sports tourism marketing	0.65	7/71	0/001

Discussion

The location of Ardabil province is such that there is a place for developing all kinds of sports tourism, including winter sports tourism. Nevertheless, winter sports have not been able to gain their place and attract tourists, considering that there is a large ski resort in Ardabil city. However, it seems that the officials and managers' inattention to the needs and wishes of tourists, not promoting and developing the ski resort, the lack of sufficient facilities needed by people, and the unfavorable quality of the ski resort have caused less participation and dissatisfaction of tourists in the ski resort. In general, it can be said that one of the most critical success factors of a tourist destination is to provide quality services and products and to satisfy them to participate in

winter activities such as skiing. Since people and tourists less use this type of sports activity, therefore, the role of introducing the desired place and advertising and marketing to attract tourists, primarily through the city of Sarein, which is a tourist city, is more visible. Therefore, the marketing management of the destination has not made much effort to meet the needs of Alvarez tourists. One of the major weaknesses in this field is not paying attention to the expectations and demands of tourists and not trying to increase the satisfaction of tourists. Also, determining the characteristics of the marketing mix that satisfy tourists can help tourism planners improve services to attract customers.

After performing the necessary statistical methods to confirm of comprehensive model of

winter sports tourism marketing in Ardabil province, the following model was obtained, shown in Figure (1-5) with all its components and sub-items.

Diagram 4-6- The final model of winter sports tourism marketing (standardized values)

As can be seen, the factor loading of all the items is more than 0.7; in other words, the underlying variable explains more than 70% of the changes in each item.

Investigating the effect of determined components on Winter Sports Tourism Marketing

To evaluate the effect of each of the eight components obtained in the model (Chart 6-4 and Table 23-4), the standardized coefficients of each were tested and analyzed.

The results showed that all the mixed variables of marketing ($B=0.81$ and $P=0.001$), geography and infrastructure ($B=0.79$ and $P=0.001$), economic ($B=0.68$ and $P=0.001$), competitive factors ($B=0.76$ and $P=0.001$), political and legal factors ($B=0.56$ and $P=0.001$), cultural and social factors ($B=0.51$ and $P=0.001$), environmental factors ($B = 0.50$ and $P = 0.001$), and management and planning ($B = 0.65$ and $P = 0.001$) are effective on the marketing of winter sports tourism in Ardabil province.

Conclusion

The location of Ardabil province is such that there is a place for developing all kinds of sports tourism, including winter sports tourism. Nevertheless, winter sports have not been able to gain their place and attract tourists, considering that there is a large ski resort in Ardabil city. However, it seems that the officials and managers' inattention to the needs and wishes of tourists, not promoting and developing the ski resort, the lack of sufficient facilities needed by people, and the unfavorable

quality of the ski resort have caused less participation and dissatisfaction of tourists in the ski resort. In general, it can be said that one of the most important success factors of a tourist destination is to provide quality services and products and to satisfy them to participate in winter activities such as skiing. Since this type of sports activity is less used by people and tourists, therefore, the role of introducing the desired place and advertising and marketing in order to attract tourists, especially through the city of Sareen, which is a tourist city, is more visible. Therefore, the marketing management of the destination has not made much effort to meet the needs of Alvares tourists. It seems that one of the major weaknesses in this field is not paying attention to the expectations and demands of tourists and also not trying to increase the satisfaction of tourists. Also, determining the characteristics of the marketing mix that make tourists satisfied can help tourism planners in improving services to attract customers.

After performing the necessary statistical methods to confirm the comprehensive model of winter sports tourism marketing in Ardabil province, the following model was obtained, which is shown in Figure (1-5) with all its components and sub-items.

Figure 5-1- The comprehensive marketing model of winter sports tourism in Ardabil province

It is suggested to attract more potential tourists to this region by recognizing and analyzing the management factors in the way of organizing competitions and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources and tourism management during the organization of these competitions.

It is suggested to increase the possibility of attracting tourists to this area by examining and evaluating the physical facilities and health factors and possible access levels for tourists to different parts of urban areas and stadiums

where winter competitions are held.

It is suggested that the motivational factors of tourism at the level of sports and youth organizations and cultural heritage and tourism are investigated and studied, and by recognizing these factors and implementing them at the level of this organization, to an optimal level of attracting tourists through sports and youth organizations and Cultural heritage and tourism.

Considering the emphasis of some studies on the positive and negative effects of sports tourism, especially winter sports in the host communities, it is suggested to conduct a study on the negative effects of winter sports tourism in the host communities and ways to reduce and deal with these effects.

It is hoped that the hosts of sports events, especially winter sports, organizers, municipalities, governorates, and all organizations and bodies that are somehow related to the organization of such events, will use the results and findings of the current research at the country level to open their eyes. Not only the economic aspects, but also consider all aspects of sustainable development and be able to meet people's basic needs in the field of housing, transportation, leisure, etc., in such a way that the city is habitable. Life should be economically viable and socially equitable, and the environment should not be harmed.

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