

A Contemporary Innovation Study on Cultural Destination and Tourist Satisfaction in Iran

Miremadi Alireza^{1*}, Mohammadian Marjan² and Mohammad Rashidi Sheida³

^{1*}Graduate school of Management Department, Sharif University of Technology-International Campus, IRAN

²University of Shiraz-International Campus, IRAN

³Sharif University of Technology, International Campus, IRAN

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Abstract

The fastest growing section of the tourism industry is the cultural heritage tourism since an enhanced specialization of tourists is intended. The local people's adventure, culture, history, archaeology, and how to communicate with them are the main purposes of this trend. Cultural heritage destinations which are the tourists' attractions have been considered in this study. The relationship between cultural heritage destinations contributes and tourist satisfactions are the main goals of this research to investigate on the chosen tourists and travel demographic characteristics. This study has been conducted in Shiraz City. Onsite survey method has been used to collect the data. To achieve the aim of the study 300 questionnaires were distributed among tourists. It should be noted that these tourists visited Shiraz between March and August in 2012. 49 questionnaires were not successfully completed by visitors therefore 251 questionnaires were used for analyzing. In tourism industry understanding tourists' needs at cultural heritage attraction for attracting more tourists is crucially important because by reaching this goal marketers will understand their customers better. By recognizing the attribution which satisfied the cultural heritage destinations, expanding appropriate strategies for attracting tourist's attraction is much more possible. Developing adequate strategies to catch the customers' attention and serve them efficiently will not be possible unless the attributions that pleased the cultural heritage destinations are revealed.

Keywords: Cultural, tourism, expectancy, satisfaction, attraction, Shiraz, Iran.

Introduction

Over the year's tourism has evolved into a global business contributing around nine and eight percent respectively to the world GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and employment. With the number of international tourist arrivals expected to rise from one billion in 2012 to 1.8 billion in 2030, countries worldwide are increasingly focusing on tourism as a developmental strategy¹. Global communication enhancement and increasing the number of domestic and international tourists lead the cultural heritage tourism, a niche market, to grow briskly. The heritage location refers to landscapes, natural history, buildings, artifacts, cultural traditions which are utilized for ages, but tourism products can be mentioned as well, as Peleggi stated². In terms of different kinds of heritages like built, natural, and cultural heritage, the heritage sites should be marked off, as Peleggi mentioned². Hall and Zeppel stated that cultural tourism is related to visual attractions, performing arts, and festival while visiting historical sites, buildings and monuments are part of heritage tourism³. Because the ancient and historical environments are attractive for heritage tourists they defined heritage tourism as an exploratory tourism. Three important points were declared by Patterson for clarifying the relationship between tourism and heritage: i. Heritage tourism enables tourists to gain some experiences of different time or place. ii. Heritage tourism enables tourists to teach their children the

history of the site. iii. Heritage tourism contributes to the joy of a cerebral experience⁴. According to Sofield heritage tourism is part of eager tourists' experience of visiting cultural exhibition and visual arts⁵.

Contributions of Study: Different kinds of advantages may be supplied by the enhancement in the cultural heritage tourism market to cultural sites. The innovative marketing techniques can help the industries in building a niche for them in the market and stay ahead of time⁶. For perceiving market niches completely tourism market should be classified in three parts: i. Tourism marketers know their customers' need better just by comprehending what exactly cultural/heritage tourists' goals are-ii. It is worth to comprehend which attributes make the customers more satisfied⁷. So they will be more interested to visit cultural heritage destinations. Tourist planners attempt to create strategies to attract visitors more. iii. Understanding what makes the tourists pleased and what lessens their cost and expenditure, and what keeps the cultural heritage destination sustainable. In this study, we have worked on tourist satisfactory feeling towards the tourism products and services.

Definition of Cultural Heritage: Silberberg believes that the only purpose which attract "cultural tourists" are completely or partially historical, the fine arts and people's lifestyle in specific areas or regions⁸. So, cultural tourism is related to history or

past events of social groups and their scientific and artistic life style which draw tourists' attention. The word "heritage" has a wide definition. The meaning of this word is connected to something that is passing from one generation to other one. As its definition shows it has some aspects which are associated to the past. Therefore we can come to the conclusion that heritage is part of cultural movement^{9,10}.

Research Hypotheses: The research hypotheses can be written as following for the purposes of data collection and analysis.

There is a significant relationship between the cultural destination indexes and tourist's satisfaction. There are significant differences in the demographic items (gender, age, educational level and tourists' income) of tourists who visited Shiraz between in specific date. There is a significant difference in tourist's travel behavior such past experience, how much time it takes for them to select a place to travel, how long they stay in travel, if they travel alone or in a group, and how far they travel. There are significant differences between tourists demographic and overall satisfaction. There are significant differences between tourists' past experience, travel Time, duration of stay, group membership, and the distance of travels and his / her total satisfaction. There is a relationship between tourists' demographic characteristics and their travel behavior (past experience, time of travelling and the kind of place the tourists select to visit) and their total satisfaction.

Literature Review: This research project aims to investigate cultural/heritage destination characteristics that content tourists as they visit these tourist attraction sites. The current part attempts at placing study in theoretical framework by reviewing the literature behind the topic of cultural / heritage tourism. Anderson analyzed cultural tourism in Denmark¹¹. Based Anderson's idea ten important items were significant for increasing numbers of cultural tourists: Historical buildings, Museums, Galleris, Theater, Festivals, Shopping, Food, Palaces, well-known people castels, Sports and Old towns. Four out of nine which have been classified as significant characteristics of cultural tourism by Anderson were castels, gardens, museums and historical buildings. The marketing and expansion of European cultural tourism has been studied and analyzed by Richard¹². The third study which is related to international and domestic tourism has been done by Peleggi². He analyzed the state tourism agency's environment of heritage and the ideological implications of heritage visiting that is related to the official historical narrative. It is important to note that there were some specific characteristics in this research which were connected to four historical places: museums, traditional villages, monuments, and temples. In Philipp's study, ethnic disparities in the perceived attractiveness of cultural heritage tourism have been sought to survey a Southern metropolitan area and identify various attributes¹³. According to the findings white tourists were fonder of cultural heritage sites than black tourists. Several kinds of studies have been conducted about the cultural/heritage destination attributes. For instance, the cultural tourism of China by picking history,

culture, traditional festivals, historical events, beautiful scenic heritage, historical sites, architecture, folk arts (music, dancing, and craft work) and folk culture villages as the characteristics of significance have been studied by Lee¹⁴. To identify the significance of the destination attributes based on the whole contentment levels of tourists, Kozak and Rimington revealed the findings of the study¹⁵.

Methodology

This study is based on 251 (N=251) questionnaires which are gathered from tourists who visited Shiraz between March and Augusts in 2012. For having meticulous analysis 300 questionnaires were given to visitors and 251 were filled out completely. Shiraz has been chosen as the research area for two reasons: first it is one of the most historical cities in Iran which is widely known as popular vacation destinations. Second it has been called Empire of the Persia which shows that is an ancient city in Iran. This study focuses on finding the relationship between the destination attributes and tourist's satisfaction for finding the differences and analyzing those varieties, and examining distinctions attributes and tourists' overall fulfillment. In addition observing tourists demographic and specific characteristic which are part of tourists' travel behavior is crucial for this research analysis. For reaching the goals of current research the model which is shown in Figure 1 was designed based on the information obtained in literature review. A two week period took to conduct the survey at five different frequently visited places in the city. According to Miremadi the number of distributed questionnaire will have to be larger than minimum required and the response rate of 30 % is considered very good , in this study 300 questionnaire were distributed and approximately 84% response rate provided¹⁶. Internal consistency or reliability of instrument was conducted by finding the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, therefore the higher score indicated more reliable and the cutoff is 0.7 and our study achieved 0.78¹⁷.

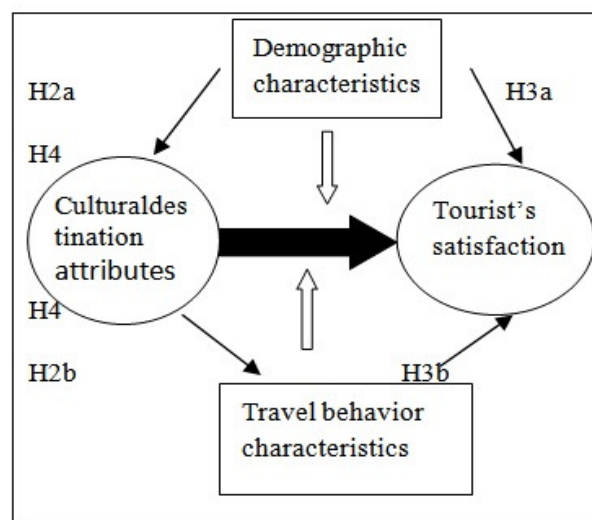


Figure-1
Research Model

Results and Discussion

Data Analysis and Interpretation: Factor Analysis: Factor analysis is an essential technique in data complexity by reducing the number of variable being studied. It is a common experience that factor analysis is a good way of resolving this confusion and identifying latent or underlying factor from an array of seemingly important variable. The result found a solution containing 23 attributes gave a high KMO(0.882) and barlett test of sphericity value of 0.00. There are two stages in factor analysis .stage 1 can be called the factor extraction process. The most popular method for this is called principle component analysis .there is also a rule-of-thumb based on the computation of an eigenvalue to determine how many factors to extract. The concept of eigenvalue translates approximately to the "Variance explained" concept of regression analysis. The higher the eigenvalue of a factor, the higher is the amount of variance explained by the factor; therefore the four factors explained the 57.65 % of the total variance before applying the rotation. Stage 2 is called rotation of principle component. After the number of extracted factor is decided, the next step is to interpret and name the factors. This is done by process of identifying which factor are associated with which of the original variables and this study based on varimax rotation technique. General tour attraction, heritage attraction, maintenance factor and cultural attraction were discovered after the rotation technique applied in Shiraz city (table-1). Reliability is the property by which consistent result are achieved when we repeat the measurement of something and the minimum cut off is 0.7 for acceptance level of the test .the result shown that the reliability of general tour (0.87), heritage attraction (0.702), maintenance factor(0.72) and cultural attraction (0.8) are placed above the cut off rate.

.ANOVA stands for analysis of variance, the generic name given to a set of techniques for studying the cause-and-effect of one or more factors on a single dependent variable. when more than one dependent variable is studied, and the technique called MANOVA. Four hypotheses were stated according to the aim of the study. We mentioned the four hypotheses again and the reports about the results of statistical analysis after testing the hypotheses were stated. In this study we used correlation analysis and multiple regression analyses to test Hypothesis 1. By performing Multi variant Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), hypotheses 2a and 2b were examined. The data would seem to suggest that the hypothesis 3a and 3b were analyzed by ANOVA techniques and MANCOVA. In connection with factor analysis on 25 attributes of cultural heritage, we discovered the four main factors, furthermore the correlation among the factors were studied. It is also worth mentioning that the difference between demographic and travel behavior proved the substantial mean on household income and length of stay. The study also revealed that there was ample difference between gender tourist in the overall satisfaction with cultural heritage by implementing two-tailed independent T-test .the decision time to travel is the only attribute that control the cultural heritage

relationship with satisfaction, furthermore the past experience variable is the only variable that impact on relationship between satisfaction and cultural. One also should not overlook the fact that gender has nor or minimal effect on this relationship. (table-2)

Conclusion

According to the findings, many suggestions can be stated to enhance tourists' contentment in Shiraz. Two important factors that have an effect on total tourist fulfillment were Heritage Attraction and Cultural Attraction. General Tour Attraction and Maintenance factors have less effect. It is worth to know that there is a significant relationship in General Tour Attractions, Heritage Attractions, Maintenance factors and Cultural Attraction and Tourists overall satisfaction. Tourism can get the advantage of this finding to prepare strategies to keep or increase their competitiveness. Actually they should pay more attention to keep or improve factors that help the overall satisfaction of tourists. Marketing strategies are developed not blindly; it is backed by a market research which helps in identifying new and unique opportunities. New and feasible innovative ideas should be put forth to gain competitive advantage¹⁸.

By using the above mentioned factors about tourists' satisfaction, businessmen can be able to extend their trade and more successful. New ideas and opinions make the business more successful. By generating new opportunities, marketing strategies will be developed and more competitive advantages will be achieved. If the business environment knows its customers better, it can offer and make more effective and useful products and services for its customers especially tourists who visit cultural destinations. Revisiting a place particularly a cultural place is really crucial¹⁹. Planners and marketers must invent strategies to attract tourists to visit a place more than once. The relationship between the tourists' satisfaction and their intention to revisit a destination can be studied further in other cultural sites by using the same method. The questionnaire must be revisited to make all the items understandable. The following limitations must be conducted in implications.

Researcher can omit some independent variables which are not used in this study. Some items through the questionnaires were not clear and they were hard for the populations to answer clearly, therefore some respondent had less information about why they have been asked. This study collected data through a cross sectional data gathering strategy (data have been collected at one point in time). It is advised to conduct a longitudinal data collection study in which data will be collected at different points in time. Shiraz is just a sample of cultural sites. The last but not the least, different attitudes and expectations towards travelling and travel satisfactions of the tourists are other restrictions in this study. For further research the recommended limitations must be considered firmly.

Table-1
Factor Analysis Results

	Factor Loading				Communality
Attributes	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	
Factor 1: General Tour Attraction					
Religious places	00.817				00.737
Souvenirs	00.700				00.643
Theaters	00.670				00.628
Theme parks	00.617				00.600
Tour packages	00.580				00.582
Festivals/events	00.565				00.587
Food	00.565				00.416
Shopping places	00.548				00.502
Guides	00.511				00.593
Factor 2: Heritage Attraction					
Handcrafts		00.705			00.588
Architecture		00.685			00.541
Traditional scenery		00.664			00.616
Arts (Music/dance)		00.599			00.499
Factor 3: Maintenance Factors					
Accessibility			00.722		00.624
Indoor facilities			00.681		00.743
Atmosphere/people			00.623		00.574
Information centers			00.580		00.529
Accommodations			00.557		00.577
Factor 4: Culture Attraction					
Museums				00.787	00.683
Galleries				00.602	00.465
Culture villages				00.581	00.577
Historic buildings				00.499	00.522
Monuments				00.470	00.541
Eigenvalue	9.708	1,616	1,339	1,173	
Variance (%)	40.449	6.735	5.577	4.888	
Cumulative variance (%)	40.449	47.184	52.761	57.649	
Reliability Alpha (%)	87.88	70.2	72.85	80.00	
Number of items (total=23)	9	4	5	5	

Table-2
Multivariate Analysis of Covariance

	Gender	Past experience	Decision Time
Factor 1 (F. <u>p</u>)	00.164(00.686)	00.003(00.955)	00.002(00.966)
Factor 2 (F. <u>p</u>)	3.858(00.05)*	1.972(00.162)	00.260(00.611)
Factor 3 (F. <u>p</u>)	00.022(00.883)	8.141(00.005)*	00.970(00.326)
Factor 4 (F. <u>p</u>)	00.078(00.781)	00.491(00.219)	1.130(00.289)
Wilks' Lambda	2.062(00.087)	3.209(00.014)	00.867(00.485)

Note: * $p < 0.05$

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