Investigation of contributing factors in choosing Iran as a tourism destination studied by Turkish tourists in Iran

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ABSTRACT: This survey was conducted at 2019 on a 120 person sample of Turkish tourists in Iran, and is non-experimental and cross sectional in terms of data collection method. Data research collecting method is questionnaire and interview: pre-trip section to identify demographic characteristics and propulsive motives, different data sources and also the attracting and limiting factors of choosing Iran as destination. In the post –travel section, a possible change in the destination image of traveling to Iran in the tourist's mind has been addressed, and the effect of the traveling experience on this destination image, tourists desire to return to our country and visiting this destination by other potential tourists is reviewed. To evaluate final questionnaire, a sample of 15 from initial questionnaire was entered in to the SPSS software, and three concepts reliability were evaluated as the acceptable ones in form of Likert scale and then the T-test, Fridman, Logistic, Disummers and adaptive or agreement table were applied. The main Italian tourists motivating factor in choosing Iran as a destination is "getting to know other cultures", the most important attracting factor is "cultural-historical attractions" and most important limiting factor is "hijab necessity"

Keywords: Tourism, Contributing factors, Turkish tourists.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays different countries try to get their economy out of single product and use other income sources including tourism industry. Iran, also have specific geographical-political situation in middle east, and has different historical, cultural and Ecotourism attraction and is mixed up with different costumes and traditions over years, a valuable mixture which attracts different tourists, but, in spite of this high tourist attraction potential, it doesn't have good condition compared to other destinations, and unfortunately country's tourism income is 1/1000 of global income in this industry (Akhgar Eslami., 2012). This research tries to identify factors affecting destination selection by tourists, and specifically affecting on Turkish tourists that have selected Iran as a destination. Although different researches are carried out about destination selecting, in Iran less scientific studies are done about Turkish tourists and the reasons encouraging them to visit Iran (Honarvar 2014). Among target markets of Iran tourism, Italy has high potential but the number of Turkish tourists entering Iran has significantly decreased after September 11, 2001 event in a way that the country is faced to widespread propaganda and the concern is that as a destination, Iran will be removed from the list of most Italian tour operators. This issue is approved by Turkish costume board's report (2017), which considers Turkish tourist's destination ranking. In this report, France, Spain, England, United State of America, Germany, Romania, Greece, Austria, Switzerland and Egypt in (2017-2018) were respectively best Italian tourists' destinations (Thapa 2019). According to this report, new diplomacy is required for Iran in order to attract Turkish tourists, this study tries to gain correct understanding of factors influencing on Turkish tourist decision about choosing Iran as a destination, and evaluate motivating, attractive and limiting factors of these tourist's imagination about Iran to make a two sided trust between guest and the host, and aims to enhance the image of Iran among the destinations a head of Italian tour operators and compensate Italian tourists number reduction.

Research methods

Given that this research examines the status que and the relationship between variables, so this research is a survey and according to the method of data it is non-experimental and definitive, society in this research are Turkish tourists (2019) who have selected Iran as a tourism destination from January to September. In this research, Turkish tourists were questioned at the end of their journey through sampling method and travel service Bureau and tourism guides or their association were used for the research. Due to the small number and dispersion of the target community and research constraints, about 150 tourists were asked to complete questionnaire in the last days of their trip in Iran. After removing about 30 responses that were not responded or were scrambled, the sample size reached 120. In this research, library and documentary study methods, field method and explanatory scanning (face to face interview and questionnaire) were used for collecting data. Data collector of this research was questionnaire. These questionnaires were forwarded to Turkish guides or leaders through internet or in person to be completed by Turkish tourists of Iran at the end of their trip. For final evaluation of questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha test was used. In order to do initial scrolling, 15 numbers were surveyed for evaluation of questionnaire's inside harmony, and Cronbach's alpha test in SPSS software, questionnaire and test reliability of 61 variable questions, were applied. Cronbach's alpha number of evaluating 3 concepts of questionnaire "journey motivations (propulsive and gravitational)"," limiting factors of trip" and "trip experimental quality" were respectively computed, and each 3 of them were over 5/0 and were statistically acceptable (Yekta, 2008). Excell and Spss software were used in this study. In order to measure and compare average variables which were developed based on Likert's five scale in the questionnaire, T test was used and Regression logistic was applied for evaluating relationship between spaced and nominal variables with normal distribution default and defining intensity and direction of the relationship and also evaluating relations between spaced variables and cross-correlation table and correlation coefficient and D-Summer correlation.

Results

Descriptive statistics results showed that, Turkish tourists of Iran are in the range of 50 to 64 years old and over 65. These indicates Turkish juveniles less satisfaction of visiting Iran. In terms of business in this research, retired group with 35%, employees with 8.20%, teachers and university professors with 8.15 % have got highest percent of Turkish tourists in Iran. In terms of marital status, Turkish visitors in Iran, marrieds make up 2.54 and single people make up 8.25. in educational term, 2.49 % have got diploma, 8.40 BA, and only 2.9 % have a degree more than BA. In terms of fluency in English, it is noted that 5.47 % are fluent and 13% don't know any languages. In terms of residency, most travelers were coming from Izmir and Istanbul, and more popular cities were respectively Shiraz, Isfahan and Yazd. Before Iran, destinations which were more visited were India, Malesia and Egypt. Motivating factors of choosing Iran for Turkish tourism are shown in table 1.

Table 1. motivating factors of choosing Iran for Turkish tourism

Motivating factors	Non	Seldom	Sort of	Much	So Much
Rest	6/53%	8/18%	7/8%	6/11%	2/7%
curiosity	2/2%	2/2%	4/3%	6/41%	6/50%
Escaping the monotony	6/44%	20%	5/21%	8/10%	1/3%
recreation	7/29%	2/17%	6/26%	8/18%	8/7%
Good food	7/7%	2/19%	7/32%	2/21%	2/19%
Being familiar with Iranian	1/2%	2/19%	7/32%	2/21%	2/19%
Familiarity with Iranian culture	1%	1%	2/5%	4/35%	3/56%
hospitality	9/5%	0%	2/4%	1/28%	7/66%
Familiarity with Iranian ethnicities	9/16%	5/8%	1/14%	1/45%	5/15%
Familiarity with customs	8/9%	1/6%	4/13%	8/48%	22%
Health and treatment	3/72%	2/9%	8/13%	6/4%	0%
Adventure	52%	5/23%	9/27%	5/23%	4/4%
Self knowledge	9/27%	2/16%	5/23%	9/27%	4/4%
Raising social status	7/67%	21%	1/8%	0%	2/23%
Intellectual growth	1/10%	4/17%	7/21%	9/44%	8/5%
Participate in exhibitions and festivals	2/16%	6/20%	9/27%	5/26%	8/8%
Improving social relationships	3/30%	7/19%	8/31%	2/15%	3%
Childhood memories	3/72%	3/12%	8/10%	6/4%	0%
Making friends	2/17%	2/17%	5/37%	2/26%	6/1%
Total travel cost	4/19%	7/17%	3/40%	6/22%	0%
Immunity in Iran	9/2%	4/17%	42%	9/15%	0%
Facility in Iran	9/27%	3/10%	1/47%	2/13%	5/1%

Table 2, shows trips attracting factors and its impact on Turkish tourist decision about choosing Iran as a destination

Table 2. Attracting factors of choosing Iran as a destination by Turkish tourists

Attracting factors	Non	Seldom	Sort of	Much	So Much
Cultural and historical attraction	0%	7/1%	6/2%	4/28%	2/67%
Religious attraction	2/7%	2/8%	5/17%	33%	34%
Buy souvenirs	8/12%	7/11%	4/40%	5/25%	6/9%
Adventure	25%	5/23%	25%	1/19%	4/7%
Natural attraction	1/17%	3/5%	7/19%	7/48%	2/9%
Weather	7/24%	2/17%	5/35%	14%	6/8%
Ecotourism	8/13%	5/18%	2/6%	5/1%	5/1%
Birdwatching	97%	1/5%	5/1%	0%	0%
Hunting	5/92%	5/4%	3%	0%	0%
Visiting shopping centers	1/67%	4/11%	3/14%	4/3%	9/2%

According to table 2, cultural-historical attraction and religious attraction are most important attracting factors of Italian tourists choosing Iran as a destination, but Turkish tourists familiarity with natural attraction of Oran and tourism with specific interests (ecotourism and nature) is seldom. Therefore, the background is provided for working on this part of the country's tourism for Italian tourists.

Table 3. Limiting factors and its effect on choosing Iran as a destination

Limiting factors	Non	Seldom	Sort of	Much	So Much
Political immunity	8/18%	5/22%	0/25%	0/15%	8/18%
Hijab necessity	7/21%	0/20%	3/11%	1/26%	9/20%
Drinking prohibition	43%	6/24%	5/10%	7/16%	3/5%
Religious prejudice in Iran	7/32%	2/29%	6/18%	7/18%	8/1%
Other rival countries in the middle east	5/38%	1/23%	9/26%	3/10%	3/1%
Propaganda against Iran	6/28%	2/20%	4/21%	1/7%	6/22%
Tourist's personal character	8/36%	25%	4/7%	5/26%	4/4%
Marital status	7/53%	3/31%	4/10%	5/4%	0%
Number of children	55%	25%	7/16%	3/3%	0%
Age of children	55%	25%	7/11%	3/3%	0%
Monthly income	5/26%	6/17%	4/32%	6/20%	9/2%
Geographical space between Iran and Turkey	2/47%	8/20%	4/19%	3/8%	2/4%
weather	6/28%	4/13%	30%	10%	0%
Cultural differences	7/50%	11%	3/12%	4/16%	7/13%
Lingual difference	6/35%	2/19%	1/15%	4/16%	7/13%
Total trip cost	26%	3/12%	37%	9/21%	7/2%

According to table 3, the variables related to the family life cycle as a limiting factor in choosing Iran by Turkish tourists have a very small effect in this study.

Conclusion and discussion

The data on the age of Turkish tourists in Iran suggested that young Italians are less welcome to visit Iran. During face to face interviews with Italian tourists, it was founded that the reason why young Turkish are not interested to visit Iran is that they weren't familiar with Iran and in some cases they even didn't know geographical position of Iran on the map and the schools do not mention the glory, history and ancient civilization of Persian empire like before. Additionally, negative advertising(propaganda) of different medias and horror of Islamic terrorism arising from that, the image of Iran as a Muslim country is immoderately and insecure in the minds of Turkish youth along with the war torn neighbor countries and occasionally the political darkness between countries, causes facing big problems in exchanging tourists. Young Turkish also pointed to this issue that they are interested in inexpensive and recreational trips, and travel package with low and exceptional flight price, are more welcomed. They also prefer Ecotourism and adventurous trips with their back-pack rather than a long and expensive classic trips, and recreation is considered as an integral part of their journey. However, the economic crisis that has involved a lot of countries in the world, has driven not also the youth to this kind of trips but also families with low and average incomes. The things founded from related theories of motivating factors, suggests that variables like "satisfying curiosity" and "Iranian culture knowledge completion" are significantly effective in choosing Iran as a destination by Italian tourists, and Fridman motivating factors priority test results shows that variables including " "familiarity with other cultures", " satisfying curiosity", "knowing Iranian", " Iranian hospitality" and " Iranian culture knowledge completion" have respectively the most average rate and are more important from the Turkish tourist's point of view.

The findings from attracting factor theories shows that variables including "cultural-historical attractions"," religious attractions" and "natural attractions" are Italian tourist main attracting factors and have significantly influenced on choosing Iran as a destination and according to the Fridman attracting factors priority test results, variables including " historical-cultural attractions", "religious attraction", "natural attraction", " buying souvenir" and " adventure" have respectively highest average rate, so they are more important tan others. Findings from limiting factors suggest that, in spite of research initial assumption, the "negative advertising against Iran" has not restricted Italian tourist o choose Iran and although they are aware of this negative mood, they visit Iran any way. Hijab necessity is the main limiting factor of visiting Iran for Italian tourists because western negative advertising defines Hijab necessity in Iran very negative and extreme, without giving philosophic reason in Islamic religion and as a religious fanaticism. And this is where clerical cooperation with tourism practitioners is required in order to introduce actual philosophy of Hijab to tourists in an understandable and attractive way, so that this limitation becomes an attraction and beside other heritages of our country, attract potential tourists.

As it was mentioned, lingual differences between Iran and Turkey is one of the limiting factors, because according to the data related to the rating question of Turkish tourist's acquaintance in English, about half of tourists (5.47%) knew English on average, so according to that, some tourists who don't know the goal language are afraid they wouldn't be able to communicate or get in touch well with the host community. In order to reduce this problems, during interviews that I had with Turkish group of Iran, I founded that there is at least a member in each group who is completely fluent in English and whenever needed, the leader who was fluent in Turkey helped them. Therefore, by exchanging information through these two person the entire group's needs of communication were resolved to an acceptable level. Another important subject which should be noted by tourism package planners is trip's post –level. Awareness of the tourist's willing to return to Iran and their desire to visit this destination, and suggesting it to other tourists are two very important issues in the post-travel phase. According to the research results, 6.92% of Turkish tourists are willing to visit Iran again and they are more interested in visiting northern cities of country, Tabriz and Mashhad (religious attractions), and 1.99% of tourists who suggest Iran to others, use face to face advertising. Iran has high potential of face to face advertising and by improving quality of tourism services it can be one of the successful tourism destinations.

Findings of theories related to Italian tourist experience of visiting Iran shows that, there is no sensible statistical relationship between "trip experience quality" and " willing to return to the destination" and also between "completion of familiarity with Iran culture" and " post-travel destination image", and, in spite of initial assumption there is also no relationship between variables like "trip experience quality" and " willing to suggest the destination to the others" and between " trip experience quality" and " post- travel destination image".

It may be possible to justify that, high influence of global propaganda against Iran destination has made negative image in the most Italian tourist's mind before coming to Iran, but 8.75% of tourists declared that after coming to Iran and understanding its potential and culture, their imagination became more positive and it was mentioned above,1.99% of them suggested Iran to others, without regarding their trip quality.

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