



Tourism Management

Elixir Tourism Mgmt. 36 (2011) 3045-3054

Elixir
ISSN: 2229-712X

Obstacles impeding the development of tourism industry in Iran with emphasis on marketing

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 19 April 2011;

Received in revised form:

15 June 2011;

Accepted: 24 June 2011;

Keywords

Tourism industry,
Obstacles,
Marketing.

ABSTRACT

This article studies the problems and obstacles impeding the development of tourism industry in Iran focusing on marketing and promotion. For this purpose, it initially deals with the literature of tourism and marketing and then the importance of the research is expressed. After the data was collected and analyzed, the following items were identified as main obstacles to the development of tourism industry in Iran: lack of promotion in Iran's attractions in target markets; inefficiency of national and international transportation facilities and systems; low quality of services such as hospitality and entertainment facilities; International negative publicity against Iran and insufficient training of people who are involved in the country's tourism industry. The results from the research indicated that lack of promotions in the target markets (outside Iran) has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran and negative untrue publicity against Iran launched by some international communities has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to the country. It was also confirmed that lack of suitable accommodations and recreation/entertainment facilities has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran and the low quality of transportation in the country has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran.

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Introduction

In the present era, tourism has become an important source of national income for many countries. Despite the existing recession in the world economies, tourism is continuing to grow in some countries. The approximate 1000 billion dollar revenues in the world's tourism market and some 2000 billion dollars that is predicted to be earned throughout the globe in 2020 is an indication of gigantic growth of tourism in the years to come (WTO, 2008).

Tourism has been one of the world's fastest growing industries, and there are large societies entirely dependent upon the visitor for their sustenance. Tourism is the world's largest industry. It sustained 120 million jobs in 1995, accounting for 7% of the global workforce. It is estimated that the number of international travelers in 1994 will double to 1 billion by 2010, and 80% of tourists come from the 20 richest countries (The Hutchinson Encyclopedia).

The impact of tourism is extremely varied. On one hand, it plays an important and certainly positive role in the socio-economic and political development in destination countries by, for instance, offering new employment opportunities. Also, in certain instances, it may contribute to a broader cultural understanding by creating awareness, respecting the diversity of cultures and ways of life. On the other hand, as a tool to create jobs, it has not fulfilled its expectations. At the same time, complaints from tourist destinations concerning massive negative impacts upon environment, culture and residents' ways of life have given rise to a demand for a more sustainable development in tourism. According to the records from WTO, tourism industry in the early years of the 21st century has had a remarkable growth and accelerated so fast that it has surpasses many other economics sectors of the human communities. The

improvements in people's income and culture, the increase in the world population as whole, enhanced developments in the latest transportation technology, an increase in the leisure time and natural propensity of human being to travel around have made many countries to bring this industry in their focal point and develop it as far as they can.

According to statistics, about 922 million people crossed international boundaries in the year 2008 and created a wealth of approximately \$ 944 billion. It is predicted that in 2020 some 1600 million people will be traveling to different countries as tourists (or pilgrims) and, as estimated, the revenues gained globally in the same year will mount up to about \$2000 billion. This giant tree will take roots in the farthest gardens of the most remote villages, rough mountain passes, heart of the forests and meadows. Some countries do not have oil/gas reserves, metals and mineral but their revenue tourism would outstrip those countries who have such god-given gifts.

Conceiving this point, if we look at the present state of our country's tourism industry, two points will strike our minds: first of all the lack of determination to develop this industry and consequently how it is neglected and fallen behind, which is, of course, painful to the heart of anybody who loves to see the development of this country, and second point is when we compare the potential wealth to many advanced and development countries in terms of tourist attractions its beautiful nature, its glorious historical background and archeological remains, the variety of its people and their lifestyles, different climates in different parts of it, seas and sea sides, mountains and forests, wild life and all the blessing of God bestowed upon us leaves a tinge of hope in our hearts that one day they will be used to their full potential. What we need now is wide and

judicious planning to overcome the obstacles, which are basically man made, and proceed towards appreciable progress.

To keep up with the times, developing countries need precise planning to carry out fundamental projects in social, political, economic and cultural areas if they want to reach sustainable development. Planning in tourism, in accordance with other industries, can boost the economy and help to improve standards of living and solve many economics and social problems.

Although Iran is one the greatest ancient civilization of the world and there are many historical places suitable for tourism but in comparison to other countries like Egypt, Greece, and Italy it has a very small share of the tourism market and as long as we can see, the perspective to remove the obstacles is really dull. The same applies to other tourist attractions and the reason is the lack of publicity in this market.

However great the development of tourism around the world and despite the fact that Iran owns unparalleled tourist attraction both in historical and natural environments, unfortunately Iran has not been able to reach the real stand it deserves.

This research is, therefore, trying to spotlight the problems and abstract that are historically prevailing tourism marketing and to seek solution to these problems that are still persistent and hindering development in this important industry. In this research, the tourist problems in relation to marketing and promotions will be examined. High costs of traveling to Iran, unfairly negative publicity engineered against Iran by some international communities in the past three decades, as well as inappropriate marketing and promotion methods in target markets, in efficient means of transportation system in Iran and abroad, low quality entertainment and hospitality are the hypotheses put forward here. To prove such hypotheses, both field and library studies have been carried out. To obtain the required information questionnaires were distributed among 539 foreign tourists.

Theoretical Principles and Literature of Tourism

Definition of Tourism

The definition of tourism depends upon many conditions and criteria. The reason that there is not a common definition among scientists lies in the nature of tourism and how it is viewed by individuals. However the commonest definition is that "tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to end and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes"

Definition of a "Tourist"

The definition given by UN Statistical Commission is as follows:

- People who travel to another city or country for a period of at least 24 hours and use the facilities that are specifically provided for tourists
- People who travel for recreational, medical, family ... reasons
- People who travel for scientific, administrative, religious, and athletic reasons or in order to take part in seminars, conferences, etc.

Marketing

Many authors argue that understanding the customer attitude toward 4Ps marketing mix is important (Purnomo et al., 2010).

Constantinides (2006) emphasizes that marketing mix is a framework of the dominant marketing management paradigm to

identify market development, environmental changes and trends. Several studies confirm that the 4Ps is indeed the trusted conceptual platform of practitioners dealing with operational marketing issues (Romano and Ratnatunga, 1995; Coviello et al., 2000). The wide acceptance of the 4Ps among field marketers is the result of their profound exposure to this concept during college years, since identifying the 4Ps as the controllable parameters is likely to influence the consumer buying process and decisions (Brassington and Pettitt, 2003; Soekartawi, 2005).

Tourism Marketing

Definition:

Probably the best definition that can be given in the field of tourism marketing is: a management philosophy aimed at profitability for tourist regions or a tourist business and creates a suitable place for tourist products tailored to the desires and requirements of tourists.

Tourism Marketing Characteristics

Comparing tourism marketing to goods marketing shows that these two are different from each other. Some characteristics of tourism marketing are similar to services marketing and some are peculiar to tourism marketing.

We can categorize the characteristics of tourism marketing as follows:

1. The main subject of tourism marketing is to provide services. We can also point to particular products that are related to tourist markets. Among the products we can name different sort of food, candies and beverages. As tourist products are accessible, there are a series of problems that cannot be found in goods marketing.
2. Since the production and supply of goods in tourism marketing are simultaneous, the costumers must be present at the production sites and also at the times of supply.
3. Creating demand for tourist products would involve large and small scale promotions.
4. Creating demand for tourist products is bound to seasonal fluctuations. As well as obstructing accomplishments in tourist marketing, this can also cause disintegrations according to customers' characteristics and their specific requirements.
5. The principal hallmark of tourist production is that they cannot be stored. This important feature adds to the importance of active elements in tourist marketing sections. This could lead to a situation whereby a hotel may not be able to rent the rooms during a specific period of time and this can result in partial loss.
6. In tourist marketing the human factor is of prime importance. In the production of tourist merchandise, both domestic and foreign consumers and the relation between these and tourist management is important. Therefore the safest way is to satisfy the costumers.
7. Tourist products in a hotel such as a beach, a lake or foot of the mountains comprise the other features of such tourist products. Moreover in a flight, the airport, the services on board and the existing spaces are the other constituent elements.
8. The tourist production ends as the person returns to his permanent domicile. For this reason in tourist marketing, as we can see in goods marketing. There are not after sales services but one can engage in the way the product is supplied or the extent to which the costumers are satisfied.
9. In tourist marketing there are different tourist activities according to the costumers different behavior. Therefore one should behave differently and with flexibility to the costumer.

10. In the tourist marketing, contrary to other sectors, the activities are concentrated on different facets economic and cultural life including the sea, the region, customs, natural, and social endowments.

11. The content and value of tourist products must be variable and subject to changes.

The Elements of Tourist Marketing

The basic elements of tourist marketing are the famous 4 P's developed first by Jerome McCarthy (1996) consisting of Product, Price, Place (distribution) and Promotion. Many authors argue that understanding the customer attitude toward 4Ps marketing mix is important (Purnomo et al., 2010).

In the questionnaire we provided the 4 P's were included.

Tourist Products

Tourist products are composed of services required by commuters. Tourist products encompass all services at the disposal of the commuters from the time they leave their domicile until they return to it such as: Tourist agencies, accommodations, restaurants, recreation/ entertainment resorts, museums, shopping centers, etc. that provide services are all included in the definition of tourist products the provision of standard tourist products and favorable services to tourists and winning their satisfaction are all important and the incoming tourists were asked about these facilities while filling out the questionnaires.

Promotion

In the marketing mix, the most important element in decision making is the promotions process. Promotion includes all the activities that help the tourist products to become appreciated and would convince visitors to purchase them.

The main function of promotion is to concentrate on creating communication aligned with tourist goods and services. Promotion can be defined as employing different methods, techniques, devices, opportunities and personnel to increase the sales of goods and services. Implementing all sorts of marketing activities is to improve the relations with consumers and other people. It also includes all the techniques of collecting data in order to expand marketing.

Price

The prices of tourist products are determined according to costs, level of optimum profitability and market mechanisms. Generally, price denotes the value and significance of the tourist products.

In other words process is equal to the benefits that the consumer enjoys after buying a certain product. Price is the determining means of introducing a tourist product into the market. Pricing a tourist product is a tactical means of creating a share in the market and the power of competition against the other sellers. Thus determining a reasonable price in accordance with the value of certain product has the most important impact on succeeding to sell that product in the market.

Place (Distribution)

The system and condition of distribution the tourist product is very important (in delivering the products). In fact distribution channels in tourism industry are the medium of communities between the tourists and tourist organizations. These channels act as the agents of the owners of tourist products. Since the consumers of the tourist products have to be at the place of production and supply of these products the role that the agents of distributions play is critical and vital to those who invest in tourist products. Distribution agents usually consist of tour organizers and tourist agencies. The channels of distribution will

not be able to sell the tourist packages unless they include them in the selling basket of their agency.

The Research Methods

It goes without saying that any researcher, in respect to the nature of its goals and data, requires a specific method or methods. Therefore in order to obtain the relevant and appropriate data we have tried to uncover the intermingled problems of the Iranian tourism industry from different angles with an emphasis in marketing and publicity to reach this aim we have used field and library studies to collect information and distributed questionnaires among 600 foreign tourists and for further consideration we used 539 of these questionnaires. To determine the volume of this sample Cochran Formula has been used.

To find individual sample tourists, after some considerations, we went to their accommodation in the cities of Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, Shiraz and Mashhad, the major centers of tourism in Iran, to collect data. We tried to choose tourists from different countries in our research. 25 percent of them were from Europe, 25 percent from Asia, 5 percent from North America, 35 percent from the Middle East and 5 percent from Africa. Multi-level sampling has been employed in this research and the sample population has been chosen randomly.

Having the tourists fill out the questionnaires, we went through them one by one and let aside those we thought irrelevant. The final questionnaires were given specific codes for each variable (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) to be processed on the computer.

For the variables 'very little', 'little', 'average', 'much' and 'very much' were given the codes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. For the variables 'very poor', 'poor', 'average', 'good', and 'very good' the 1 to 5 codes were given respectively.

To input the data we have used CSPRO Software. To test the data we have used SPSS Software. To analyze the data we have used 'descriptive' and 'interpretive' statistics. To test the hypotheses and the relation of variables to each other, considering the level of variables, we have used the 'interpretive' statistics (test of the relations binominal).

The Importance of Research

The increase in oil revenues has led to neglecting other means of revenues, including tourism (Zendedel, 2008). Expanding the tourism sector, removing the present bureaucratic obstructions and attracting tourists to different sections of this industry will have the following advantages:

1. Increasing revenues from obtaining extra currency exchange.
2. Creating employment in the tourism industry and improving businesses that are directly or indirectly dealing with tourism.
3. Economic growth and development of the country.
4. Reducing the development on oil revenues.
5. Neutralizing the negative attempts against Iran in other countries.

The Main Goal of the Research

Iran should and can gain its rightful stand in relation to tourism. A few years before the Islamic Revolution there was a sudden increase in the oil prices and the outflow of an incredible amount of money poured into the economy and the other industries were left alone and neglected. The outbreak of the eight years war against Iran just two years after revolution and international sanctions imposed in Iran had a devastating effect on the economy of tourism. One of the most important factors that have led to the present crisis in this industry is the lack of publicity and marketing outside Iran to attract tourists to our country. Even if you had the best natural or historical attraction

how would the people living in other countries be aware of them? There are millions of people in our country who have been producing tourist products. The lack of promotions for these products too has already led to a lot of job losses.

Hypotheses and Questions in the Research

The most important parameters that will develop the tourism industry in any country are the existence of historical and natural attractions. In fact all the tourists commute to a country to visit its attractions. Unfortunately Iran has not been able to absorb a lot of visitors to its rich historical and natural attractions. Despite the attempts made by public and private enterprise in the recent years but, for some reasons, they have not been successful. The question that occurs to mind is what factors have led to the lack of development in tourism (regarding marketing and promotions) in Iran and what practical measures have to be taken to overcome this problem.

In this respect and answer these questions, the following hypotheses have been forward:

1. Absence of appropriate methods of marketing and not paying attention to the needs of tourists has become an obstacle to attracting them to Iran.
2. Lack of promotions in the target markets (outside Iran) has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran.
3. Negative publicity against Iran launched by some international communities has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran.
4. Lack of suitable accommodations and recreation/entertainment facilities has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran.
5. Maltreatment of foreign tourists is an obstacle to attracting visitors to Iran.
6. High costs of travelling to Iran have become an obstacle to attracting tourists.
7. Low quality transportation in the country has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran.

The Questionnaire

To investigate the axioms of the research we designed a questionnaire in Farsi, English and Arabic. This questionnaire is based on background surveying is a method of gathering information from specific groups who are asked to answer certain 'pure' questions that are the same for all the people within the group. Therefore the intended axioms are considered in three parts of the questionnaire as follows:

The first part contains a brief introduction about the reasons of the research and a short explanation of the subject matter for the purpose of respondents' awareness of the objective of the questionnaire. The second part includes nine closed questions most of which are general. The questions are devised to elicit answers about topics such as the tourist attraction in Iran and whether the respondents are acquainted with them; religious factors and cultural bonds between Iran and other countries which directly or indirectly affect international tourism business; some other factors including the diversity of climates in different regions and also the geographic accessibility as a factor in deciding to travel to Iran. All the answers to such questions have been carefully examined. The third part of the questionnaires consists of eleven closed questions. Each question testifies a certain variable. To confirm or reject the hypotheses in the survey and research, different means of promotions were designed. In this part issues such as the quality of promotions; information; marketing; means of promotion; quality of services, accommodations and restaurant centers; quality of national and

international transportation facilities and costs of traveling to Iran have been examined.

Testing the Hypotheses

Statistical Hypotheses Test is the law that helps to make decisions upon statistical hypotheses as:

$$H_0: p \geq p_0$$

$$H_1: p < p_0$$

As $n > 30$, so we can use normal distribution.

The statistical test can be defined as:

In the above formula = in which X is the number of successes of the sample and n is the size of the sample. The ratio of P0 expressed by the hypotheses is zero.

To prove the hypotheses and more certainty, %70 of the respondents' answers have been taken for the proof. P0 (%70)

Findings

After studies were carried out and the data was analyzed the overall conclusions were sorted in tables 1 to 6. As we mentioned before, to arrive at these conclusions we applied the method of collecting data by field and library studies and the questionnaires that were filled out by 539 foreign tourists.

1. The finding of the research demonstrated in Table 3 shows that few people have traveled to Iran. Moreover, Means=1.45 shows that the number of trips has been less than 2 and Mode=1 tells us that most of the respondents have traveled to Iran only once.
2. The finding of the research in Table 1 indicates that few people have been acquainted with tourist attractions in Iran. Besides, Mean = 2.66 shows that the responses have been less than average. The findings reiterate that a lot more information and publicity about the tourist attractions must be shown to public abroad.
3. The finding in Table 1 shows that the main incentives of the tourists traveling to Iran are, first of all, to visit the historical sights (%54.2) and after that are the natural attractions (%30.1). Therefore the main focus of publicity must be on planning to attract tourists to these places. In Islamic countries the promotions should emphasize the holy places.
4. The finding in Table 1 show that almost no publicity has been done and the rate of familiarity of foreign tourists with different tourist attractions has been little or very little. That is irritating! In spite of that, Mean=1.83 shows that the responses were mostly 'little' or 'very little' and from Mode=2, we conclude that the most frequencies have been on 'Little'. These data tell us again the publicity (outside Iran) has never been sufficient.
5. The finding in Table 5 indicates that 'abiding by the Islamic norms in Iran' has not been a serious problem for their traveling to Iran. Besides, Mean=2.36 shows that most answers to this question has been 'no' and from Mode=3 we would come to this conclusion that 'abiding by the Islamic norms in Iran', contrary to what some authorities and individuals may have believed, has not homogeneity been an obstacle to prevent tourists from coming to Iran.
6. The finding in Table 1 shows that from the viewpoint of most respondents, cultural and religious homogeneity has not been an effective factor in determining their traveling to Iran. Also M=2.36, indicates that the answers have mostly been 'no' and from Mode=3 we conclude that most choices were concentrate on 'Little'. The above information verifies that cultural and religious homogeneity has not been an effective factor in determining tourists' traveling to Iran.
7. According to Table 1, the data shows that most respondents have shown a positive reaction to the regional and climatically

factors in determining to travel to Iran. Their answer to this question has been 'much' and 'very much' Mean=3.57 shows this as more than 'average' and from Mode=4 we conclude that most frequencies have been on 'much'. The above finding show that regional and climatically conditions in Iran have been important factors in motivating tourists to travel to Iran.

8. In Table 1 the findings indicate that geographical proximity has had an important effect on the respondents' decisions to travel to Iran. Also, Mean 3.82 shows that responses have mainly been concentrated on 'much' and 'very much' and from Mode=4 we conclude that the highest frequencies have been 'much'. This fact stresses the need to do a good amount of promotions in neighboring countries to attract tourists.

9. Again in Table 1, we observe that most respondents believe that Iranian tourist's attractions are 'much' and 'very much' more than those other countries. Where Mean=3.76, too, implies that responses are more than 'average' and close to 'much' and from Mode=4 we conclude that the highest frequencies are on 'much'. Based on the above data we can state that Iranian authorities' obligation to try to preserve this heritage and introduce them to the world.

10. As for the negative publicity against Iran, our findings in Table 1 show that absolute majority of the respondents have found it effective in dissuading tourists to travel to Iran. Here Mean Mean=4.58 which indicates that most responses have been 'very much' and from Mode=5, we interpret that most frequencies have been concentrated on 'very much'. The above data indicate that most tourist have considered negative publicity against Iran has been 'very much'. Therefore, it is to the authorities to try to counteract this publicity by increasing publicity on this issue.

11. Our findings based on Table 6 show that most respondents have found the behavior of customs officer and customs formalities being 'average'. Means= 3.17 shows this a little more than 'average' and from Mode=3, we conclude that the highest frequencies have been an 'average'. The data shows that tourists are not well treated and welcomed by customs staff during customs and inspections formalities, while we know that the first communications from good or bad images in the minds of people who traveled such long distances to visit the beauties.

12. The finding in Table 1 indicate that from the viewpoint of the majority of respondents the rate and range of promotions on Iranian tourist attractions have been low. Besides, Mean=1.67, too, shows that most responses were 'little' and from Mode=2 we arrive at this conclusion that most frequencies have been concentrate on 'little'. The above data shows that the Iranian tourism industry suffers acutely from lack of these types of promotions and the authorities have to roll up their sleeves and do something.

13. Based on Table 1, most respondents emphasize that the impact of publicity in mass media in foreign countries on tourist attraction in Iran can be 'much' and 'very much' in drawing tourists to Iran. Meanwhile, Mean=4 we will come to this conclusion that most frequencies have been focused on 'much'. From this information we realize how important is promotions in foreign countries' mass media, while we know, unfortunately, this has not been taken serious in Iran.

14. The finding in Table 1 also point out to the importance of means of promotions such as brochures, posters, videos, etc, about tourist attraction of Iran in foreign countries. On the effect of this, to attract tourists to Iran, most respondents have stressed 'much' and 'very much'. Where Mean=4.20 and Mode=4, we

deduce that most frequencies have emphasized 'much' in the range of answers.

15. The rate at which tourist attractions in Iran are publicized through the internet in order to encourage foreigners to travel to this country has also been examined in Table 1. Most of the respondents believe that the impact of this, where Mean=4.63 ('much') and Mode=5 ('very much') we can conclude that most frequencies have been concentrated on 'very much' this implies that introducing tourist attractions through the web is a very important method of attracting tourist to Iran.

16. The findings in Table 1 show that most respondents see the effects of participating international tourist fairs in order to attract tourists Iran as being 'much' and 'very much'. As Mean=3.72r responses are more than 'average' and from Mode=3 it can be concluded that most frequencies have been on 'average'.

17. And about the costs of traveling to Iran in comparison with similar countries, according to Table 1, most respondents have found it 'average'. Furthermore, where Mean=2.75 shows it at 'average' and Mode=3, as result. Most frequencies have been on 'average'. Based on this information, we can say that cost of traveling to Iran comparing to other countries is not very high and this is an advantage to our country. Obviously, because of the importance of price in making travel decisions and in order to be competitive in tourist market prices must be kept as low as possible.

18. Our findings in Table 6 reflex the opinions of the majority of respondents on how they have been treated by the personnel of hotels and/or entertainment centers. Means=3.27 indicates that most answers have been on 'average' and from Mode=3 we deduce that most frequencies have been focused on 'average'. In this relation, authorities should commit themselves to giving standard training to all the personnel who, in one way or another, communicate with tourists to win their satisfaction while they are touring around.

19. The findings in Table 2 shows that most respondents have found the quality of the hotels and restaurants, compared with other countries, 'poor' or 'average'. Mean=2.78 shows this less than 'average' and Mode=3, we can conclude that most frequencies are on 'average'. Based on this data, it can be stated that places of accommodation and entertainment it are - qualitatively and quantitatively - not in proper conditions and cannot host domestic and foreign visitors appropriately. Presently, there are few companies active in hospitality and chain hotels in Iran. The present hotels are either old or charge very high prices. There are few 4-star and 5-star hotels in Iran.

20. The findings in Table 2 show that most respondents think the quality of domestic and worldwide transportation facilities is 'poor'. Besides, where Mean=2.39, it shows that response have bee below 'average' and from Mode=2 we conclude that most frequencies are concentrated on 'poor'.

21. The Result of Proving the First Hypothesis
The first Hypothesis: absence of appropriate methods of marketing and not paying attention to the needs of tourists has become an obstacle to attracting them to Iran.

As the marketing mix are Product, Price, Place (Distribution) and Promotion, proving this hypothesis is in relation with the consideration of the second, forth, sixth and seventh hypothesis. Since we have proved the second, fourth and seventh hypothesis, the first hypothesis is proved in the light these three hypotheses. In fact, lack of publicity abroad about tourist products in Iran. Poor quality of hotels and entertainment

centers and the inefficient and unfavorable conditions of transportation facilities inside the country are the main obstacles to attracting tourists to Iran. In other words, 70 percent of the respondents have expressed that poor publicity on Iranian tourist attractions, inefficient system of transportation in Iran and abroad and low quality hotels and entertainment centers are the most important hindrances in the flow of foreign tourists to Iran. All these factors are indicative of improper marketing and not paying attention to tourists' requirements in order to attract them to Iran.

22. The Result of Proving the Second the Second Hypothesis

The Second Hypotheses: "lack of promotions in the target markets (outside Iran) has become an obstacle to attracting tourist to Iran."

The result of the test has shown that the second hypothesis is confirmed, i.e. more than 70 percent of the sample believed that lack of using appropriate promotions abroad about Iran's attractions has blocked the flow of tourism to Iran.

23. The Result of Proving the Third hypothesis

The Third Hypothesis: "negative publicity against Iran launched by some international communities has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran"

The result of the test has shown that the third hypothesis confirmed, i.e. more than 70 percent of the samples believed that negative publicity in international communities has been an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran.

24. The Result of Proving the Fourth Hypothesis

The Fourth Hypothesis: "lack of suitable accommodations and recreation/ entertainment facilities has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran."

The result of the test has shown that the forth hypothesis in confirmed, i.e. more than 70 percent of the samples believed that lack of accommodation facilities hinders the flow of tourism to Iran)more than 70 percent of the respondents have found the quality of Iranian hotels and restaurants 'poor' in contrast to other countries).

25. The Result of Proving the Fifth Hypothesis

The Fifth Hypothesis: "maltreatment of foreign tourists is an obstacle to attracting visitors to Iran."

The result of the test ahs shown that the fifth hypothesis is rejected i.e. less than 70 percent of the sample believe that maltreatment of foreign tourists is an obstacle to attracting visitors to Iran.

26. The Result of Proving the Sixth Hypothesis

The Sixth Hypothesis: "high costs of traveling to Iran ahs become an obstacle to attracting tourists."

The result of the test has shown that the sixth hypothesis is rejected, i.e. less than 70 percent of the sample believed that high costs of travelling to Iran have become an obstacle to attracting tourists.

27. The Result of Proving the Seventh Hypothesis

The Seventh Hypothesis: "low quality of transportations in Iran has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran."

The result of the test has shown that the seventh hypothesis is confirmed, i.e. more than 70 percent of the sample believed that low quality transportations in the country has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran (they find the quality of domestic and international transportation in comparison to those of other countries is 'poor'

Conclusion

As shown in the tables above, the results from the research indicated that lack of promotions in the target markets (outside

Iran) has become an obstacle to attract tourists to Iran and negative publicity against Iran launched by some international communities has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to the country. It was also confirmed that lack of suitable accommodations and recreation/entertainment facilities has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran and the low quality of transportation in the country has become an obstacle to attracting tourists to Iran.

Recommendations

1. Pointing out the economic and social importance of developing tourism industry to the authorities and those on control of tourism in Iran by holding seminars conferences related to this industry.

2. Increasing the number of times tourists travel to Iran by satisfying them and unblocking the obstacle and difficulties that are inhibiting tourism in Iran.

3. International publicity about the tourist attractions of Iran in target markets backed by Iranian embassies throughout the world in order to attract visitors.

4. Restoration and conservation of historical works of arts and monuments as tourists are very interested in visiting them.

5. Nullifying the negative mindsets of people around the world by providing favorable and standard services to foreign visitors, increasing promotions abroad, inviting high ranking officials to seminars and conferences on tourism held in Iran or outside.

6. Establishing a university and research center specializing in tourism industry in the country.

7. Planning standard training course or briefing sessions for the managers and personnel of hotels and entertainment centers customs officers, drivers and all the people who are somehow dealing with tourists.

8. Building new standard hotels and other entertainment centers by supporting the private sector: selling land at low price, 10 year tax exemptions, exemptions from customs duties or income taxes on imported materials for hotel and other tourist related centers.

9. Helping to found a bank of tourism in order to encourage invest in Iran's tourism industry.

10. Forming a tourist marketing section in the country's tourist organization with experts in market research, foreign tourists' requirements, effective promotions and other marketing activities necessary for this business.

11. Holding programmed and periodical international conferences with domestic and foreign tourist professionals.

12. Improving the means of national and international transportation for foreign tourist' satisfaction.

13. Training government and private sector executives involved in tourism according to international standards and taking advantage of experienced and empowered managers.

14. Coordinating state owned organizations concerned in tourism to reduce beaurocracy to its minimum.

15. Setting up an all inclusive databank from tourist products in different provinces across the country to be used for strategic developmental planning.

16. Inviting heads of tourist organizations in the neighboring countries in the first place and later the other target markets to come to agreements in sending tourists to Iran through their tourist agencies.

17. Preparing the country's comprehensive tourist plan with domestic and foreign experts in order to identify potential tourist markets in Iran; regional, developmental tourist plans; devising strategies for marketing and providing a framework for

developing tourism with specific goals in the short, medium and long terms.

18. Restoring hotels and entertainment centers with government support and granting bank loans at low interest rates.

19. Opening Iranian tourist marketing offices with professional staff to steer marketing outside Iran.

20. Creating an exhausting website in different languages to provide information about the tourist attractions in Iran.

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Table 1 – Distribution of Population Sample Based on Respondents' Answers to the Questions in the Questionnaires

Questions	Options	The ratio of relative frequency Very low	The ratio of relative frequency Low	The ratio of relative frequency fair	The ratio of relative frequency high	The ratio of relative frequency Very high	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation	Variance
Rate of familiarity of respondents with Iranian tourist attractions prior to traveling to Iran		6.9	29.1	31.2	23.9	8.9	2.66	2	3	1.597	2.549
Rate of familiarity of foreign tourists with Iranian tourist attractions as viewed by respondents		20.2	77	2.8	0	0	1.83	2	2	4	0.200
Surveying the rate of cultural/ religious homogeneity in respondents' decisions to travel to Iran		6.1	63.8	14.7	11.3	3.9	2.43	2	2	0.911	0.830
Surveying the rate of climatic conditions in respondents' decisions to travel to Iran		0	5.6	39.7	46.8	7.8	3.57	4	4	0.500	0.250
Surveying the rate of geographical proximity in respondents' decisions to travel to Iran		0	0.2	22.1	70.9	4.8	3.82	4	4	0.500	0.250
Evaluation of Iranian tourist attractions in comparison with other countries as viewed by respondents		0	0	35.3	53.6	11.1	3.76	4	4	0.637	0.406
Surveying the impact of negative untrue propaganda against Iran in other countries upon the decline in attracting foreign tourists		0	0	2.8	41	56.2	4.58	5	5	0.494	0.244
The rate of publicity about Iranian tourist attractions in other countries as viewed by respondents		35.4	61.6	2.8	0	0.8	1.67	2	2	0.544	0.296
Surveying the rate of publicity of Iranian tourist attractions in the mass media of foreign countries and its impact on attracting tourists to Iran		0	0	17.8	74.2	8	4.10	4	4	0.296	0.088
The rate of distributing publicity means of Iranians tourist attractions and its impact on attracting tourists as viewed by respondents		0	0.2	30.8	54.4	14.5	4.20	4	4	0.44	0.194
The impact of showing Iran's tourist attractions through the web in attracting tourists as viewed by respondents		0	0	14.3	31.9	53.8	4.63	5	5	0.484	0.234
The impact of participating in international tourist fairs on attracting tourists to Iran as viewed by respondents		0	4	45.3	36.5	17.8	3.72	4	3	0.753	0.561
The rate of costs of traveling to Iran in comparison to other tourist countries as viewed by respondents		7.8	17.6	69.4	2.4	2.8	2.75	3	2	0.749	0.561

Table 2 – Distribution of Sample Population Based on the Respondents' Answers to the Questions in the Questionnaires

Questions	Options	The ratio of relative frequency Very poor	The ratio of relative frequency Poor	The ratio of relative frequency Average	The ratio of relative frequency Good	The ratio of relative frequency Very good	Mean	median	Mode	Standard deviation	variance
Evaluation of the quality of Iran's hotels and restaurants in comparison with other countries as viewed by respondents		0	39.3	45.1	13.2	2.2	3.78	3	3	0.754	0.569
Evaluation of the quality of Iran's domestic and international transportation facilities in comparison with other countries as viewed by respondents		0	65.1	30.6	4.1	0.2	2.39	2	2	0.576	0.332

Table 3 - Distribution of Sample Population Based on the Number of Respondents' Travel to Iran

Questions	Options	The ratio of relative frequency First time	The ratio of relative frequency Second time	The ratio of relative frequency Third time	The ratio of relative frequency More than 3 times	Mean	median	Mode	Standard deviation	variance
Surveying the number of times the respondents have traveled to Iran		64.9	25.6	9.1	4	1.45	1	1	0.673	0.452

Table 4 - Distribution of Sample Population Based on the Respondents' Incentives to Visit Iran

Questions	Options	The ratio of relative frequency Historical sights	The ratio of relative frequency Natural attractions	The ratio of relative frequency Scientific studies	The ratio of relative frequency Knowing Iran's cultural	The ratio of relative frequency Pilgrimage	Mean	median	Mode	Standard deviation	variance
Surveying respondents' motives to visit Iran		54.2	39.1	2	4	5.6	1.67	1	1	1.108	1.228

Table 5 - Distribution of Sample Population Based on the Respondents' Views That Abiding by Islamic Norms and Values (Hijab, etc.) Is an Obstacle to Attracting Foreign Visitors to Iran

Questions	Options	The ratio of relative frequency yes	The ratio of relative frequency To some extend	The ratio of relative frequency no	Mean	median	Mode	Standard deviation	variance
Surveying respondents' views that abiding by Islamic norms and values is an obstacle to attracting foreign visitors to Iran		14.8	34.3	50.8	2.36	3	3	0.727	.028

Table 6 - Distribution of Sample Population Based on the Respondents' Evaluation of the Behavior of Personnel in Hotels, Entertainment Centers and Customs Officers Towards Foreign Tourists

Questions	Options	The ratio of relative frequency Very bad	The ratio of relative frequency Bad	The ratio of relative frequency Average	The ratio of relative frequency Good	The ratio of relative frequency Very good	Mean	median	Mode	Standard deviation	variance
Customs and inspections staff's behavior towards foreign tourists during inspections and other formalities		0	2.4	78.1	19.5	0	3.17	3	3	0.436	0.190
Respondents' answers to how they were treated in hotels and entertainment centers		0	2.2	72.1	22.1	3.5	3.27	3	3	.0559	0.312