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STUDY AND IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL FACTORS AFFECTING RELIGIOUS TOURISM FOCUSING ON TOURISM CAPABILITIES IN FARS PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, since tourism industry has become one of the world's largest and most profitable sectors of economy around the world, it provides dramatic economic income and a considerable number of job opportunities for many different countries and will play an important role in removing poverty in deprived countries as well as underdeveloped areas. Thus, considering the importance of this issue, this study aimed to study and identify critical factors affecting tourism religious tourism focusing on tourism capabilities in Fars province through questionnaire in 2014 using SPSS statistical method. The results of this study indicate that, among the factors affecting the development of the religious tourism in province of Fars, media and newsletter, tourism advertising, and motivation and beliefs of tourists enjoy the highest effectiveness but impact intensity of mentioned factors are different due to inequality of variances.

Keywords: *Religious Tourism, Critical Factors, Fars Province, Statistical Method of SPSS*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an ancient phenomenon existing from early time of human societies and has gradually arrived to current technical, economic, social position and industrial state in various historical phases. This industry is a mixture of different activities from transportation and nutrition to staying and management playing a chain and connected services in order to sever passengers. Nowadays, tourism is a complete different concept compared to the past. The economic background of tourism has risen. Now, tourism is seen as an economic issue, thus, it needs to follow certain goals while working. Tourism can be simulated as commercial goods which need markets to present to customers. To this end, one of important indexes of tourism allocating a considerable amount of tourism activities is religious tourism (Yeganegi and Afshar, 2009). Religious tourism, called religion tourism, refers to a type of tourism in which religious people travel individually or in groups because of pilgrim reasons and religious or recreational (research) advertising.

Theoretical Principles

Tourism industry is one of the largest and profitable economic sectors of the world and it is developing and improving on a daily basis. In fact, according to published data from United Nation World Tourism Organization, total number of 940 million international tourists has left the borders of their own home countries in 2010, travelling in various regions and creating approximately 919 billion dollar income. The predictions of this organization indicate that this number will reach to 1.6 billion people in a 10-year period (2020) with an income of over 2 trillion dollars in that a major share of this income will go to developed countries. Considering their capabilities and merits, various countries around the world have done some activities in this field, have taken their share in terms of number of tourists and created income, and have tried to increase this effort (Habibi, 2009).

Frequent number of studies has been done in terms of internal and external tourism development. Since the goal of this study is to identify international tourism economic barriers in Iran, related researches which studied the failure of international tourism development were taken in to account. What follow is conducted researches in terms of Iran international tourism, barriers, solutions, and challenges.

Mahdi (2002) in his study entitled "cultural backgrounds of sustainable tourism development in Iran" studied the cultural dimension of tourism aiming to make the appropriate theoretical framework in order

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to study the cultural backgrounds of tourism development and identify the conditions, barriers, and cultural activators of tourism development in Iran. His research method is descriptive and it is a survey research. Necessary data was collected through field research using questionnaire distribution in three languages including English, German, and French as well as interviews. The results indicate that fundamental beliefs of Iranian society toward human nature, work nature, activity, and nature of place and privacy do not contradict tourism development although the condition of fundamental beliefs of Iranian society toward individuals` relationships and nature of time are not suitable for tourism development. The results of analysis show that fundamental beliefs of society do not contradict with tourism development and cultural backgrounds for tourism development are available.

Makian and Naderi (2003) in a study entitled “a study on foreign tourism of Yazd” studied attractions and problems of tourism in Yazd from foreigners` points of view using descriptive and inferential research method and questionnaire. According to findings of this research, foreign tourism in this city is facing some problems such as lack of informed guides and lack of accommodation and service facilities.

Ebrahim *et al.*, (2011) studied strategic planning of tourism development focusing on religious tourism (Case study: Qom). The main goal of this research was to provide solutions and determine applied strategies for tourism development focusing religious tourism of Qom by applying strategic planning process and looking for capabilities and tourism application of Qom. In this process, studying the capabilities and opportunities of tourism in Qom, the final results indicate that cautious strategies are prioritized first as acceptable strategies for religious tourism planning. In fact, aggressive strategies are prioritized second. To meet the goals of research and tourism development using this strategy, the development of Islamic sciences from one hand, and increased advertising, attracting scholars and foreigner religious -cultural tourists along with considering the introduction of real positions of religious-cultural applications of Qom to other countries as well as creating sustainable job opportunities and income, on the other hand, are recommended.

Ahmadi and Sabz (2011) studied the development capacities of religious-cultural tourism of megacity of Qom analytically using descriptive-analytic studies. The research results reveal that optimum usage of religious, historical, and cultural attractions in Qom, along with being profitable, lead to expansion and improvement of values and Islamic culture, introduction of revolution values and pure Iranain-islamic culture and enrichment of spiritual culture in international, regional, and national levels.

Badri and Tayebi (2012) who studied effective factors on religious –tourism costs, case study: Mashahd using analytic-descriptive method was looking for the highest allocated expenses of religious tourists. Findings of research reveal that the highest expense of tourists in Mashhad belongs to purchasing from markets.

Research Questions

In the past few decades, tourism section has not been successful among cultural and economic plans of Iran to advertise Iranian culture and profit of this industry. Even in fourth and fifth development plan, considering passing two years from the latter, in spite of appropriate overview of this industry, achieving planned goals is far away. Therefore, this question is raised that what factors can lead to higher development and application of religious tourism capacities in Fars province. To reach research goals, the following questions are studied and responded.

- ✓ What are the effective factors on religious tourism development of Fars province?
- ✓ Among identified factors, which are critical ones?
- ✓ How is the condition of religious tourism of province based on identified factors?

Research Statistical Method

Validity of Research

In this section, results obtained from statistical data analysis and research –question test are studied. First, using Central Tendency and Variability indexes, data are summarized and inferential statistical analysis is done in the following. To this end, the reliability of mentioned questionnaire was studied. In this study, content -validity method was used to determine the validity. According to research, validity of effective factors on religious-tourism development in Fars province was calculated 0.78 using Alpha Cronbach in

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that Alpha Cronbach coefficient was calculated 0.73 for all questions. It is noteworthy that Alpha Cronbach method in SPSS software was used to calculate reliability.

General Description of Sample

The samples included 30 authorities and tourists which is a sufficient one in terms of size collected between June 2014 and August 2014.

Ages of Responders

Eleven participants were aged 30-40 years old, 19 were aged 41-50 years old which means that 36.7 per cent of statistical population participants were aged 30-40 years old and 63.3 per cent were aged 40-50 years old.

Table 1: Statistical condition of age characteristics of responders

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
30-40	11	36.7	36.7	36.7
41-50	19	63.3	63.3	100.0
total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research calculations by software

As it can be seen from table (1), it is clear that 63.3 per cent of responders were aged 40-50 years old and 36.9 per cent were 30-40 years old.

Thus this issue must be taken in to account for future analyses in that result toward 40-50 age groups is bias. Of course, this fact does not cause a problem in extraction of results due to the random nature of sampling.

Responders` Level of Education

Responders` levels of education clarifies that 23.33 per cent are B.S., 56.7 per cent are M.S, and 20 per cent are Ph.D.

Table 2: Statistical situation of education level of responders

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
B.S.	7	23.3	23.3	23.3
M.S.	17	56.7	56.7	80.0
Ph.D	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research calculations by software

Then statistical features of effective factors on religious tourism development in Fars province were studied. Following tables compare mean of any given factor.

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Table 3: Statistical features of mean and standard deviation of effective factors on religious tourism development

	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error man
Media and news letter	30	1.3333	0.47964	0.08754
Coordination of relevant organizations	30	1.2677	0.44978	0.08212
Suitable networks	30	1.1000	0.30513	0.05571
Tourist`s Motivation and beliefs	30	1.3333	0.47946	0.08754
Internet resources	30	1.1333	0.34575	0.06312
Postcard	30	1.1333	0.34575	0.06312
Touristic advertisement	30	1.3333	0.47946	0.08754
Providing security for locals and tourists	30	1.2000	0.40684	0.07428
Location	30	1.0667	0.25371	0.04632

Source: Research calculations by software

Table 4: Comparison test of means for effective factors of religious tourism development

	Test Value =0			95% confidence interval of the difference		
	T	Df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Media and news letter	15.232	29	0.000	1.33333	1.1543	1.5124
Coordination of relevant organizations	15.425	29	0.000	1.26667	1.0987	1.4346
Suitable networks	19.746	29	0.000	1.10000	0.9861	1.2139
Tourist`s Motivation and beliefs	15.425	29	0.000	1.26667	1.0987	1.4346
Internet resources	17.954	29	0.000	1.13333	1.0042	1.2624
Postcard	17.954	29	0.000	1.13333	1.0042	1.2624
Touristic advertisement	16.858	29	0.000	1.16667	1.0251	1.3082
Providing security for locals and tourists	16.155	29	0.000	1.20000	1.0481	1.3519
Location	23.028	29	0.000	1.06667	0.9719	1.1614

Source: Research calculations by software

According to above table, existing components of table were obtained from mean of various questions of all related questions to effective factors on religious tourism development. According to this, the highest

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mean belonged to media and newsletter, touristic advertisement, and tourist`s motivation and beliefs ($\mu=1/33$).

According to above table, it is obvious that t and reported value of Prob rejects the zero assumption of equality between defined index means for effective factors of religious tourism development of Fars province and this index has a different performance and impact on religious tourism.

Inferential Statistics of Variance Analysis

In Variance analysis, zero assumption, no significant difference exists among categorical means, is tested. Thus, some of key assumptions of Variance analysis are that groups are almost equal in terms of size and they enjoy similar variances in research variables (Variance homogeneity). Another assumption is that research variables have normal distribution for each row of research components (multivariate normal). According to defined research location which is studying and comparing means of effective factors` indexes on religious tourism development in Fars province in various groups, parametric test of one –way analysis of variance (among subjects) was used to test the fact that mean of these groups are significantly equal. Therefore, one variable of classified factor and one response variable were used and they are compared through groups` means. Using variance-equality test among various related groups to effective factors on religious tourism development in Fars province, it is clear that, according to significance level, equality of variances are accepted at $\alpha=0.05$ level.

Table 5: Variance-equality test among groups of effective factors of religious tourism development in Fars province

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between group	0.560	2	0.280	2.239	0.006
Media and newsletter Within groups	6.106	27	0.226		
Total	6.667	29			
Between groups	0.837	2	0.419	2.247	0.025
Coordination of relevant organizations within groups	5.029	27	0.186		
Total	5.867	29			
Between groups	0.837	2	0.419	2.247	0.025
Suitable networks within groups	5.029	27	0.186		
Total	5.867	29			
Between groups	0.102	2	0.051	3.530	0.095
Tourist`s Motivation and beliefs within groups	2.598	27	0.096		
Total	2.700	29			
Between groups	0.011	2	0.006	2.015	0.056
Internet resources within groups	3.455	27	0.128		
Total	3.467	29			
Between groups	0.369	2	0.184	4.606	0.019
Postcard within groups	3.098	27	0.115		
Total	0.211	29			
Between groups	0.211	2	0.106	4.722	0.095
Touristic advertisement within groups	3.955	27	0.146		
Total	4.167	29			
Between groups	0.408	2	0.204	2.254	0.002
Providing security for locals and tourists within groups	4.392	27	0.163		
Total	4.800	29			
Between groups	0.092	2	0.046	3.701	0.005
Location within groups	1.775	27	0.066		
Total	1.867	29			

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Source: Research calculations by software

As it can be seen from ANOVA table, Sig. value for all factors and effective factors on religious tourism development are bigger than 0.05 leading to rejection of zero assumption which means that means of effective indexes on religious tourism development among various groups is significant. Variance-equality test among mentioned indexes is as following:

Table 6: Variance- homogeneity test among effective factors on religious tourism development

Levence statistics	Df1	Df2	sig
0.516	2	27	0.756

Source: Research calculations by software

As it can be seen, according to sig=0.516. Equality of variances in $\alpha=0.05$ level is accepted.

Table 7: Various intensity test of effective factors on religious tourism development

	Levene statistic	Df1	Df2	Sig.
Media and news letter	8.007	2	27	0.054
Coordination of relevant organizations	10.786	2	27	0.000
Suitable networks	9.936	2	27	0.001
Tourist` s Motivation and beliefs	7.645	2	27	0.000
Internet resources	7.301	2	27	0.003
Postcard	7.901	2	27	0.002
Touristic advertisement	6.623	2	27	0.016
Providing security for locals and tourists	4.264	2	27	0.025
Location	5.787	2	27	0.043

Source: Research calculations by software

As it can be seen, since Sig is less than 0.05 and variance equality at $\alpha=0.05$ level is not accepted. In other words, the intensity of these factors on tourism development is different due to various intensity of these factors.

Table 8: Fit Indexes of model

Fitness model index	Value	Calculation method
Chi-squared to degree of freedom ration	2.3	$\frac{\chi^2}{df}$
Normed fit index	0.97	$NFI = \frac{\chi^2 \text{ ZERO ASSUMPTION} - \chi^2 \text{ SUGGESTED MODEL}}{\chi^2 \text{ ZERO MPDEL}}$
Non-Normed fit index	0.95	$NNFI = \frac{\frac{\chi^2}{df} \text{ ZERO ASSUMPTION} - \frac{\chi^2}{df} \text{ SUGGESTED MODEL}}{\frac{\chi^2}{df} - 1 \text{ ZERO MPDEL}}$
Comparative fit index	0.92	$CFI = \frac{d \text{ ZERO ASSUMPTION} - d \text{ SUGGESTED MODEL}}{d \text{ ZERO MPDEL}}$
Goodness fit index	0.94	
Adjusted Goodness of fit index	0.97	

Source: Research calculations by software

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To check the fitness of model, there are many indexes including Chi-squared to freedom degree ratio, Normed fit index (NFI), Non-normed fit index (NNFI), comparative fit index (CFI), Goodness fit index (GFI), and Adjusted Goodness of fit index (AGFI) in that all were used in this research. It is noteworthy that RMSEA for this research is 0.0016 which shows a good fit index for research model. The following table shows the fitness indexes and calculation method.

Conclusion

This research aims to study and identify effective critical factors on religious tourism focusing on tourism capabilities of Fars province. To this end, effective factors were studied through questionnaire and statistical method of SPSS in 2014 including Media and newsletter, Coordination of relevant organizations Suitable networks, Tourist`s Motivation and beliefs, Internet resources, Postcard, Touristic advertisement, Providing security for locals and tourists, and Location. The results indicate that analysing mean of effective factors on religious tourism development, the highest means belongs to media and newsletter, touristic advertisement, tourist`s motivation and beliefs indicating the effectiveness of these factors on tourism development. According to analysis of variance and obtained results, since the significance level is less than 0.05 and equality of variances is not accepted in $\alpha=0.05$ level, the intensity of effectiveness of these factors is different.

Policy Recommendations

What was followed in this research was to identify general perception of effective factors on religious tourism development and management of these factors. One fundamental problem is lack of expert and trained human resources in models. It is recommended that people become aware of this issue by training because according to facilities, religious tourism can be one of money-making industries of the country.

Based on conclusion, some suggestions are presented as following:

- ✓ Expansion of hygiene-welfare infrastructures in these places can provide more welfare backgrounds in order to attract more tourists.
- ✓ Building equipped pilgrim accommodation to serve pilgrims in different parts of the city can be effective in direction with religious tourism development and tourist attraction.
- ✓ Qualitative and quantitative improvement in services and network roads to these places can be an important factor for motivation of religious tourists.

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