

SIGNIFICANCE OF SEGMENTING INTERNATIONAL VISITORS OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS BY INTRODUCING MULTIDIMENSIONAL CRITERIA

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ABSTRACT

Tourism market previous studies can be largely contributed to building tourist profiles (in the form of segments) for a tourist destination, by using these segments SMTEs (small and medium-sized tourism enterprises) and other business organizations would be able to develop attractive and interesting tourism products and services that are preferred and valued by each targeting segment. Various methods are existing to classify tourist markets to special segments, most of classified approaches have been argued by the academic researchers. Whilst many mentioned previous studies have suggested that the only motivation or lifestyle base segmentation should be the emphasis of research, in our new approach, visitors should be segmented based on their motivations, lifestyles and decision-making style.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism market previous studies (Agrusa et al., 2009; Bansal & Eiselt, 2003; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Bideci & Albayrak, 2016; Crompton, 1979; Kozak & Kayar, 2009; Kim, 2005; Lee et al., 2004; Park & Yoon, 2009; Srihadi et al., 2016; Scott & Parfitt, 2005) can be largely contributed to building tourist profiles (in the form of segments) for a tourist destination, by using these segments SMTEs (small and medium-sized tourism enterprises) and other business organizations would be able to develop attractive and interesting tourism products and services that are preferred and valued by each targeting segment. The importance of segmentation in tourism industry over the last 50 years is widely acknowledged (Eusebio et al., 2017). In this regard, to enhance proficiency and reach efficiency in tourism marketing and management, the overall understanding of the existing market segments has been required. Various methods exist to classify tourist markets to special segments, most of classified approaches have been argued by the academic researchers. Whilst many mentioned previous studies have suggested that the only motivation or lifestyle base segmentation should be the emphasis of research, in our new approach, visitors should be segmented based on their motivations, lifestyles and decision-making style. Because people in the same groups can also have very different psychographic profiles. So, proposing a combining descriptive variable

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provides a clearer insight and adequate details and awareness into marketing and communication strategy formulation in tourism development process. Although Tehran's Bazaar has been known as a tourist destination that local managers and marketers have become aware of its historical, cultural, and social potential in generating interesting and attractive activities for foreign tourists but has not been performed the previous study by researchers in the spite of marketing efforts specially segmentation. Therefore, the paper is aimed at identifying the main dimensions of inbound visitors' travel motivations and lifestyles characteristics to classify them into special groups. By these efforts, we could be able to demonstrate the best understanding about different segments of inbound visitors and how benefit tourism management and marketing strategies can increase the number of visitors to Grand Bazaar of Tehran as a heritage site. In particular, somewhere like ancient Bazaars has potential to sightseeing and buying resource for foreign visitors. It might lead to revitalize cultural heritage and historical places and providing it to earning financial income and finally have economic growth.

To pass through the research methodology process performing factor analysis, two-step cluster methods and chi-square test in this study were necessary. Factor analysis in order to extract latent factors, two-step cluster analysis in order to divide visitors in specific groups and finally chi-square test in order to examine the significance of identified groups and their demographic variables. The findings of the study suggested that the Grand Bazaar market can be divided into four groups based on tourists' motivations and lifestyles: 'Ideal-sense seekers', 'Principled behavior enthusiasts', 'Middle want vacationers,' and 'Special aspiring visitors', that significant differences in the characteristics of clusters have been explored. However the results indicated that visitors in all four segments when traveling to abroad, have high interest in interacting and communicating with other people, to explore the local culture, to experience way of life in a different culture, and to visit places that their friends have never seen, but they have specific difference in terms of psychological and behavioral factors, for example the 'Ideal-sense seekers' had high concerning with quality of the product and services, that expect those fit their needs best. Additionally, they are also brand consciousness people who have tendency to buy reputed and expensive brands with belief that such reputed brands have the best quality. The 'Principled behavior enthusiasts' are socializing and optimistic people. They are also interested in healthy and safely trend when they are traveling. The 'Middle want vacationers' to have an equal tendency to everything. On the other hand, they are impulse and careless buyers about their selection of the products and services and their spending in shopping. Furthermore, promotional information of competitive brands on the marketplaces may lead them to confusion. The 'Special aspiring visitors' had a high motivation and interest for exploring different cultural nations and put themselves in different situations, interacted with other people.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

With a deep understanding of importance of economic impacts of increasing the number of inbound visitors to a specific tourist destination, carrying out of the basic marketing efforts such as STP (segmentation, positioning and targeting), can effectively leads to managers and marketers to implement a set of effective tourism marketing strategies. In this regard, knowledge about the

motivations, lifestyles, and demographic profiles of inbound visitors would enable DMO (destination management organizations) to generate effective tourism marketing strategies. By understanding about decision-making styles of each segment of inbound visitors, managers and marketers will also be better able to formulate and develop specific and unique products and services and offer the best value for them. This study profiled four segments of inbound visitors who come to Tehran grand bazaar by using cluster analysis. One of the important findings of the study is that all four segments are very interested in exploring the local culture, including the local architectural and handicrafts. All four segments were conservative people and they preferred to do safely, accessible and healthy activities when they are traveling abroad. Tehran grand bazaar has an exotic, unique and corridor structure that can potentially attract some inbound travelers and visitors. The findings suggest that by differentiating inbound tourists into segments, managers and marketers in small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMTEs) and other business organizations would enable to create and develop attractive and competitiveness tourism products and services that are suitable for each segment of inbound tourists. Now, the quality and quantity of existing tourism products and services must be enhanced and promoted to attract more consumers and visitors. Tehran bazaar has a great variety of shopping segments. The present study demonstrates shopping as one of the attracting activities in Tehran bazaar that attracts inbound visitors who are categorized into 'Ideal-sense seekers', 'Middle want vacationers', 'Principled behavior enthusiasts', and 'Special aspiring visitors' segments. This bazaar differentiated from specialized corridor markets with several entrances to shopping centers that offer a great variety of modern and traditional products and services, and it could become a big and specific tourist attraction. SMTEs, Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization and Tehran municipality should cooperate to create some alternative tourist attractions and provide reliable transportation for accessibility-oriented visitors to reach the bazaar easily. Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization must be making laws and regulations to ensure to support environmental conservation and preservation of the grand bazaar. These findings suggest that SMTEs, Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization and Tehran municipality need to build infrastructure and facilities that are required by tourism industry in order to provide comfort for inbound visitors that want to see Tehran bazaar. The socio-demographic profile of inbound visitors who travel to Tehran's grand bazaar demonstrates that more than two-thirds of them were coming to Tehran bazaar for the first time and they made travel arrangements for themselves. Most of the visitors belonged to male group gender. Tourism stakeholders in Tehran may use the findings from this study to improve and increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of the Tehran grand bazaar to inbound visitors.

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