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*Isfahan University & Lulea University*

# THE TYPOLOGY OF INBOUND TOURISTS VISITING IRAN

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**Master Thesis in Tourism and Hospitality Management**

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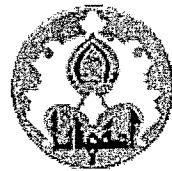
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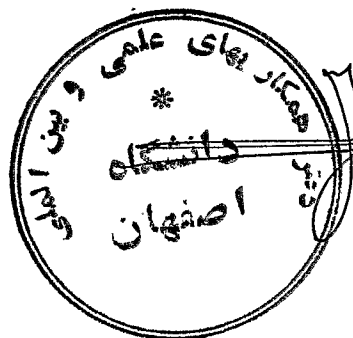
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## ABSTARCT

Tourism and tourists has become a characteristic feature of current societies. Cities and regions are being planned and transformed in a way that they will attract more tourists and tourism investors. With the increasing improvement of tourism industry, the custodians of this industry should have plans to improve and construct new facilities, adequate plans for the entertainment of tourists so that they can have a higher income from this industry. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to deliberate more about motivation, personality, reasons and patterns of inbound tourists with emphasis on tourists staying at hotels in Tehran. Data gained will be given to managers, programmers and responsible peoples in the tourism industry, with the intention that they can organize a plan to develop effective investment and management programs.

So far extensive research on the destination, and personality and typology of tourists has been done and it has proven that there is a very close relation between personality of tourists and their motives for choosing their destination. In Iran there have been few researches carried out on the topic but not exactly under this title. The lack of applied research on this subject in Iran has motivated me to do this research.

This research is done with the purpose of knowing more about motivation, reasons and patterns of foreign tourists so that the result can be forwarded to managers, programmers and responsible people in tourism industry. Because on these results, related organizations can organize tourism activities, plan investments, provide ideal standards and services which would pare the ground for scientific management of the programs at destination points.

The population includes all the tourists traveling to Iran from August 22<sup>nd</sup> to December 11<sup>th</sup>. In this study, the emphasis is on the tourists who stay in hotels of Tehran, but because there are many hotels in this city, multi-phase cluster sampling method was used. Therefore, first, randomly 10 hotels out of all hotels in Tehran were chosen, then 10 tourists were chosen randomly among tourists staying in each of these hotels. A sample of 100 tourists was gathered.

To evaluate personal characteristics of these tourists and to find out their motives of Choosing Iran as their destination, questionnaires were used. The questionnaire that has been used was partly designed by researcher and partly designed by professor Plog. The questionnaire has two separate parts, its first 8 questions has been adopted from professor Plog's famous travel personality quiz. Second part of this questionnaire which is designed by the researcher evaluates the tourists' motivations for traveling to Iran.

This thesis indicates that the predominant types of tourists visiting Iran are of "Venturer" personality and as it has been mentioned before, these groups are characterized as "adventurous, self-confident, curious, outgoing, belonging to higher income levels. Moreover, in this thesis 14 motives were proposed and the relations between every motive with these two types of personality were studied. It also has been found that there is a significant difference between male and female in regard to some motives. Furthermore, the relation between age- groups and the motives has been studied and it can be viewed in table 4-27.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### **1-1 Introduction:**

Studying tourists' motivations and personality provides insight to help destination managers in regards to product development, image creation, promotional activity design, and destination positioning. Identifying tourist's motivations, personality and reasons of their trip also gives destination managers information to assist with decisions concerning the quantity and quality of services to provide visitors.

Tourism and tourists have become a characteristic feature of contemporary societies. Tourism as an industry accounts for about seven percent of world trade, and places, cities and regions are being planned and transformed in a way that they will attract more tourists and tourism investors. Even whole countries can be highly dependent on tourists and the tourist trade. The role of tourism in society has also increased in a metaphorical sense, for as Jokinen and Veijola (1997) state; the tourist seems "to appear everywhere, in every keynote paper at social scientific conferences, as a symbol of our supposedly post-modern era". Social theorists and other commentators are increasingly debating over questions that are traditionally seen as the fundamental issues in tourism studies: what is a tourist, what is it to be a tourist, why should one to be a tourist and why should one to travel? In general it is a question of tourist motives, typologies and personality.

The debate on tourism often conceptualizes tourist motives in terms of push and pull factors, the former referring to the socio-psychological and individual elements of these motives and the latter to the destinations and their features (see Crompton, 1979, Dann, 1981, Cohen, 1984, Witt and Wright, 1992). The everyday environment and its physical, mental and cultural features are examined in the context of push factors, as are the individual and societal

structures that create a (temporary) need to get away from home. As far as the pull factors are concerned, interest is focused on tourist destinations, their representations and the processes constructing them.

Tourists are classified and categorized in various ways in the literature (see Pearce, 1982, Cohen, 1984, Dann and Cohen, 1991, Lowyck et al., 1992). The physiologies published in early 19th century Paris can be seen as distinct "ancestors" of present-day tourist typologies. These physiologies were to be found in popular paperback literature, which described human personalities and features that one could observe and meet in the commotion of the metropolis. As in the case of tourist typologies, the object of interest, human character, was associated to a certain environment deemed to be characteristic of each type (Benjamin, 1973).

Unlike physiologies, however, most of our tourist typologies are based on the motives of the tourist, and as such can be classified into two main groups: interactive tourist typologies that stress the interplay between tourists and their destinations and tourist environments, and cognitive-normative typologies that consider more the psychological elements attached to the tourists themselves (Murphy, 1985). Perhaps the two best known and most widely used of the tourist typologies are those formulated by Erik Cohen (1972) and Stanley Plog (1973). Cohen's classical typology is an example of the interactive group, whereas that of Plog (1973) is of the cognitive-normative type. Cohen (1972) categorizes tourists according to the general nature of the environment they prefer: safe and usual or unknown and different. He identifies four types: drifters, explorers, individual mass tourists and organized mass tourists.

Plog (1973), that his questioner is going to be used in this thesis, classifies tourists into three types on the basis of the psychological dimensions of their personality. Allocentrics are individualistic, active and adventurous travelers, psychocentrics are the opposite, conservative

and passive tourists who choose common, popular and safe destinations and activities, while the Mid-centrics are intermediate to the previous two and according to Plog constitute the most common 'or average' tourist type. Mid-centrics are hybrids that need some sense of individualism at their destination but with organized travel arrangements and safety ensured by the use of a travel agent.

These tourist typologies are generally accepted, but also contested in the tourism literature (see Smith, 1990). The reasons for travel form a continuum (Dann and Cohen, 1991), and the categorization of tourist types in practice is problematic, especially if a type is seen as equivalent to an individual. As Cohen (1988) states, there is no such person as the tourist (Richter, 1995). What he means is that the tourism is a multivalent activity and there is more than one type of tourist-on-the-move. But there is another perspective to the relationship between tourist and person apart from Cohen's. Like the types of social action described by Max Weber (1978), instrumentally rational, value-rational, effectual and traditional, tourist typologies should be seen as ideal types, which cannot be necessarily identified in "reality" as such. A specific tourist type is not necessarily equal to an individual tourist. It is possible, and even probable, that during the same journey and within the same destination, the motives and activities of tourists would be cast within more than one conceptual category of any tourist typology. The motives of tourists and the types of tourist change in space and time.

Tourism from long ago has its specific forms in human society regarding the basic of motivation of traveling and dislocation and through the time it has reached its evolution. We can understand these improvements in the tourism industry by studying the industrial revolution which brought up new aspect in living and transportations.

Today, income of tourism business has been placed fourth after agriculture, industry and urban services and the experts are predicting that by year 2020 tourism industry will be the most profitable industry in the world, which it will be called the invisible industry that the cities are its economical centers.

With the increasing improvement of tourism industry, the custodians of this industry should have plans to improve and construct new facilities, adequate plan for the entertainment of tourists so they can have a higher income from this industry. Iran as of an ancient country with a great culture and a lot of historic sights and variety of climates is in the 10 top country in the world, but unfortunately for some reasons, this country is not using its potential at all and this is very shameful and distressing. One way to expand and develop this industry in any country is to know the needs of tourists and their intention of visiting the country. With this knowledge of these necessities will be able to make adequate preparation for visitors so they can enjoy their visits and recommend others to visit Iran.

## **1-2 Tourism in Iran**

Iran or Persia as it used to be called is an ancient country which enjoys attractions that make the country a unique one, Iran is the second largest country in the Middle East, and has thousand years of fascinating history. For aficionados of nature, history, culture and art, Iran is rich and attractive. Along with its splendid history and culture, Iran is a diverse land and has a great variety of geographical environment. Iran's climatic diversity is such that some tourists can enjoy winter sports in the mountains while others can bathe in the warm waters of the southern shores, both within a few hours drive from the main cities. The most noticeable highlight of Iran is its people. Nomadic lifestyles are still present throughout Iran and a great attraction for many tourists.

Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Francesco Frangialli described Iran as a nation with rich culture and civilization, and he predicted a bright future for the country's tourism. Iran is one of the countries that have a very good potential for being one of the touristiest places. Iran has an impressive history, fascinating culture, and incomparable hospitality that keep tourists coming back. It is also perhaps one of the most misunderstood and contradictive societies in the world.

The Revolution of 1979 has caused the media to generate much propaganda about Iran, thereby scarring its image, particularly in the Western world. Before 1979, Iran was a well sought-after destination due to its impressive history of over 2,500 years. United States citizens alone accounted for 70,000 of the tourist arrivals in 1977 (compared to 800 in 1995) (Alavi and Yasin, 2000, p. 13). Many American hotel chains such as the Hilton, Sheraton, Intercontinental, and Hyatt developed hotels throughout the country; however, within days of the Revolution, all Western businesses were forced to pull out, and Iran's tourism sector plummeted. The economy dropped further from the eight-year war with neighboring Iraq.

According to UN statistics, Iran is one of the world's top 10 countries in terms of tourist attractions, it has a great potential to be amongst famous destinations and attract many tourists, but unfortunately for some reasons, this country is not using its all potential.

The number of tourist arrivals to Iran through years 2001/2005

| Number of tourism(in thousand)  | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Africa</b>                   | 2    | 1    | 2    | 3    | 3    |
| <b>America</b>                  | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3    | 3    |
| <b>Europe</b>                   | 16   | 21   | 26   | 44   | 63   |
|                                 | 6    | 5    | 1    | 9    | 1    |
| <b>Pacific and East of Asia</b> | 15   | 16   | 17   | 11   | 18   |
| <b>South of Asia</b>            | 12   | 15   | 20   | 19   | 25   |
|                                 | 2    | 5    | 9    | 4    | 6    |
| <b>Middle East</b>              | 54   | 62   | 75   | 80   | 97   |

Source: world tourism organization.

The World Tourism Organization statistic of tourism indicates that the most recent statistic of arrivals to Iran is 740,000 and Iran holds the 56<sup>th</sup> position in tourist arrival in the world which is not acceptable in comparing with Iran's potentials and capacities.

As I mentioned above, Iran is a country that has lots of potential to grow its tourism and be one of the most desirable destinations but unfortunately it is facing issues and

problems such as poverty, religion obstacle for example alcohol use and women's dress code (hejab), Lack of facilities in terms of accommodations, hotels, transportations, also being deficient in management and planning, failure of introducing the real features of Iran to world and other problem as such make it hard for Iran to develop its tourism and gain as much as necessary benefits from this industry.

### **1-3 Statement of the problem:**

Tourism as of now is the biggest industry in the world and we see millions of visitors are relocated in the world every year. As of an industry, for tourism marketing and management, it is very essential to know and understand the needs of customers to be able to minimize the negative effects of those unaccepted events of trips for visitors so that the customers with all kinds of personality and cultures will remember all the good times and the new memories. With adequate knowledge of motivation and needs of visitors for the destination managers, they will be able to make a better plan for a successful trip and acceptable conditions to satisfy all kind of visitors.

Since consequently the destinations of visitors are growing rapidly and competition is very intense, the knowledge about the necessities of visitors is important to attract them. Since right now for attracting visitors a lot of new techniques are used, it seems the best way is to try to identify and understand the visitors; the visitor's personality and their reasons and motivations that they have chosen this destination. The evidence explains that there is a psychological reason for the visitor's choice of destinations.

The inbound tourism plays an important role in the economical progress of the country, so with true knowledge of their motives, reasons and their personalities for which they have chosen this destination, therefore we should make all kind of efforts to make them enjoy



their times while they are staying here and when they go back to their countries, they will be happy and completely satisfied. The visitor's destination is one of the most important constituent in the tourism industry.

The lack of proper understanding of tourists involve, it has caused a negative economical, social and publicities for Iran at most it has hurt the reputation of Iran in the world. It is obvious if there is not enough information and understanding of visitors we will not be able to create proper conditions and opportunities for them so in result we will have a displeased visitors that will not be ready to repeat this experience again, this will cause a negative reputation for Iran and since as of marketing laws an unsatisfied tourist prevents the trips of ten tourists and a pleasant visitor will make way for at least three or more visitors. Analysis of values and motivations and different personalities of visitors coming to Iran will show us that what kind of activity and entertainments they are interested in; furthermore the mangers and people in charge will be able to provide and improve their services and products to respond better to tourist's needs and wants.

As have been said this thesis is done with the purpose of knowing more about motivation, personality, reasons and patterns of foreign tourists with emphasis on tourists staying at hotels in Tehran, so that this information will be given to managers, programmers and responsible peoples in the tourism industry, with the intention that they can organize a plan to develop effective investment and management programs.

#### **1-4 Objectives of the research:**

- 1- To determine the typology of tourists visiting Iran.
- 2- To identify the main motivations of tourists visiting Iran

3- To determine if there would be any difference in motivations and typology between tourists with a different nationality.

#### **1-5 Significant and importance of research:**

This research is done with the purpose of knowing more about motivation, personality, reasons and patterns of foreign tourists so that this information will be given to managers, so that they can organize a plan to develop effective investment and management programs.

#### **1-6 Application of the Research:**

The objectives of this research are to help the management and other employed personnel in this industry, so that they will be able to understand the motivation and the reason of foreign visitors to that destination. Also to find out the exact influential factors on the typology of visitors such as, motives, perspectives, typology and their previous experiences.

- 1- To introduce proper techniques for tourism policy making in Iran.
- 2- To introduce proper techniques for personnel in charge of Iran's cultural heritage and tourism and handicrafts.
- 3- To introduce proper techniques for managing destinations of private sectors.
- 4- Introducing proper techniques to upgrade the system of expansion and development of the tourism industry in Iran.

#### **1-7 Questions of the research:**

- 1- What is the description of Iran inbound tourists mix with respect to their personal characteristics?
- 2- How to determine the typology of tourists visiting Iran?
- 3- What are the main motivations of tourists visiting Iran?

### **1-8 Research methodology:**

- **Method:** Survey.

- **Population:** Inbound tourists visiting Iran and staying at hotels with emphasizing on city of Tehran.

-**sampling methods:**

Grouped and simple incidental

- **collecting data tools:**

Journals, e-journals, Text books, e-books, Questionnaire, Observation.

- **Questionnaire:**

The questionnaire used in this thesis includes 25 questions; the first 8 belong to Professor Plog famous psychographic scale. The rest of the questions are compiled from an assortment of articles on tourism in aid of investigating the motives of the traveler choosing to visit Iran.

In the final section, the aim is to gain statistical information on the age groups, level of education and gender of tourists coming to Iran. The questionnaire will be affixed to this chapter.

- **Analysis tools:**

Descriptive analysis and statistical tests such as one-sample T- test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), cluster analysis, and using soft wares such as SPSS, and Minitab.

### **1-9 Definition of Keywords:**

Tourist motivations: Tourist motivation can be defined "as the global integrating network of biological and cultural forces which gives value and direction to travel choices, behavior and experience". (Pearce, Morrison & Rutledge, 1998, p.....).

Tourist typology: Over the years, researchers have developed several tourist typologies with the purpose of providing a better understanding of tourists' needs and motivations. The

current tourist typologies are mostly based on the motives of the tourist, and can be classified into two main groups: interactive tourist typologies that stress the interplay between tourists and their destinations and tourism environments, and cognitive-normative typologies that consider more the psychological elements attached to the tourists themselves (Raj, 2004, p..).

Market segmentation: The process by which people with similar needs, wants and characteristics are grouped together so that an organization can use greater precision in serving and communicating with its chosen customer.” (Mill, R.C., et. al., 199)

Inbound tourism: Comprises the consumption of non-resident visitors within the economic territory of the country of reference and/or that provided by residents. (WTO, 2001)