

**INVESTIGATING TOURISM MARKET AND MANAGEMENT****Vali Neimanti*¹**¹Faculty member, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran.**ABSTRACT**

Knowing tourist's behaviors in destinations has a great importance in order to understand tourism outcomes and appropriate planning. Analyzing tourists' behaviors can help to offer good facilities and to optimize resource allocation. In this research we have used questionnaire to gather data in three main summer tourism spots in Ardabil province, namely Sarein spa complexes, Shorabil recreational complexes and Sheikh Safi historical site. Results show that most of arrivals come from neighboring provinces and from Tehran. In using different information sources, advertisement has the lowest score. By analyzing data we have discovered some good information about travel decision time, staying length, accommodation modes and so on.

Keywords: Tourism, Traveling Process, Marketing Research, Ardabil Reigns.

INTRODUCTION

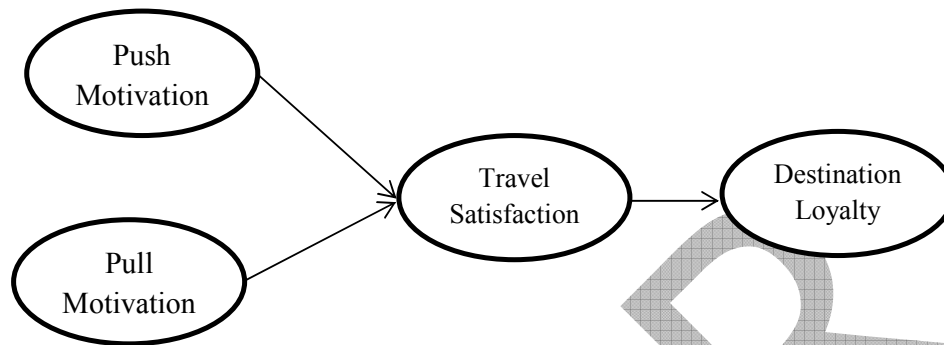
One of the most preliminary stages of planning - especially in the long term and strategic planning –is identifying the current status. The tourism planning has been no exception from special attention. Countries have significant attention to tourism due to positive socio-cultural effects. Tourism going to be the first industry of the world because of taking part in national revenue making and economic growth. As a result many countries by making themes and infrastructures try to use its advantages. For many of these countries tourism is a fundamental source for business activities, revenue making, employment and foreign exchange (Haber, Lerner, 1998:198)

After oil and car industry, tourism is the greatest industry of the world and it has 6 to 7 percent of world employment direct or indirectly. There is no doubt tourism will be flowered and got top places by and by. WTO rereported that tourism share of world trade is 30% and more than 6% of goods and services trade belong to tourism. For many countries it is not just a revenue source but the important and greatest activity complex in economical balance and job making. UNWTO forecasts that from 2010 to 2030 the number of international tourists by 3.3% growth will reach to 1.8 billion (Unwto Tourism Highlights, 2010).

TRAVELING PROCESS

Understanding leisure travel decision-making is a daunting task because the process may extend over decades and many decisions are not made until the visitor arrives at the destination. Past experiences, both consciously and unconsciously filed in travelers' memories as well and external stimuli affect traveler decisions (Martin, 2010: 372).

A review of the literature on motivation reveals that people travel because they are “pushed” into making travel decisions by internal, psychological forces, and “pulled” by the external forces of the destination attributes (Yoon&Uysal, 2005: 45).



Yoon & Uysal, 2005: 46

A travelers’ decision-making rule is an evaluation system that represents the perception and assessment of travelers of the attributes of route alternatives. In reality, however, an individual’s behavior is usually influenced by his or her personality, psychological state, and risk preference and environmental elements, among other factors (Zhou& et al, 2011: 218).

Making and holding a destination with attractive environment for tourists and local people and for economical development has its importance for tourism planners. To attract people and make them stay longer, knowing their behaviour in destination is very important (Kemperman et al, 2009). Different destinations for attracting tourists with respecting cultural and geographical and regarding market information and market needs, proper necessary infrastructure for turning tourist wanted one. This is need to systematic approach by making and offering good facilities toward tourism. This is the first step in attracting and holding tourists by reattracting them (Ebrahimpour et al, 1389). As a result surveying market position is a key to know tourists needs and wants.

MARKETING RESEARCH

Marketing research is the systematic gathering, recording, processing and analysing of data. It is undertaken to improve the quality of marketing decisions. The information provided by this research is used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems, to refine and evaluate actions, to monitor performance, and to improve the understanding of marketing as a process (Jafari, 2000: 381).

In large organizations market research amongst staff can assess levels of job satisfaction, identify problem areas and discover ideas for product improvement. In small and medium-sized travel and tourism companies, the encouragement of upward communication coupled with an open-door policy may suffice. Use of employees within prestigious advertising campaigns aimed at consumers also targets messages at staff and can be used to reward achieving employees and to motivate others as well as creating a sense of ownership (Middleton & Clarke, 2001: 98). Customers can provide a vital source for new product ideas,

particularly if the organization carries out regular quantitative and qualitative market research surveys with them (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2005: 95). In terms of demand, the approach requires market research focused on customer needs, behaviour and perceptions in order to define target segments and to identify strengths and weaknesses of product design and images (Middleton & Clarke, 2001: 136).

Market research indicates that many visitors to tourism destinations, especially foreign and first-time visitors, are open to suggestion and persuasion from all sources of information, especially those having the official endorsement and authority of an NTO and its regional bodies (Middleton & Clarke, 2001: 345). Market research can be used to identify the benefits that are important to various types of consumers. This marketing information allows management to segment the market based on benefits sought, as well as demographic, psychographic, or behavioral variables (Reid & Bojanic, 2006: 135).

Market research is an essential prerequisite for an organisation to analyse its markets in the ways outlined above. Research data needs to be comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date which means it is often expensive to gather (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2005:158). The characteristics of each segment were derived by market research and became the basis for devising marketing strategy and marketing campaigns, and for forecasting and evaluating the results achieved (Middleton & Clarke, 2001: 358).

Market research indicates that information is collected for a specific reason or project; the major objective is a one-time use (Reid & Bojanic, 2006: 204). An important consideration in market research assessment of destination image is gaining an understanding of consumer decision sets (Pike, 2004: 109). All the new product ideas should be screened to see which are acceptable for the organisation. This may involve talking to experts or market research with potential customers. This stage should prove that the ideas are suitable for the market (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2005: 97). The two other aspects of the competitive environment for a marketing information system are market research activities and marketing audits. Market research encompasses a wide range of activities undertaken to generate information about a firm's products, customers, and external environment. Marketing audits are evaluations of the effectiveness of current marketing practices. In particular, marketing audits are used to monitor marketing plans on an annual basis (Reid & Bojanic, 2006: 207).

The market research enabled the development of a brand identity and a five year strategy for increasing market exposure, industry partnerships and developing new infrastructure and tourism products (Pike, 2004: 84).

To produce a good brief, organizations require up-to-date market research. They need to think about (Morgan & Pritchard, 2000: 27):

- What is happening in the marketplace and what is likely to happen in the near future?
- Who is the campaign aimed at?
- Does enough information exist to profile the target market or is more required?
- What needs to be done to get this information?

In addition to effective research, a brief needs clearly expressed goals that answer:

- What should the advertising achieve?

- How does an advertiser want to influence consumers?
- Does the advertiser want to raise their awareness?
- Does the advertiser want to change their perceptions?
- Who is the brand competing against?
- How does the brand stack up against them?
- How can it be truly differentiated from the rest?

In this study has tried to establish a profile from major attractions of Ardabil city's tourists and visitors in the summer of 2012.

ARDABIL REIGNS

Ardebīl is a historical, cultural and natureal city in north-western Iran. Ardabil is the center of Ardabil Province. Many hot springs and beautiful natural landscapes are in Ardabil and around which attract tourists. This reign have good climate, sites, hills, bridges, buildings and castles. The mineral springs of Ardabil (Beele-Darreh, Sar'eyn, Sardabeh and Booshloo) are notable throughout Iran for their medicinal qualities. Many beauty lakes: the largest of which are Ne'or, Shorabil, ShoorGel, NouShahr and Aloocheh that are the habitats of some species of water birds. The beautiful Lake Ne'or is located in a mountainous area 48 km south-east of the city of Ardabil. It covers an area of 2.1 km² and has an average depth of 3 metres. It is fed by springs in the lake bed. In addition to these, in many villages of Ardabil, relics of ancient monuments, including tombs have been found. Table 1 shows the Anthropology of Ardabil.

Table 1: Anthropology of Ardabil.

Attraction	Description
The complex of Sheikh Safi-ad-din Ardabili is a World Heritage Site, comprising the following components: the mausoleums of Sheikh Safi and Shah Ismail I, Chini khaneh (meaning the house of chinaware), a mosque, Jannat Sara (meaning the house of paradise), Khanaqah (the house of Dervishes), Cheragh Khaneh (the house of lamps), Shahid khaneh (the house of martyrs) and Chelleh Khaneh (the place where devotees shut themselves up during the forty days of Lent). The mausoleum of Sheikh Safi, the dome of which is called "Allah-Allah" has an octagonal interior.	
Masjid Jameh	Ruins of once magnificent and unique mosque
Mirza Ali Akbar mosque and school	This complex dates back to Qajar period
Ardabil Bazaar	This Persian bazaar was built during Safavid period and in addition to main bazaar hall with open vaults has ahammam and a small yet mystifying mosque.
Ardabil bridges	Ardabil host numerous historical bridges namely <i>Pol-e Gilandeh</i> , <i>Pol-e Nayer</i> , <i>Pol-e Haft Cheshmeh</i> , <i>Pol-e Panj Cheshmeh</i> and <i>Pol-e She Cheshmeh</i> and Qarah Soo Bridge, most were built during Safavid era.
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Imamzadeh Saleh mausoleum	The mausoleum of Imamzadeh Saleh who is a descendant of a Shia Imam was built 250 years ago.
Saint Mary church	This orthodox church has a beautiful wooden main door and painted dome built in 1876.
mausoleum of Sheikh Jebra'il	located 2 km north of Ardabil
old but always lively bazaar	
Babadavood Anbaran	Friday mosque

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive – analytical study that has done to study of the tourism market in Ardabil. Population of the study is all Ardabil's tourist in 2012. To gathering of data from 400 persons, we used a questionnaire with the simple random sampling in Lake Shorabil, Collection of Sheikh Safi Addin Ardabilis and Sarein city's Hot and treatment Groundwater. In order to analyze the data resulted from collected questionnaires descriptive statistical methods are used, and to display some statistical data we used column diagram.

RESULTS

The survey of visitor demographic information has been shown that Fifty eight percent are male and Fourty two percent are female. The responder's age is 8 percent under 20 years old. 30.25 percent are between 21-30, 31.5 percent are between 31-40, 19.75 percent are between 41-50 and 10.5 percent are upper 51 years old. It means that the most of the responder have under 40 years old and they are youngs. (Table 2)

Table 2: Responders age

Responder's age		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Under 20	32	8
	21-30	121	30.25
	31-40	126	31.5
	41-50	79	19.75
	Upper 50	42	10.5
	Total	400	100.0

Table 3 shows the the responder's number of travel to ardabil province. is 8 percent under 20 years old. 30.25 percent are between 21-30, 31.5 percent are between 31-40, 19.75 percent are between 41-50 and 10.5 percent are upper 51 years old. It means that the most of the responder have several times travel to Ardabil .

Table 3: Responder's number of travel

Responder's number of travel		Frequency	Percent
Valid	First Time	84	21
	Second Time	99	25
	Third Time	125	31
	More Than 3 Times	92	23
	Total	400	100.0

Table 4 shoes the Reasons for Choosing Ardabil as a Destination. We asked the reasons for choosing Ardabil as a destination with eight item (Accidental, In path of travel, Reputation of attractions, Recommend a friend, Advertising Previous experience and Friends and relatives).

Table 4: Reasons for choosing Ardabil as a destination

Responder's number of trips		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Accidental	10	3
	In path of travel	55	14
	Reputation of attractions	84	23
	Recommend a friend	68	18
	Advertising	4	1
	Previous experience	95	26
	Friends and relatives	53	14
	Total	400	100.0

The most important reasons for choosing Ardabil as a destination is Previous experience with 26 percent. It shows that Tourists have satisfaction from Ardabil as a destination.

One of the important items of this survey was this question “ where was the the Ardabil tourists last year? To find the answer to this question we asked responders to choose their last year destination the from 31 province of Iran. The Khorasan Razavi, Ardabil, Fars, Isfahan, Gilan, Mazandaran, and Golestan provinces have highest Tourists.

Table 5: Past year destinations

Responder's past year destinations		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Khorasan Razavi	127	32
	Ardabil	101	25
	Fars	76	19
	Isfahan	64	16
	Gilan	57	15
	Mazandaran	54	13.5
	East Azarbaijan	48	12
	Golestan	45	11
	Total	400	100.0

Khorasan Razavi province with 32 percent have the highest tourists between 8 province and Golestan with 11 percent have the lower tourists.

One of the most important to identify tourists' decision making processes factors is Decision time for travel. It help to planning and organizing the traveling programs and do activities purposefully and largely avoids wasted resources.

Table 6: Decision time for travel

Responder's Decision time for travel		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Accidental	72	18
	Before May	40	10
	The first half of May	46	11.5
	The second half of of May	85	21
	The first half of June	81	20
	The second half of June	61	15
	Other	15	4
	Total	400	100.0

The results shows that most of the people who travel to Ardabil province in the summer decided to travel in May.

Table 7: Visited Attractions or viewed list of the tourists

Responder's Visited Attractions		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Sarein's Fountains	198	49.5
	Shorabil Lake	50	12.5
	Ardabil Market	48	12
	Mausoleum of Sheikh Safi	77	19.25
	Fandoglo Forest	15	3.75
	Other fountains	12	3
	Total	400	100.0

The result of table 7 showsn that the most popular Ardabil's tourist attraction is hot and mineral water springs in Sarein according to the passengers point of view. The Mausoleum of

Sheikh Safi with 19.25, Shorabil Lake visitors with 12.5, Market Ardabil with 12, Fandoglo Forest with 3.75 and Other fountains with 3 percent are highest to lowest visited attractions. Findings show that the most important reasons for choosing Ardabil as a destination is Previous experience with 26 percent. It shows that Tourists have satisfaction from Ardabil as a destination. Khorasan Razavi province with 32 percent have the highest tourists between 8 province and Golestan with 11 percent have the lower tourists. Ardabil have second position after Khorasan Razavi. Also, the most of the people who travel to Ardabil province in the summer decided to travel in May. Finally, the centralization of tourist were on hot and mineral water springs in Sarein and other hot and mineral water springs can not attract tourist because they have Lack of marketing, Absence Advertising, Financial weakness, Mismanagement of resources and Lack of proper road ways.

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