A CONSIDERATION OF THE FACTORS INFLUENCING SPORT TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ZANJAN-IRAN

Akbar Heidary
Student, (M.A.) University of Tehran, Iran

S.N. Sajjadi
Member, (Ph.D) University of Tehran, Iran

M.J. Farahani
Member, (Ph.D) University of Tehran, Iran

Shahram IskandariPour
(M.A.) University of Tarbiat Moaelum

Abolfazl Meshkini
(Ph.D) Tarbiat Mudares University

Tagi Heidary
(M.A.) Tarbiat Mudares University

ABSTRACT

Today, tourism and sport enjoy a complementary interrelationship directly affecting the nations’ economy. Also, sport tourism is, nowadays, considered as the most lucrative industry worldwide. In addition, it may affect the all social strata economically and politically. Thus needless to say that much more attention should be directed to the industry through clear-cut policies, visions and constructive plans in this regard. To this end, In this paper, the authors investigate and offer guidelines for sport tourism development in Zanjan from economic, social and cultural perspectives. This is an applied research carried out as field study. The statistical sample is divided into 2 groups: 1) Experts including physical education teachers, cultural heritage and physical education department employees and, 2) Customers including different sportsmen/women traveling to Zanjan. The research tool is a 43 item researcher-made questionnaire in Likert scale whose reliability and validity were confirmed by a board of university professors. To process the data, we applied demographical as well as inferential statistics. The chi-square results revealed that there was a significant relationship between both experts and customers’ perceptions about sport tourism development in Zanjan.

Keywords: sport tourism, Zanjan, tourism
INTRODUCTION

One of the Industries in the world is tourism industry in which sport tourism has attracted much more attention. Sport and Tourism make the world a small place enhancing more understanding between tolerance and world peace, eventually. Sport Tourism is an economic, environmental, social, and political phenomenon as well as attractive mixture of both sport and Tourism. For instance, Tourism Organization in 2004 acknowledged that 55% of people travel abroad in Germany and 52% of Dutch people travel for sport purposes. A great number of those tourists are male, single and highly educated. Racially, the blacks and the Asians make up the biggest sport tourists and the age group below 40 years, especially between 17 to 22 years, gives more importance sports tourism. Sport Tourism in Iran has its root in Sport Tourism Commission in National Olympic Committee. World Tourism Organization (WTO) has predicted Tourism Industry in 2020 will increase with the Annual rate of 4.1%. Also, number of inbound tourist to Iran will grow with average annual rate of 8.4% through 1955 to 2020. Additionally, thanks to sports tourism growth in the past 50 years, it is regarded as one of the most important social and economic phenomena of the twentieth century.

Problem statement: What are the factors influencing sport tourism development in Zanjan: Customers and Experts’ viewpoints

Research questions:

What are sporting events quality factors affecting sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?
What are tourism facilities factors affecting sport tourist’s attraction in Zanjan?
What are cultural and social factors affecting sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?
What are geographical factors affecting sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?
What are marketing factors affecting sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?
What are security and safety factors affecting sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?
What are economic factors affecting sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?

METHODOLOGY

The present study is applied and the data collection method is descriptive and survey type.
Questionnaire: It is researcher-made one consisting of 43 5-scale items whose reliability and validity were confirmed by professors and Cronbach alpha (83%), respectively.

Statistical population: Due to the nature of the study, we divided our statistical population into 2 groups as following:

1) Experts group: There were 110 physical education teachers, 4 cultural heritage experts, 15 academic physical education professors and 5 physical education department experts. Having determined our statistical population, we set out to select the statistical sample in which all of statistical population were chosen as our samples except for the teachers of whom we selected 86 teachers based on the Krejesi & Morgan table (110=86). Finally our experts group was 110 individuals.

2) Customers group: we wanted to have an equal number of customers as of experts. So, we distributed 110 questionnaires among different sportsmen/women coming to Zanjan. These customers were university students participating in academic competitions held in Zanjan as well individuals traveling to resorts in Zanjan. It should be noted we chose our customers based on availability sampling method. We used descriptive and inferential statistics –chi-square-to test our research questions.

RESULTS

Table 1: The demographical information of both groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Academic degree</th>
<th>Management background</th>
<th>Coaching background</th>
<th>Job</th>
<th>Event participation background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

As it is shown in Table 2, there is a significance relationship between both experts and customers’ perceptions as for all 7 factors (df=3, P<.05) in terms of sport tourism development in Zanjan.

Table 2: The chi-square results about 2 groups’ viewpoints regarding the 7 factors in terms of sport tourism development in Zanjan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Statistics</th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
<th>Q6</th>
<th>Q7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square a,b</td>
<td>181.055</td>
<td>218.509</td>
<td>126.873</td>
<td>170.109</td>
<td>146.818</td>
<td>80.545</td>
<td>116.618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 55.0.
b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 44.0.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The tourism and sports shall supplement each other and the resulting revenue from sport tourism can be an economic leverage. Given the favorable geographical conditions, Zanjan can afford to host and cater a great number of mountain climbers, hunters, cyclists and national teams so that it can increase local economy productivity and meet social and recreational needs of different users.

Effects of Sport Tourism: Economic, Cultural and Social.

Economic impacts: Sport Tourism is one of the most prolific industry and world economy components. Plus, it is a multi-million dollar business and can be such an important source of foreign exchange earnings, generating economic and employment opportunity that, based on reports, each tourist creates 7 to 9 jobs when entering the country.

Social and cultural effects: In order to stabilize cultural values in the international scene, there must be increased sports tourism which is the best tool for dialogue among civilizations and causes development, strengthens friendships, builds bridges between cultures and ends up with strengthening social cohesion and promotion of national belonging.

To sum up, authorities are supposed to pay much more attention to public sports in national and international levels and participate actively in international conferences and creating sports
tourism database. Also, they can seek the support of private sectors, create employment and attract investors in terms of constructing and equipping multi-hosted/purposes sport facilities as well as undertaking sporting events. Most importantly, developing Sport Tourism so as to consolidate peace and friendship and sport globalization and strengthening and striving for national identity shall be considered as the ultimate goal of sport tourism development.

REFERENCES


