

Prioritization of the Factors Affecting Sport Tourism Development

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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 all the 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 investigated and offered the guidelines for sport tourism development in Zanjan from economic, social and cultural perspectives. This was an applied research carried out as a field study. The statistical sample was divided into 2 groups: 1) Experts including physical education teachers, cultural heritage and physical education department employees and, 2) Customers including different sportsmen and sportswomen traveling to Zanjan. The research tool was a 43 item researcher-made questionnaire in Likert scale whose reliability and validity were confirmed by the board of university professors. We applied descriptive to describe the demography and T-test and Friedman to determine the differences and prioritize both groups` viewpoints regarding 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 an 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 to sports tourism. Sport Tourism in Iran has its root in Sport

Tourism Commission in National Olympic Committee. World Tourism Organization (WTO) has predicted that Tourism Industry in 2020 will increase with the annual rate of 4.1%. Also, a number of inbound tourists to Iran will grow with an 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: Is there any difference between the experts and customers' viewpoints regarding the factors influencing the sport tourism development in Zanjan-Iran?

What are the priorities of sport tourism development?

Research hypotheses:

There is a difference between customers and experts' viewpoints regarding sporting events factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?

There is a difference between customers and experts' viewpoints regarding tourism facilities factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?

There is a difference between customers and experts' viewpoints regarding cultural and social factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?

There is a difference between customers and experts' viewpoints regarding geographical factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?

There is a difference between customers and experts' viewpoints regarding marketing factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?

There is a difference between customers and experts' viewpoints regarding security and safety factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?

There is a difference between customers and experts' viewpoints regarding economic factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?

Methodology

The present study was an applied research and the data collection method is descriptive and survey type.

Questionnaire: It was researcher-made one consisting of 43 questions (5-scale items) whose reliability and validity were confirmed by professors and Cronbach alpha (83%), respectively.

Statistical population: Due to the nature of 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 sample 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 as individuals traveling to resorts in Zanjan. It should be noted that we chose our customers based on availability sampling method. We used descriptive, t-test and Friedman to test our research questions.

Results

Table 1: The demographical information of both groups

Sex	Age	Academic degree	Management background	Coaching background	Job	Event participation background
Male:159 Female:61	Under 30:143 Over 30:77	Associate degree: 112 B.A:85 M.A and over:23	No management:92 Under 10:17 Over 10:21	No coaching: 108 Under 10:94 Over 10:18	Teacher:86 University professor : 15 Expert:9 Customers:110	Yes:191 No:29
Total:220	Total:220	Total:220	Total:220	Total:220	Total:220	Total:220

H₁: There is a difference between customers and experts viewpoints regarding sporting events factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan? The findings revealed a significant difference between both groups` viewpoints (df=217, t=13.627, P<.05)

H₂: There is a difference between customers and experts `viewpoints regarding tourism facilities factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan? The findings revealed no significant difference between both groups` viewpoints (df=217, t= 1.081, P>.05)

H₃: There is a difference between customers and experts `viewpoints regarding cultural and social factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?
The findings revealed a significant difference between both groups` viewpoints (df=217, t=9.338, P<.05)

H₄: There is a difference between customers and experts `viewpoints regarding geographical factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?

The findings revealed no significant difference between both groups` viewpoints (df=218, t= 1.680, P>.05)

H₅: There is a difference between customers and experts `viewpoints regarding marketing factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?

The findings revealed a significant difference between both groups` viewpoints (df=218, t=11.554, P<.05)

H₆: There is a difference between customers and experts `viewpoints regarding security and safety factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan?

The findings revealed a significant difference between both groups` viewpoints (df=218, t= 3.442, P<.05)

H₇: There is a difference between customers and experts `viewpoints regarding economic factors affecting the sport tourists attraction in Zanjan? The findings revealed a significant difference between both groups` viewpoints (df=217, t=4.775, P<.05).

Friedman test to prioritize both groups perspectives regarding the sport tourism development

Groups	Variables	Mean Rank
Experts	Quality	6.93
	Tourism Facilities	6.05
	Cultural & Social attraction	4.93
	Geography	2.31
	Marketing	4.09
	Safety	2.02
	Economic Factor	1.68
Customers	Quality	6.40
	Tourism Facilities	6.60
	Cultural & Social attraction	4.87
	Geography	2.50
	Marketing	3.70
	Safety	2.59
	Economic Factor	1.35

As table shows, there is a difference between both groups priorities regarding the sport tourism development ($\chi^2(1.166)$, $p=0/001$).

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 the 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 is, 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 an 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 local, 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.

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