

Examining the Motivational Factors for Traveling to Iran and the Principles of Designing Souvenirs

Abstract

Today, tourism is one of the most significant economic industries in developed countries. Recognizing key factors in the prosperity of this industry has played an important role in the development of this commerce. Iran can also become one of the central tourism hubs in the world due to its high historical and cultural potential. This research aims to analyze the affiliation between souvenirs and the flourishing of tourism in Iran. The present research was carried out by a descriptive and analytical method based on quantitative method with a valid questionnaire and field investigation. Due to the difficulty of reaching European tourists in Iran, a sample of 96 people from among the tourists who were present in Iran (through hotels) and people who had traveled to Iran before (through discussion forums) were surveyed to answer the questionnaire. The results presented that the recommendation of tourists returning from Iran is the most effective motivating factor for others to visit Iran. In other words, "narrative" is the vital section of tourism promotion and this can be enhanced through souvenirs. Also, ornaments were listed as the most attractive souvenirs of Iran, along with Iranian carpets and modernized handicrafts. In the following, factors that can motivate souvenirs were identified and solutions were presented that can be deliberated upon by souvenir designers and tourism product providers.

Keywords: travel motivation, tourism, souvenirs, narration, Iran.

Introduction

Iran is one of the countries that is visited by tourists every year. Tourists will finally return to their homeland after a short or long stay; however, what they take with them from this trip, whether in the form of memories or souvenirs, will be a motivation to attract and even repel other people towards this land. Therefore, "travel memories" play an effective role in motivating others. What is important in this context is the correct and accurate transfer of the most important and attractive events and parts of a trip, which is actually one of the best ways

to attract tourists. There are various methods of transferring these experiences, proficiencies that become memories in the process of "narration", representing these memories by reliving that event in another corner of the world, makes the tourist's experience tangible for others. In a situation where the capacities and opportunities available in the vast land of Iran should be used as much as possible, a change in the way of presenting the narrative and representation of travel memories is a fundamental step in achieving this goal. The aim of the current research is to find a solution that plays a serious role in choosing Iran as a tourist destination.

Regarding the design of souvenirs that can motivate the recipient to travel to Iran after receiving, there is no research background. Also, investigating the motivating factors for choosing Iran as a tourist destination with the aim of applying it to the design of souvenirs has not been studied so far. According to Cohen's theories (Goletta, ۱۹۳۹), what is seen in all categories of tourism is the position from which the tourist looks at the new place and behaves accordingly. In the current research, the motivation that at the first stance encourages the tourist to visit a place is the matter under study followed by analyzing the behavior of the tourist when facing a new place.

When talking about the topic of tourism, the first question that is raised in the field of planners of this industry, researchers and marketing experts is why people travel to a certain destination? Which tourist destinations do people choose? And what is their motivation and reason for thus selection (Aliqlizadeh et al., ۲۰۱۴). The study of tourism literature shows that the choice of destination has always been one of the important issues of tourism management. Along with the increase in tourism demand and the growth of this industry, the study on destination selection has increased. Each tourist destination offers various products and services to attract tourists and each tourist has the opportunity to choose from a set of different destinations (Kazemi, ۲۰۰۸: ۷۸). In leisure and tourism studies, motivation has always been of special importance. Travel motivation is a scientific topic in tourism studies and is considered as a basis for tourism development. Many researchers consider motivation as the driving force of activities. They state that the motivation is the starting point of studying the behavior of tourists and beyond that the understanding of tourism systems (Qadri and Motahar, ۲۰۱۳: ۱).

Experts believe that the concept of motivation can be classified into two factors: external and internal motivation. Internal motivations states that people travel because they are motivated to travel, and external motivations describe the forces that trigger tourists to travel to a specific destination (Qadri and Motahar, ۲۰۱۳: ۴۴). Pulling or external motivations are those that are

expressed by the attractions of tourist centers, such as facilities, accommodations, entertainment, suitability of the destination for family trips, cultural, historical attractions, natural landscape and other attractions (Alighalizadeh et al, ۲۰۱۴).

Bern also examines the motivation of tourists to travel in two parts, motivating factors and attracting factors. From this point of view, the motivating factors of travel that make a tourist to start a travel and escape the boredom of repetition of work whilst dealing with mental affairs, health, calming actions, self-realization and other factors. In contrast to the attracting factors that attract tourists to a place to choose a destination, it is to realize the attractiveness of the tourist destination (Kalantari and Farhadi, ۲۰۰۸: ۸). The attractiveness of the destination is considered one of the main motivations in traveling to different tourist destinations. The attractiveness of the destination is a subject of permanent research in tourism. Mayo and Jarvis have defined the attractiveness of the destination as the set of observed abilities of a destination in attracting satisfaction and in line with the benefit of tourists. Also, Victor has stated that attractiveness is a main motivation for tourists in choosing a place, according to their interests and priorities. In fact, attractiveness allows the general public to engage in entertainment, interest and educational functions (cited in Aliqlizadeh et al., ۲۰۱۴). The attractiveness of a place is generally calculated by internal or main features and extra features (ibid.). Internal features refer to specific natural or cultural resources that include history, music, ancestral customs and important events. Nonetheless, the excess features are communication features that include transportation, interpretation services, organizational services and environmental services. Gulilmo mentioned seven factors influencing tourists (Golta, ۱۹۳۹: ۲۳), which are: location, duration, interview, travel season, travel equipment, age group and inspirations.

According to the process of this research, the first component of vacation, the second component of duration and the seventh component which is the motives of the trip are of special standing. It is necessary to understand the standing of Iran in the tourism industry and to perceive how these motivating factors and travel obstacles are in relation to Iran. Although Iran has many potential attractions, including natural, historical, artistic and cultural attractions, it can play a worthy role in attracting domestic and especially foreign tourists. It goes without saying that the income from this industry has been very small compared to other countries. However, despite its long history, tourism has enjoyed significant growth in recent decades and has gained a valuable position in the socio-economic exchanges of countries, and it is necessary to make more efforts to improve this position. The correct management of tourism development can be effective in addition to the economic-social effects of the first three factors. The

questions of the present research are: ١. What is the way of introduction of Iran by the tourist after returning to his homeland? ٢. What are the factors that create the greatest motivation to visit Iran?

One of the problems in the way of studying foreign tourists is the small number of tourists in Iran, and on the other hand, the unwillingness of hotels and tourism tours to provide tourists with research questions, which can be for security reasons. At this stage, among the tourists who had previously traveled to Iran (through the forum of these tourists) or the people who were staying in Iran (through the hotels), ٥٦ people were randomly selected to be studied. Due to the lack of time spent by the tourists, whose schedule was often determined by the tour leaders, the questionnaire was chosen as a survey tool. This questionnaire includes ١٨ questions about the motivation for traveling to Iran including the cities visited, perceived deficiencies, memories they would like to recall, the amount of travel by their compatriots to Iran, the reasons/obstacles for their compatriots to travel to Iran, the number of souvenirs purchased, satisfaction or non-satisfaction with souvenirs, the cost they usually spend on buying souvenirs, the ratio of the person receiving the souvenir to the tourist, and the level of interest in Iranian ornaments. This research is placed in the category of applied research in terms of purpose and in the category of qualitative studies in terms of information.

Conclusion

The sum of the research findings of this research leads us to the importance of souvenirs - as a product that can be effective in establishing an emotional feeling towards the visited place. Considering that during a trip to a tourist destination, the findings resulting from the narratives and memories of friends and acquaintances are the most motivating, and considering that the recollection of good memories by tourists of a land has a serious and undeniable effect in retelling the narratives. On the one hand, souvenirs were considered as a factor for storing these memories. On the other hand, the presence of precious stones and its combination with the art of Iranian hands has always occupied a special place in the design of Iranian jewelry, which according to the findings has a suitable place among the choices of tourists as souvenirs. It can be used as an excuse to design souvenirs with the aim of recording memories.

Certainly, such souvenirs must contain special and unique features, which according to the findings of this research include the following:

- The souvenir should contain the identity symbols of Iran, but it should not describe only one moment, for example, it should not be only a photo of Naqsh Jahan Square. In this regard, it is necessary to narrate a part of the journey.
- Souvenirs must mediate the tourist's conversation with the recipient of the souvenir.
- It is better to have the ability to store the tourist's voice to describe a place or an event.
- According to their size and price, jewelry should be given serious attention, on the other hand, it should be a modernized form of Iranian handicrafts.
- Turquoise stone should be considered as a symbol of Iranian ornamental stone in jewelry.

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