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Importance-performance Analysis of Religious Tourism Services (The Case of the City of Birjand)

Javad Yousefi¹

Abstract

Nowadays, service quality plays an important role in the economies of the various countries. Tourism as a service has a significant effect on the economy of a region, so it should provide its services more quality. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the satisfaction of tourists from the services. Measuring existing gap between the expectations and perceptions of tourists from the service is one of the ways to use. In order to increase the satisfaction of tourists in religious tourism destinations, the quality of tourism services should be desirable. Religious tourism is one of the most prolific forms of tourism in Iran and South Khorasan province. Specifically in the city of Birjand and some around countries there are holy shrines and places that attract religious tourists. So services in these destinations must be more desirable to satisfy tourist's experience. In this research by an Important-Performance Analysis (IPA) technique, six factors of services in religious tourism destinations were evaluated by tourists. According to results, tourists that are reviewed were not satisfied in terms of facilities and amenities and the greatest gap between importance and performance as much as 1.69 was in this regard. About the geographical conditions and environmental order and hygiene factors identified that their importance and performance were higher than the mean. The gaps in the regulation and environmental health were 1.39 and 1.09 for geographical conditions. Transportation and cultural factors despite lower-than-average importance tourist's points of view, destinations performance was higher than the average. Importance and performance of price and accessibility of goods and services for tourists is lower than the average assessed and the gap in this case is

¹ Lecturer in Tourism Management, Payame Noor University, Iran (javad.yousefi@pnu.ac.ir)

calculated as 1.26. So the most desirable indicators of religious tourism are cultural factors and transportation and then geographical conditions.

Introduction

Today, religious tourism, with its various components and varieties, has been able to accommodate itself in the context of the world's tourism, due to its structural and functional features, so that its sphere of influence is encompassed throughout the world. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze each aspect of religious tourism services to improve them for achieving destination competitive advantage.

Material and method

This research is a descriptive-analytical research that the method of data collection is a researcher-made questionnaire, and the Likert scale was used to measure the indicators used. In order to receive accurate and complete answers, 100 questionnaires were distributed, 4 of which were excluded due to defects. For data analysis, the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) method has been developed which is one of the most common tools used in tourism literature.

Discussion and result

Findings show that among the six environment sustainability components studied, religious tourism destinations in the city of Birjand are not desirable in terms of amenities, despite its very high importance for tourists and the greatest gap between importance and performance as much as 1.69 was in this regard. The gaps in the regulation and environmental health were 1.39 and 1.09 for geographical conditions. Transportation and cultural factors despite lower-than-average importance tourist's points of view, destinations performance was higher than the average. In these cases the gaps results 0.93 and 0.65 respectively. Importance and performance of price and accessibility of goods and services for tourists is lower than the average assessed and the gap in this case is calculated as 1.26.

Conclusion

Based on result, quality of tourism services at first requires precise and coherent planning to provide the infrastructure of the tourism, and then valuable goods and services for tourists. In this regard, it is recommended that the strategic investment priority of related organizations such as the Endowment and charity, Cultural heritage, handicrafts and tourism, and the Way and urbanization of south Khorasan province should be focus on these issues to enhance the satisfaction and welfare of the tourists and the host community. So that achieving tourism development will be facilitated for destinations.

Keywords: Importance Performance, Tourism Services, Religious Tourism, Destination Management, Birjand.

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