

Original Research Article

The Role of Local Community Culture in Slow Tourism Attraction

(Case Study: Turkmen Sahara)

Narges Kazemifard^{1*}, Seyed Saeed Hashemi², Parvaneh Parchekani³

1. Master of Tourism Planning, University of Science and Culture, Tehran, Iran.

2. Associate Professor, University of Science and Culture, Tehran, Iran.

3. Assistant Professor, University of Science and Culture, Tehran, Iran.

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Abstract | The world of tourism is getting much bigger and more complicated. New types of tourism have emerged to meet the needs of humans in modern life. It drives modern man to slow down. Slow tourism has emerged to slow down the rapid life cycle of modern humans and help them get closer to the indigenous cultures that have been forgotten at this speed of technology. It also aims at improving their lives by benefitting from all the elements of travel. Slow tourism is a new perspective in the world of tourism that contributes to both the environment and the quality of human life at the same time. The purpose of this research is to study the role of local community culture on slow tourism attraction in Turkmen Sahara. This study is applied and its nature is descriptive-analytical. After designing the questionnaire, its validity was confirmed by experts and its reliability by Cronbach's test. Due to the limited number of slow tourists based on the inclusion criteria, through non-probable snowball sampling, 103 questionnaires were collected from the slow tourists of the Turkmen Sahara region, afterward, data were analyzed in SPSS software using regression and F test. The conclusion is that the local culture directly affects the slow tourist attraction in Turkmen Sahara.

Keywords | *Slow tourism, Culture, Turkmen Sahara, Attraction.*

Introduction | Tourism has different types of which slow tourism refers to a kind of travel whose purpose stretches beyond fun and entertainment. This new travel style proposes a new type of travel to travelers. Nowadays modernity is the cause of meaningless and different travels. Destroying both culture and environment are the major concerns associated with mass tourism in the modern world. If any solution has not been thought yet for the side effects of mass tourism, there won't be resources in the next few years, and the culture of local communities would be destroyed under the pressure of mass tourism. Slow tourism is raised to address the problems caused by mass tourism. This type of tourism provides travelers with a new view of life and encourages them to appreciate the local culture. That is why slow tourism is precious and can be a solution for mass tourism destruction,

on the other hand, if this subject is unknown, the earth would be harmed in near future.

Literature review

The slow food movement in 1986 appeared with the invention of Carlo Petrini in a new food style which was a reaction against the rise in the number of famous fast-food restaurants and generally hasty fast life cycle. The official date of the slow food movement was back to 1989 when in the meeting of Paris the slow food statement was signed by representatives of 15 countries (Lackov & Rogovsk, 2014, 137). After the slow food movement, the concept of slow city and slow tourism was defined based on the main idea of slow food. The term "slow tourism" originated from creative tourism, so an explanation of creative tourism needs before starting the concept of slow tourism. Researchers have defined Creative tourism from their standpoints, for instance, Virginija defined

*Corresponding author: +989358487471, k.narcise@gmail.com

creative tourism in her article as a type of cultural tourism. One of the differences is in the purpose of travel. In cultural tourism, tourists travel to rest and visit other countries while in creative tourism the goal is to experience and learn (Virginija, 2016, 2-5). Obridska and Ivanon defined creative tourism: "More specifically it is travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of a place, and it provides a connection with those who reside in this place and create this living culture. It offers visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are characteristic of the holiday destination where they are undertaken. Creative tourism goes beyond the general tourist gaze and involves deeply the tourists in the culture scape of the destination, where they take part in different activities – crafts, arts, culinary, and other creative activities, thus creating a close link between the tourists, the local population and its cultural heritage" (Obridska & Ivanon, 2014, 3). But the origins of creative tourism back to 1990 when experts were searching for a solution to increase selling handicraft products to tourists (Richards, 2009, 78). Richards and Raymond were the inventors of creative tourism term. The idea of getting more creative in types of tourism was held in a European project for purpose of simulation of handicraft production in tourism (Richards & Marques, 2012, 2). After a while, creative tourism received attention, not for the increase in the number of tourists. It is because the authorities in the cultural sector and destination management were looking for a way to increase the interaction of tourists. Creative tourism became more important not for presenting the culture of a region but for introducing destinations and promoting the usage of local culture and creativity (Richards, 2009; 78). Based on creative tourism features and principles, slow tourism originated from slow food. Pauline Kenny was the first one who used the word 'slow travel'; he ran a slow travel website in 2000 (Dickinson, Lumsdon & Robbins, 2011, 283). Building from the ideas of the Slow Movement, the same principles and philosophy can be easily applied to tourism. Central to the meaning and concept of Slow Tourism is the shift in focus from achieving a quantity and volume of experiences while on holiday towards the quality of (generally fewer) experiences. It is a form of tourism that respects local cultures, history, and environment and values social responsibility while celebrating diversity and connecting people (tourists with other tourists and with host communities); it is characterized by the enjoyment of discovery, learning, and sharing. This 'slowing of the pace of a holiday provides opportunities to interact and connect with local people and places on a deeper level. This facilitates a more detailed exploration of the cultural environment in which the holiday is taking place and results in a more rewarding and memorable experience for the

participants (Robbinson et al, 2011, 117-118). The statement of slow tourism insists on reclining the speed. A journey with resting instead of stress pressure while moving between home and destination (Paul, 2014, 141). Dickinson and Lumsdon believe that the philosophy of slowness is the opposite of fastness and related to green travel and sustainable development. Slowness is not a doctrine. Two decades later, writers have discussed this idea (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2016,125). Researches are shown that the slow tourism concept is more than a movement or transportation in places. The phenomenon of slow tourism also needs to be understood in a broad socio-cultural context of the slow movement (Oh, Assaf & Baloglu, 2016, 205). Slow travel is more than a long stay as a result of a marketing plan. Recognizing the whole travel and features of destination is very important (Dickinson, Lumsdon & Robbins, 2010, 293). There is an emphasis on the travel experience. This is not simply about the route and the mode used to reach a destination, but it is about how time is spent at the destination. In both cases, it involves movement as well as locality. Movement is identified as a motivational element, passing through different places both urban and rural, thus making a stimulating travel experience (Lumsdon & McGrath, 2011, 274). In slow travel, there is no insistence on prolonging the journey, but the travel could be qualified by limited days (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010, 90). The motivations of slow travel are adventure, independence, control, social status, vision, and other equipment (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010, 69-70). Slow travel is equivalent to time quality and means slowing down the speed of travel while enjoying. In other words, enjoyment, and quality of experience that you share with others matter. Those groups of slow tourists who are deeply attentive to the environment, are called tenacious slow tourists. But the group of 'indifferent slow tourists' choose slow traveling when environment profits is an advantage or prefer one of the transportations to the others or seeking for an experience (ibid., 85). According to the history of slow tourism research, European countries have been pioneers in slow tourism research. Dickinson, Lumsdon, Richards, and others are the main researchers of this concept. In Iran, there have not been specific studies on slow tourism yet. But some Iranian articles are published on this subject. For instance, the article of Mirabedini, Salmani, and Ghadiri Masoum (2019) concentrated on slow tourism potentials in desert geomorphic sites. In the article, they concluded that in these places due to pure resources, peace, hospitality, and rich local foods, slow tourism has lots of advantages. By mixing two types of tourism 'slow' and 'earth-based and also complying with the rules associated with the sustainable environment, they showed how the geomorphic sites can be protected. Finally, with more research, they identified villages that had more potential to be slow tourism destinations based on their score. In another article, Bastenegar (2020) explained

the philosophy of slow tourism and the concept of slowness. Namazi (2019) in his article “study on the effects of slow tourism in greenhouse gasses publishing” studied environmental dimensions of slow tourism. In other articles, destinations and sustainable development have been studied by the vision of slow tourism. According to resources that have been studied, local culture has an important role in slow tourism. In references there are lots of cultural definitions: Some of them defined culture as spiritual and material storage of a tribe along with history. Others believed that culture is the whole customs, social group basic features, and also jobs, beliefs, and traditions. Culture is a part of a lifestyle that lots of people are participating. Similar spoken and written language, behavior, lifestyle, traditions, heritage, ideology, and even technology have been constituted specific cultures (Mousavi & Kashkouli, 2014, 32). Bloukbashi states that: “culture could be named as a complex set of behavior, beliefs and collective etiquette. The tradition of inventors’ lifestyles is identified by culture and the social relations are determined and emerged through it (Boloukbashi, 2009, 33). In the point of view of Yavari and Masiha “The local culture could be classified in ceremonies, dances, music, and musical instruments, religious tradition and national sports, beliefs, and customs, folk medicine, children’s local games, histories and fictions, traditional shows (Yavari & Masiha, 2009, 15).

Case study

Iran with a variety of cultural potentials in local communities can arouse the interests of slow tourists and manage to attract them. In return, locals will understand their cultural value and importance as a result, they will protect their culture more than past. The case study of the research is Turkman Sahara which is located in the north of Iran stretching from the east of the Caspian Sea (in Golestan Province western) to the northern of Khorasan Shomali province (in Golestan eastern). This region was chosen as the research site because of the evident cultural elements of the local community and also slow tourism potentials in Turkman Sahara. The cultural elements of the research were classified into 5 parts. These parts were classified based on the cultural characteristics of the case study (Turkman Sahara); because these characteristics relate to creative and slow tourism and also provide a special experience for tourists. Although lots of cultural components are involved in these elements, in this article only 5 topics are studied: music, food, customs, handicrafts, and clothes. The data associated with these elements were gathered through questionnaires from slow travelers of Turkman Sahara and then studied and analyzed using research tools. Turkman Sahara is located in Golestan province. Turkmans live in the north and northeast of Golestan (especially in GonbadKaboos, Bandar Turkman, Bandar Gaz, and some villages of Golestan) in other words,

Golestan is the most important region of Turkmans in Iran (Golestan Sarzamin-e Tala-ye Sefid, 2000, 3). The Turkmans were a group of East Asian mongoloids that invaded the south for a variety of reasons. The group settled in the Turkmenistan region of the former Soviet Union and the present-day Turkmen Sahara of Iran. Turkmans needed to meet 3 inclusion criteria:

- Each Turkman has to be in a family tree of a Turkman by blood;
- Must speak with Turkman accent;
- Must be a Sunni Hanafi Muslim (Asgari khanghah & Sharif kamali, 1994, 29).

This article studied the region of Turkmans and focused on the connections of tourists with Turkmans.

Research method

First, the theoretical part of this research was collected by the bibliographic research method. In this method, lots of resources such as books, theses, and articles were read. Then, other information in the field was collected through the questionnaires (slow tourist-target) and interviews (with experts). Due to the lack of study and understanding of slow travel in Iran, in addition to measuring cultural factors, interviews with experts and locals were needed. In addition to the quantitative method with the questionnaire tool, the qualitative method with the interview tool was also included in the research. According to the purpose of the research which is investigating the role of local’s cultural elements in the special interests of slow tourists in Turkman Sahara, the study is practical and in terms of the method is descriptive-analytical. The study attempts to clarify what role the cultural elements play in the interests of slow tourists. Data collection is one of the most essential parts of the study. In this article first, the main resources were read. However, the novelty of this context, few sources were available. Secondly, the field method information was collected by interviews with experts and questionnaires. In this article, the interview was researcher-made. The validity of this test was examined by experts. The interviewees were 15 people who were experts of slow tourism, slow travelers, and aware locals. After the interview with 15 people, the theoretical saturation was achieved; hence in the latest interviews, no additional issues or insights emerged from data and all relevant conceptual categories were explored. Finally, the interviews were analyzed by interpretive analysis (one of the methods of interview analysis), and the interview results were reported. To access vast information rapidly and measure the interests of slow tourists in Turkman Sahara and also be able to transfer data, analyze them, and measure the correlation, the questionnaire was used. Due to the limited number of slow tourists based on the inclusion criteria, a non-probability snowball sampling method was used. Researchers in the snowball technique

find new samples through the prospective participants. In this article samples introduced each other. The questions of questionnaires were developed based on the research hypotheses and research questions. The five-level Likert scale was utilized for the answers to the questionnaires. The test was piloted with 15 tourists; this pilot test confirmed the validity of the questionnaire. Then, experts and specialists confirmed the validity of the questionnaire. For the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated. The answer was more than 0.7 (0.932) so the reliability of the questionnaire was approved.

The statistical population of the research was slow tourists who had traveled to Turkman Sahara and stayed more due to cultural elements of the region. Due to uncertainty about the number of tourists and lack of slow tourists, the sample size was chosen by estimation method, and based on the descriptive survey, the minimum sample of this method is 100 (Hafeznia, 2010, 165). Accordingly, 100 was the minimum number of questionnaires were filled by tourists. In addition, because the study community had homogeneity, a small sample size was not a concern. The questionnaires were distributed among slow tourists of Turkman Sahara, then their statistics calculates were analyzed. Because of the importance of identifying variables for the Correlation model explanation, the Regression method with the F test for data analysis was selected. Regression was recognized as the best method to analyze the variables in this research. Table 1 shows the number of models, variables entered and variables exported, and also displays the way how variables are entered. The local culture variable as an independent variable entered the Regression model to predict changes of slow tourism as a dependent variable. tourists, it is recommended to broadly advertise Halal tourism in Iran. According to Table 2, the correlation between local culture and slow tourists is clear. Also R Square shows that the independent variable of local culture could explain a large amount of dependent variable of slow tourists' variance. The adjusted coefficient of determination 0/074 shows that the independent variable

of local culture could explain 7.4 percent of changes of the dependent variable of slow tourists. So, other changes (92.6 percent) which are named the squares of the errors (e^2) are affected by variables out of the model.

Table 3 shows the variance results. In this table, the resource of independent variable changes in regression and residual is showed and there are the total squares, degree of freedom, and average squares for each resource. In this model, the residual resource is 1.039 and the regression resource is 11.502 which shows the residual is lower than the regression, this means that the clarification of the model is strong in explaining the changes of the dependent variable. Based on Table 3 results, the F calculated 9.127 is meaningful because the error is less than 0.05. Thus, the independent variables are strongly clarified and can explain the changes and dependent variable's variance. In other words, the regression model of the research works well and other changes of the dependent variable are clarified by the independent variable of the research. Table 4 reflects the independent variable regression impact coefficients on the dependent variable of the study.

Regression impact coefficients are two parts: 1. Unstandardized coefficients (B) 2. Standardized coefficients or Beta = β . Unstandardized coefficients relate to estimated regression model that is showed in below:

$$\text{Slow Tourist} = 0.196 + 3.294 = 3.49$$

The results of the regression calculation are exactly similar to the standardized coefficient. The estimated regression model based on standardized coefficient is:

$$\text{Slow tourism} = 0.288$$

The beta coefficient is 0.288 meaning that a standard deviation change in the local culture variable will cause a change of 0.288 in the standard deviation of the slow tourism variable. But in unstandardized coefficients, a unit of change in local culture makes 0.288 unit changes in slow tourism. As a result, standardized coefficients interpretation is preferred on unstandardized coefficients. T statistics in this study is 3.021. The standardized coefficient of the local culture variable is meaningful in less than 0.01 error level.

Table 1. study on local culture variant. Source: Authors.

Model	Variables Entered/ Removed ^a		Method
	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	
1	Local culture ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Slow tourists
b. All requested variables entered.

Table 2. Study on Local Culture variable. Source: Authors.

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.288 ^a	0.083	0.074	0.33746

a. Predictors: (Constant), Local Culture
b. Dependent Variable: Slow Tourists

Thus, the local culture variable has effects on slow tourism. In another word, with an increase in the standard deviation in the local culture variable, the slow tourism standard deviation will increase¹. One of the assumptions of using regression is that the distribution remains normal. The charts show that the distribution pattern of standardized regression residues is normal and there is a high correlation between them and the expected standard residues (Fig. 1). These analyses are based on 100 questionnaires that were answered by slow tourists of Turkman Sahara. Besides these questionnaires, 12 interviews with experts and locals of slow tourism and slow tourists were carried out and the results are concluded below.

Conclusion

According to the theory of this research, slow tourism is a new type of travel style that focuses on the quality of travel. This research examined the effect of local culture (Turkman Sahara) on slow tourists, who have special interests in traveling and seeking new and unique experiences. Based on experts' comments in the interviews using Rubin and Gillham's interpretive method, similar and meaningful concepts emerged. Interviewers concurred with the research's concepts like: "slow travel, modern human's needs", "slow travel, more understanding", "slow travel, travel quality", "deep experience", "Less damage to the environment" and "locals beneficitation". To conclude the interviews, slow tourism is a type of new tourism which the world needs. As human has been detached from nature and social relations, separation from their culture and traditions, struggling in the modern and fast life, and also the relentless destruction of the environment have turned slow tourism into hope in the dark; this kind of tourism forces humans to move slowly and feel nature and cultures and goes beyond and also lead them to think. As a result, at the end of the travel, travelers will find new ways in their lives. In

another aspect, the slow tourist prefers to travel with minimal damage to the environment and cares about the health of the earth, so the travel gets more enjoyable and more interactive with the environment. Slow vehicles like bicycles, trains, or even walking in slow tourism are preferred. This makes humans feel closer to nature and pay attention to more details in the environment. The case study is Turkman Sahara so the experts were questioned about the effects of Turkman's culture on slow tourists' special interests. They confirmed that this region is full of potentials and cultural attractions since it attracts tourists and encourages them to stay more (especially slow tourists). Different factors, folk Turkman music which is being played in joy and mourning, specific customs like weekly weddings or farmers' seasonal celebrations, foods and Turkman's sweets, handicrafts like sparkling carpets, clothes, and traditional Turkman jewelry, and also language and Turkman's literature, affect the duration of the tourist's stay. In fact, other attractions such as architecture and Turkmen pavilion construction, lifestyle, and events like horse racing are cultural elements of the research that experts mentioned. They believed that these cultural elements encourage tourists to stay longer. In addition to the interview, the results of the questionnaires have reflected the correlation between local culture as an independent variable and the slow tourists as a dependent variable. It shows that the local culture could explain a large amount of dependent variable variance as the independent variable. Thus, the role of local culture in slow tourists is important owing to the reinforcement of the cultural potentials and more slow tourists with long stays. To conclude, the analysis of the data from the interview and questionnaire and the qualitative and quantitative analysis prove that the local culture affects the special interests of slow tourists in Turkman Sahara. The cultural effects have shown that how cultural elements affect slow tourism attraction. As

Table 3. the analysis result of local culture variance. Source: Authors.

ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.502	1	11.502	9.127	0.003 ^b
	Residual	1.039	101	0.114		
	Total	12.541	102			

a. Dependent Variable: Slow Tourists
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Local Culture

Table 4. results of independent variable regression coefficient on the dependent variable. Source: Authors.

Coefficients ^a						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error				
1	(Constant)	3.294	0.216		15.278	0.000
	Local culture	0.196	0.065	0.288	3.021	0.003

a. Dependent Variable: Slow tourists

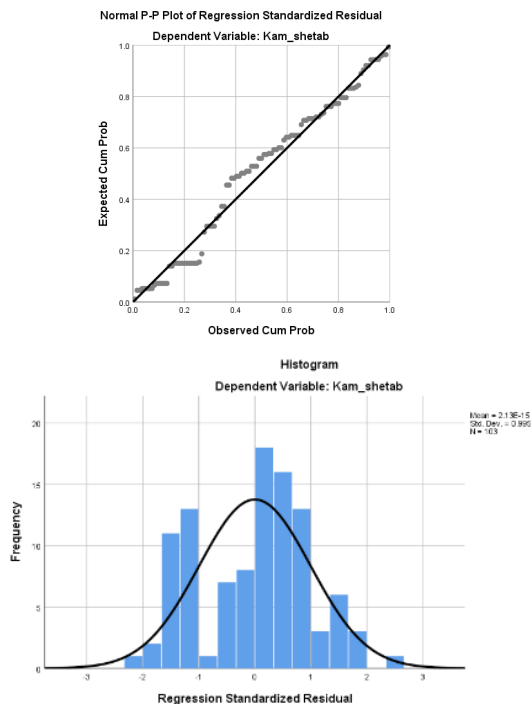


Fig. 1. Distribution of standardized regression residues. Source: Authors.

a result, music, customs, foods, language and literature and handicrafts directly affect the special interests of slow tourists, but the impact of all these factors are not equal and they are different among slow tourists as it was clarified on descriptive and inferential statistics and interviews.

Endenote

1. When there is an independent variable, the amount of Beta or correlation between independent and dependent variables is equal.

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