



<http://doi.org/10.22133/IJTCS.2023.386698.1120>

Design and Measurement of Religious Tourism Destination Management Model in Yazd Province

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Article Info

Received:

2023-02-21

Accepted:

2023-04-08

Keywords:

Destination Management

Tourism Destination

Management

Religious Tourism

Yazd Province

Abstract

In the 21st century, the meaning of places is essential to people. Meanings have gained symbolic importance through tourism heritage. Tourism is a powerful force in shaping the world and our understanding of different cultures, people, and places. This research investigates the complexities of religious tourism and the management of religious destinations. It obtains criteria for managing religious goals with a detailed look and uses the descriptive-analytical method based on library documents and the opinion of research experts. Then, using research experts and ISM-PLS hybrid approach, a three-level framework for managing religious goals in Yazd city has been presented and analyzed. The results showed that the government's decisions and actions were the most effective criteria. The ultimate goal was to create a sense of trust and security among religious tourists. It is hoped that the findings of this research will be a starting point for managing religious tourism destinations and a guide for examining the complexities of Islamic tourism destinations and their management.

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How to Cite:

Mirfakhraddini, F. S. (2023). Design and Measurement of Religious Tourism Destination Management Model in Yazd Province. *International Journal of Tourism, Culture and Spirituality*, 6(1), 1-22.

Introduction

Destinations are the final product purchased by tourists and the main product of the tourism industry (Zeytoonli & Barzegar, 2019). Many factors play a role in determining and choosing a tourist destination, including service quality, perceived value, trust, innovation in marketing, destination attractiveness, etc. (Pike, 2017). One of the tourist attractions that play a role in choosing tourist destinations is religious attractions. Religiously motivated travel has grown significantly in the second half of the 21st century, and it is surprising to many who believe religion is losing its institutional and social significance. Major tourist destinations have been primarily developed because of their connection to sanctities, places, and events. Tourism, religion, and spiritual travel comprehensively assess the fundamental issues and concepts related to the intersection of tourism and religion (Timothy & Olsen, 2006). It is argued that this trend will contradict the progress of modernity and rationality in the modern Western world, composed of seemingly expanding "unknowns" and many facts. (Suleman & Qayum, 2019).

It should be mentioned that with the improvement of the socio-cultural situation and people's awareness, the need to visit tourism capacities has increased, and people decide to travel and visit and attend religious ceremonies and places in order to reduce their internal stress and increase and improve their sense of peace (Griffin & Raj, 2018). Religious tourism can play an effective and significant role in improving the quality of life, improving spiritual status, and reducing mental illnesses, while also being effective in promoting economic and religious goals. In fact, religion has long been a necessary motivation for travel. Every year, millions of people travel around the world to important pilgrimage destinations, both ancient and modern. Religiously or spiritually motivated travel has become widespread and common in recent decades and has taken an important part in international tourism and has grown significantly in recent years. (Jamal & El-Bassiouny, 2019)

Yazd province is one of Iran's tourist destinations with many tourist attractions and is one of the main destinations for national and foreign tourists. Yazd is primarily known as a cultural-historical destination and then medical tourism, and its religious facilities have been neglected to some extent. Yazd province has very high potential in the field of religious tourism. However, a small share of the vast benefits of this type of tourism goes to the province every year. Considering the potentials of religious tourism in Yazd, including the registration of globalization of the historical context, having the title Hosseinieh of Iran and Dar al-Ebadeh, the existence of religious minorities and their related pilgrimage sites, holding special religious ceremonies and ceremonies such as Moharm, Mehregan, etc.

It should be noted that the number of tourists who visit Yazd each year to attend special religious ceremonies is often spontaneous, and there is no special preparation and management for their visit if the proper management of destinations and tourists in this area can bring many benefits to the tourism

sector of the province. Therefore, this paper responds to this research gap by using literature and new studies in destination management by presenting and evaluating a model for managing religious tourism destinations in Yazd province. In this regard, this study aimed to answer these two questions: What are the effective criteria for managing tourism destinations in Yazd province? Moreover, what is the relationship between these criteria?

So far, no study has been conducted to provide a model for destination management in religious tourism; therefore, this is a new study; To investigate the research background, the most important studies presented in two thematic areas of 'Destination Management of Tourism and Religious Tourism': Yousefi (2018) examined Birjand's¹ religious tourism services through an important-performance approach; It concluded that the indicators of tourism services related to cultural factors are prioritized, and then the indicators of transportation and geographical conditions are placed. Hoseinipor et al. (2016) conducted research titled "Factors of stretching and drift affecting the intentions of religious tourism in Qom²" with the opinion of experts. Then they prepared a model for the intention of religious tourism trips. They concluded that the factors of significant pull in the intention of religious tourist's trip to Qom city are age, tourist's belief in the necessity of visiting the region, religiousness, motivation to increase faith, the experience of religious travel, motivation for the forgiveness of sins and important pull factors, the existence of nightlife facilities, mentioning the name of the region in the Qur'an and hadiths, development of health services, the popularity of the region, development of transportation of the region. Zargham Borujeni and Tohidlu (2012) investigated the destination management of Mashhad³ using the Crouch and Ritchie (2003) destination management model. They analyzed the gap between the desired and existing conditions of the city. Jamal and El-Bassiouny (2019) addressed the extent to which the religious tourism industry is a social and cultural institution that requires careful examination of how culture and religion interact with each other. Not all tourists are the same, they say. Despite the publication of scientific works on Islamic tourism, there is a need to examine better and understand Muslim tourists and how they interact with the tourism industry. Accordingly, they show that culture, both as an extrinsic factor and as an intrinsic factor (cultural orientation as a personal orientation), can play a role in shaping Muslim tourists' reactions to external stimuli (e.g., service marketing mix) in the Islamic tourism industry.

1. Birjand is a city in the Central District of Birjand County, South Khorasan province, Iran, and serves as capital of the county. The city is known for its saffron, barberry, jujube, and handmade carpet exports.

2. Qom is the seventh largest metropolis and also the seventh largest city in Iran. Qom is the capital of Qom Province. Qom is considered holy in Shi'a Islam, as it is the site of the shrine of Fatimah bint Musa, sister of Imam Ali ibn Musa Rida.

3. Mashhad is the second-most-populous city in Iran, located in the north-east of the country. It serves as the capital of Razavi Khorasan Province. The city is named after the shrine of Imam Reza, the eighth Shia Imam, who was buried in a village in Khorasan which afterward gained the name, meaning the "place of martyrdom". Every year, millions of pilgrims visit the Imam Reza shrine. The Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid is also buried within the same shrine.

Suleman and Qayum (2019) critically examined some of the complexities of Islamic tourism and its management. They explore interesting and challenging approaches to managing Islamic tourism destinations. They argue that managers can target a long-term positioning strategy, and they also make interesting comments about the potential impact of globalization and commoditization on consumer evaluation of unique attributes associated with tourist destinations.

Mittal and Sinha (2022) designed India's religious tourism supply chain framework. This paper aims to examine the religious tourism supply chain and understand and introduce resilience throughout it to mitigate post-pandemic disruptions. By reviewing the literature, they identified the gaps and designed a theoretical framework. The findings of this article were to identify the threats and opportunities for the Indian religious tourism supply chain, which has existed in the past and caused many disasters.

It is necessary to pay more attention to the issues related to managing religious destinations, especially in research fields. This subfield of tourism management has received little attention, although some research is slowly making its way into tourism literature. However, despite the smaller number of studies, many elements of diversity remain. For example, Al-Sawafi (2017) looks beyond religious tourism as the definition of Hajj (obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca, subject to health and wealth) and provides compelling insight into the motivations of Omani religious tourists when embarking on Umrah (optional pilgrimage to Mecca). El-Gohary (2016) provides a very insightful reflection on the meaning(s) of halal tourism, market exploration, consumption, religious principles, and cases of non-compliance with halal principles, to name a few strands of his research.

Literature Review

Religious tourism

Religious tourism is a subcategory of tourism that is less represented, despite being considered one of the oldest forms of travel (Kaelber, 2006). Spiritually motivated travel has grown alongside tourism in the 21st century. It can be argued that modern travel and mobility cannot be explored and understood without including religion. Timothy and Olsen (2006, p. 1) support this view. However, they confirm that the movement to understand religiously motivated travel by the tourism industry and related enforcement is also driven mainly by capitalist tendencies (Sharpley, 2009). Traditionally and historically, pilgrimage has been defined as a physical journey in search of truth and that which is sacred. In other words, it is a place where people are drawn to the spiritual forces of the holy place: "where divine power suddenly erupts" (Chaturvedi, 2020). Religiously motivated travel, including pilgrimage, has grown exponentially over the past fifty years, and religious pilgrimage has increased

its social and institutional importance among tourists. To maintain this growth, individuals must be encouraged to participate in unmediated and reflective forms of it, leading to a spiritual journey.

It should be noted that in pilgrimages, the authenticity of the experience is partly dependent on the institutions and sacred structures of the destination (Durán-Sánchez et al., 2018). However, it can be argued that pilgrimages are increasing rather than decreasing rapidly. This can be seen in Europe, where visits to places of worship are increasing while regular church attendance is declining (Future Markets Insights, 2020). This partly indicates many people searching for answers to the fundamental question of human existence, such as "What is the meaning of life?" Or, more precisely, "What is the meaning of my life?".

The purpose of religious tourism is to visit a holy place for the purpose of pilgrimage, religious need, feeling, or duty, which is to pray, visit and see the holy place to heal diseases and find spiritual peace. Here, it is appropriate to provide a complete definition of religious tourism. The World Religious Travel Association (WRTA) defines religious tourism as: "travel for religious purposes, travel for religious gatherings, travel for missionary or humanitarian purposes, and travel for fellowship, companionship, and friendship." Radwick and his colleagues in 2017 refer to the division of religious tourism by Gisbert, a German geographer, who distinguishes two types of religious tourism based on the length of stay, i.e., the length of time spent visiting a holy place:

a) Short-term religious tourism related to trips limited to small distances to visit a local or regional religious center to participate in a religious celebration, conference, etc.

b) Long-term religious tourism includes visiting religious centers for several days. This type of tourism usually includes pilgrimage trips and is common in all religions of the world (Mecca, Rome, Varanasi). (Wang et al., 2018)

The concept of destination management

The concept of DM has emerged in the last two decades, and various scholars have provided different definitions and interpretations of DM. From a review of DM literature, three viewpoints are evident. The first viewpoint is that DM is a management method that is based on "the awareness of how important the benefits of an integrated supply system are and how (these benefits) can be defined through several activities and attraction factors" (Dwyer & Wickens, 2013, p. 148). This contrasts with the second viewpoint suggested by Costa, Panyik, and Buhalis (2013, p. 78), who argue that DM is "a destination (micro-) level activity whereby several resident and industry stakeholders perform their individual and organizational responsibilities on a daily basis" to "integrate and adapt the national or regional (macro-) level vision contained in policy, planning and development". Morrison (2019), however, gives a third and

different interpretation of DM by suggesting that DM is a professional approach to guiding all the efforts in a place that has decided to pursue tourism as an economic activity.

The definition provided by Dwyer and Wickens (2013) describes DM as a means to an end, which is clearly result-oriented. On the other hand, Costa et al. (2013) view DM as a link within a chain that serves a greater purpose (national or regional vision) and, thus, limits DM to a municipal or even a county level. In comparison, Morrison's (2019) understanding of DM is complete and more inclusive. In this definition, cooperation, coordination, and integration form the core of DM.

DM involves the coordinated and integrated management of the destination product and the destination mix (as represented in Figure 1), which includes attractions and events, facilities, transportation, infrastructure, and hospitality resources (Mill & Morrison, 2012, p. 7).

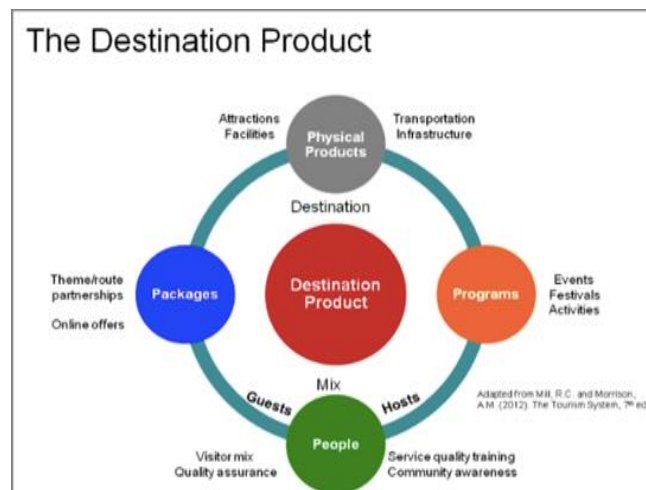


Figure 1. Diagram of the destination product¹ (Mill & Morrison, 2012)

Benefits of DM and the Roles of DMOs

As tourism is a highly competitive industry, destinations must be managed and coordinated to maximize tourism value for visitors while ensuring local benefits and sustainability. In the report A Practical Guide to Tourism Destination Management (World Tourism Organization, 2007), five benefits were outlined:

- Establishing a competitive edge.
- Ensuring tourism sustainability.
- Spreading the benefits of tourism.
- Improving tourism yield.
- Building a solid and vibrant brand identity.

1. This is an adapted version of the original diagram.

Dwyer and Wickens (2013) point out another benefit of enhancing local culture and tradition. In conclusion, by drawing upon Dwyer and Wickens (2013) and the World Tourism Organization (2007), DM has six possible advantages, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Six possible advantages of DM.

Those six advantages can be realized through the operation and practices of DMOs. Destination Consultancy Group (DCG), in a report in 2012, identified six roles of the DMOs in DM (see Figure 3):



Figure 3. Roles of the DMOs in DM (Morrison, 2019)

After developing a Destination Management Plan (DMP), which is a crucial instrument for building partnership and commitment that clearly sets out the plan of action, a DMO also needs to involve public and private sector stakeholders to fulfill the functions of DM. These stakeholders include governments, agencies, organizations, authorities, service providers, and operators. DMO must ensure cooperation and coordination between different stakeholders in the implementation process.

Examples have already been seen in the tourism industry that, with the effort of DMOs, destinations can benefit from DM, their markers grow noticeably, and assist in their resilience when faced with a severe crisis or disaster. To illustrate, Cancun, in Mexico, provides one such example. In 2005, Hurricane Wilma hit Cancun and caused severe damage. Cancun's tourism industry was tested again in 2008 by the global economic downturn. This was followed in 2009 but an outbreak of the H1N1 virus (All About Cancun, 2015). Cancun witnessed sharp drops in tourist arrival numbers during the periods when those disasters and crises impacted that destination. However, effective DM provided by Cancun's Trust for Tourism Promotion allowed Cancun to overcome those difficulties and challenges successfully. The Trust worked closely with all the stakeholders involved in tourism governance and provided competent supervision of the financial resources and infrastructure. This UNWTO recognized this effective DM of Cancun; it was awarded the best Certification of Excellence in Tourism Governance (Pelas, 2011).

Religious tourism destination management

More attention is needed to issues related to the management of religious destinations, especially in research fields. It is a subfield of tourism management that receives little attention, and some of its research is slowly reaching the level of tourism literature. However, despite the smaller number of studies, there is currently much variation. It is also expected that religious tourism, in its management, supports religious values, culture, sustainability, and quality of the environment as well as the interests of the nation and the government. One of the principles that should be considered in tourism is the observance of religious norms and cultural values as the embodiment of the concept of life in a balanced relationship between man and God Almighty, the relationship between humans and fellow humans, and the relationship between humans and the environment as mandated in Law No. 10 of 2009 (Yrza & Filimonau, 2021). The management of religious tourism destinations, which pays attention to religious norms and cultural values as an embodiment of the concept of life in a balanced relationship between humans and the Almighty, is the basis for the management and development of tourism based on religious tourism objects in the region. Religious tourism improves spirituality because through religious tourism, increasing spirituality is the process of changing from bad to better by consistently implementing the commands and staying away from the divine paths, consistently by guiding the values of the pillars of faith to know and understand your own values, emotions, others, self-stimulation, as well as the ability to manage emotions in dealing with others (Sari et al., 2017).

Ruru et al. (2022) clarify that the designation of an area as a religious tourism destination must meet conditions such as good accessibility, having interesting objects in the form of nature, cultural arts, legends, local cuisine, etc., to develop as a religious tourism destination. The attraction of society

and the devices also receive and provide adequate support and guarantees of security, accommodation, telecommunications, and human resources. Religious tourism destinations should also be supported by cold or cool climates and linked to other tourist objects already known by the wider community. Putri & Syamsiyah (2022) also argues that the components a requirement for a religious tourist area are having tourism potential and art and culture-specific to the local area. The place is located within the tourism development area, or at least it is sold in the corridors and routes of the tour packages. The availability of management staff, educators, and religious, artistic, and cultural tourism activists is preferred. Access and infrastructure to support tourism programs; and ensure security, order, and cleanliness.

The problem that hinders the development of an area as a religious tourism area is that there is no visible space for a tourist attraction that focuses on religious tourism (Imandintar & Idajati, 2019). Tourists' evaluation or perception of the quality of religious tourism managers' services is a comprehensive evaluation of the advantages of these attractions (Suaibah, 2017). Several aspects that should be considered in relation to the management and development of religious tourism objects are: 1) tourism marketing, 2) infrastructure, 3) tourism facilities, 4) increasing human resources (HR), and 5) community personality and culture (Anam, 2017). Imandintar & Idajati (2019) suggest several things that should be considered in religious tourism management and development, including attractions/attractions (attractions/cultural attractions), community participation, accessibility, availability of infrastructure Transportation (roads/bridges) and transportation facilities, facilities/support facilities and infrastructure/support facilities.

In this field, several questions are raised, such as: how religious tourism managers can, through marketing, use a long-term strategy to create a suitable position of religious purpose in the consumer, the consumer? What is the impact of globalization and commodification on the unique characteristics that religious tourism destinations present? The evolution of the concept of tourism destination management indicates that the views of this field are among the subjects that operate in different fields. The management of religious destinations is the management of the coordination of all components of the goal, which uses this strategic strategy to link. It seeks to maintain cooperation between organizations and interest groups that share a common goal (Beiki & Tardast, 2018). Regarding religious tourism destinations, the discussion of competitiveness in the goal between providing different services and at a more comprehensive level with other tourist destinations in attracting tourists and providing more convenient services, providing more places at the local level, attracting investment at the highest level is highly relevant (Alsawafi, 2017).

Research Methodology

The purpose of this research is applied research because the development of practical knowledge and its practical application is considered to solve one of the problems related to tourism management. On the other hand, the current research is a survey based on data acquisition. In this research, first, the management criteria of tourist destinations with an emphasis on religious destinations were identified using the background study of the research, and five academic experts in this field were investigated and localized. This department's academic experts were university professors with a history of research activities in the field of destination management and religious tourism during the last few years. In the first step, a pairwise comparison questionnaire was designed to establish a relationship between the Identified factors in the research. The number of experts answering the questionnaire questions on pairwise comparisons of the interpretive structural modeling technique is between 8 and 15 experts (Mirfakhraddini, 2022). Accordingly, in this part of the research, 14 experts were used to answer the questions of the paired comparison questionnaire. These experts have more than ten years of experience in tourism management of Yazd province and were active in the religious areas of the province, thus had a prominent level of familiarity with this area.

Interpretive structural modeling is an interactive learning process that can graph complex issues and reduce complexity. Structural-interpretive modeling is a suitable method for analyzing the influence of one element on other elements. This method examines the order and direction of complex relationships between the elements of a system. In other words, it is a tool that can analyze the complexity of the relationships between the forming elements of a system. It is necessary to implement the structural-interpretive modeling approach and determine the relationship and order of importance between the problem elements. It should be mentioned that Wardfield (1973) put forward the structural-interpretive modeling method. This method determines how each element affects the others (direction and intensity of the relationship) in a hierarchical structure. (Mirfakhraddini, 2022)

The research model is drawn based on the determined levels and the final achievement matrix. This model shows the leveling of varied factors and how the factors affect each other.

In the continuation of the research, the structural equation modeling technique was used to measure the fit of the conceptual model formed based on the interpretive structural modeling technique. To use the structural equation modeling technique, SmartPLS3 software was used. To fit the formed structural model, a questionnaire consisting of 28 items was designed and given to tourism experts and specialists of Yazd province. The number of respondents to this questionnaire was determined based on the table provided by Hair et al. (2014). They state that the minimum sample size required to use the PLS method, based on the minimum R² equal to 0.25 in each endogenous construct

in the structural model and considering the significance level of 5% and considering the statistical power of 80% for complexity Specific to the model (maximum independent variables in measurement models), they presented a table of the number of samples. Since the maximum independent variable or sub-criterion in this research is equal to 6, according to Hair et al. table, at least 48 people should be selected as sample members, and 61 questionnaires were completed at this research stage. The sampling method used in this section is the purposeful sampling method. The questionnaire's items were obtained by studying the background of the research. Then the face validity of this questionnaire was modified and verified by academic and industry experts. To check the validity of this research, the convergent validity tool that shows the average variance shared between each construct with its indicators has been used. The acceptable limit for this criterion is 0.5. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability tools have been used to measure reliability. Cronbach's alpha indicates the degree of correlation between a structure and its related indicators; the acceptable limit for this measure is 0.7. Also, the composite reliability criterion is the reliability that calculates the structures not in an absolute way but according to the correlation of their structures with each other. If the combined reliability value for each structure is higher than 0.7, it indicates the appropriate fit of the model's reliability. (Safari Derbarzi et al., 2019)

Findings

First step: identifying and extracting criteria and sub-criteria

At this stage, as explained above, by examining the background of the research and asking for opinions from experts (5 experts), suitable criteria for managing religious tourism destinations in Yazd province were extracted and localized. The localized criteria and sub-criteria are presented in Table 1.

The second stage: Designing the stratification framework of tourism destination management in Yazd province with the ISM approach

According to the factors obtained and affecting the management of tourism destinations in the province, as well as the opinions of experts, a pairwise comparison of the relationship between these factors is shown in Table 2.

Using Table 2, the initial achievement matrix was formed, and then the final achievement table was obtained based on it. To determine the level of dimensions, it is necessary to identify the sets of Reachability, Antecedent, and Intersection specified in Table 3.

Table 1. Related criteria and sub-criteria in the management of religious tourism destinations in Yazd province

Criterion	Sub-Criterion	Source
Relationship (Connections)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual media and digital services • Strong notification system • Access to location information (GPS, etc.) 	Rezaei Sarkhaei et al. (2022) Nadalipour (2012) Coban & Yildiz (2019) Zeytoonli & Barzegar (2019)
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of an opportunity to invest in religious tourism in the province • Financial and non-financial support of government organizations in this field • Improving political relations • Supporting the higher education sector of religious tourism • Delegation of authority to the relevant bodies to deal with the development of religious tourism in the province 	Zhang & Blasco (2022) Rezaei Sarkhaei et al. (2022) Zeytoonli & Barzegar (2019) Research experts
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfying religious tourists • Preservation of the native culture of the province by focusing on religious issues • Improving the local community's awareness of religious issues and rituals 	Zhang & Blasco (2022) Coban & Yildiz (2019) Research experts
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying and segmenting the market and correctly identifying the target market • Holding religious events according to the needs of the target market • Improving the quality of the experience of receiving religious services 	Rezaei Sarkhaei et al. (2022) Coban & Yildiz (2019) Research experts
Security and Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing and organizing religious tours • Educating the local community to ensure the safety of tourists and respect for all religions • Securing access routes to religious attractions (inside and outside the cities) 	Research experts
Facilities and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of religious places • Creating the infrastructure to host religious events • Appropriate placement of religious facilities • Secure traffic network • Creating suitable places and facilities to perform religious duties in access routes • Renovation of routes, means of transportation, etc. 	Zhang & Blasco (2022) Zeytoonli & Barzegar (2019)
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the private sector in religious tourism of the province • Recruiting a reliable and experienced force in this field • Training skilled workforce in religious tourism • Creating a university course in the field of religious tourism • Periodically holding seminars and conferences focusing on religious tourism 	Zhang & Blasco (2022) Rezaei Sarkhaei et al., (2022) Coban & Yildiz (20)

Table 2. Self-interaction matrix of factors affecting the management of religious tourism destinations in Yazd province.

	Relationship	Government	Culture	Marketing	Security and Trust	Facilities and Infrastructure	Management
Relationship		A	V	V	V	V	X
Government			V	O	V	V	V
Culture				V	V	O	X
Marketing					V	O	A
Security and Trust						X	A
Facilities and Infrastructure							X
Management							

Table 3. Determining the religious tourism destination management levels in Yazd province.

Factors	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection set	Level
Relationship	1,3,4,5,6,7	1,2,3,6,7	1,3,6,7	"1"
Government	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	2	2	"3"
Culture	1,3,4,5,6,7	1,2,3,6,7	1,3,6,7	"2"
Marketing	4,5	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	4,5	"1"
Security and Trust	5	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	5	"1"
Facilities and Infrastructure	1,3,4,5,6,7	1,2,3,6,7	1,3,6,7	"2"
Management	1,3,4,5,6,7	1,2,3,6,7	1,3,6,7	"2"

Paying attention to table 3, the drawing of the interpretive structural model is shown in figure 4.

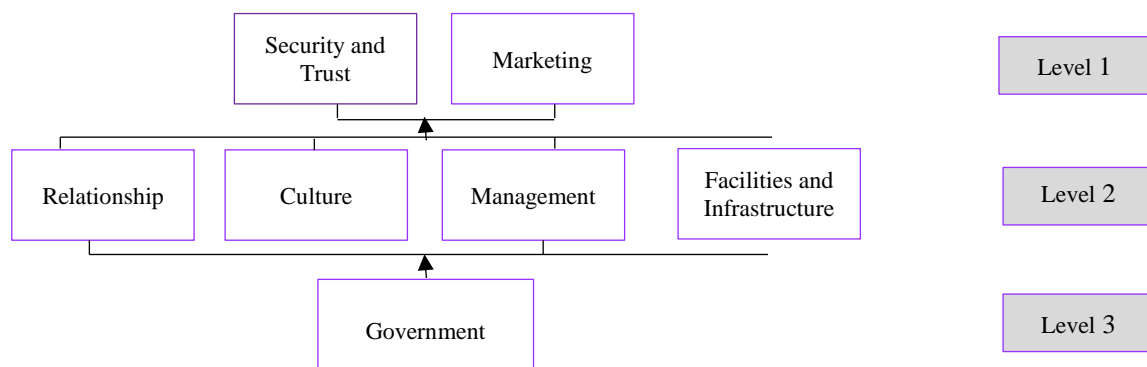


Figure 4. Research model (Researcher's findings)

The third step: fitting the primary framework of the research with the structural-interpretive modeling approach

The framework obtained in the research, which is shown in Figure 1, was placed in Smart PLS3 software for statistical fitting to be tested using the information obtained from 61 experts. Table 4 shows the validity and reliability values of each model dimension.

Table 4. reliability and validity values

Criteria	Convergent validity (acceptable limit 0.5)	Cronbach's alpha (acceptable limit 0.7)	composite reliability (acceptable limit 0.7)
Relationship	0.705	0.796	0.888
Government	0.658	0.865	0.904
Culture	0.698	0.782	0.876
Marketing	0.722	0.804	0.886
Security and Trust	0.723	0.819	0.887
Facilities and Infrastructure	0.647	0.889	0.913
Management	0.649	0.867	0.897

Based on the findings of Table 4, the validity and reliability of the research were confirmed. Based on Table 5, in this section, the fit of the structural model and the Q2 and R2 values for the dependent variables of the research model, and the correlation values for all variables are presented.

Table 5. Q2 and R2 values and connectivity

Criteria	Q ²	R ²	Communicability
Relationship	0.489	0.715	0.833
Government	-	-	0.802
Culture	0.457	0.684	0.831
Marketing	0.491	0.752	0.849
Security and Trust	0.511	0.765	0.852
Facilities and Infrastructure	0.452	0.754	0.794
Management	0.469	0.777	0.791

Q2 criterion determines the predictive power of the model. Models with an acceptable structural fit should be able to predict indicators related to the endogenous structures of the model. Regarding the severity of the predictive power of the model regarding endogenous structures, three values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 have been determined (Henseler et al., 2009).

Based on the findings, all Q2 values of the model are in a strong state, which shows that the model follows sufficient predictive power. Three values of 0.1, 0.2, and 0.35 are considered for connectivity values (Ramayah et al., 2018). Based on this, communication values are placed in a strong state. The R2 criterion is used to connect the measurement and structural parts of structural equation modeling and shows an exogenous variable's effect on an endogenous variable. The R2 criterion is calculated only for the endogenous (dependent) structures of the model, and in the case of exogenous (independent) structures, the value of this criterion is zero. Three values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 have been introduced as criteria for weak, medium, and strong values. The higher the value of R2 related to the endogenous structures of a model, the better the model fit (Holland, 1999). In this research, the R2 values are in a vital state. To check the overall fit of the model, the GOF criterion was used. Based on this criterion, the researcher can control the fit of the general part after examining the measurement part and the structural part of the overall research model. The three values of 0.01, 0.25, and 0.36 are considered weak, medium, and strong values for the GOF criterion. The value of GOF for the present study model was obtained as 0.791. Based on this, the model's overall fit is estimated to be strong. T-values for all routes should be higher than the standard value of 1.96 (Ramayah et al., 2018). In this study, T-values for all relationships were more significant than 1.96, which proves the existence of a significant relationship between the dimensions of the research.

Figure 5 shows the path coefficients and Z significance coefficients. The numbers inside the parentheses show the values of the significant Z coefficients, and the numbers outside of them indicate the values of the path coefficient.

In Table 6, the relationships of the research model are shown by measuring the values of path coefficients and Z significance coefficients.

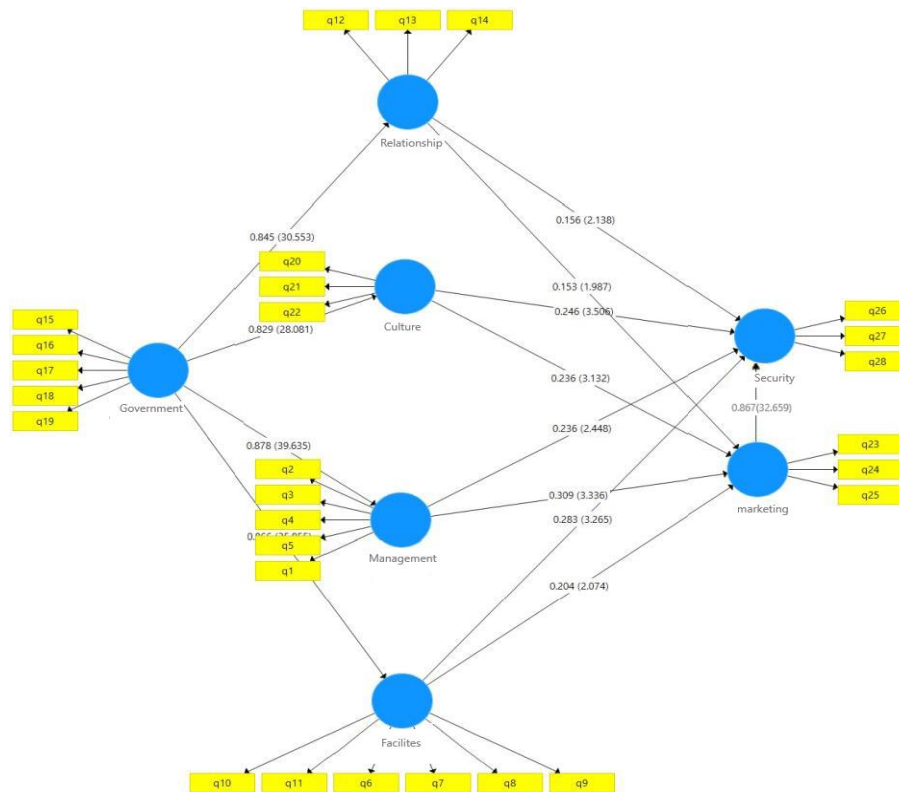


Figure 5.

Table 6. Effect coefficients of the research stimulus

Direction	Direction of Relationship	Path coefficient	Z Value	Confirm or Reject
Government- Facilities	Direct	0.86	35.85	Confirm
Government- Management	Direct	0.87	39.63	Confirm
Government- Culture	Direct	0.82	28.08	Confirm
Government- Relationship	Direct	0.84	30.55	Confirm
Facilities- Security	Direct	0.28	3.26	Confirm
Management- Security	Direct	0.23	2.44	Confirm
Culture- Security	Direct	0.24	3.50	Confirm
Relationship- Security	Direct	0.15	2.13	Confirm
Facilities- Marketing	Direct	0.2	2.07	Confirm
Management- Marketing	Direct	0.30	3.33	Confirm
Culture- Marketing	Direct	0.23	3.13	Confirm
Relationship- Marketing	Direct	0.15	1.98	Confirm
Marketing- Security	Direct	0.87	32.65	Confirm

According to Table 6 and Figure 2, all relationships between research variables have been confirmed.

Conclusion

This study aimed to pay attention to Yazd as a religious tourism destination, along with other potential and other types of active tourism in the province, such as cultural, therapeutic, and natural tourism. In other words, this article specifies that Yazd province has the capacity to attract religious tourists; Therefore, a proper management model is needed to manage them. Since diverse types of tourism are active in the province, it is necessary to know what mechanism we need to manage this tourist destination. Today, destination management is one of the critical factors determining destinations' competitive position, and beyond that, it guarantees a destination's sustainability. Although effective measures have been taken in marketing and planning in the province's tourism field in recent years, Yazd's emergence as a religious tourism destination is a new issue and has not yet been sufficiently addressed. Therefore, it is better to start this type of tourism at the beginning of its activity in a principled and planned manner so that with correct and scientific management and awareness of the functional coherence between all the components involved in it, it will play a significant role in improving the quality of the destination management and following it. To develop tourism in the province.

Religious tourism is a developed sector of Iran's tourism industry due to the shrine of the eighth Imam in Khorasan and Sainthood Masoumeh in Qom, as well as the meeting place of religious minorities, including Zoroastrians. It is the most critical factor that can effectively develop this industry. The provinces of Khorasan, Qom, and Shiraz are better known for religious tourism in Iran and among Muslims. However, Yazd province is also known for its particular religious potential, including special religious ceremonies for both Muslims and Zoroastrian religious minorities. And Yehudi can be a suitable destination for investment in this area. At the beginning of tourism development projects, recognizing the role of destination management in attracting tourists and developing tourism facilities is a priority.

The present research was conducted to design a conceptual model of destination management focusing on religious tourism in Yazd province to achieve this approach. It will create a sense of security and trust in religious tourists with its management measures and marketing activities to attract religious tourists and improve the performance of this area in the province.

For this purpose, using a research background study and a survey of experts, seven influential factors were identified in the design and establishment of the destination management model in Yazd province, focusing on religious tourism. Next, using the interpretive structural modeling technique, the relationship model between the identified factors and then the obtained structural model was tested

and fitted using the technique of the structural equation and through SmartPLS3 software. The research results indicate that the seven factors identified in this field are structured on three general levels. Based on the obtained model, the factor "Government actions and decisions" has been investigated as the initial factor in implementing destination management concepts in the field of religious tourism in Yazd province. According to the nature of the criterion of "government measures" and its related sub-criteria, this factor will provide the basis for the province's tourism industry to introduce religious tourism and gain the trust of tourists to attend ceremonies and visit religious places in the province. Government agencies can create an opportunity to invest in different sectors and people in the province's religious tourism through financial and non-financial support. On the other hand, the government can entrust the task of education in the field of religious tourism to educational organizations and promote the development of religious tourism by delegating authority to other organizations and private sectors. Also, government organizations such as handicrafts, cultural heritage, and tourism organizations and municipal organizations, as tourism trustee organizations in the province, have the power to communicate with other provinces, to facilitate the exchange of tourists and attract religious tourists from other destinations.

In general, the accompaniment and support of government organizations active in religious tourism pave the way for management activities, culture building in society, communication, and improvement and provision of necessary facilities. Moreover, in this way, the target market of this type of tourism will be well studied and identified, the quality of the experience of religious tourism services will be improved and promoted, and a sense of security will be instilled in the tourists. The ground will be laid for them to be present in the province to participate in ceremonies, events, places, and religions, etc.

Most of the conducted researches in this field have used the existing models of destination management, especially Crouch and Ritchie's model (2009), Zargham Borujeni & Tohidlu (2012), Nadalipour (2012), and Rezaei Sarkhaei et al. (2022). However, the present study is a new model with native offers. Among the notable and essential features of this model include: the studied case, that is, religious tourism in Yazd province; The comprehensiveness of the identified criteria and finally, attention to all tourism stakeholders (government, local community, private sector, tourists) are in the criteria of the model.

Edgell, Allen, Smith, & Swanson (2008) presented a destination management model focusing on economic issues; Other researchers have also compiled and presented the management of tourist destinations focusing on social, cultural, political issues and even during the outbreak of Corona and critical conditions (Chaturvedi, 2020). However, the current research is a comprehensive model focusing on all has presented dimensions, which will be one of the strengths of this article. In the

presented model of this research, "culture" was identified as an influential and, at the same time, influenced criterion, which is consistent with the research result of Jamal & El-Bassiouny (2019); Also, the criterion of "marketing" in the model of this research is a criterion that is directly and indirectly affected by all the criteria of the model and only affects the "security and trust" variable, in Nadalipour's article (2012); also the marketing factor as priority criterion has been identified.

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