

Role of New Information and Communication Technologies in Development of Religious Tourism (Case study: Tehran citizens)

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Abstract

The present research seeks to analyze the role of new information and communication technologies (ICT) in development of religious tourism of Iran. Different approaches and models have been raised and then the approaches given by them have been used in addition to study of views of Tehrani citizens. The research method applied in this research was applied in terms of objective and quantitative in terms of data type, descriptive and correlative in terms of data collection. The statistical population of the present research was Tehrani citizens and simple random sampling method was used. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire were measured and confirmed with the experts' view and also Cronbach's alpha. In the next stage, based on the conceptual research model, research questions and hypotheses, the extracted items were tested in the research statistical sample with a researcher made questionnaire. In the descriptive statistics section, description of data was presented in two sections of demographic variables and main variables with indices of absolute frequency, relative frequency, mean, standard deviation, and variance in the table and in inferential statistics section, correlation tests and multivariate regression and path analysis test.

Keywords: *New Information and Communication technologies, Religious tourism development, religious places*

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Introduction and Problem Statement

Tourism has been regarded as one of the indices of economic, social, cultural and political progress of a society from long time ago and survival of the human societies depends on it. This is of high importance in today's society. It has been predicted that the number of international tourists which was 1 billion persons in 2010 will increase to 6.1 billion in 2020 and income of tourism will reach approximately 1.590,000,000,000 Dollars in 2020. In addition, tourism alone has consisted of jobs of more than 10% of GDP at global level (World Tourism Organization, 2012). Today, tourism is not only the means of recreation and amusement but also turned into means for recognition and awareness of people's life, understanding of others and beyond that, recognition of the surrounding world, its realities and richness of insight and attitude of the people toward concepts of their life (Shojaee and Noori, 2007:64). In early Century 21, the subject of tourism was raised as a dynamic, diversified and revenue generating industry and also one of the sections which affect economic growth of the world. All countries in close competition seek to use abundant opportunities and advantages resulting from them thereby creating relative welfare for the present and future of its societies. It is evident that tourism industry development for each country can have strategic and vital benefits from the different economic, social and cultural perspectives. Different countries take it into account with reliance on cultural and economic issues from special perspective. Today, markets are changing with incredible speed. It means that in this era, we see transfer of power, rapid growth and acceptance of shop brands in addition to globalization. Such changes cause the companies to make mistake in adoption of suitable policy. Unfortunately, people and even many top managers don't have proper understanding of marketing. Application of marketing process is not only limited yo

goods and services but also it can include ideas, events of marketing and searching for market opportunities (Kotler, 2005; 668).

Religious Tourism among all different types of tourism is one of the most known ones. In all human civilizations, people have been interested to visit religious places. Among the Muslim societies, millions of tourists arrive to these regions very year due to the presence of holy cemeteries and places to perform commercial and economic activities while holding religious ceremonies and attaining knowledge. This type of tourism is one of the most common forms of tourism all over the world and it is related to the past centuries and eras. Generally, it includes travels and visits which mostly aims at religious experience. Religious tourism with all of its components and types could have been included in global tourism context due to special structural and functional characteristics so that it dominated over the entire world(Nolan&Nolan, 1989: 11).

On the other hand , one of the most important applications of information and communication technology in tourism, industry and they are forced to equip them and utilize innovative technologies due to role of tourism industry in different economic and social dimensions of each country and to use this industry. In the past decades , not only tourism industry has experienced rapid growth but also the touristic regions in the world underwent many changes and have been diversified considerably. During 1950s, 15 countries of Western Europe and North America have consisted of 97% of tourists in the world. This has been possible due to investment and creation of suitable structures for utilization of information and communication technologies. (Baslmaki et al. , 2007: 27) but in 1992, this country has successfully attained the fifth rank in absorption of tourist in issue of information and communication technologies. Method of presentation of information and touristic advertisement play important role in heightening general understanding of the people from countries and considerably expenses are paid for presentation of information to tourists through different methods such as posters , books and publications , CDs and Internet so that in 2006, 10 million dollars was paid for advertisement of tourism industry development and our country was ranked low in the world for absorption of capital in tourism industry. One of the most important technologies affecting

tourism industry is information tools and telecommunication routes (Internet). (Azani, 2007: 4)The value and importance which information and communication technologies created for development of touristic infrastructures are very interesting and notable. A tourist will be interested when he/she can consider tourism information related to historical monuments of a country in global zone of web and obtain audiovisual and textual information about them. Although Iran is one of the first 10 countries in terms of touristic and historical charisma , contribution of Iran to tourism industry is among the first 100 countries(Vodoodi, 2007: 30). There are different reasons for creation of such condition . One of the most important reason is lack of information about abilities of Iran. In fact, the modern technologies which are important factor in absorption of tourist in Iran have been used in Iran. Statistics shows that 60% of the Internet users use Internet for planning and making decision about work and recreational travels. High number of internet users in different countries allows cheaper , faster and more optimal information to the developing counties in absorption of tourism. For example, Malaysia in 2000 could absorb 380 million Dollars of revenue from tourism through internet (Voroodi, 2007, 34) so that 30% of tourist absorption in this country is due to electronic tourism while contribution of Iran in this field is 0. Tourism in the third millennium is regarded as the most valuable moneymaking industry in the world and statesmen of the country make effort to take this action with national determination . This effort can lead to absorption of tourist , introduction of the country at global level and promotion of GNP. The income which we can earn from information technology for absorption of tourist will not be comparable with the oil income because there is only capital absorption in this industry(Amooszad Khalili et al. , 2009: 2). In this regard, the main question in the present article is what the role of innovative ICT technologies are in tourism development in the religious places?

Background

Role of virtual social networks in Iranian tourism development , case study of (Yazd, Isfahan , Mazandaran, Golestan, Khorasan Razavi and Fars provinces)Title of the M.S. Thesis was tourism which was written by Sajieh Shahidi in 2015. The abstract of this thesis is as

follows: Today, considering progresses in computer and information and communication technologies and expansion of Internet global network allowed the people to share what they can experience with rest of the world. This expansion and ease of access to information created considerable effect on tourism and propagated innovative tourism more differently from what was common traditionally. Among them, competent authorities involved in introduction of Destination Management Organizations(DMO) try to utilize these new equipment and get ahead of the competitors. In this research, websites of Destination Management Organizations(DMO) in Iran(Isfahan, Fars, Golestan, Khorasan Razavi, Mazandaran and Yaz) and also the presence and rate of their participation new social networks and use of web services and equipment were studied. This research was done in two descriptive and analytical methods. To perform this research, the proposal of Jame Hamil , Allen Stevenson and Danila Atard was used by making small changes in optimization , updating of and localization of this proposal and some questionnaires were created according to their proposal and one expert of social media and 5 experts of information technology were asked to help the researcher to identify factors of web particularly social networks to specify to what extent these authorities these services and equipment are used and to what extent they enjoy general feedback. 6 provincial DMOs from different countries in the world which were selected from the site , TripAdvisor and information of World Tourism Organization (2014) and The World Economic Forum (2015) were studied and the obtained data was studied to clarify issues of research. It is necessary to note that Microsoft Excell 2013 and ReCal 0.1 Alpha software was used to analyze data. It was specified in results that all DMOs of the local provinces were included in “wall paper sticking “ and “low participation level” groups and all international DMOs were included in the “selective” group due to participation in specified number of factors and having privileges of high participation in it.

Religious tourism and factors affecting it (case study of Iran) was the title of the paper which has been published by Masoumeh Aghajani and Saeed Farahani Fard in Journal of Strategic and Major Policies , No. 9 , year 2015. It has been mentioned in this paper that : Travel is a small but meaningful word which has accompanied the human since

creation. If we name travel as tourism and study it from the economic perspective, we will face one of the most profitable industries in international field. Subject tourism in the Islamic culture and civilization has strong relationship with Muslims' thought and belief. For this reason, it is necessary to study importance of tourism industry (religious tourism) in Islamic culture and study concepts, characteristics, objectives and its effects. In this study, we study factors affecting religious tourism and effectiveness of factors considering statistics in this field in Iran. Among them, we will glance at condition of tourism in some Islamic countries such as Arabia, Egypt and other Islamic countries. The research results show that tourism is highly important from the Islam's viewpoint and potential of religious tourism in Iran can be assessed positive. At the end, considering results of estimating effect of factors affecting religious tourism, necessary strategies will be mentioned by Iran to utilize religious tourism opportunities to increase incomes resulting from religious tourism industry in Iran as one of the best ways of excluding single-oil product economy.

Studying and identifying factors affecting electronic tourism promotion and its role in development of tourism industry (case study: Isfahan City), Fereshteh Amoo Ali Khostrabadi, M.S. Thesis of Geography, University of Isfahan, 2013. Rapid expansion of information and communication technology and Internet of the industrial structures all over the world. In tourism which information is regarded as an important component, creation of virtual media, electronic tourism, new information and reservation systems, etc. caused increase in customer satisfaction. Information and communication technology continually provides new tools for tourism marketing and management and reorganizes the entire process of development, management and marketing of products and tourism destinations. Isfahan has no proper place in international field despite various cultural, historical, religious and ecotouristic in terms of tourism revenues. Generally, statistics indicates declining place of tourism industry in the country and 1% contribution of global tourism and Isfahan is not excluded from this statistics. Therefore, considering unsuitable place of Iran and Isfahan in tourism industry, it seems that virtual tourism development and its related

infrastructures can fill the existing gap. The present research which is applied in terms of goal and identifies and studies factors affecting electronic tourism in Isfahan and is descriptive and correlative in terms of research method and is library -field method in terms of data collection method (distribution of 381 questionnaires based on Cochran's C test) and reliability coefficient of the questionnaires is 0.83. The collected data was also tested and analyzed with Excel and SPSS software and SWOT strategic analysis model was utilized to analyze internal and external factors affecting condition of electronic tourism in the region and to draw plans , Arc GIS software was used. Based on the research results, most tourists (33/3%) of Isfahan and its touristic charisma searched it through Internet but most of them (43.8%) still perform touristic activities including room reservation , selection of hotel m, etc. In their presence and Isfahan city is in early stage of electronic tourism and electronic tourism can be promoted in Isfahan by strengthening foundations of tourism.

Electronic tourism is a new approach in convergence of Islamic countries with emphasis on central role of Iran ; Tooba Amir Azodi and Mohammad Ali Rajaei, Sistan and Balouchestan University , International Congress of the Islamic World Geographers, 2010 In the present era, information burst and expansion of communication caused changes in geographical and political borders and dimensions of this phenomenon are so extensive that all dignities of human life have been affected in different scientific , technological , cultural , social, political , economic and touristic fields. Tourism industry as the most extensive and varied type of industry in century 21 is one of the economically comprehensive and effective components and one of the social -cultural phenomenon which causes relationship, bond, peace and friendship and reduction of global and regional disputes and causes a sort of convergence. Electronic tourism is a serious phenomenon in this field which is one of the foundations of globalization of information and evident center of place, time and space compression leading to introduction of historical , cultural tourism and ecotourism charisma among the countries through virtual space. The Islamic countries as a geographical (spatial) reality and with historical -religious history has high potential for tourism. Among them, Iranian civilization with historical, natural and touristic

extent and abundant technical equipments can play central role in unity, solidarity and convergence of Islamic countries. Electronic tourism is a starting point between tourism and information technology and Iran can take into account approaches, methods and strategies of this convergence. Main objective of this article is to recognize strategies in main missions of electronic tourism development in Iran based on convergence of the Islamic countries with effective role of Iran. The research method of this article is documentary and analytical method considering aim, of the article. Results of this research indicate that place of Iran as a country with touristic charisma can help introduce touristic abilities of Islamic countries to strengthen social, economic and political solidarity and convergence of the Islamic countries.

Relationship between globalization and Iranian tourism development; M.A. Thesis of tourism management, Faculty of Management and Accounting, Allameh Taba'tabae University, Zahra Nekoei. Globalization is a phenomenon which has attracted attention of scientific gatherings ever than before. Although this phenomenon has existed in the past, new communication technologies have taken new shape in the present due to the new communications. Many believe that globalization is an exceptional opportunity. Therefore, condition of success requires that dimensions of this phenomenon be recognized well to allow selection of optimal strategies, because any negligence of that converts this opportunity into a threat. Globalization means process of time and space compression through which people in the world merge more or less and relatively consciously in the single global community. Since globalization is more or less effective in all dignities of life and affected by them as well. Tourism is not excluded and have been affected by globalization. Among them, process of globalization helped remove barriers for travel by collapse of borders and on the other hand, tourism strengthens globalization trend particularly in its international dimension. Two key factors of globalization in tourism section include: Transportation technology: Reduction of costs (financial and temporal) -removal of restrictions and geographical borders and communication technology: Emergence of computer, satellites and digital media. The main aim of this research is to know if globalization has relationship with tourism of

Iran and in case there is any relationship, it seeks to determine direction and intensity of this relationship. Globalization is studied in four major economic, political, cultural and social and environmental fields. In this research, relationship between each of the indices and tourism development of Iran is studied from the viewpoint of managers and experts of different industrial sections of tourism and then, the obtained results have been analyzed with the statistical tests (Wilcoxon, Friedman and Kruskal–Wallis one-way analysis of variance). At the end, it is concluded that globalization in economic, political and cultural -social fields and environmental field has negative relationship with tourism development in Iran. Among the dimensions of globalization, political globalization has stronger relationship with Iranian tourism development.

Role of information technology and new and advanced educations in sustainable development of tourism , Faezeh Tavasoli Ara and Saeedeh Bashiri: Today, information is an essential part of tourism industry and information and communication technology is the informative , communicative and executive skeleton of tourism. Information and communication technology has created globalization of supply and demand and directs it and provides efficient tools for consumers to identify and purchase suitable products and suppliers to develop management and distribute their suggestions at global scale. Today, application of electronic devices led to extensive innovations in type and style of information publication, virtual or real reconstructions, type of show m supply and information of the charismas. Therefore, it can be said that one of the most important applications of information and communication technology and Internet is semantic expansion of sustainable tourism based on presentation of the logical methods for utilization of natural and human resources , prevention of unscientific application of these resources , suitable marketing , protection and promotion of natural , social and cultural diversity , protection of local economic system and education of human resources which can be studied in two ways: One is the application of information and communication technology and another one is virtual tourism which means electronic nature of the existing touristic resources and even artificial spaces.

Functional analysis of religious tourism in Iran (metaanalysis of the existing researches) is a title of a paper which has been written by Ali Asghar Firooz Jaeeian et al. in *Journal of Tourism Planning and Development* ,No. 8, Spring 2014. Religious tourism as one of the forms of tourism is one of the most prosperous types of tourism at present. Review of the related literature shows that religious tourism had different consequences. For this purpose, religious tourism and positive and negative functions in Iranian society have been studied with metaanalysis method and with emphasis on Parsons' functionalist theories. Considering theory of Parsons, effects of religious tourism can be divided into four economic , political , planning , social and cultural sections. The research results indicate that in biological microsystem, religious tourism caused improvement of main infrastructures in the region , creation of employment , increase of income and economic improvement of tourism receptive cities. In the personality microsystem, effect of religious tourism on plans and policies is bilateral that is increase of religious tourism with the related events leads to approval of plan and political actions and sometimes, some plans are approved for increase of the number of tourist and particularly religious tourist. Religious tourism is effective in social microsystem, or increase of quality of life , increase of welfare equipment and increase of social solidarity. At the end , energy of tourism is given to cultural microsystem and it shows its cultural microsystem with phenomenon of cultural transfer and share and protection of values.

Theoretical Framework

Religious tourism is one of the oldest and the most prosperous types of the past and present tourisms all over the world which dates back history of religious culture. (Momeni and Sarafi, 2004: 13). If we look at the past history of religious tourisms and travels , we will face religious tourisms such as pilgrimage to Mecca and pilgrimage to Al-Masjid an-Nabawī, holy shrine of Shiite imams in Iraq, Arabia and Iran , holy ceremonies of the ancient Greeks in Apollo temples and travels of the Egyptians to visit the Pharaohs and ancient Iranians to The Anahita Temple in Kangavar and the like and each of them shows old age and prevalence of tourism among different nations. Religious tourism can be introduced as the most suitable type of tourism because

pilgrimage and religious tourism are rooted in religious beliefs and in its specialized sense and beyond dependency on time and leisure time, it is an important factor in formation of travel; concentration and cultural vision. However, religious tourism with all of its components and types could be embedded in global tourism context due to its special structural and functional characteristics so that its domination has encompassed all over the world (Momeni, Sarafi and Ghasemi, 2008: 12).

Religious tourism is regarded as the oldest and the most prosperous tourism in the past and present in the world (Ajit, 2004: 2). Which climatic difficulties or bad climate doesn't prevent (Monshi Zadeh, 2005: 139) and it is as old as the religious culture. Religious tourism has been defined as follows: Religious tourism means the tourists' visit of the holy shrines and places such as shrine, Imāmzādeh tombs and the like. Religious tourists are the cultural tourists who travel to perform pilgrimage to religious actions, promote, instruct and spend leisure time in religious places of the world (Rahim Poor, 2010: 14). Religious tourism includes all religions. Religious tourists may perform pilgrimage to holy places and one time of pilgrimage to these places does not prevent them from referring to them again. (Feiz Abdi and Vaziri Mahboob, 2011: 2) Religious tourists can be divided into two groups: One includes pilgrims or those who only want to perform pilgrimage and religious affairs and their residence time is not subject to leisure time and another one includes religious tourists who visit other touristic places including religious and non-pilgrimage places while performing pilgrimage and participating in religious ceremonies. In other words, aim of their travel is multiple with preference of pilgrimage (Momeni ET AL., 2009: 14). We face two different classes of tourists in another classification: the first class includes those who visit the holy places in their religion and the second class includes those who visit the holy places of other religions (Rahim Poor, 2000: 14).

Religious tourism is almost regarded equal but considering definitions of each of them, it can be said that religious tourism is regarded as a part of religious tourism. Religious tourism is for the persons who give religious and spiritual value to destination. Pilgrimage to Mecca is one of the evident examples of tourism. (Homayoon, 2012: 104).

Religious tourism is of different types: Religious tourism, Islamic architectural tourism, Halal tourism, Islamic medical tourism, tactical tourism. Tourism is a way of linking between people with different religions and culture and helps them to better understand each other despite political and social tensions. According to World Tourism Organization, religion has been known as one of the main motivations of travel. This type of tourism is one of the most common forms of tourism all over the world which are related to the past centuries and eras and generally, it includes travels and visits the main aim of which is religious experience. Religious charisma, shrines and holy places absorb many tourists every year, residential and hospitalization places for this type of tourism such as hostels and pilgrim hotels considering social, cultural and doctrinal context of tourists and host society have special characteristics and are various in any country / it is necessary to note that religious tourism is the only form of tourism which dominates over climatic barriers. "Sing", one of the theorists of this industry says: it seems that spirit of Odyssey dominates over the climatic barriers. In this regard, when the season and climate change, it is observed that the number of tourism and visit of religious cities and centers don't change and only destination is important for this type of tourism. His experience starts with leaving the origin and includes all routes and events which he/she faces on the way (Meyer, 2004). In the Islamic culture, travel has been considered as travesty against lives. Islam has special look at human and his needs and recognizes what makes life enjoyable and easy and is effective in body and soul of the human. In today's machining world, human needs rest and travel more than ever to neutralize effects caused by mental stresses as far as possible because from this perspective, tourism is an introvert experience in which human wants to spend time to bring his/her bored, unhappy and dark and distressed soul into peace, freedom, enjoyment and extraordinary beauty. He/she wants to live and move based on growth and perfection in this spiritual way. The Holy Qu'ran in many verses has emphasized on travel and recommends human to travel:

Say, [O Muhammad], "Travel through the land and observe how He began creation. So proceed throughout the earth and observe how was the end of those who denied. .

Tourism is a phenomenon which has existence since the ancient time in human societies and has reached its technical, economic, social and industrial place gradually during different historical stages. This industry is a mixture of different activities of transportation and food to residence and management of events which play role as interconnected chain to serve the tourists. On this basis, one of the important indices of tourism which plays considerable role in tourism activities is religious tourism. Religious tourism which is usually referred to as religion tourism is a form of tourism in which religious people individually or collectively travel for the purpose of pilgrimage , religious or recreational advertisement. Undoubtedly, one of the most important and ancient factors and motives of human travel is religious beliefs and religious feelings. Aim of religious tourism is to go to a religious center with local, regional or trans-regional domination or participation in a religious festival , religious conference or a religious session which doesn't include overnight residence. In another definition, religious tourism means visit of religious centers with local, regional or trans-regional, national and international domination or participation in a religious festival , religious conference or a religious session for some days or weeks. The holy places for pilgrimage absorb between 1 and 10 million pilgrims (tourists)every year and this number always fluctuates and increases during special religious ceremonies or occasions or decreases due to political issues , stagnation and war(Rinschede,1992).

Classification of all types of religious tourism

All types of religious tourism can be classified and studied from different perspectives. Each of the following classifications can have considerable effect on marketing of tourism product and we refer to three of these classes from different perspectives.

1. Duration of residence: Types of religious tourism can be classified into two general classes in terms of duration of residence: Short-term religious tourism: It means the travel is limited in terms of place and occurs in short intervals. Aim of this travel is to go to a religious center with local, regional or trans-regional domination or participation in a religious festival, religious conference or a religious session which doesn't include overnight residence.

Long-term religious tourism: religious centers with local, regional or trans-regional, national and international domination or participation in a religious festival, religious conference or a religious session for some days or weeks.

The holy places for pilgrimage absorb between 1 and 10 million pilgrims (tourists) every year and this number always fluctuates and increases during special religious ceremonies or occasions or decreases due to political issues, stagnation and war (Rinschede, 1992).

2. Motivations and goals of travel: All types of religious tourism are classified into three general classes in terms of goals and motivations of travel:

2.1. Traveling to visit religious and pilgrimage centers such as mosques, churches, temples, abbeys, tombs and shrines. This type of travel is divided into two classes of worship and pilgrimage travels and missionary travels. worship and pilgrimage travels include travel for pilgrimage to Mecca, pilgrimage to shrines, cemeteries and tombs, traveling to regard for kinship and look after the relative and pay visit to friends and patients, traveling to perform good acts and studying prophetic mission and helping the orphans and people in need. And missionary travels include advertisement of Islamic and traveling to guide people.

2.2. Traveling to participate in conferences, meetings and religious ceremonies

2.3. Traveling to visit historical and architectural monuments of the religious and pilgrimage places (Rinschede, 1992).

3. Organized travel

From this perspective, religious tourism can be divided into two classes:

3.1. Unorganized forms of religious tourism which include types of travel which people alone do and are found less in different religions due to teachings of these religions to their followers.

3.2. Organized forms of religious tourism which are organized considering specified characteristics as follows:

1. The number of participants

As mentioned above, most of the pilgrimage and religious travels are done collectively so that it is important for many tourists to travel with a group with the same belief or the peer groups, for example, travel of

Muslim pilgrims to Mecca which is performed every year in the form of group at special time.

2. Method and means of transportation:

By Mid 19th Century, the pilgrims traveled all over the world on foot or on foot and by ship or animal (today, pilgrimage on foot is common in many regions, cultures and religions).

3. Seasonal models: Religious tourism has linked with special season like other types of tourism and the factors affecting this field are religious ceremonies in memorial days, climatic situations of pilgrimage places and work calendar of the local population etc. which play major role in seasonal religious and pilgrimage tourism. For example, in Dhu'l-Hijjah month, many people go to Mecca to participate in ceremonies of pilgrimage to Mecca.

4. Social structure: Social structure including age, sex, social position, etc. Is also effective in organization of these travels and generally, there are differences between age and sex of different pilgrims of religions (Ibid).

Characteristics of religious travels

Religious travels like other travels have the characteristics which are mentioned as follows:

1. Religious tourism has less negative environmental, cultural and social effects than other types of tourism and some of these characteristics may be due to teachings of schools and religions of the pilgrims and most pilgrims are peaceful and law obedient people. 2. Seasonable nature of religious travels and that many of these travels are performed only in special travels. 3. The people who travel in this way are not variety seeking because they almost seek for spiritual matters and most of them seek for simplicity. 4. All of the people from each social class can travel in this way. In other words, such travels are not limited to special class of community as in many developing countries, which tourism in its early stage, religious tourism is regarded as the only opportunity for travel for many social classes.

This condition is more evident in middle class societies which are not financially and socially able to travel in long term and they fill their leisure time to visit religious and pilgrimage places.

5. Most religious and pilgrimage travels are performed collectively

and in organized manner. 6. Some of the religious travels take compulsory or assertive shape in terms of performance of the rules related to that religion. All believers are performed to perform such travel at least for one time. 7. Religious and pilgrimage centers provide places for visiting and communication of people from different cultures and regions. 8. Production and sale of old handicrafts, ancient designs and products of different regions in religious and pilgrimage centers. 9. Religious tourism has political aspect as well so that many religious places are consequently regarded as national places and many religious places are used for holding national festivals (Rinschede,1992).

New Information and Communication Technologies

Information And Communication Technologies include: A set of machines called computers, telephones , data processors , work stations , robots , satellites , etc. which act through software. In sum, if we regard information technology as triangle , three vertexes of that triangle will be office automation information systems and communication between these parts means information and communication technology(Babae Hemati, Roshan, 2014).Information and communication technology is defined as : A set of machines i.e. Computers , telephones , data processors , robots , satellite , cable televisions , etc. which are activated through software. Manuel Castells also defined information and communication technology as: A convergent set of technologies and microelectronics, computing (including machines and software), remote communication, telecommunication and optical electronic broadcasting. The present revolution in information and communication technologies has promoted human relations to new and complex level. New information and communication technologies are the most important dynamic forces in progress of global process and current challenges in human activities, particularly electronic networks which are regarded as a type of main infrastructure of globalization. David Held and Anthony Mc Grew and many other researchers on globalization argue that these important technologies are the most important determining elements of globalization. As mentioned above, the revolution which has occurred for information and communication technologies caused change in

paradigm of technology from industrial technology to information technology so that it determines the extent of their power in international field based on the extent to which countries enjoy communication technologies. For this reason, it can be acknowledged that information and communication technologies are source of national power and perhaps as the most important power tools of the countries (Sadooghi, 2001: 31)

1- Website

Web is a large system of servers which supplies all types of information to every person in Internet. The main characteristic of web which distinguishes it from other services is based on its textuality. It means that one can go from one source or page to page and another source with pointers and it includes textual, audiovisual and graphic sources And is based on Hypermedia (Golestani, 2006). One of the most fields of information about tourism potential is the use of websites. These websites are the good opportunity for introduction of tourism equipment of a country due to extraordinary value o information which is given to the users. Among them, governmental information sites related to tourism of a country in Internet is of special importance. In fact, it can be said that the formal sites are digital speakers of a country in web and the stronger and the more up-to-date these sites, the more attention they will attract. To design these databases, one should pay attention to some points:

A- Multi languages: Considering nonnative language of the tourists , common languages in the world should be taken into account.

B-multimedia: Database should use all capacities of web such as photo of text film and others for information and only one website with tens of text pages cannot respond to the clients.

C: up-to-date The information available on website should be updated occasionally so that the users can be familiar with changes , laws and regulations(Cho, Y., Wang,2002).

User friendly: Website should easily give the required information to the user not to confuse him/her. For example, some services such as sort and search should be available on the base to obtain the information in the form of the related clusters.

2. Television and its role in development of religious tourism

Influence and attractiveness of television in the present world are inevitable and its role in education, guidance, orientation and formation of the public thoughts is undeniable. For this reason, television has been used as one of the main tools for penetrating into the public thoughts and applied by the states or private section based on the intended purposes. Invention of telecommunication satellite caused effect of television to go beyond the national borders and has converted it into transnational and global case. The powerful states relying on the strong communication and satellite equipment intend to convert the world into an area for invasion of visual waves and direct unilaterally thoughts of the world to their goals and desires so that these states intend to utilize television as magic box for equalizing the public thoughts , the world and forming global united village(Biriukov, 7).

Television has the characteristics which distinguish it from other media and information methods:

Firstly: Television concurrently affects two visual and hearing senses.

Secondly: Television is able to give hot news to the viewers with light speed.

Thirdly: A television program doesn't need mediator to attract attention of the audience.

Fourthly: Television is able to cover many audiences concurrently.

Fifthly: Television is an uncompetitive media due to direct and parallel communication with audience and showing events at time of occurrence. (Biriukov, 7).

All of these priorities indicate that television is not only the news and information means but also media which collects all characteristics of other media and change and combined them(Ibid, 14). In addition to the above definitions which pay attention to structural aspects of television media, television can be regarded as a social-cultural phenomenon. It means that what appears on television page will be interpreted by the audiences and then they enter social worlds due to social interactions in which there is broad scope of discourses. Television media connects us to the world of larger symbolic systems every day , social and political life (Peter Dahlgren– first published, p.39).

While television can play role in social interaction and unity of humans , it has another duty that is this media can participate in facilitating and optimizing political , economic and social processes and in the affairs related to cultures such as transfer of traditions , creation of new cultural compositions , promotion of education , cultural and sport activities. Television can provide necessary information and also amusement and recreation for the routine life. One of the main characteristics is the role of television education and its relationship with creation of public collaboration. Regarding relationship between education trend and television, it is evident that television images are of the highest importance because they arouse increasing need of collaboration deeply among the audiences. So, each class may be equipped with a television set soon. At present, television could have changed our sensory and mental life so that even human tastes have changed due to its changes. Television caused the people not only to know and rely on it but also know more and add any knowledge to their demands. At the end, it can be said that television can show functions and contrasts of different trends and expansion of forms and states better than any other media (McLuhan, 391-2).

McLuhan believes that electronic devices play determining role in different industrial, educational and cultural fields in the human life future changes. He says that : Segmentation, specialization , production and supply of packed products in future will be removed and originality and diversity will replace them and all people will be able to participate (Cazeneuve, 1985: 43). In addition, television helps provide experience frameworks, general cultural attitudes in which people interpret and organize information in modern societies. Television is as important as book, magazines or newspapers in expansion of indirect forms of communication in the present era Television forms the methods in which the people interpret social life and react to it by organizing our experience of social life. For example, television has helped change nature of modern election due to its importance in provision of a field for statement of problems and introduction of the elected candidates to some extent(Giddens , 2010: 479). It is natural that when television is monopolized by the government and there are no opposing parties, it will turn into means

of amusement, information and culturing of thoughts based on the dominant ideology and since other mass media such as newspaper and radio are congruent with television, there will be no inconsistency among them and short-term and long-term effects of television on the public thoughts have been controlled to some extent (Cazeneuve, 181).

Advertisement

Tabliqat in English language is known as advertisement. The abbreviated form of advertisement is "advert" and "ad" which means commercial advertisement in Persian. Tabliqat is the plural form of tabliq and means notification of message. Eblaq literally means conveying and tabliq means act of conveying and mobaleq means conveyor. Conveyor of messages and special trainings for advertisement and teachings of the conveyor regarding its content determine nature of advertisement and in fact, advertisement is defined as: Making comments or announcing special information to acquire views or desirable trends..... Qualter and Young also define advertisement the same other colleagues define and believe that advertisement is highly effective on behavior. Qualter having conducted careful studies and defined advertisement says that: Advertisement means intentional effort which has been made by some people or groups using media to control, change or form attitude of other groups with purpose of affecting their reaction in a special situation to the extent that the advertiser desires (Shah Mohammadi, 2006: 67). Advertisement in fact means communication through introduction of products or services through channels of distribution in return for money received from organization. Unlike the past, it is more important to have customer than sales itself. In today's world, advertisement is not regarded as cost but a sort of investment to fulfill organizational goals (Dehdahti, 2004).

One of the important barriers to tourist absorption is the lack of effective advertisement for introduction of Iranian tourism charisma at international level. Advertisement and marketing are very important factors in an organization to reach its goals and play an undeniable role in tourism section and even, it can be said that it is regarded as one of the key factors. At present, the countries which have successfully attracted tourists spend high expenses in different ways and with

modern and advertisement and marketing methods to introduce their country to the foreign tourists and create enthusiasm and motivation for traveling to their country, however, it should be acknowledged that no considerable investment has been made to introduce tourism charisma of Iran and apply effective methods of advertisement. Political and cultural delegates of Islamic Republic of Iran outside the country couldn't introduce the world to real situation of Iran through proper advertisement . Many people particularly women fear of traveling to Iran due to negative advertisement of mass media and this is sign of the advertisement weakness of our country.

Considering our special condition of our country in the world and false advertisement by most mass media , some large countries have tried to disrepute Iran and sequester our country . Special attention to advertisement is undeniable and this prevents the country from solving this problem easily. One of the evident weaknesses of tourism of the country is sensible lack of accurate , scientific and beautiful brochure , book, slide and audiovisual tape for introduction of cities and parts of the country whether in Persian or in different languages of the world. Unfortunately, the materials which are published about Iran by our contracting party out of Iran and are given to the interested people are so contradictory that they confuse the tourists while receiving visa. In the tourism advertisement, tourism products of Iran don't have separate characteristics of charisma of competitive destinations while Iran is unique in terms of cultural , exceptional situation and natural elements.

One of the special duties of the government is major advertisement for the country to attract tourist because one should attract travelers with new e-commerce methods and Internet advertisement while publishing poster ,brochure and magazines but Iran has limited potential to make such major investment in private section to utilize new technology for marketing and progress of tourism. Tourism is a suitable section for application of IT while attention to this fact that it will have determining role in marketing and progress of tourism by providing facilities and services to the tour leaders. On the other hand, advertisement in the fields of tourism is so weak that the people are not aware of the natural , historical and local monuments and charisma. Tourists' failure to recognize charisma of the country caused

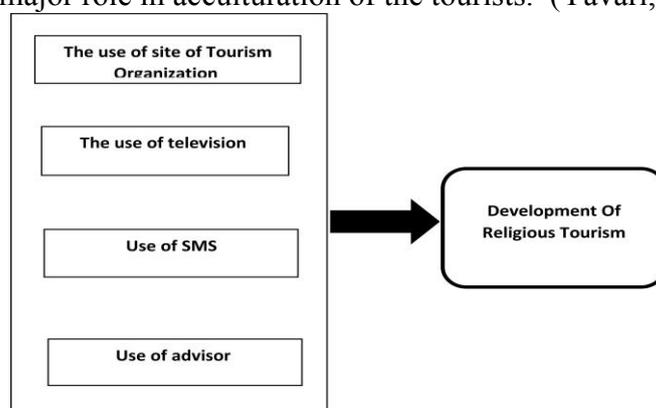
stagnation of tourism industry in the country. In addition, there is improper image of the country among other countries. In this regard, foreign delegates and consultations can also play main and optimal role. In addition, tribal advertisement can play role in increasing awareness of tourists with climate of different areas, social and cultural situations of the country and the related areas in terms of food, clothes, traditions, customs and transportation. Generally, goal of advertisement in our country should be to present information about product of tourism in Iran and change image of the present tourism out of Iran and encourage the foreigners to travel to the country. Tourism has taken the minimum advantage of advertisement compared with other countries while they should consider advertisement as one of the most important factors in their scope of activity. (Yavari, Toghiani, 2010: 21)

Consultation about issues of religious tourism

Iran as a touristic country with historical and cultural records and natural and living characteristics has considerable touristic potential. Relics of different periods of human settlement in the Iranian Plateau, natural and various coastal, mountainous and desert landscapes and historical complexes, cultural and religious heritages are the major incentives for visiting Iran. Despite all of these fields, it requires having residential and hospitalization places with desirable traveling facilities. Fortunately, Iran provides necessary equipment with desirable condition to the tourists who travel to Iran with different motivations as far as it can. (Vadoodi, 2007).

Awareness with information level and familiarity of people with charisma and issues of tourism in the country indicate this undeniable fact that there is insufficient scientific and real information even for the most distinguished experts about potential of tourism in the country under such social conditions which people are not aware of the charisma of travel and pilgrimage at different parts of the country. How can one introduce the tourists of other countries who don't have knowledge of touristic charisma of our country to the existing charisma? Therefore, we first should develop tourism in Iran then expand tourism with optimal facilities and planning. It is necessary to have sufficient awareness and recognition of the interest and motivations of the foreign tourists particularly western tourists based

on cultural elements, values and norms of society and this is rarely common among the tourists of the Muslim and Asian countries which are religiously and culturally similar to us . Considering type of tourists visiting Iran based on Islamic rules , some services were provided to the tourist to fill his/her leisure time in proper and reasonable manner while being familiar with cultural-social elements of our country. Method of information and preparation of these plans can play major role in acculturation of the tourists. (Yavari, 2009)



Research theoretical model

Research hypotheses

Main hypothesis

New information and communication technologies causes development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

Sub hypotheses:

1. The use of site of Tourism Organization causes development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

The use of television causes development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

Use of SMS causes development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

Use of advisor causes development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

Research method

Given that the present research is conducted to apply results of its findings to development of religious tourism in religious places,

therefore, its method is applied in terms of goal and since the present research is conducted to identify and describe role of spiritual and material supports in development of religious tourism, thus, it is descriptive in nature. Data collection method in this research is library and field method considering subject and nature of the research. Data collection instrument in this research is questionnaire.

Statistical population, sample size and sampling method

Given that the present research is conducted to apply results of its findings to development of religious tourism among Tehrani citizens , therefore, Statistical population included all citizens aged 18 years above residing in four districts (2,13, 17, 22) of Tehran and was equal to 1219432 based on census of 2011. The sample size was determined 384 persons based on Cochran Formula and the sampling method was performed considering relative dispersion of research context based on multistage clustering sampling method. The number of statistical sample has been specified based on Cochran Formula .

Cochran Formula :

$$n = \frac{N \cdot Z_{\alpha}^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)}{\epsilon^2 (N-1) + Z_{\alpha}^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)} = \frac{1219432 \cdot 1.96^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot 0.5}{(0.05^2 \cdot 1219431) + (1.96^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot 0.5)} = 384$$

Where

N= population size 1219432) = ϵ estimation error 05/0)

P= success probability (5/0)

The confidence interval of 95% has been considered and given that

1

variance of the sample is maximum as $p = \frac{1}{2}$, the minimum sample size for the research is 384 persons to validate the research. The said questionnaire was copied for 400 persons and distributed among them and was returned by 397 persons.

Test method and statistical analyses

In the present research , difference and relationship test has been used to considering measurement level of variables and type of hypotheses. In the descriptive statistics section, data was described in two sections of demographic variables and main variables with absolute frequency indices , relative frequency , mean standard deviation and variance

were given in the table and in inferential statistics section, correlation and multivariate regression tests and path analysis test were used.

Research findings

1. Descriptive findings

Considering the research findings , 151 persons (9.37%) constituted women and 246 persons (8.61%) constituted men. In terms of age ,37 persons (3.9%) were below age of 20 years , 134 persons (7.33%) were in age of 20 to 30 years , 97 persons(4.24%)were in age of 30 to 40 years , 69 persons (3.17%) were in age of 40 to 50 years , 32 persons (8%) were in age of 50 to 60 years and 17 persons (3.4%) were in age of 60 years above. In terms of education, 90 persons (6.22%) had below high school degree, 125 persons (4.31%) had high school degree , 82 persons (6.20%) had associate’s degree , 79 persons (8.19%) had bachelor’s degree and 20 persons (5%) had master’s degree above . Regarding travel to religious places , 357 persons (7.89%) traveled to Imam Reza shrine , 349 persons (7.87%) traveled to Hazrat Masoumeh Shrine , 343 persons (2.86%) traveled to Hazrat Abdolazim Alhasani. As results of religious tourists’ destination show, the highest rate of travel was related to Mashhad destination and then Qom and Shah Abdolazim destinations. In this regard, 80% of the respondents used tourism sites for religious travel at low level, 82% used virtual social networks for religious travel at low level, 78% used advertisement at low level and 77% used SMS at low level. In this regard, it can be concluded that the respondents don't use new technologies so much for their religious travels and they still use traditional methods of religious tourism.

2. Analytical findings (study and test of research hypotheses)

1. New information and communication technologies cause development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

Table 1: correlation test of new information and communication technologies and development of religious tourism in religious places

Variable		Correlation coefficient	Significance level	Result
New Information and Communication Technologies	Development of Religious Tourism	0.055	319/0	The absence of significant relationship

Considering the above Table , it is found that significance level of test of two variables of new information and communication technologies and religious tourism is 319.0 which is higher than 05.0(error rate of

the research is (05.0), therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected and it can be said with confidence of 95% that there is no significant relationship between these two variables.

2. The use of site of Tourism Organization causes development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

Table 2: correlation test of use of site development of religious tourism in religious places

Variable	Correlation coefficient	Significance level	Result
Site Holy Mashhad	-014/0	788/0	Absence of significant relationship
Site Hazrat Masoumeh Shrine in Qom	-027/0	614/0	Absence of significant relationship
Site Hazrat Shah Abdolazim Shrine	009/0	874/0	Absence of significant relationship

Considering the above Table , it is found that significance level of test of two variables of the use of site and pilgrimage to Holy Mashhad is 788.0, Significance level of test of two variables of the use of site and pilgrimage to Hazrat Masoumeh Shrine in Qom is 614.0 and significance level of test of two variables of the use of site and pilgrimage to Hazrat Shah Abdolazim Shrine is 874.0 which is higher than 05.0(error rate of the research is (05.0), therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected and it can be said with confidence of 95% that there is no significant relationship between these two variables. Therefore, use of Internet sites doesn't cause development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

3.The use of television causes development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

Table3: correlation test of use of television and development of religious tourism in religious places

Variable	Correlation coefficient	Significance level	Result
Television Holy Mashhad	-002/0	964/0	Absence of significant relationship
Television Hazrat Masoumeh Shrine in Qom	-035/0	513/0	Absence of significant relationship
Television Hazrat Shah Abdolazim Shrine	01/0	853/0	Absence of significant relationship

Considering the above Table, it is found that significance level of test of two variables of the use of television and pilgrimage to Holy Mashhad is 964.0. Significance level of test of two variables of the use of television and pilgrimage to Hazrat Masoumeh Shrine in Qom is 513.0 and significance level of test of two variables of the use of television and pilgrimage to Hazrat Shah Abdolazim Shrine is 853.0

which is higher than 05.0(error rate of the research is (05.0), therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected and it can be said with confidence of 95% that there is no significant relationship between these two variables. Therefore, use of television doesn't cause development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

4. Use of SMS causes development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

Table 4: correlation test of use of SMS and development of religious tourism in religious places

Variable		Correlation coefficient	Significance level	Result
SMS	Holy Mashhad	093/0	082/0	Absence of significant relationship
SMS	Hazrat Masoumeh Shrine in Qom	08/0	134/0	Absence of significant relationship
SMS	Hazrat Shah Abdolazim Shrine	092/0	085/0	Absence of significant relationship

Considering the above Table , it is found that significance level of test of two variables of the use of SMS and pilgrimage to Holy Mashhad is 082.0, Significance level of test of two variables of the telephone advisor and pilgrimage to Hazrat Masoumeh Shrine in Qom is 134.0 and significance level of test of two variables of the use of SMS and pilgrimage to Hazrat Shah Abdolazim Shrine is 085.0 which is higher than 05.0(error rate of the research is(05.0) , therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected and it can be said with confidence of 95% that there is no significant relationship between these two variables. Therefore, use of SMS doesn't cause development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

5. Use of advisor causes development of religious tourism in religious places of the country.

Table 5: correlation test of use of phone advisor and development of religious tourism in religious places

Variable		Correlation coefficient	Significance level	Result
Telephone advisor	Holy Mashhad	069/0	196/0	Absence of significant relationship
Telephone advisor	Hazrat Masoumeh Shrine in Qom	1/0	061/0	Absence of significant relationship
Telephone advisor	Hazrat Shah Abdolazim Shrine	0.114*	034/0	Presence of significant relationship

Considering the above Table , it is found that significance level of test of two variables of the use of telephone advisor and pilgrimage to Holy Mashhad is 196.0, Significance level of test of two variables of

the telephone advisor and pilgrimage to Hazrat Masoumeh Shrine in Qom is 061.0 which is higher than 05.0 (error rate of the research is 05.0), therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected and it can be said with confidence of 95% that there is no significant relationship between these two variables.

Therefore, use of telephone advisor doesn't cause development of religious tourism in religious places of the country. Significance level of test of two variables of the telephone advisor and pilgrimage to Hazrat Shah Abdolazim Shrine is 034.0 which is lower than 05.0 (error rate of the research (05.0) is), therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be said with confidence of 95% that there is significant relationship between these two variables. Considering positive value of correlation coefficient, it can be said that there is positive correlation between two variables of the use of telephone advisor and tourism (Hazrat Shah Abdolazim Shrine) and there is direct relationship between two variables.

Path analysis

In this section, the research model has been studied with linear regression. For fitting of the regression model, tourism development in religious places was selected as dependent variable and the use of Internet sites, television, SMS and telephone advisor were selected as independent variables.

Table 6-Summary of descriptive results of the regression model

Correlation coefficient	Coefficient of Determination	Adjusted Coefficient of Determination	Durbin-Watson statistic
193/0	037/0	025/0	830/1

In this regard, as observed in Table 6, it is found that value of Durbin-Watson statistic is in interval of 5.1-5.2. Therefore, hypothesis of the absence of correlation between errors is not rejected and the regression can be used. Coefficient of Determination is 037.0, which indicates that 7.3% of changes of dependent variable can be determined with independent variable.

Table (7)-Results of ANOVA

	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean-square	F statistic value	Significance level
Regression	433/4	4	108/1	150/3	015/0
Error	709/114	326	352/0		
Total	142/119	330			

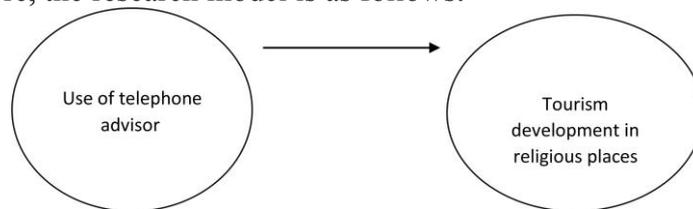
Considering f test statistic and its significance at confidence level of 95%, the regression equation is valid and its results can be analyzed.

Table 8- Regression analysis and regression coefficients

Variable	B	Standard error	BETA BETA standardized coefficient	Statistic t	Significance level
Constant	749/5	105/0	-	692/54	000/0
Internet sites	062/0	048/0	-100/0	-278/1	202/0
Television	028/0	02/0	-126/0	-412/1	159/0
SMS	035/0	031/0	096/0	103/1	271/0
Telephone advisor	048/0	021/0	188/0	304/2	022/0

Considering the table, it is found that significance level of the variable of use of Internet sites and television and SMS is higher than 05.0, therefore, variables of use of Internet sites and television and SMS have no effect on development of religious tourism. Significance level of the variable of use of telephone advisor is below 05.0, error level is $\text{sig} < 0.05$, therefore, variable of the use of telephone advisor is included in the regression model. Considering positive regression coefficient (B), it can be said that there is positive and direct relationship between the use of telephone advisor and tourism development in religious places. In other words, the use of telephone advisor has positive effect on tourism development in religious places.

Therefore, the research model is as follows:



Discussion and result

Tourism generally and religious tourism specially have been converted into a rapid and global trend so that this is common in many countries of the world. Religious Tourism among all different types of tourism is one of the most known ones. In all human civilizations, people have been interested to visit religious places. Among the Muslim societies, millions of tourists arrive to these regions very year due to the presence of holy cemeteries and places to perform commercial and economic activities while holding religious

ceremonies and attaining knowledge. This type of tourism is one of the most common forms of tourism all over the world which are related to the past centuries and eras. Generally, it includes travels and visits the main aim of which is religious experience. In rapidly global trend, media and communication technologies have made progress with considerable speed and have dominated all levels of human activities. Today, information is an essential part of tourism industry and information and communication technology is the informative, communicative and executive skeleton of tourism. Information and communication technology has created globalization of supply and demand and directs it and provides efficient tools for consumers to identify and purchase suitable products and suppliers to develop management and distribute their suggestions at global scale. Therefore, it can be said that one of the most important applications of information and communication technology and Internet is semantic expansion of sustainable tourism based on presentation of the logical methods for utilization of natural and human resources, prevention of unscientific application of these resources, suitable marketing, protection and promotion of natural, social and cultural diversity, protection of local economic system and education of human resources which can be studied in two ways: One is the application of information and communication technology and another one is virtual tourism which means electronic nature of the existing touristic resources and even artificial spaces. Based on results of the main hypothesis analysis, there is no significant relationship between two variables according to the respondents. Therefore, authorities of tourism industry should reconsider their function in use of new information and communication technologies for tourism development in religious places.

Based on the research findings, contribution of the new communication technologies such as Internet, virtual social networks and telephone advisors to development and expansion of religious tourism is negligible and these technologies couldn't have been used properly in Iran. This situation means that religious tourists in Iran travel to religious places in traditional way and they don't use new technologies for different reasons. Regarding travel to religious places, 357 persons (7.89%) traveled to Imam Reza shrine, 349

persons (7.87%) traveled to Hazrat Masoumeh Shrine , 343 persons (2.86%) traveled to Hazrat Abdolazim Alhasani. As results of religious tourists' destination show, the highest rate of travel was related to Mashhad destination and then Qom and Shah Abdolazim destinations. In this regard, 80% of the respondents used tourism sites for religious travel at low level, 82% used virtual social networks for religious travel at low level, 78% used advertisement at low level and 77% used SMS at low level. In this regard, it can be concluded that the respondents don't use new technologies so much for their religious travels and they still use traditional methods of religious tourism.

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