

The Choice of Travel Agencies Factors in North Cyprus: Evidence from Universities students

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the importance of travel agency selection factors for domestic and international students from different countries such as Turkey, Iran who use travel agencies of a small island - Cyprus. A total 251 students studying at various programs of the Faculty during the fall 2011-12 academic term were participated in survey. Descriptive analysis through computing mean scores was used to investigate and compare travel agency selection factors by nationality.

“24 hours availability of services or High/Low service charges” is the most important attribute for students from Turkey (mean score = 3.98) whilst “Holiday packages offered e.g. all inclusive etc...” is the most important one for Turkish Cypriots (mean score = 4.20) however “Speed and quality of service” (mean score = 4.14) for Iranian students and surprisingly for other overseas students, “Giving individual attention to customers” is the most important attribute (mean score = 4.42).

Results reveal that the travel agency selection process differs in nationality classification in the case of international students in North Cyprus implying that young generation customers from different cultures generally focus on different types of factors in considering traveling services.

Keywords: Travel agencies, selection criteria, students, North Cyprus economy.

ÖZ

Bu tez seyahat acentalarının seçiminde ortaya çıkan önemli faktörleri inceler. Kuzey Kıbrıs Üniversitelerinde okuyan uluslararası öğrenci grupları hedef alınmıştır. 251 Türk, İranlı, Kıbrıslı Türk ve diğer öğrenciler olarak ankete katılım gerçekleşmiştir. Ortalama değerler hesaplanarak bu faktörlerin öğrenciler üzerindeki etkisi mukayese edilmiştir.

Gelinen ülke'ye göre değişik faktörler önem göstermiştir. Türk öğrenciler için 24 saat hizmet (servis), Kıbrıslı Türk öğrenciler için seyahat paketi, İranlılar için hızlı ve kaliteli hizmet ve diğer öğrenciler için de müşteriye gösterilen birebir ilgi en önemli faktörler olarak tahmin edilmiştir.

Ampirik Sonuçlar genel olarak ülkelerin yeni nesil özelliklerine, ekonomik sınıflara ve kültürlerine göre değişim göstermektedir. Seyahat acentelerindeki seçim kriterleri belirlenirken kültürün, yeni nesil bakış açısının ve maddi durumun çok önemli olduğu ampirik olarak ortaya konulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Seyahat acentaları, seçim kriterleri, öğrenciler, Kuzey Kıbrıs Ekonomisi

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The services sector has increasingly become a significant part of national economies in the last few decades, especially in industrialized countries. Increased competition has brought service quality issues to this industry. Therefore, service quality has been increasingly recognized as a holding key strategic value by organizations in both the manufacturing and service sectors. It is also considered to be a critical determinant of competitiveness (Lewis, 1991). Travel agencies are significant linkages in the tourism and service industry (McKercher, Packer, Yau and Lam, 2003; Lam and Zhang, 1999; LeBlanc, 1992), which travelers mostly use as their important key of travel information (Lawton and Page, 1997; Mok and Armstrong, 1996; Bitner and Booms, 1982). They act as a bridge between destinations and suppliers and travelers (McKercher, Packer, Yau and Lam, 2003). Their main services include issuing air tickets, linkage between hotels book, and organize rental cars services for the travelers (Lam and Zhang, 1999). Travel agencies' features (i.e. physical store) and offerings (i.e. holiday packages) are very important for travelers in the selection of a travel agency. The success of a travel agency stems from their ability to provide products that meet traveler's needs and wants (McKercher at al., 2003). Service quality of travel agents is perceived one of the most important means in attracting travelers. Major service quality features include corporate image, competitiveness (i.e. continuous technical innovations), courtesy, responsiveness, accountability, competence, motivating, informing (i.e. health advice to customers), booking (i.e.

hotel bookings), purchasing, planning, organizing and supporting (Millan and Esteban, 2004; McKercher at al., 2003; Lam and Zhang, 1999; Lawton and Page, 1997). The type and variety of services provided by these agencies are quite important for travelers. There are numerous studies that have been conducted to establish the factors affecting customers in their choice of travel agencies (Hui, and Wan, 2005), which range from the choice of package tours to the choice of travel agency services in general. Along with the quality of services provided by travel agencies, the expectations of travelers from these agencies are also essential. According to the Works of Mok and Armstrong (1996) and Bitner and Booms (1982) most travelers use travel agencies as their main source of travel information. Convenience of travel agencies and the price of the packages are important factors that travelers take into consideration (Hui and Wang, 2005).

International students studying at higher education institutions contribute to national economies like international tourists; that simply means as international student tourism. Since stay of international students are longer than international tourists, they contribute not only to higher education institutions but also to services industry, manufacturing industry, and employment creation.

Travel agencies are among service providers which highly benefit from international student tourism due to the fact that international students use these agencies for traveling purposes. Therefore, it is important to identify factors that students find important in travel agency selection as well as international tourists. The importance of these factors need to be taken into consideration by travel agencies especially in smaller states.

This study contributes to the literature by investigating the importance of travel agency selection factors for undergraduate students from different countries studying in North Cyprus, home to a small and politically non-recognized state. Although the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is politically non-recognized, there are more than 40,000 international students from more than 68 countries studying at the universities on the island. Having great difficulties in attracting international tourists to the island because of political reasons, international student tourism somehow contributes to compensation of this negative impact in the tourism sector of North Cyprus. Therefore, this study is important with this respect. The sample of the present study comprises of undergraduate students studying at the Faculty of Business and Economics in Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU).

There are important motivations for doing this research: First, as mentioned above, this study is unique in the sense that it analyzes and compares travel agency selection factors of international students studying in North Cyprus who extensively benefit from travel agency services for the first time. Second, this study focuses on the segment of undergraduate students of the Faculty of Business and Economics due to the fact that (i) they are potential young customers of agencies and, (ii) many new traveling agencies have been opened as a result of international student tourism in North Cyprus for more than 10 years.

It is a fact that not only travel agencies but many different service providers in North Cyprus have developed and increased in the number in parallel to a rapid development in higher education sector of North Cyprus. North Cyprus enjoys a considerable development in higher education sector which is now almost ahead of banking and tourism sectors. The total number of students studying at the universities

of North Cyprus make up 16.3% of Turkish Cypriot population in 2006 (SPO, 2006). Due to this importance, traveling agencies started to offer a wide variety of services for international students studying in North Cyprus. Thus, the results of this study are expected to give important implications for policy makers and managers of travel agents on how international student tourism in higher education can contribute to the development of tourism sector of small states in general.

This thesis is organized as follows: The second chapter reviews the related literature; the third chapter gives brief information about travel agencies as well as North Cyprus Economy. Chapter four explains methodology, data and the instrument used in the thesis, chapter five presents and discusses results, chapter 6 concludes some important remarks by discussing managerial implications and chapter 7 summarizes some important recommendations for further studies.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the past literature about people travel motivation according to a quantity of researchers (Crompton, 1979; Yuan & McDonald, 1990; Uysal & Hagan, 1993) is based on two factors first they are pressed by their own internal forces and pulled by the external forces of destination characteristic.

There is some similarity between retail shops and travel agencies, the difference is that travel agencies despite purchase any stock and sell it they on-sell the service product in the source of commission. (Litvin, 1999). In trade agents execute the labor intensive clerical activities on the side of providers such as handing out the tickets, the provision of fares and the provision of advice (Dumazel & Humphreys, 1999). Subsequently they will make profit based on two elements: sell products which give the maximum commission to increase the profit, and time efficiency uses while processing customers in order to minimize costs.

Service suppliers and customers are connected to each other by travel agencies, therefore they still have a crucial role in tourism delivering system and travelers decision making process. Their knowledge that they trade with customers is their single stock. (Middleton, 1994),

Customers always have some need and wants, in the fact that agents provided service were met those needs and wants of customers, along with their profound

product knowledge, could support the success. In order to earn customers trusts and make them sure about the quality and truthfulness of their provided advice they suppose to offer reliable information for all people in any class or culture. Agencies also have the ability to create further traveling problems for people from particular populations. .(McKercher, Packer, Yau and Lam, 2003)

According to Klenosky and Gitelson (1998),there are four factors which have been recognized which affect the amount and quality of information provided by travel agencies.

Perceived service quality is a separate concept of customer satisfaction but in the literature there is some significant correlation between these two factors and related errors of interpretation integrated. (Oh& Parks, 1997). Customer's feelings and overall judgment of service level in a period of time can described as customers perceived quality, whereas customer satisfaction comes about while a specific transaction has been done. (Bitner, 1990; Bolton& Drew, 1991; Parasuraman et al., 1988), overall perceived service quality comes before satisfaction, hence satisfaction goes before perceived quality (Oliver, 1981), however dissatisfaction about a specific transaction comes before overall service quality evaluation. (Bitner, 1990; Bolton & Drew, 1991).

Consumers choose their travel agencies and make the evaluation according to their level of satisfaction, and satisfaction outcomes can define as subjective comparison between expected and receive service product attribute rank (Andreason, 1977; Day, 1977; Oliver,1977, 1981) and particularly high performance and reliable service could increase the possibility of consumer satisfaction (Brown and Swarz, 1989).

Even if customers are satisfied or not with travel agency service quality, their past experiences can affect their final performance evaluations, subsequently agents should consider customers with more positive emotions and experiences in order to make the best decision about promotional activities and industries quality evaluation of performances and behaviors.(Leblanc, 1992).

There are various theoretical frameworks with several methodologies in order to measure service quality in different service industries. (Ryan & Cliff, 1997; Getty & Thompson, 1994; Saleh& Ryan, 1991; Pizam&Milman, 1993).Service quality happens when industry meets customers need and expectations and which level they are able to deliver the service. (Lewis & Booms, 1983).Gronoos (1984) confirmed that perceived service quality is highly dependent to the association of expected service with perceived service, which cause proportional evaluation.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry have developed the questionnaires based on SERVQUAL model. Customer final perceived quality service images shows their willingness of buying service and will affect the final decision which will be made by customers in order to get the service product. It will result in high quality service image and result which would win the competition between to competitors in the case of deliver service product.

In the case that service providers do not met customer expectations customer will get disappointed moreover this disappointment will have some outcomes such as avoid their desire to retention, to cancel their plans , bad words of month, and select a new service provider in future to buy a service product, and unfortunately it will affect

their incomes and their status as well which reduce their service quality by low cost and provide poor service so finally will cause their bankruptcy .

“From their research in a number of service industries PZB suggested that customers base their assessment of service quality on five criteria, namely, Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy.”

There are many differences between what customers feels and what they perceive from the company but we can still found a deep relationship between to concept what they are getting from company and customer satisfaction. (Oh& Parks, 1997). Customer approach is what we call service quality however when the linkage between the satisfaction and a definite operation means customer satisfaction (Bitner, 1990; Bolton& Drew, 1991; Parasuraman et al., 1988).when customer have a overall received quality they evaluate those with different point of view and it will result in specific customer satisfaction and it will affect their re-purchase intention and

Wong and Kwong (2004) identified important selection factors for all-inclusive package tours as perceived by outbound tourists in the case of Hong Kong. They found that security of package tours chooses. They although mentioned about accommodation, expediency of vacation preparations, money value, catalog definitions and commissioner explanation are very influence factors in select agencies

Some previous studies have also shown that people from various cultures have different fondness, desires and travel consumption patterns (Mok and DeFranco, 1999; Reimer, 1990).

Wong and Kwong (2004) identified important selection factors for all-inclusive package tours as perceived by outbound tourists in the case of Hong Kong.

Finally, travel agencies are skilled in huge factors of travel and their knowledge may be broad in the market. Despite being expert in all aspects of travel their knowledge may not be particularly deep for specific groups such as disabled people (McKercher et al., 2003). Studies focusing on specific groups, like Huang and Tsai's (2003) study which identifies on senior travelers behaviors in Taiwan, McKercher et al.'s (2003) study for disabled people to buy travel products, and Lawton and Page's (1997) study which focuses on health and tourism, might be helpful for travel agents to learn more about specific groups needs and wants.

2.1 Travel Agency Selection

Nowadays, among travel agents high competitive environment there is limited literature focused on the customers' agencies service quality evaluation process, while travel agencies high service quality plays a crucial role in the route of their selection and evaluation. LeBlanc (1992) stated that service quality is an important factor in travel agencies choosing, mainly the interaction way of delivering service to customers. It is generally strong-minded by the customer-personnel exchanges that take place through the service delivering come across (Solomon, Surprenant, Czepiel, and Gutman, 1985; Brown and Swartz, 1989), so above statement proves a survey by Touche Ross and Company (1978) that travel expertise can be ranked as the most important reason for agency usage.

Persia and Gitelson, (1993) determined that customers evaluate the performance of travel agencies according to five service factors: information search, technical booking skill, physical quality, corporate quality, and interactive quality.

Cronin and Taylor (1992) examined the mediating role of expectancy-disconfirmation theory in customers' perception of service quality.

Teas (1993) differentiates between what the customer thinks 'should be', 'is likely to be', 'must be', or 'can be'. Brown, Churchill and Peter [1993] state that: high expectations scores may result from social desirability response bias, and these can distort gap scores.

Another problem with the SERVQUAL model is the stability of the five-dimensional structure asserted by the original writers. Studies described a broad difference in the number of empirical elements extracted from performance, expectations and difference score sets (see for example Llosa, Chandon and Orsingher, 1998; Johns and Tyas, 1996; Headley and Miller, 1993; Babakus and Mangold, 1992; Carman, 1990).

2.2 Students Selection Reason

International students studying at higher education institutions contribute to national economies like international tourists; that simply means as international student tourism. Since stay of international students are longer than international tourists, they contribute not only to higher education institutions but also to services industry, manufacturing industry, and employment creation. International tourism is a major source of foreign exchange for small countries as well as the larger ones. Small

countries, in particular small islands, have more dependency on tourism than the larger ones since their economies are based on only a few sectors. Especially, export-oriented services tend to represent unique characteristics of small islands and therefore provide a basis for a potential comparative advantage (Mehmet and Tahiroglu 2002); therefore, the impact of international student tourism is more significant in smaller states.

Travel agencies are among service providers which highly benefit from international student tourism due to the fact that international students use these agencies for traveling purposes. Therefore, it is important to identify factors that students find important in travel agency selection as well as international tourists. The importance of these factors need to be taken into consideration by travel agencies especially in smaller states. This study contributes to the literature by investigating the importance of travel agency selection factors for undergraduate students from different countries studying in North Cyprus, home to a small and politically non-recognized state. Although the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is politically non-recognized, there are more than 40,000 international students from more than 68 countries studying at the universities on the island. Having great difficulties in attracting international tourists to the island because of political reasons, international student tourism somehow contributes to compensation of this negative impact in the tourism sector of North Cyprus. Therefore, this study is important with this respect. The sample of the present study comprises of all students studying in Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU)

Chapter 3

NORTH CYPRUS

The reason of selection of North Cyprus If Cyprus is seen on the globe, it is the third largest island in the Mediterranean after Sicily and Sardinia. It lies between latitudes 30.33 and 35.41 and longitudes 32.23 and 34.55. The Republic of Cyprus gained its independence from Britain in 1960. Today, the island has two parts: North – administered by Turks, and South – administered by Greeks since 1974.

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) is politically non-recognized Small Island, 80% of women and 70% of working people are employed in service industries. Because of positive effect of expectations and increase in foreign demand, construction sector became one of the leading sectors of the North Cyprus economy.

It is a fact that not only travel agencies but many different service providers in North Cyprus have developed and increased in the number in parallel to a rapid development in higher education sector of North Cyprus. North Cyprus enjoys a considerable development in higher education sector which is now almost ahead of banking and tourism sectors. The total number of students studying at the universities of North Cyprus make up 16.3% of Turkish Cypriot population in 2006 (SPO, 2006).

Due to this importance, traveling agencies started to offer a wide variety of services for international students studying in North Cyprus. Thus, the results of this study are expected to give important implications for policy makers and managers of travel

agents on how international student tourism in higher education can contribute to the development of tourism sector of small states in general.

Northern Cyprus has 161 travel agents, mostly small family-owned businesses [Cyprus Turkish Tourism and Travel Agents' Association, 2001]. However, inbound and outbound travelers regularly complain about the services of these local travel agents [Tourism Planning Office, 2001] indicating that the expectations of customers are not being met.

Chapter 4

METODOLOGY

4.1 Survey Design

Survey questions of the questionnaire form were improved from different investigations (Wan and Hui, 2005; Wong and Kwong, 2004; Heung and Chu, 2000; Persia and Gitelson, 1993), Consequently adaptation and revision had been done according to the case of Turkish Cypriot travel agencies, some questions were obtained from studies in process of selecting banks which is related to bank marketing studies.(Gerrard and Cunningham, 2001; Kennington et al., 1996; Holstius and Kaynak, 1995; Boyd et al., 1994; Anderson et al., 1976), therefore they were also reversed. Demographic variables and Travel Agency Selection Factors were examined in our study. Respondents profiles were consist of 7 questions and TASF 31 questions. A five-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 “Not Important at all = 1” to Very Important = 5” was conducted to measure 31 items of agency selection factors in survey.

4.2 Data Collection

The data for the study were collected through distributing questionnaires in the selected classes in Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) (Famagusta, North Cyprus). The questionnaire forms were distributed to 300 students studying at various programs of the Faculties during the fall 2001-2012 academic term. We get

280 questionnaires back but only 251 of them were useful because of lack of information, the response rate of 83%.

Chapter 5

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

Table 1 shows that Cronbach's estimate coefficient which indicates 31 questions asked in the questionnaire are consistent (0.8 is greater than 0.6). Table 2 also indicates whether questions individually consistent or not by conducting factor analysis.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.823	31

Table 2. Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Q1	1.000	.885
Q2	1.000	.672
Q3	1.000	.653
Q4	1.000	.733
Q5	1.000	.805
Q6	1.000	.832
Q7	1.000	.741
Q8	1.000	.652
Q9	1.000	.768
Q10	1.000	.724
Q11	1.000	.736
Q12	1.000	.768
Q13	1.000	.871
Q14	1.000	.692
Q15	1.000	.840
Q16	1.000	.709
Q17	1.000	.686
Q18	1.000	.894
Q19	1.000	.831
Q20	1.000	.631
Q21	1.000	.781
Q22	1.000	.686
Q23	1.000	.632
Q24	1.000	.901
Q25	1.000	.696
Q26	1.000	.811
Q27	1.000	.706
Q28	1.000	.760
Q29	1.000	.685
Q30	1.000	.733
Q31	1.000	.710

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 3. Demographic Breakdown of Undergraduate Students (n=251)

	Turkish Students from Turkey		Turkish Cypriot Students		Persian Overseas Students		Others Overseas Students	
	(n = 79)		(n = 50)		(n = 47)		(n = 75)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Gender								
Male	58	73.4	34	68.0	21	44.7	53	70.7
Female	21	26.6	16	32.0	26	55.3	22	29.3
Total	79	100.0	50	100.0	47	100.0	75	100.0
Years in EMU								
Less than a year	11	13.9	1	2.0	16	34.0	25	33.3
One	14	17.7	4	8.0	7	14.9	17	22.7
Two	8	10.1	15	30.0	15	31.9	14	18.7
Three	16	20.3	6	12.0	1	2.1	6	8.0
Four	8	10.1	6	12.0	4	8.5	5	6.7
Five and More	22	27.8	18	36.0	4	8.5	8	10.7
Total	79	100.0	50	100.0	47	100.0	75	100.0
Department								
Business	45	57.0	28	56.0	32	68.1	43	57.3
Banking & Finance	7	8.9	9	18.0	4	8.5	8	10.7
Economics	11	13.9	4	8.0	5	10.6	14	18.7
International Relations	10	12.7	9	18.0	6	12.8	8	10.7
Public Administration	6	7.6	50	100.0	47	100.0	2	2.7
Total	79	100.0					75	100.0
Travel Agency Used								
Public	32	40.5	19	38.0	15	31.9	35	46.7
Private	47	59.5	31	62.0	32	68.1	40	53.3
Total	79	100.0	50	100.0	47	100.0	75	100.0

The respondent profile of all international and domestic students is presented in Table 3. As can be seen from the Table, the majority of students were Turkish, and Other International students were in second big part of respondents. 79 students were Turkish and 75 were from other International students.

Except Turkish-Cypriot students which 66% were between ages 18-22 the majority of respondent for rest nationalities were between age 23-27. Also the big part of participant for all nationalities except Iranian which 55% were female, 73% for Turkish 68% Turkish-Cypriot and 70% Other International students were male.

Fifty seven of Turkish participants 56% of Turkish-Cypriot and 68% of Persian and 57% were from Business Administration department and the rest were from International Relations, Economics, Public Administration and political Science and Banking and finance departments.

Twenty percent of Turkish respondent were in third year of study in EMU and 17% of them in year between first and second year. Thirty percent of Turkish-Cypriot were in their second year and 12% in third. However the majority of Iranian students about 34% were in less than one year students in EMU and approximately 32% were in their second study year. And finally 33% of Other International students were being study at EMU less than one year on the other hand around 23% were between one and two year students in EMU.

Forty one percent out of 79 student had intention to both continuing their studies and working after their graduation nevertheless 46% Turkish-Cypriot participants were intending to work and 44% were intention to both studding and working after

accomplish their school. The great part of Iranian respondent around 58% had intention to work and continue their schools and 26% were intending to continue to study after their graduation, and 40% of Other International students had intention to do both after their graduations.

The greater part of Turkish students were used private agencies and 62% Turkish-Cypriot and about 69% Iranian students and %53 Other International participants were also prefer to use private agents as well.

Table 4. Travel Agency Selection Factors of Turkish Cypriots Students

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	50	1.00	5.00	3.8000	1.04978
Q2	50	1.00	5.00	3.9600	1.02936
Q3	50	1.00	5.00	3.8600	1.04998
Q4	50	1.00	5.00	3.7000	1.26572
Q5	50	1.00	5.00	3.3800	1.10454
Q6	50	2.00	5.00	3.8400	.95533
Q7	50	1.00	5.00	3.9200	.85332
Q8	50	1.00	5.00	3.9800	1.16916
Q9	50	1.00	5.00	3.7400	1.19198
Q10	50	1.00	5.00	3.2800	1.01096
Q11	50	1.00	5.00	3.8000	1.19523
Q12	50	1.00	5.00	3.6200	1.25990
Q13	50	1.00	5.00	3.6200	.98747
Q14	50	1.00	5.00	3.6800	.99877
Q15	50	2.00	5.00	3.7400	1.02639
Q16	50	1.00	5.00	3.8800	1.18907
Q17	50	1.00	5.00	3.9400	1.01840
Q18	50	1.00	5.00	4.0800	1.29110
Q19	50	1.00	5.00	3.9600	1.10583
Q20	50	1.00	5.00	3.6400	1.20814
Q21	50	1.00	5.00	3.6800	.91339
Q22	50	1.00	5.00	3.3000	1.19949
Q23	50	1.00	5.00	4.0000	1.03016
Q24	50	1.00	5.00	3.6800	1.28476
Q25	50	1.00	5.00	3.9200	1.17526
Q26	50	1.00	5.00	3.6800	1.20272
Q27	50	1.00	5.00	3.6000	1.16058
Q28	50	1.00	5.00	3.8800	1.25584
Q29	50	2.00	5.00	4.2000	.85714
Q30	50	1.00	5.00	4.1200	.93982
Q31	50	1.00	5.00	3.9200	1.29110
Valid N (listwise)	50				

Table 5. Turkish Students from Turkey-Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	79	1.00	5.00	3.3291	1.39340
Q2	79	1.00	5.00	3.9867	1.07824
Q3	79	1.00	5.00	3.8354	.99267
Q4	79	1.00	5.00	3.3038	1.12494
Q5	79	1.00	5.00	3.3797	1.15807
Q6	79	1.00	5.00	3.9873	1.11509
Q7	79	1.00	5.00	3.7215	1.14283
Q8	79	2.00	5.00	3.7595	.96364
Q9	79	1.00	5.00	3.4684	1.04802
Q10	79	1.00	5.00	3.5823	1.00776
Q11	79	1.00	5.00	3.3924	1.34372
Q12	79	1.00	5.00	3.2658	1.20585
Q13	79	1.00	5.00	3.7089	1.03962
Q14	79	1.00	5.00	3.4810	1.17518
Q15	79	1.00	5.00	3.3544	1.20934
Q16	79	1.00	5.00	3.8354	1.12581
Q17	79	1.00	5.00	3.6456	1.05049
Q18	79	1.00	5.00	3.5570	1.10647
Q19	79	1.00	5.00	3.8734	.89682
Q20	79	1.00	5.00	3.5190	1.03603
Q21	79	1.00	5.00	3.6582	1.10808
Q22	79	1.00	5.00	3.1646	1.41811
Q23	79	1.00	5.00	3.1772	1.28860
Q24	79	1.00	5.00	3.7342	1.12898
Q25	79	1.00	5.00	3.8228	1.19571
Q26	79	1.00	6.00	3.8608	1.09467
Q27	79	1.00	5.00	3.8481	1.13328
Q28	79	1.00	5.00	3.7342	1.05865
Q29	79	1.00	5.00	3.5443	1.07175
Q30	79	1.00	5.00	3.7089	1.21055
Q31	79	2.00	5.00	3.3038	.82204
Valid N (listwise)	79				

We can assess the perceived importance of travel agency selection factors of Business faculty students from different nationalities studying at EMU. Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7 demonstrate minimum, maximum, mean scores and standard deviations of agency selection factors that are sorted in descending order by mean scores for students from Turkey, North Cyprus, Iran and other overseas students.

Table 6.Persian students from Iran-Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	47	1.00	5.00	3.2553	1.22418
Q2	47	2.00	5.00	3.5532	.97375
Q3	47	1.00	5.00	4.0638	.86989
Q4	47	1.00	5.00	3.5319	1.13924
Q5	47	1.00	5.00	3.5532	.95117
Q6	47	1.00	5.00	3.7660	1.21964
Q7	47	2.00	5.00	3.6383	.96517
Q8	47	1.00	5.00	3.7021	.97613
Q9	47	1.00	5.00	3.4255	.97233
Q10	47	1.00	5.00	3.4894	1.10084
Q11	47	1.00	5.00	3.4043	.99257
Q12	47	1.00	5.00	3.5106	1.08091
Q13	47	1.00	5.00	3.4468	1.19434
Q14	47	1.00	5.00	3.4043	1.20974
Q15	47	1.00	5.00	3.3191	1.30395
Q16	47	1.00	5.00	3.6809	1.10545
Q17	47	2.00	5.00	3.8723	.94678
Q18	47	1.00	5.00	3.7234	1.07748
Q19	47	1.00	5.00	3.4894	1.12041
Q20	47	1.00	5.00	3.0213	1.01058
Q21	47	1.00	5.00	3.3617	.94237
Q22	47	1.00	5.00	2.7021	1.19628
Q23	47	1.00	5.00	3.0851	1.08005
Q24	47	1.00	5.00	3.6809	1.21774
Q25	47	1.00	5.00	4.1489	.88413
Q26	47	1.00	5.00	4.0000	1.23359
Q27	47	1.00	5.00	4.1064	1.16533
Q28	47	1.00	5.00	3.9787	1.22456
Q29	47	1.00	5.00	3.7021	1.01970
Q30	47	1.00	5.00	3.5319	1.19512
Q31	47	1.00	5.00	4.0426	.99907
Valid N (listwise)	47				

Of the perceived importance of travel agency selection attributes, “24 hours availability of services or High/Low service charges” is the most important attribute for students from Turkey (mean score = 3.98) whilst “Holiday packages offered e.g.

all inclusive etc...” is the most important one for Turkish Cypriots (mean score = 4.20) however “Speed and quality of service” (mean score = 4.14) for Iranian students and surprisingly for other overseas students, “Giving individual attention to customers” is the most important attribute (mean score = 4.42).

Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7 show that the order of selection factors clearly varies across international students from different countries. It also obviously indicates that family tradition does not play a very important role in agency choices of all students from any nationality. This points out that they are generally self-behaving in benefiting from agency services. The other importance attribute is “Giving individual attention to customers” which shows (mean score = 4.30), and (mean score = 4.43) for students from Turkey and the other overseas correspondingly and “Accuracy – in ticket writing” (mean score = 4.11) for Iranian students, and “Handling from/to airport” is an important factor Turkish-Cypriot This demonstrates that Turkish students perceived the attribute to be more important than others. However “Giving individual attention to customers” not shows importance for Cypriot-Turkish (mean score = 3.92) whereas the attribute such as the importance of “customer relations/friendliness of agency personnel” is high for them (mean score = 4.10) as compared to students from Turkey (mean score = 3.56), Iranian students (mean scores = 3.72) and Other International students (mean score = 4.05), in addition “Online internet services” (mean score = 4.39), is an also important attribute for overseas student while compare to Turkish-Cypriot (mean score = 3.88), Turkish (mean score = 3.83) and Iranian students (mean score = 3.68).

Table 7.Others international students- Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1	75	1.00	5.00	3.6533	1.27865
Q2	75	1.00	5.00	3.9067	1.06762
Q3	75	2.00	5.00	4.2933	.83461
Q4	75	1.00	5.00	3.8267	1.17833
Q5	75	1.00	5.00	3.8533	1.06153
Q6	75	2.00	6.00	4.3067	.85382
Q7	75	1.00	5.00	3.8400	.98694
Q8	75	2.00	5.00	3.7600	1.03767
Q9	75	1.00	5.00	3.4933	1.10739
Q10	75	1.00	5.00	3.7467	1.06661
Q11	75	1.00	5.00	3.4933	1.21225
Q12	75	1.00	5.00	3.4933	1.13153
Q13	75	1.00	5.00	3.8533	.94000
Q14	75	1.00	5.00	3.6533	1.04614
Q15	75	1.00	5.00	3.5200	1.05728
Q16	75	1.00	5.00	4.3867	.83655
Q17	75	2.00	5.00	3.9600	.82920
Q18	75	1.00	5.00	4.0533	.99856
Q19	75	1.00	5.00	4.2533	.79003
Q20	75	1.00	5.00	3.7333	1.17787
Q21	75	1.00	5.00	4.2000	.98639
Q22	75	1.00	5.00	2.8933	1.35141
Q23	75	1.00	5.00	3.2000	1.23025
Q24	75	1.00	5.00	3.7333	1.09462
Q25	75	2.00	5.00	4.1867	.98218
Q26	75	2.00	6.00	4.3200	.79117
Q27	75	2.00	5.00	4.1067	1.12194
Q28	75	1.00	5.00	4.0267	.94402
Q29	75	1.00	5.00	3.7733	1.06000
Q30	75	1.00	5.00	3.8133	1.21581
Q31	75	2.00	5.00	4.4267	.88796
Valid N (listwise)	75				

In sum, while agency selection factors are important for Iranian students and International students, studying at EMU, there are differences in the ranking of importance of these factors across nationality classifications. This means that cultural differences play an important role in preferring traveling agencies according to the results of this study.

Table 8. Anova Analysis

Between Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Within Groups	21.074	4	5.268	3.233	0.017
Total	114.073	70	1.63		
	135.147	74			

The results in Anova analysis indicate that the four students groups differs each other since F-statistics result is statistically significant. In other words, they are different groups with the different cultural behaviors, values, and custom.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION, MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

Current literature has examined the importance of travel agency selection factors for graduate and undergraduate Turkish, Turkish-Cypriot, Iranian and Other Overseas students studying at the Faculty of Business and Economics in Eastern Mediterranean University of North Cyprus. Generally speaking, respondents give high importance to all of the factors provided in the survey form of this study. As for Turkish and International customers, “24 hours availability of services” is the most important factor on the other hand for students from Iran “Speed and quality of service” is a significant attribute, whereas “Holiday packages offered e.g. all inclusive etc” is the most essential attribute for Turkish-Cypriots.

In addition, this study has shown that travel agency selection process differs in nationality classification in the case of international students in EMU. Although the study uncovers differences with respect to the travel agency choices of students from Turkey, North Cyprus, and international students, different requirements of the respondents in considering traveling services may stem from their cultures. (Mok and DeFranco, 1999; Reimer, 1990) emphasize that people from various cultures have diverse preferences, expectations and this statement is consistent with our findings. The other important factor is that family tradition which does not exert an important role for the relevant international students in preferring traveling services. This is a general conclusion as that does not take into account the different nationalities

among the international students in the survey form. Our general conclusion on family factor is in contrast to Heung and Chu's (2000) and Kaynak and Kucukemiroglu's (1999) studies where family factor was as a major consideration, especially for the first time travelers in selecting a travel agency.

In travel agency selection studies, little proof has been obtainable on the development that consumers (i.e., students in this case) used to assess agencies and the quality of their services. According to Le Blanc's (1992) view, service quality is a determinant in selecting travel agency. This is confirmed by Solomon et. al (1985) and Brown and Swartz (1989) based on customer-personnel interaction. Our empirical results are consistent with the last two authors' findings, especially for both Turkish and Turkish Cypriot students' case. The results found for the international students are also consistent with Olshavsky's (1985) findings. He points out that service quality is important in overall evaluation of service.

My findings may have important implications for managers of travel agencies that provide services to the relatively large number of university students in North Cyprus. It is also important for travel agencies operating in student sending countries having larger populations. Managers of travel agencies or travel agencies themselves should differentiate between international students and local students who have different cultures and customs. Since Turkish Cypriot students have a tendency to use public instead of private travel agencies, managers of private travel agencies should try to find out the reasons for this preference and try to attract this group of students as well. This may stem from modern travel facilities and developed equipments.

Managers should also realize that students from Turkey (who make up the largest proportion of university students on the island) 24 hours availability of services, which is the most important factor in their choice of travel agents. This is not surprising; probably this would be the case for people studying in other parts of the world as international students away from home. Given the fact that they are living in unfamiliar settings, this may influence their need 24 hours availability of services. This means that, travel agents need to make more employees available even in weekends and atleast two or three days in a week, night-time working in order to provide customers 24 hours availability and get their satisfaction. In addition it may find that there is also many Iranian students who are studding in EMU which Speed and quality of service is the most important factor for them, so agencies could increase their technical facilities and by using their own website they will achieve 24 hours availability and obtain both nationalities satisfactions. The customers often need to have contact with the travel agency several times and each time they call or visit the agency they may be helped by a different agency personnel and they may have to explain their problem to this person from the beginning. By using a CRM system, the agency personnel can keep track of each customer's demands and what action has been taken on these demands by other agency personnel. Given the above mentioned statement, it can be safely concluded that recruitment policy of travel agents in North Cyprus should be revised and developed further.

Chapter 7

RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDIES

As long as the young population increases worldwide, their demand for better traveling services will rise, too. Thus, recruitment of travel agencies in North Cyprus should be in such a way that they recruit skilled and young generation professionals who can understand young customers' needs better.

Subsequently travel agencies managers could provide more facilities in the case employees training, teaching and development which make them able to perform better and obtain customers satisfaction, while, with satisfied customers they guarantee, their re-purchase behavior and good words of month, therefore it increase company reputation, interactive agent qualities, and finally agencies revenue.

One limitation for this study can mention as Iranian students and other oversees students they always face with language problem while they are going to buy service product, meanwhile they are not even able to complain in the case of dissatisfaction, they mostly prefer the one which they can communicate easily. The main limitation of the study was that international students coming from Turkey, Iran and the other countries benefited from the services travel agencies in their countries plus those in North Cyprus. It was difficult for them to answer the questions as being aware of travel agency services in their countries, because they were asked to answer the questions for Cypriot travel agencies in the instrument used for this study.

This Thesis investigation can lead to continue this way on the other major universities in Northern Cyprus as well as in the other small states. With regard to any further studies, it is recommended that the most influential travel selection attributes or factors should be determined with a larger sample including other universities students' overall satisfaction levels, their families' income, agency credibility, agency reputation, staff quality, mass media advertising, and efficiency of technical booking and willingness of staff to provide prompt services. These criteria seem essential for doing a "young customer survey" to investigate the expectations or desires of a younger generation towards both public and private travel agencies.

Finally, in order to see if the results of this thesis can be generalized across the other sectors of the industry, further research can be done for the other sectors for young generations even in the other countries as well at the initial stage and for other consumer groups at the later stage for comparison purposes.

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