The Effect of External Information Sources on Destination Decision-Making
"Case of North-Cyprus"

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Approval of the Institute of Graduate Studies and Research

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is,to propose the new conceptual framework in the context of Tourist's information search behavior and destination decision-making by focusing on destination perception and several external information sources rather than single one.

The study is organized as follow, first, based on a review literature in tourist information search behavior and destination decision- making process ,we develop a model that investigate the effects of external information sources on overall destination perception and destination decision making, Moreover , destination perception as mediator was tested in this model.

Second, we describe the sample, survey instrument and data.Data were gathered from 351, Iranian leisure travelers who travelling to North-Cyprus., in order to test the relationships among study variable.

Questionnaire is used as survey instrument to gather data for conducting quantitative Research.

Third, quantitative techniques used to analyze the data and test the hypotheses;all of these procedures were performed using SPSS 19.

Finally, we present a general discussion of the results, the result of this study revealed that the combination of external information sources has the positive effect both on overall destination perception and destination decision making .

The result also emphasized that, destination perception positively affects the Tourist destination decision making process. Further, the results of this study demonstrate the partial mediating role of overall destination perception between these external information sources and destination decision-making.

Consequently, this study provides managerial implications of the study findings, limitation and outline directions for future research.

Keyword: Tourist Information Search Behavior, Information Source, Destination Decision-Making, Destination Perception

ÖZ

Araştırmanın amacı; turistlerin karar alma sürecinde dışsal bilgi kaynaklarının etkisinin ve destinasyon imajının bu süreçteki rolünün anlaşılmasıdır.

Çalışmanın ilk bölümünü, turist bilgi edinme davranışı ve karar alma sürecine ilişkin ilgili literatür oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde ise geliştirilen model ve hipotezler yer almaktadır. Çalışmanın sonraki bölümünleri ise; aratırma yöntem, veri analizi, bulgular ve sonuç bölümleridir.

Çalışmanın örneklemini KKTC'ye seyahat eden İranlı turistler oluşturmuştur. Çalışmada tümden gelim yaklaşımı ile hipotez testleri ve model doğrulama yapılmıştır. Veri toplama yöntemi olarak anket uygulanmış ve söz konusu örneklemden 351 adet soru kağıdı toplanmıştır. Daha sonra veriler SPSS 19.0 istatistik paket programı yardımıyla değerlendirilmiştir.

Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre dışsal bilgi kaynaklarının destinasyon imajı ve karar alma süreci üzerindeki olumlu etkisi saptanmıştır. Ayrıca yine destinasyon imajının destinasyon karar alma süreci üzerinede olumlu etkisi olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Destinasyon imajının dışsal bilgi kaynakları ve destinasyon karar alma süreci arasındaki aracı rolüde yine çalışmada ortaya konmuştur.

AnahtarKelimeler: TuristBilgiedinmeSüreci, BilgiKaynakları, DestinasyonKarar AlmaSüreci, Destinasyonİmajı

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Finally, I would like to leave a memory of my deceased father, an adorable father whose valuable advice providedme a better insight to different aspects of life. This thesis is dedicated to my beloved father who had a great role in my academic life as he was always encouraging me to take further step in learning and education.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Define and place of Tourist and Tourism industry at the global level and its role in social and economic development of countries, particularly Mediterranean regions such as North-Cyprus, have recently gained a great attention to the different aspect ofTourism, as their traditional tourist product sun, sand and sea transformed them into a Touristic destination.

Similar to other consumer product decisions, "tourism information acquisition is necessary for selecting a destination and for onsite decisions such as selecting accommodations, transportation, activities and tours" (Fodness& Murray, 1998; Gursoy& Chen, 2000; Gursoy&McCleary, 2004; Snepenger, et al., 1990).

Therefore, where Tourism plays an important rolein industry's growth and sustainable development, the need to understand how tourists acquireinformationabout the particular destination is a fundamental importance.

Tourism is an information intensive industry which relies on the communication with tourists, through a variety of channels, in order to build customer relationship and eventually market their products. (Poon, 1993).

In view of that, the variety of sources which travelers use to acquire relevant destination's information, has received abundant attention by scholars.

Tourist industry as an information-driven industrywhich requiresmeeting differentneeds, demands and desire of diversegroup of travelers. For that reason,"understanding why people travel and what factors influence tourists' travel intentions has been paid much attention by tourism scholars". (Chien, et al., 2012).

Hence, destination decision-making is rather complex than any other purchase situation, it is crucial to focus on multiple perspective of this process.

From an academic perspective, there has been a significant amount of literature demonstrating how important the role of information search, plays in consumer decisions. (Erawan, et al., 2011) , many studies have examined the importance of information search in terms of various factors affecting the tourist information search behavior ,also researchers have acknowledged the significance impact, of information on every decision task .Choi, et al., 2012).

Information search behavior is the decisive process in the purchasing decision of tourist leisure travelers. (Novática, et al., 2010) which can be classified either

internal or external and for most tourist decisions, search is predominantly external.(Gursoy&McCleary, 2004).

A wide range of variables have identified to influence the choice of search strategies, At a more abstract level, these variables are categorized as "personal variables (age, gender),situational variables (family composition, trip phase) and tourism product variables (travelstyle, mode of travel, activity preferences"(Bronner&Hoog ,2013).

From marketing perspective, leisuremarketing lies in promoting and communicating the image of the destination.In the same directionverification of relationship among information search behavior and destination perceptionsis found in the travel and tourism literature.

Information sources have been included in many research works as an important factor for the analysis of tourist behavior (Molina, et al., 2010).

Tourist information sources have an important influence on destination image.(Molina, et al., 2010), besidesWalmsley and Lewis (1984) suggested that"tourists use information from various sources to compile pre-purchase destination images".

According to above discussion,in today's competitive market, Tourism marketers in order to better promote the destination's image,have relied on variety ofinformation

sources to support different tourist's activities such as information search and decision-making.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although Tourism information search behavior, especially external information search was studied extensively in the literature (Ramkissoon&Uysal, 2011; Erawan, et al., 2011; Tan & Tang, 2013), but still there is a lack of knowledge in which information source, tourists use to make their choice (Nolan, 1976; Gitelson& Crompton, 1983; Snepenger et al. 1990; Weilbacher, 2003; Kim et al., 2005; Mar Gómez & Consumer, 2010).

This is despite the fact that Fodness and Murray(1999) recommended, "this should be an area of focus for future study if scholars were to gain a better understanding of external information search behavior and develop a more complete tourist information search behavior model".

Information is one of the most influential factors in tourism decision process, however "the existent literature currently fails to consistently define consumer information search behavior" (Erawan et al.,2011) and information-processing strategies have been little studied in travel and tourism context.(Jun & Holland 2012).

Regarding to what is discussed above,"These research gap needs to be bridged since information is the lifeblood of the tourism industry" (Sigala, 2010).

To this end, success in today's competitive environment depends requires to understand how touristgather information through a range of sources and communication channel.

1.3Purposeof the Study

The purpose of this study is to propose the new conceptual framework in the context of Tourist's information search behavior and destination decision-making by focusing on several external information sources rather than single one. Furthermore, this study attempts to investigate the mediating role of destination perception in the relation among external information sources and destination decision-making process.

This study mainly focuses on the impact of Tourist information source decision-making process in pre-purchase information search behavior.

This study has been developed based on two theoretical models , *Strategic Model*(Snepenger, et al.1990) which proposed in the context of Tourist's information search behavior and leisure *travel model* (Gunn, 1989) which proposed in the context of Tourist's destination decision-making.

Accordingly, the research objective is formulated as below:

In | To gain better underrating of the impact of external information sources on the Tourist destination making process.

1. Is there any relationship between the external information sources and destination decision-making?

2. Is there any relationship between the external information sources and destination perception?

3. Is there any relationship between the destination perception and destination decision-making?

4. Does overall perception act as mediator among external information sources and destination decision-making process?

1.4 The Significanceof the Study

In tourism area, where , "travel decision is complex and multifaceted"(Choi, et al. 2012), "viewing information as something continuously changing the consciousness of travelers, can give us a more in depth understanding in the tourists' decision-making and travel behavior". (Pan & Turner, 2006), on this basis, understanding how customers acquire information have become a fundamental factor in Tourism marketing management decisions.

Therefore , findings of this research can provide direct inferences for the marketing and advertising strategy of Tourism business sectors, as the fact that it is through information acquiring process that marketers are able to affect the Tourist's decisions.

Furthermore as Fodness& Murray (1997) suggest that "Research into tourist information-search processes developed into one of the most widely studied areas in

tourism", accordingly, this study will provide a broader insight into Tourism area that can be count as valuable findings.

The value of studying Tourist's behavior has been emphasized in many Tourism researches as Choibamroong, (2005), who proposed a Framework (see Figure 1) to show that understanding tourist consumer behavior is useful for practicing managers of tourism industries.
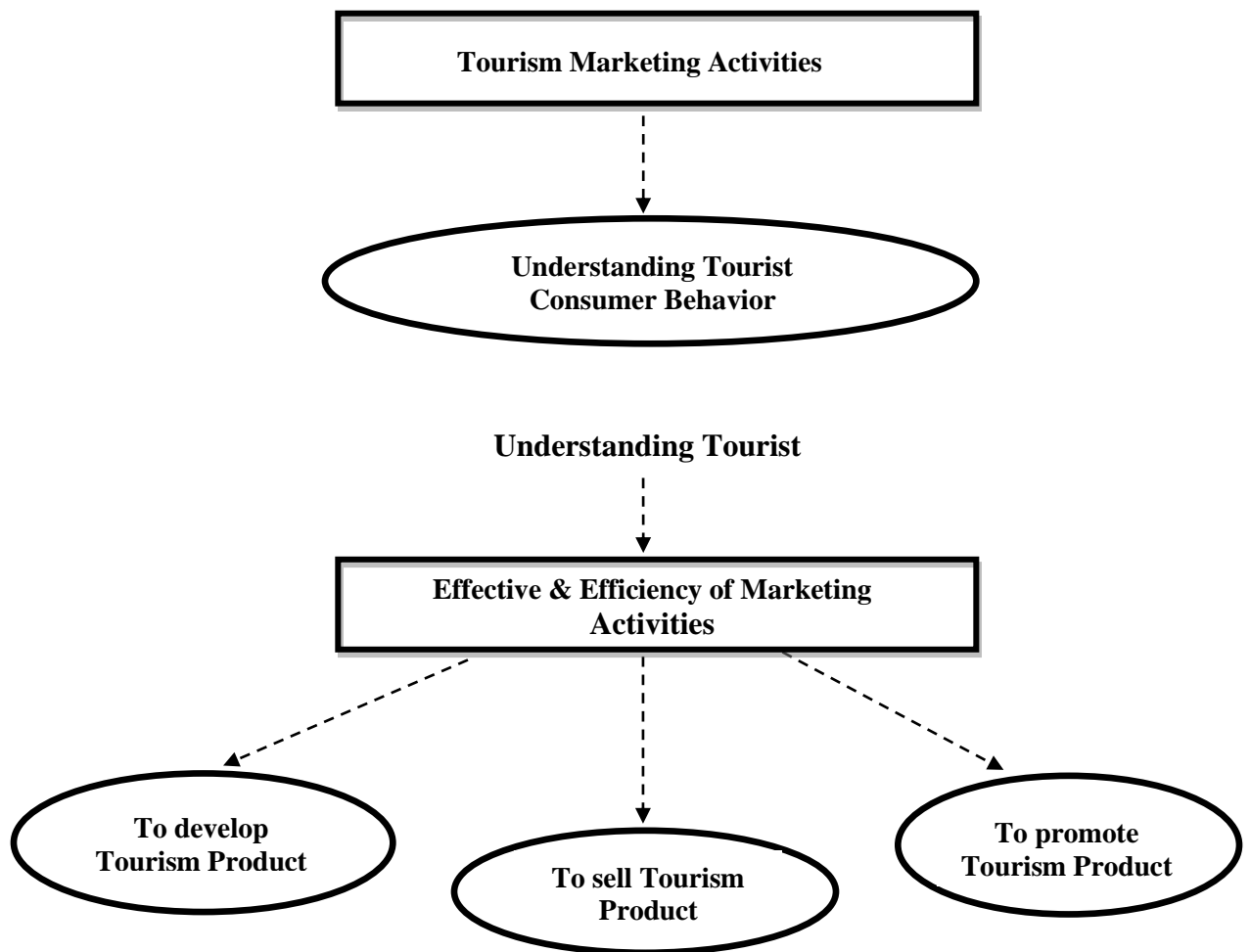
Figure 1: Knowledge of Tourists' Behavior: Key Success Factor
For Managers in Tourism Business
Source: Choibamroong, 2005

1.5 The Contribution of the Study

One of the major contributions of this study is, considering the mediating role of overall perception between the usage of external information sources and destination decision-making process. As it is not investigated in previous Studies thus, the findings of this research may provide significant contribution in the context of Tourist's destination choice process.

This study contributes to the study of tourist information sourcing behavior in destinationdecision-making process, as a means of promotion for the tourism industry.

In the same direction, Cyprus's promotion as a travel destination plays an important role in informing its economic policy and is crucial for businesses related to tourism.

According to BronerandHoog (2013):

> "For tourism practice, things relate to the kind of information that should be made available by information suppliers, and by which suppliers. Tour operators, can assist vacationers when comparing vacation alternativeswhen comparing vacation alternatives that differ on sub-decisions like booking moment and period, and can offer a range of options" (Bronner, &Hoog, 2013).

Due to the fact that , North Cyprus, as a tourist destination, has a rich natural and cultural attractions,undere standing Tourists' external information search behavior may

provide direction for tourism-related businesses, which would help them to plan their marketingCommunication strategies (Fodness, &Murray, 1998,Cited in Erwan, et al., 2011).

Finally, it is anticipated that this study would help both governmental bodies and managers to better understand and serve the international tourists, so as to better design the destination products, marketing focus, and eventually enhance the sustainable strategies for North Cyprus.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

This research paper consistsof sevenchapters, as shown in the Figure 1. In the first chapter, the background, statement of the problem, research purpose, significance and contribution of this study is presented.

The second chapter provides the brief information about the Turkish republic of North-Cyprus as a Tourist destination.

Third chapter consist of literature review, which present, a brief review of the relevant literature about information search behavior and destination decision-making.

Chapter Four will present the conceptual model of the study as well as hypothesis which are developed based on the purpose of this study.

In Chapter Five, the methodology used in this study will be explained.Chaptersixwill contain the results of the study, where response rate, demographic characteristics of the sample is discussed.

Finally, Discussion of Findings Implication for Practitioners Future Research Directions and limitation of the study will be presented in chapter seven.

Introduction

North-Cyprus as the Case Sutudy

Litrature Review

Conceptual Model & Hypothesis

Methodology

Result

Discussion & Conclusion
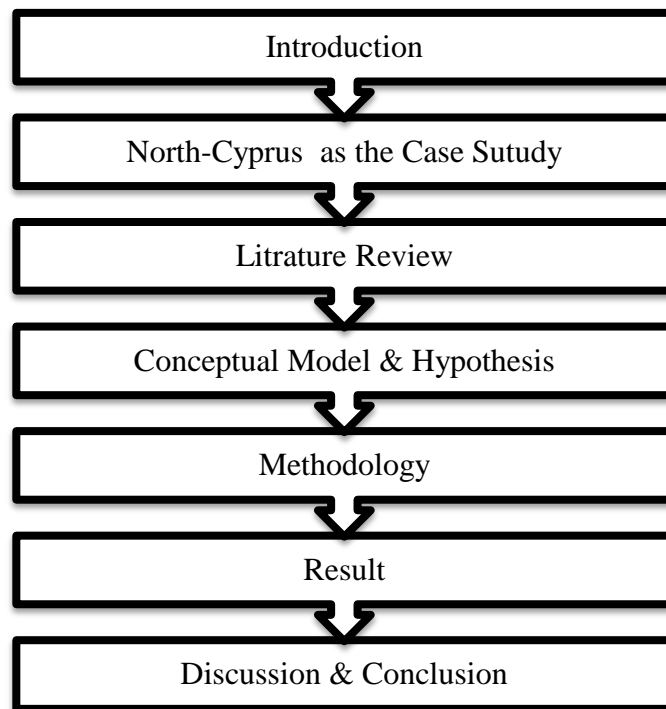
Figure 2: Thesis Structure

Chapter 2

NORTH CYPRUS AS A CASE STUDY

2.1 North Cyprus

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) "commonly called Northern Cyprus, is a self-declared state" (Emerson, 2004) that comprises the northeastern part of the island of Cyprus. The independence of the island was gained in 1960 with an agreement between Britain, Greece and Turkey on bi-national independence, political equality and administrative partnership of the two communities (Albrecht, 1994) However, "since 1974 with the intervention of Turkey, the island has been divided into two parts" (Albrecht, 1994).

North-Cyprus is recognized only by Turkey and it is considered by the international community as an occupied territory of the Republic of Cyprus. (Gravely, 1983)."Cyprus has a fascinating history and is of enormous strategic importance - marking the meeting point of three continents: Europe, the Middle East and Africa".
(http://evergreendevelopments.com/north-cyprus-info.php).

Cyprus with a total area, of 3584 squares miles. (9250 sq. kilometers) is ranked as the third largest island in Mediterranean after Sardinia and Sicily. Neighboring countries at the nearest coastal points are Turkey 40 miles north, Syria 60 miles east, Lebanon 108

miles south-east, Israel 180 miles south-east and Egypt 230 miles SouthCyprus, a former of British colony until 1960, has been divided into two autonomous states since 1974. This came about by virtue of the linguistic and cultural differences, and as a result of communal friction which lasted for 11 years.

Greek Cypriots occupy the southern and the Turkish Cypriots occupy the northern part of Cyprus. A boundary known as the' Green Line` which runs through Nicosia, the capital of both South and North Cyprus separates the two states.

The Geography of North-Cyprus is characterized by its unique combination of Mountains, beaches, coastlines and plain which make this island a Mediterranean Paradise with more than 10.000 years of history.

Visitors can seek the beautiful uniqueness of the Island through different regions of North-Cyprus which is offering something for all taste and activities, also the geography ranges from high mountains to flat coastal plains. (See figure 3).

Which are included: Lefkosa, Kyrenia/Girne, Famagusta/Gazimagusa, Iskele/Karpaz and Guzelyurt/Morphou; furthermore, North-Cyprus has 195 villages which each has its distinct attraction.

Cyprus has a very pleasant Mediterranean Climate with mild winter and dry summer and average of 300 days of sunshine per year, alsothe Average rainfall of 402mm which is below Mediterranean average, adjust it more to eastern Mediterranean climate, although

snow fall is not a typical of Cyprus but it can remain on Toroodos Mountain in the Sothern part.

According to State planning organization "population and Housing Cencus" Northern Cyprus's first official censuswas performed in 1996, population of island recorded as 200,587.

The second census, carried out in 2006, revealed the population of Northern Cyprus to be 265,100, which majority were composed of Turkish Cypriots, with the rest including a large number of settlers from Turkey. In addition,Bahceli (2007) mentioned that "The figure for non-citizens, including students, guest workers and temporary residents stood at 78,000 people."

Figure 3: North-Cyprus Map

According to the report on January, 2012"the last Census of North Cyprus was Conducted in December 2011among those who either, residing or holidaying in North-Cyprus"(http://www.essentialcyprus.com/north-cyprus-population/).

The results of this census gave the number of people who were on the island on that day as 265,100 and total number of permanent residents which refer to those who live in a place for a year or longer, as 256,644, which comparing to last Census in 2006,this amount indicating an amazing growth in the permanent population.

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"A census in the government-controlled areas is still ongoing;Morely (2011) reported that "asa census performed in December 2011 has been disputed by political parties, labor unions and local newspapers."It has also been reported in KibrisGazatesi (2011) that "governments accused of giving an estimate of 700,000 before the census, in order to demand financial aid from Turkey".

(http://www.kibrisgazetesi.com/index.php/cat/2/news/129803/PageName/Ic_Haberler).

In the 2011 census, there are no statistics on the balance of local Cypriots, foreigners, religions or other ethnic groups, but we can at least reach the conclusion that the population of North Cyprus is most certainly on the increase. Further, North Cyprus Free Press reported "This is said to be an overall increase of 11.2% on the figure in the last Census in 2006"on this basis, the preliminary figures have been released by "the Prime Minister Mr. IsrenKucuk" as shown in table 1.

To this end, North Cyprus is a secular state with the population involves different group of people: "Turkish-Cypriot People, Greek-Cypriot People Maronite Community, and People of Baha`i Faith in North Cyprus." (http://www.cyprusive.com/?CID=290).

Table 1: North-Cyprus Population

Regions	Population
Lefkosa	98739
Famagusta	69273
Girne	72284
Guzelyurt	31254
Iskele	23356
Total	294906

Released by the Prime Minister Mr. IsrenKucuk
Source:http://northcyprusfreepress.com/cyprus-property/north-cyprus-news-census-results

2.2 North-Cyprusas Tourism Destination

TurkishRepublic of North Cyprus is known for the Sea, Sand andSun (3s) and attracts many travelers to the island (Daskın, 2011).And it offers all the details for the perfect Mediterranean holiday, with a great choice of hotels, fantastic beaches, an abundance of history and year-round sunshine.

The best beaches are located in the North- Cyprus, comparing to the south, which excite many tourist to come to the island due to its admirable beauty. Nowadays more international Tourist are visiting North-Cyprus such as, Turks, British, Russian and Germans as well as Iranians, But among all, According to (Arslan, 2005) as the "access to the north of Cyprus is unproblematic for Turks, so Turkey continues to be the main country of origin of tourists visiting the TRNC".

Figure4: North-Cyprus, West -Kyrenia

Northern Cyprus offers a wide range of accommodation and lodging for the visitors who come to the island, it varies from5 star luxury hotels to holiday villages. It may be a luxury hotel near the sea or a holiday village villa, and visitors can choose among the variety of facilities, which suits them better.According to "Ministry of Tourism, Environment and culture", the latest information about the total number of Tourist arrival and departure by their nationality has released in 2011 (see table 2).

Table2: Number of Arrivals and Departures to and From
T.R.N.C. by Nationality, 2011

Nationality	Arrival	Departure
Turkey	801.326	802.856
Uk	50.846	50.659
Germany	18.079	18.067
Iran	18.897	18.393
Italy	7.582	7.648
Holland	10.256	10.103
Other	115.103	114.349

Released by Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture.
Source:http://www.tckb.gov.ct.tr/enus/yanmenu/istatistikler/2011istatistiklerlistesi.aspx

Moreover, "Ministry of Tourism, Environment and culture", has reported on the number

of passengers by country, arriving in TRNC through the doors as it is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: January-March 2013 Period,The T.RN.CPassengersArrivingBy Air and Sea.
The Distribution ofNationalities.(2012-2013Comparative)

Country	2012	2013
ABD	556	647
Germany	3.050	9.110
Albania	30	35
Australia	121	114
Austria	912	672
Azerbaijan	1.315	1.409
Belgium	282	182
Belarus	145	189
Bulgaria	1.149	1.036
Czech-republic	66	180

China	204	236
Denmark	74	96
Holland	1.542	11.699
Uk	3.929	4.188
Iran	5.713	4.301
Spain	103	96
Turkestan	832	862

Released by Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture
Source:http://www.tckb.gov.ct.tr/Portals/4/%C4%B0statistikler/2013/Mart/Uyruklara%20gore%20girisler%202013.pdf

Further , North Cyprus provide wide range of tourism products and leisure activities according to North-Cyprus "Hotelier Association" these are includes; " bird watching, golfing, turtle watching, diving, historical site visit, nature visits, eco/agro-tourism, walks to endemics, traditional village fests". (http://www.northcyprus.net/north-cyprus.php).

North-Cyprus provides a rich array of cultural delights in terms of variety of Music and Theater Festivals. (See table 4).

Table 4: Music and Theater Festival in North-Cyprus

FESTIVALS	TIME	LOCATION
International Spring Concerts	During April and May	Bellapais Abbey,
International Bellapais Music Festival	For 4 weeks in May and June	Refectory Hall in Bellapais Abbey.
North Cyprus International Music Festival	between September and October	Historic settings venues : Bellapais Monastery, Salamis Amphitheatre and Kyrenia Castle.
The International Cyprus Theatre Festival	Mid-August to the beginning of September	stages performances in Nicosia, Famagusta and Kyrenia venues: Salamis , Ataturk Cultural Centre.
Famagusta International Festival	During June and July	Famagusta City
Guzelyurt Orange Festival	During May	Guzelyurt City by Guzelyurt Municipality
Kyrenia Jazz Festival	Every December	Rocks Hotels

Source: http://evergreendevelopments.com/north-cyprus-festivals.php

However, North-Cyprus with its unique natural area has become one of the eco-tourism destinations, although its natural area especially in the East and West part of the island areas are still unspoiled natural areas, but it attracts more people come to visit the island. North-Cyprus has only one functioning airport, Ercan Airport which is located in the east of Nicosia, the capital of Turkish republic of Cyprus. The subsidiary airport at Geçitkale is not currently used. According to Direct line Holiday, "Only four Turkish airlines currently fly into Ercan owing to the international boycott of northern Cyprus, always with a touchdown beforehand somewhere in Turkey. Therefore, keying in ECN

will often not return results, when searching for cheap flights to Ercan"
(http://www.directline-holidays.co.uk/cyprus/northern-cyprus).

Travelers may arrange to rent a car or using available transportation facilities at the airport such as taxies, shuttles and bus, they simply can choose the one suits them better to start their journey in the Mediterranean Island.

2.2.1 North Cyprus Nature

2.2.1.1 Mediterranean Coastline

Coastline of North Cyprus consists of charming cove, rocky coast and long golden beaches,the beaches of North-Cyprus are known as the cleanest and safest in the Mediterranean.

North Cyprus with its fascinating beaches, offer a new nature experience to travelers, as they can choose among the diverse beaches available. (See table 5).

Travelers can enjoy a wide range of beauty in North-Cyprus Beaches, from warm Mediterranean water in clean golden sandy beaches to boat trip in the bather's delight coastline with rocky outcrops.

During summer North-Cyprus Hotel beaches provide excellent services such as Beach club or seaside bar and restaurant ,to its guest and even travelers enjoy more while some Hotelier offering different water sports at the hotel's beaches such as water skiing, banana ridesjet-ski, wind surfing and scuba diving.

Furthermore, those who are interested in the pure nature can enjoy from the fantastic and undiscovered sandy beaches at the west coast of the island.

Table 5: North-Cyprus Beaches

KyreniaBeaches	Karpaz Peninsula Beaches	GuzelyurtBeaches
Acapulco Beach Altinkaya Hotel Beach Lara Beach Denizkiki Beach Alagadi Beach	KaplicaBeach Kasa Beach Golden Beach	Aphrodite Beach

Source: http://evergreendevelopments.com/beaches.php

2.2.1.2 Mountains

The Kyrenia Mountain ,also called Five Finger Mountains ,are the most spectacular feature of the island which are parallel to the coastline and only about 800 meters from coastline .

The largest spring in the North Cyprus is in this range near Five Finger Mountains and the productive north coast is mainly covered with olive and carob trees.Moreover, it is composed predominately of limestone, dolomite, and marble narrow. The highest point is Mount Selvili, near the historical village of Lapta, at 1,023 m.

2.2.1.3 Plains

The Mesaoria plain is known as the breadbasket of Cyprus, which is located, in the center of the island, between the Kyrenia Mountains and the Troodos Mountains in the

south, is used for the production of central crops such as wheat, barley and oats. Guzelyurtis a wealthy village, because of its huge citrus fields, which provide export goods from North Cyprus, not to mention fresh squeezed juices and healthy living year round for locals.

2.2.2 North Cyprus Regions

2.2.2.1 Nicosia/Lefkosa

Nicosia (Turkish: Lefkosa, Greek: Lefkosia) is the capital of Cyprus. Nicosia is the center of administrative district, and currently the only divided capital in the world, with the northern Turkish and southern Greek portions divided by a "Green line"; a demilitarized zone maintained by the United Nations. (http://www.north-cyprus-villa.com/north-cyprus-city.htm).

Table 6: Places toVisit in Nicosia

Places To Visit	
The Museum of Barbarism	Dervish PaşaKonak
DrFazilKucuk Museum	ArapAhmet Mosque
The Lapidary Museum	İplikPazarı Mosque
National Struggle Museum	Turunçlu Mosque
The MevleviTekke	BüyükHamam
Museum of the Whirling Dervishes	Kumarcılar Hanı
St. Sophia Cathedral (Selimiye Mosque)	Büyük Han
Atatürk Square and the Venetian Column	Bedesten

The central Eleftheria Square links old Nicosia with the modern city that has developed outside the walls, and provides different opportunities for a tourist today.

Travelers may enjoy, visiting an incredible collection of Cypriot antiquities and art treasures from the Neolithic Age to the early Byzantine Period or visiting the Cyprus Handicraft Center workshops, where presenting traditional arts which made in the same as they were in the past ages.

As it is shown in the table above, there are various visiting places, which would be interesting to visitors. (SeeTable6).

2.2.2.2 Kyrenia/Girne

The famous harbor town of Kyrenia is the Main resort in North Cyprus is Kyrenia,Greek Kirínia, Turkish Girne city, is lies along the northern coast of Turkish Cyprus."Kyrenia is the most attractive town on the coast of North Cyprus with its picturesque Venetian Harbor front and fascinating old quarter".

(http://evergreendevelopments.com/cities-kyrenia.php).

Kyrenia Tourism, have the ability to fulfill variety of demands and covering different range of people from young to elderly ,nature lovers to gamblers .it provide opportunity to tourist to   passing their time however they wish to,either a fabulous or a tranquil journey .choosing preferably among alternatives activities, as there are plenty of entertainments, amazing beaches, astonish walking area surrounded by fascinating nature, excitement watersports, restaurants, bars, night club and casino.

According to the new clouds webpage "Kyrenia Harbor is the main focus of different activities with cafés and bistros that face the sea prepare for their nightly trade. Crisp white linen and small vases of local flowers are lovingly arranged on tabletops to welcome the evening's guests to wine and dine in the cooling breeze".(http://www.north-cyprus-villa.com/north-cyprus-city.htm).Places to visit in Kyrenia are as Follow:

Table 7: Places to Visit in Kyrenia

Places to Visit	
The Kyrenia Museum of Folk Art	Bellapais Abbey
The Shipwreck Museum	Old KyreniaHarbour
Besparmak Mountain	Kyrenia Castle
Icon Museum/ Church of PanagiaChrysopolitissa	The Crusader Castles of Northern Cyprus

2.2.2.3 Famagusta/Gazimagusa

Some historians declare that Famagusta was founded by King Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt in 285 B.C. By the year 300 A.D. the town was one of the principal markets of the Eastern Mediterranean.

"Famagusta city lies south of the ancient city of Salamis and just north of the ancient ghost town of Varosha (Maras).todayVarosha is no more than an empty ghost town.

Famagusta with the deepest harbor in Cyprus is a major port in TRNC, which makes it a center for the export of citrus, fruits and other agricultural products and, other major economic activities include cotton spinning, the distillation of brandy, and fishing.

"The popularity of Famagusta refers to "Outdoor museum" of Famagusta (Gazimağusa) castle and its historical sites on the eastern coastline, has been listed as an important heritage site by the World Monument Fund".(http://evergreendevelopments.com/cities-kyrenia.php) Furthermore the Gothic architecture of Famagusta ranked it as one of the best in the eastern Mediterranean.

Besides all these Features, "Famagusta offers a host of educational establishmentsUniversities and international study" (Daskın, 2011) which cause many international students come to North Cyprus to study. As the fact, Student has become a major source of income for this city and made a great Contribution in to its Tourism Development.

Famagusta offers an ideal day out to visitors to North-Cyprus, walking through the ruins of Famagusta Castle as it has the world heritage importance .they can easily reach to Famagusta as it is less than an hour from Famagusta and it is only 55 kilometers far, from Nicosia.

Table 8: Places to Visit in Famagusta

Places To Visit	
The Ruins of Salamis	The Monastery of St. Barnabas
Othello Tower	St. Nicholas Cathedral
AyiosPhilon	

2.2.2.4 Iskele/Karpaz

A spectacular finger shaped peninsula in the East, has Iskele as its main town, it is known as the most beautiful part of the North-Cyprus. And "The development of

tourism has recently emerged as a key factor for the remote Karpaz, Region of Northern Cyprus, Due to its relatively unspoilt nature and well-preserved traditional lifestyle."(Gunsoy & Hannam ,2012).

The most famed destination of Iskele is the Karpazpeninsula, which attractsa lot of people by its enormous Golden Beach and its ancient villages. Dipkarpazis a town on the Karpaz Peninsula, which is a representative of the biggest Greek-speakingpopulation in the North. The priority of this region is its fertile soil, which allows benefiting from different range of local crops such as cotton, tobacco and grain.

"There is a very high level of support for tourism development in the Karpaz region."(Gunsoy & Hannam ,2012)**.**Karpaz offers fascinating places to visit.

Table 9: Places to Visit in Karpaz

Places To Visit	
Golden Beach	St. Synesios Church
Karpaz Village	Holy Trinity Church

2.2.2.5 Guzelyurt/Morphou

Guzelyurt ,it was also referred as Morphou is a market town as produce more than half of Cyprus citrus fruits. , this area is located in the west of North-Cyprus and it simply means beautiful village in Turkish language.

Despite, Guzelyurt has various potential attractions; it is no ordinary destination to Tourist, while this beautiful village is well worth a visit. It has wonderful atmosphere,

beautiful rustic surroundings, houses which represent rich collection of archeological treasure.

Furthermore, the popular St. Mamas, which is located in Guzelyurt, add another attractive feature to this town. The popularly of this church goes behind its story, hence it is about the poor man whose bravery against the authority, brought him exemption from tax, this churchis known as, the "patron saint of tax avoiders". Beside all these, the picturesque village of Lefke within Güzelyurt domain offers another enjoyable place. Guzelyourt, such a beautiful land like other regions in North-Cyprus, deserve to be visited by more tourist , its intact nature , the originality of the city which almost remained as the same as ages past and its quite atmosphere , allows for unique experiencing.

Table 10: Places to Visit in Guzelyurt

Places To Visit			
The Vouni Palace	Soli road	Guzelyurt Museum	St. Mamas's Monastery

2.3 North Cyprus Tourism Development

In general, North-Cyprus has practicing, long before, Tourism and Tourism development became one of the leading growth sectors, which it is today due to the fact that all authorities extremely contribute to develop Tourism in North-Cyprus.

"Since the division of Cyprus in 1974, the two communities on the island(Greek and Turkish) have both stressed the role of tourism in development, in contrast with South-

Cyprus, the development of the Turkish Cypriot sector has been muchslower"(Warnner,2010)."Although this part was originally the site of, most tourism development, prior to partition" (Lockhart, 1993; Butler & Mao, 1995).

The result of this division was not pleasant for Turkish Community as serious decline occurred in different sectors and Tourism was not exempted, numerous difficulties emerged such as "an embargo against its product by the international community, the difficulty of transport to it .in Transportation".(Warnner,2010).

Furthermore, Tourism industry in North-Cyprus has been Suffering from political instability Since 1963 tourism industry in Cyprus has been significantly influenced owing topolitical instability of the island (Altinay,, Altinay, &Bicak ,2002) as it is well known that "Tourism iswidely sensitive to political instability and political environment, which has a great impact on the tourism industry in any region" (Clements &Georgiou, 1998).

Moreover, according to another statement "Tourism is widely sensitive to political instability as the political environment has a great impact on Tourist industry on any Region" (Scott, 1998 , Hall 1994 ,Clements &Georgiou 1998).

In the same direction, the tourism industry in north Cyprus is strongly depend on the decision taken in the political environment (Altinay et al., 2002), therefore a case of North-Cyprus can be consider as a goodexample to support above statement, due to the

which ongoing political instability on the island prevented the development of the tourism industry, in terms of sustainability.(Altinay et al ,2002).

"Before 1993, the tourism sector was merely considered on legitimate structures as it was registered under the, undersecretaries, term", (Ligay, 2011), but when, North-Cyprus realized the importance of Tourism development to the economical aspect of the island as well as its considerable impact on the wealth of community, they took an action and consequently "the Ministry of Tourism had been created under the wing of the State Ministry and Deputy Prime Ministry".(Ligay, 2011).

Since then, Tourism of Cyprus was almost directed in the path to growth) and TRNC experienced a substantial boom to tourism when the Green Line had opened to EU visitors, in May 2004.

However many believes that "the opening of the division line in April 2003 has led to a considerable, inflow of Greek Cypriots to North Cyprus for tourism purposes" (Arslan, 2005).

Moreover"Tourist arrivals in North Cyprus have been significantly influenced due to the April ,2004 referendum for a peace solution between North and South" (Nadiri, et al,2008).

Northern- Cyprus has recently started experiencing better diversity in special tourismYaga,Cyprus-Turkish investment development agency in their investor guide 2010-2011 has mentioned that "There have been global signs recently of a move in the direction away fromsolely mass tourism, and a search for more exotic locations, which North -Cyprus has benefited from this trend" by its distinct features.(http://www.investinnorthcyprus.org/pdf/IG_short_version.pdf).

On this basis, North-Cyprus with its rich heritage and multicultural history, natural resources, intact nature could gain a great betterment in its Tourism industry and has the opportunity to seek and encourage different type of tourist.(See Table 11).

Table 11: North-Cyprus Tourist Segmentation

Segments
Eco-Tourism
Dark Tourism
Long-stay Visits and Second Home
Conference Tourism
Leisure Tourism

Source: Adapted from Warnner, 2010

Consequently, we see more effort toward Tourism development in North-Cyprus and Further Improvements is expected, which according to representative of MillenniumTourismVugarAliyev (2011) "North Cyprus can compete with Turkish resorts like Antalya, Bodrum, Marmaris Official of Northern Cyprus" can prove the above statement."(http:// tourism market. NorhCyprusDaily.com).

Although, there is significant improvement in the number of Tourism and different aspect of Tourism industry in North-Cyprus, despite there is still long way to achieve such a Sustainable Tourism in whole island, numerous problems and gaps must be taken under consideration by authorities, a comprehensive Tourism plan implementation is an absolute necessitates to boost Tourism development process in the North-Cyprus.

According to last Statistic information released by ''Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture'' the average of bed-capacity and the number of Tourist have reached its maximum by the year 2011, comparing to past 9 years**.**

Table 12: Number of Tourists and Bed Nights, Average Length of Stay and Occupancy Rate in all Accommodation Establishments by Years.

Year	Number of Tourist	Bed Night	Av. Length of Stay	Occupancy Rate%
2002	291.198	1.295.374	4,4	37,8
2003	279.244	1.324.219	4,7	37,0
2004	314.470	1.543.800	4,9	40,7
2005	341.446	1.586.164	4,6	40,2
2006	375.224	1.373.325	3,7	33,2
2007	430.108	1.487.099	3,5	32,2
2008	482.976	1.580.052	3,3	33,0
2009	480.514	1.649.809	3,4	34,4
2010	507.343	1.837.568	3,6	35,9
2011	611.024	2.324.959	3,8	40,9

Released by Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture
Source: http://www.tckb.gov.ct.tr/tr-tr/yanmenu/istatistikler/2011istatistiklerlistesi.asp.

2.4 Tourism and Economy

Cyprus is a divided island and one, which is completely dependent upon tourism. A diverse culture and environment is evident on the island which in turn has made tourism an effective option for economic development(Gunsoy,& Hannam,2012).

After the de facto separation of the Island, North Cyprus did not fulfill its economic potential and the structure of economy in the TRNC made further development limited (Arslan, 2005).

As a consequence of this isolation, the tourism industry, which is the largest sector of the TRNC economy, has deteriorated. Since direct flights to any country except for Turkey are not possible, (Arslan, 2005).

The economy of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus applies a free market economy or liberal economy system, which is ruled by the services sector with the limited intervention of governments. These service sectors include public sector, trade, construction, agriculture and industry manufacturing, which all plays contribute to overall GDP of the island and play a significant role in terms of economic support.

Although to a considerable degree, TRNC has been suffering from barriers such as lack of international recognition, embargo on its ports and dependency to Turkish military and economic support, consequently it could "turned its economy in an impressive performance."(Ligay,2011)

In such a place as North-Cyprus where economic growth heavily is depended on Tourism development ,the high degree of support Tourism Development is a key to success as "One explanation for the high level of support for tourism development is the residents need for economic development"(Gunsoy,& Hannam,2012).

The economic and social impact of Tourism development during recent years cannot be neglected, while Tourism sectors have contributed a great amount of income to the economy of TRNC, at the same time ,local community have been benefiting from Tourism development when more Tourism establishment cause more job opportunities for local people.

Table 13: Numbers of Employees in Tourism Sector
North-Cyprus 2011

TYPES OF ESTABLISHMENTS	Number of Establishment 2011	Number of Employee2011
Turistikkonaklamatesisleri (tourist accommodation est.)	134	4.433
Diğerkonaklamatesisleri (other accom.Est.)	16	92
Turizmveseyahatacenteleri (tourism & travel agencies	175	410
Casinolar (casinos)	22	3.743
Turistikrestoranlar (tourist restaurants)	580	3.840
Total	927	12.518

Released by Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture
Source:http://www.tckb.gov.ct.tr/en-us/yanmenu/istatistikler/2011istatistiklerlistesi.aspx

Chapter 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Consumer Behavior

The consumer behavior have studied broadly since 1950s, it refers to investigation of when, where, How and when consumer do or do not purchase a particular product ,consumer behaviors incorporates lots of research sphere , to conceive the buyer decision-making process.

Consumer behavior is the study of "individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society" (Kuester& Sabine 2012).

Typically, "consumer behavior refers to the process of acquiring and organizing information in the direction of a purchase decision and of using and evaluating products and services" (Moutinho 1987).

 Consumer behavior isalso defined as "all activities directlyinvolving, acquiring, consuming and disposing products /services and the procedures to incur decision-makingbefore and after these activities (Engel et al., 1995).

Consumer behavior is rooted in the buyer decision processwhich involves a series of processes. It can be analyzed with two aspects: "the decision-making process associated with consumer buying and the factors which affect the buying process" (Rowley, 1997).

Consumer behavior is not the easy task to study , "learning about the why of consumer buying behavior is not so easy-the answer are often locked deep within the consumer's mind"(Kotler&Armstrong, 2008,p.130).

Marketing	Other Stimulu	Buyer's Black Box	Buyer Responsess
• product • price • place • promotion	•Economic •Technological •Political •Cultural	•Buyer Characteristicts •Buyer Decision Process	• Product Choice • Brand Choice • Dealer Choice • Purchase Timing • Purchase amount
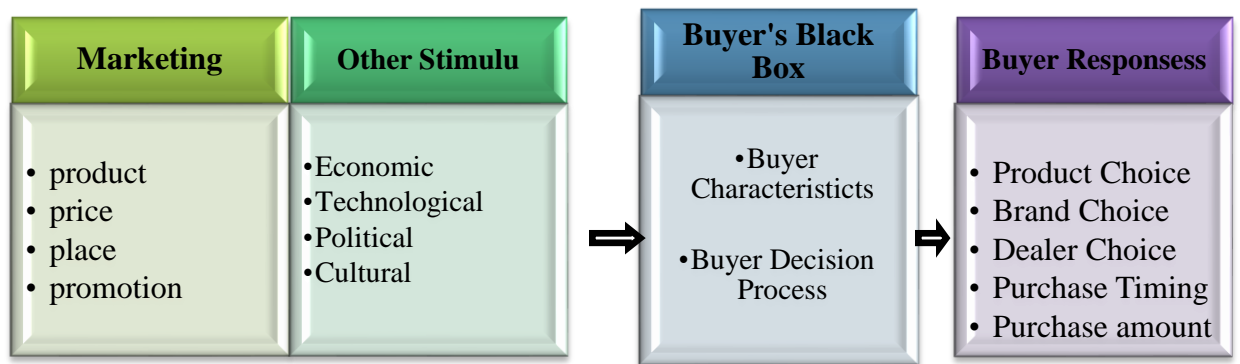
Figure 5: Model of Buyer Behavior
Source: Kotler&Armstrong, 2008

In this regard, the key question for marketers is how consumer responds to different marketing efforts and various market stimuli. The starting point is the "**Stimulus Response Model of Buyer Behavior" shown** in Figure 5, marketer wants to understand how the marketing and other stimulus are changed into certain response inside the consumer's black box. The buyer's black box consist of two main parts, first, the buyer

characteristics, which determine how consumer respond to stimulus, and second, the buyer decision process which affects the buyer behavior.

3.1.1 Tourism Consumer Behavior

In general, tourism can be defined in behavioralterms as "persons who travel away from theirNormalresidential region for a temporary period of at leastone night".(Choibamroong, 2005).

Tourist behavior involves a search forleisure experiences from interactions with featuresor characteristics of places they choose to visit(Leiper, 1997).The physical travelling behavior in tourism is referred to as one part of the consumption behavior, and the selection of a travelling destination is the alternative evaluation in theConsumers' behavior. (Lin, Li & You, 2012).

"Consumer behavior is a dynamic and complex process".(Correia&Pimpão, 2008). When applied to tourism, this, process becomes even more complex by the"intangibility of the product and by thediscontinuity and accumulation of purchasing power" (Correia, 2002).

Tourist behavior like any other consumer behavior is rooted in the consumer decision-makingprocess , actually, "a tourist's travelling destination originates from his (her) decision-making"(Chen & Liu,1992).

In this regard, a tourist's behavior to select the particular destination can be described through the procedure of Tourist destination decision-making process.

3.2 Leisure Traveler Destination Decision Process

Based on the consumer behavior definitions, consumer decision-making can refers to the process of acquiring information and injecting the relevant information into related purchase decision. Similarly, the process of travel decision-making has been described as "evolving and dynamic information processing within the context of the travel planning process in several previous studies" (Fodness& Murray 1998; Hwang, et al., 2002; Jeng&Fesenmaier 2002).

In general, much of tourist behavior research has been developed basedon "classical buyer behavior theory". (Choi, et al., 2012), which drawn from consumer behavior literature, in this sense, decisions are thought to evolve in sequential steps: needs motivation, problem recognition,Information search, evaluation of alternatives and decision, purchase, and post -purchase evaluation (Engel,et al., 1973).It has been widely held among researches in the buyer behavior field, that the "consumer's decision to purchase is a multi-staged process".(Woodside &Lysonski, 1989;Kotler, 1998;Kotler& Keller 2012).

| Need Recognition | Information Search | Evaluation of alternatives | Purchase decision | Post-Purchase Behavior |

Figure 6: The Classical Model of Buyer Decision Process
Source: Kotler& Keller, 2012

Figure 6, shows that decision-making process consist of five main stages ,noticeably the buying process start long before the actual buying process and continues long after .

Kotler&Armstrong, (2008,p.147) explained that " the figure suggests that consumer pass through all five stages with every purchases, but in more routine purchases, consumers often skip or reverse some of these stages .

Need recognition is the first step in the decision-making, which arise from the differences between the idealistic of individuals and reality, in this moment a buyer recognize a need or problem which makes her/him to take further step into the information search stage. In this stage the consumer aroused to search more information,which may go in active search of information or may heighten their attention to relevant information sources.

In some purchasing situation such as Tourist's products, consumers obtain relevant information from any of several sources. According to kotler&keller (2012) "these include personal sources (e.g. family & friends), commercial sources (e.g. advertising & display), public sources (e.g. mass media &internet search) and finally experiential sources (e.g. handling & examining)."

Once required information is gathered, the consumer moves to the evaluation of alternative solutions, 'how consumer goes about evaluating purchase alternative depends on the individual consumer and the specific buying situation". (Kotler& Armstrong 2008, p.148).

In fact this stage is one of the complex stages in buying decision process which will vary among buyers. , in some cases consumers use careful evaluation but at other times, the same consumer may do little or no evaluation .In general consumer use information to evaluate the alternative brands and assigning the features of the productto their own priority, in order to reach the overall level of satisfaction and make the best choice.

In the next step, purchase decision, a buyer finally decide about which product/brand to purchase, as already in the evaluation stage, the brand intention were formed, thus consumers will decide to buy the most preferred brand but two factor can come between the purchase intention and purchase decision, the first factor is the attitude of others as key people can influence the buying decision, for example, a recommendation from family members may effects the buyer's decision-making. The second factor refers to unexpected situational factors as the consumer may form a purchase intention based on factors such as expected income or expected product benefit.

Although the product is bought by consumers, but the decision-making process is not finished yet, the post-purchase behavior stage, is the last stage concerned in the buyer decision process, in this stage the further purchase of consumers depends on their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, what determines whether the buyer is satisfied or dissatisfied with a purchase lies in the relationship between the consumer's expectation and their perception of product's performance.

The leisure traveler, like consumers of other products, can approach a product decision through "routine, limited, or extended problem-solving behavior" (Moutinho, 1987).

Destination decisions are not made at one point of time, but they aredeveloped over a period of time and most studies of tourists' destination decision address tourist destination choice as the key element in the travel decision-making process (Hsu, et al., 2009).

This model is "describable metaphorically as a decision funnel suggesting consumers consciously collect information and narrow alternatives down to one final answer orchoice". (Martin & Woodside, 2012).

A key advantage of this model is that it recognizes that the buying decision process is likely to commence long before actual purchase and continue after purchase has occurred, signaling that marketers need to focus on the entire buying process rather than just on the purchase decision (Kotler, 1998).

In Tourist decisions according to the nature of the trip and individual's characteristics, travelers either passthrough the whole process or would skip one or more stages, but what is definite in any destinationdecisions is, the inevitability of information search stage since it is essential for the final destination choice (Sirakaya& Woodside, 2005).

Arguably "in no other product or service is the customer as involved in the information search for and choices around their purchase as is the case in tourism". (Decrop, 2006; Sirakaya&Woodside, 2005).

3.2.1 Theoretical Background

Tourism destination Decision-makingprocess have been mastered by*rational choice theory*,   this theory believes that individuals are rational decision makers who intending to go through the complete information search, choosing the best alternative in order to make the most desirable decision , actually this rational process assumes choices are deliberate, calculated, and seldom unconscious decisions(Martin & Woodside, 2012),but this theory criticized by some scholars as an unrealistic theory.(Bettman,, et al., 1991; Decrop 1999; Jun, et al., 2010).

This theory claim that all information is available and ultimately decisions are based on all possible alternatives,asZajonc (1980) proposed "it is further possible that we can like something or be afraid of it before we know precisely what it is and perhaps even without knowing what it is."

Taking a more realistic approach, *information-processing strategies* (Jun & Holland, 2012) are based on *constructive consumer choice processes* (Bettman, Johnson, & Payne 1991; Bettman, Luce, & Payne 1998).

Moreover, Constructive choice theorists apply choice heuristics or information processing shortcuts rather than "omniscient rationality" (Ladhari, 2007). In fact, CCP is dominated by the belief that, individuals as decision makers have limited information

capacity and are surrounded by the complex information environment, which makes the decision-making as a contingent and heuristic process.

Individuals make decisions in a complex informationenvironment in which they have to deal with a large number of alternatives and abundant information availablefrom many sources (Bettman, et al., 1991). Indeed," Individuals cannot process all the available information and sometimes ignore thisinformation, especially when it is not relevant to their decision-making goals" (Jones 1999).

Due to the fact that in Today's dynamic environment, with variety of information sources, making decision about a particular place have become more and more complicated than ever, some suggest that, the myriad of information provided by new technology increases uncertainties in choice and decreases effectiveness of information searches .(Bettman, et al., 1998; Lurie, 2004).

In general, the characteristics of this theory are found in early decision-making models. (Martin & Woodside, 2012) and Gilbert (1991) in attempt, to provide broader look, summarized the similarities among studies a listed below:
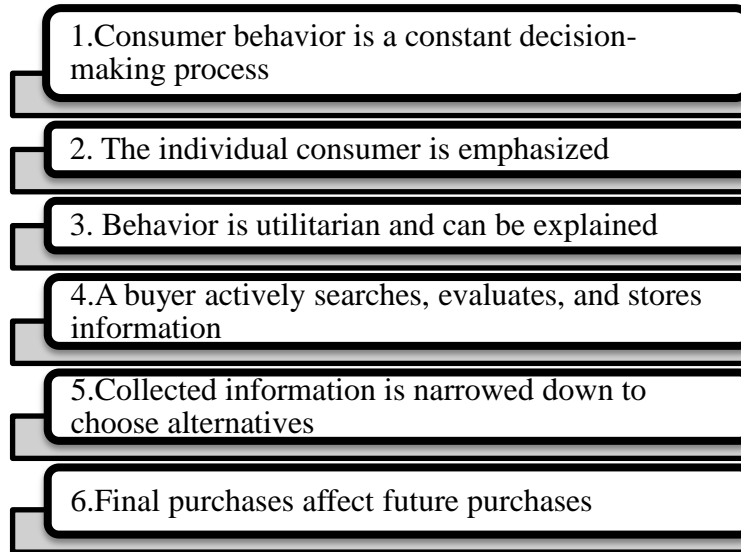
| 1.Consumer behavior is a constant decision-making process |
| 2. The individual consumer is emphasized |
| 3. Behavior is utilitarian and can be explained |
| 4.A buyer actively searches, evaluates, and stores information |
| 5.Collected information is narrowed down to choose alternatives |
| 6.Final purchases affect future purchases |

Figure 7:Similarities among Related Studies
Source: Gilbert 1991; Adapted from Martin & Woodside, 2012

Another theory in this context is identified as ***case-based vacation planning or Contingent theory*** which suggests that "travel planning and decision-making is contingent". (Jun, et al., 2007; Stewart &Vogt 1999).

This theory has developed in accordance with CCP theory (Jun & Holland, 2012) and it is discussed that according to the nature of contingent events, which are unpredictable duringthe tourist's information searching,decision-making process is considered as an ongoing process until a trip end.

In fact, unpredictable events such as flight missing are inevitable events, which require new information searching and decisions,"While repeating these processes, individuals learn how to deal with unexpected situations and construct their own effective and efficient means to process information" (Jun, et al., 2010).

Moreover, Contingent or adaptivedecision-making (Payne, 1982; Payne, et al., 1993) allows for natural dynamics in solving problems, finding that individuals use a variety of problem solving strategies, depending upon personal traits or characteristic, and problem and social contexts.(Smallman, & Moore, 2010).

Consequently, asconventional models of decision-making failed to fully address the common accepted conventions of good theory (Bacharach, 1989; Whetten, 1989),recent developed decision theories, unlike convential approaches tend to describe travel decisions as "temporal, dynamic, successive, multistage, and contingent processes that evolve through the course of travel planning".(Fesenmaier 1990; Jeng&Fesenmaier 2002; Choi, et al., 2012).

3.2.2 A Review of Alternative Models

It has been widely argued by researchers that "consumer's decision is a multi-staged process" (Chon 1990; Woodside &Lysonski 1989; Mayo &Jarvis 1981; Hunt 1975; Gunn 1972; Clawson &Knetch 1966).

There have been a range of theoretical models,advanced in the academic literature to provide the broader insightinto the destination decision process. (Chon 1990; Woodside &Lysonski1989; Gunn 1989; Clawson &Knetch 1966).

Particularly, The model of Um and Crompton (1990), Clawson and Knetch (1966), Van Raaij and Francken (1984), Gunn (1989), among the recent development in travel decision process have attracted attention in Tourism literature,also the study of

Fesenmaier and Jeng (2000) proposed the model regarding destination decision process.
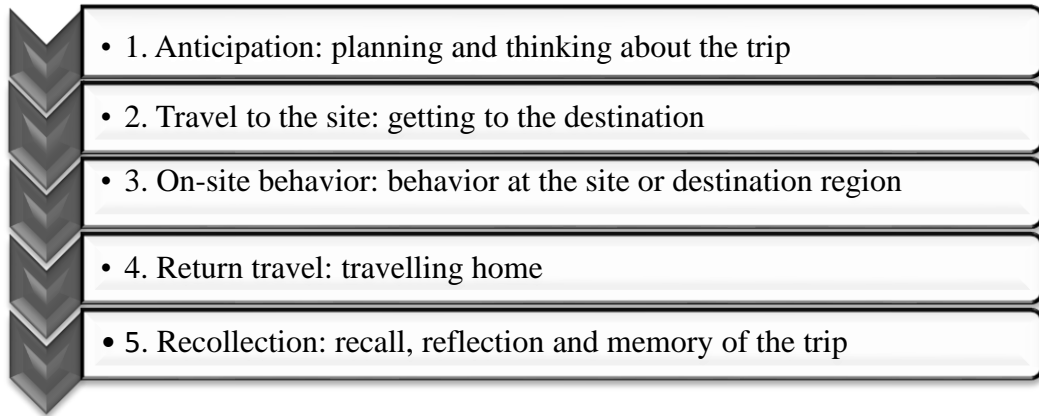
 ❖ **Um & Crompton's Model of Destination Choice**

This model identified threestagesin the destination choice of leisure travelers

- 1. Composition of awareness set
- 2. Evoked set
- 3. Final destination set.

.
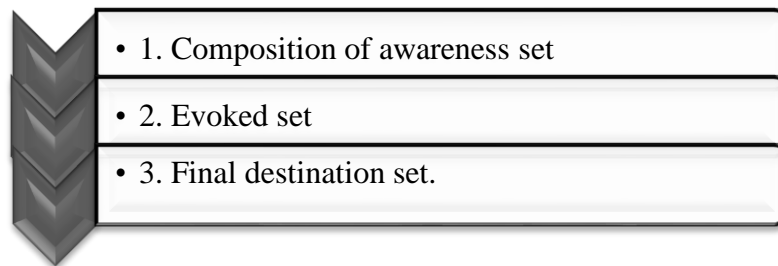
Um and Crompton (1990), using a choice set structure to propose a theoretical framework of destination choice process, this model describes the travel decision process as contingent in nature, and it is focused only on the destination choice before starting vacation, while the process of travel decision-making,should encompass various sub-decision-making .

 ❖ **Clawson and Knetch's Model of Recreational Behavior**

Clawson and Knetch (1966) identified five-phases in their Model:

- 1. Anticipation: planning and thinking about the trip
- 2. Travel to the site: getting to the destination
- 3. On-site behavior: behavior at the site or destination region
- 4. Return travel: travelling home
- 5. Recollection: recall, reflection and memory of the trip

The anticipation stage comprises the actions, initiated to the trip, including need recognition and information search.

Travelling to the sitemay associate with a range of experiences obtained, while travelling to and from the site. These experiences mostly depend on the mode of transport. The behavior at the destination regions is influenced by a wide number of service providers such as accommodationfacility, recreation outlets and even the interaction with other travelers.

The final stage, reflection and memory of the trip, refers to the post-purchase evaluation of travelers asthis will have a major impact on the next purchase decision .(Clawson &Knetch 1966).

❖ **Van RaaijandFrancken's Model of Vacation- Sequence**

Van Raaij and Francken (1984), outlined 5 phases in their Model.

- 1. The generic decision to spend on a vacation.
- 2. Information acquisition
- 3. Joint decision making by husband and wife
- 4. Experience of the vacation.
- 5. Subsequent levels of satisfaction

This model is proposed in the context of family vacationas a sequence of sub- decisions, the findings suggested that household related variables play an important role in vacation decision and this model is represented.

❖ Gunn's Model of Leisure Travel

This model identifiedseven stages process, in the context of leisure traveler.

- 1.Accumulation of mental images about vacation experiences
- 2. Modification of those images by further information
- 3. Decision to take a vacation trip..
- 4.Travel to the destination
- 5. Participation at the destination
- 6.Return travel
- 7. New accumulation of images based on the experience

.

In this model, Destination decision –making process, begins with the accumulation of destination images through variety of sources, these images then modified as a result of Further information search. In the next stage, due to the travel experiences, these images may change , during the post-purchase evaluation stage.

On this basis, this model transmitting the concept of continually altering destination image, this concept can be considered in the advocacy of what Hunt (1975) ; Mayo and Jarvis (1981), suggested, these authors argued that "traveler's choice of destination is subjective and multi-faceted" (Fuller, et al., 2007).

So long as, many factors necessitated in the decision-making process, the most unfathomable factor is the traveler's perceived image. Accordingly,Mayo and Jarvis (1981) suggested that, "The most important is based on the image projected by a set of alternatives and the perceived ability of that image to most closely satisfy the travelers' needs''.

Many researchers believe that Gunn (1989) made distinct reference to changes in destination image as the consumer moves through the seven stages of the leisure travel experience.(Fuller, et al., 2007).

❖ **Fesenmaierand Jeng'sModel of Hierarchical Trip Decision**

- 1. Core decisions
- 2. Secondary decisions
- 3. en rout decision
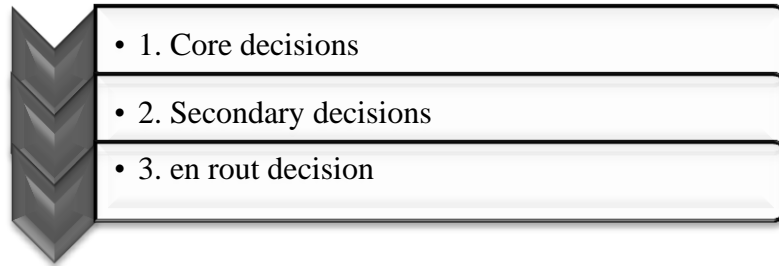
In this model three stages of decisions were identified,the first phase of this model is demonstrated by the well organizedplaned prior to the trip such as destination, length of trip as well as travel companies.

From core decision, the secondary decisions will take place, although these kinds of decisions are made earlier , but still are mutable to embedded the possibility of change and finally en-route decisions as the last stage, are not contemplated until the travelers actively seeking alternative such as rest stop or shopping areas.

3.2.3   Recent Studies

Fuller, Wilde, Hanlan, and Mason (2007), in their study suggested that "there are important limitations evident in existing models of destination choice", hence recent studies , aimed to extend more comprehensive approach to investigate factors associated with travelers' decision process.

Choi, Lehto, Morrison and Jang, (2012) pointed that "These studies either examined travel decision-making behavior in dynamic decision contexts or comprehensively described the overall travel decision-making process".

❖ **Martin andWoodside's Structuring and Processing Model (SPM)**

This study took broader insight into the travelers'decision-making and introduced structuring and processing model (SPM) as a framework for tourism decision-makingstudies, also the flexible method and structure of this model allowing for non-linear and holistic decision-making.

Martin and Woodside, (2012) emphasized that "SPM enables mapping and comparing visitors' plans, motivations, choices, and consequences and results demonstrate nuanced decision-behavior dynamics and complexities of visitors' travel-related unconscious/conscious thinking and behavior."

❖ **Choi, Lehto, Morrison and Jang's Models of Structure Travel Planning Process and Information Use Pattern**

In this model, travel decision-making processdecomposed in to the multistage sequences, as it sis identified four stages of travel planning (pre-purchase, at time of purchase, after purchase and after arriving at destination), based on the multiple choices for vacation trip.

According to Choi, Lehto, Morrison & Jang, (2012) "This research has revealed that:

1. Travel decision-making and choice behavior is a multifaceted hierarchical process.

2. Travel decision-making and choice behavior involve a temporal-dynamic process,

3. The decision heuristics used vary across decision facets."

Furthermore, this study developed aframework which portrays travel decision-making process by combining information use pattern in a visual form.

Consequently the findings of this study demonstratedthat Tourist's decision-making process is an ongoing sequence, multi-dimensional and hierarchical process.

- ❖ **Ingram andGrieve's Model of Purchase Decision-Making for Hospitality and Tourism Products**

Ingram & Grieve, (2013) have extended a model of purchasedecision-making forhospitality and tourism products in their study.

The focus of this research was on the nature of perception and image and how they influence the purchasing process of Tourism products , consequently they have found that "Positive image and perceptions will contribute considerably to consumer behavior and affect whether consumers buy travel, holiday or hospitality products and services".
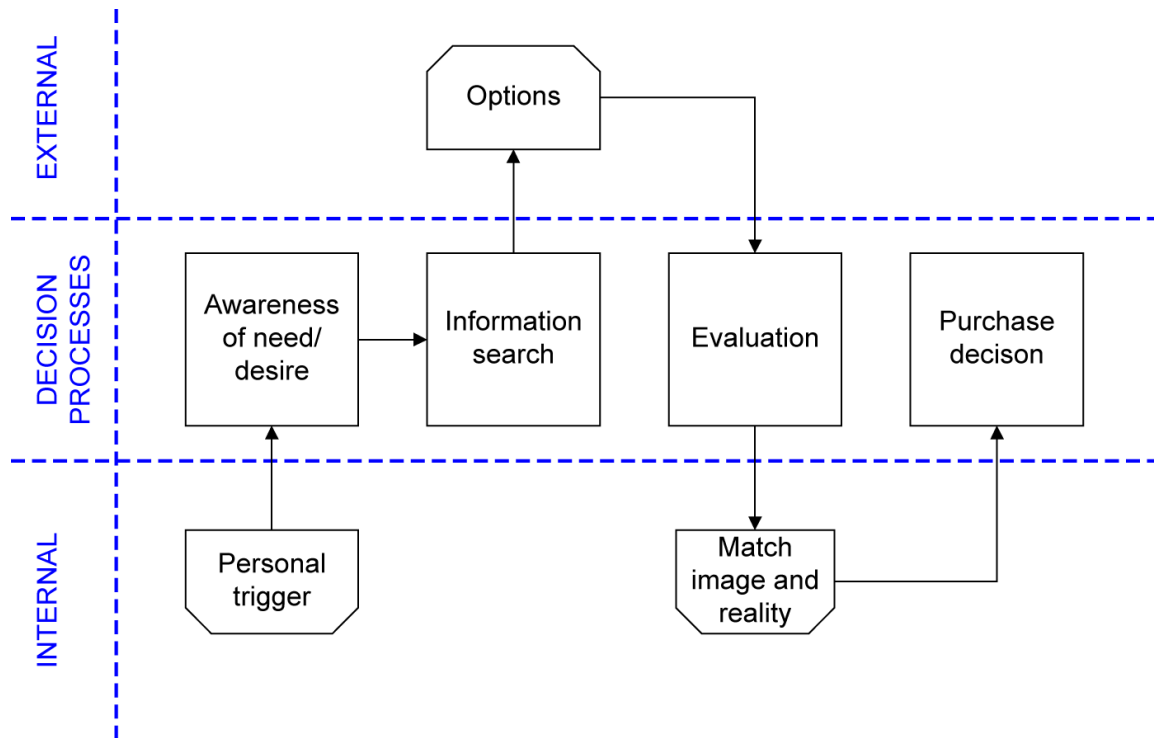
Figure8: A model of Purchase Decision-Making

Source: Ingram & Grieve, 2013

3.3 Tourist Information Search Behavior

In line with general consumer behavior, similarly Tourism information searching, is considered to be desirable and even necessary for choosing a good tourist's product-(Bronner&Hoog, 2013).

Objectively, researchers have the common opinion on this concern which "Similar to other consumer product decisions, tourism information acquisition is necessary for selecting a destination and for onsite decisions such as selecting accommodations, transportation, activities and tours" (Fodness& Murray, 1998; Gursoy& Chen, 2000; Gursoy&McCleary, 2004; Snepenger, et al., 1990).

The concept of information is defined by Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi, (1990) as "anything that produces changes in consciousness of the human being "a perception, a sensation, an emotion, a memory, a thought".

In tourism area, information is not necessarily assigned at the higher level of information about different alternatives, as it may cover many momentous determinants of travelers' behavior.

"It has been commonly acknowledged that information search is a lengthyprocess and can be conceptualized as a series of interrelated activities and factors" (Schmallegger& Carson, 2008).

Information search behavior has been a continual topic of research since it is essential in all choice behavior and decision-making process.As the fact that,"Research into tourist information-search processes developed into one of the most widely studied areas in tourism" (Fodness and Murray, 1997).

Theintangibility of tourism product, caused to concern the magnitudeof information search behavior in purchasing, tourism products.

On this basis, tourist count-on, high degree, high-quality, reliable and trustworthy information (Novática, et al., 2010), as a matter of fact, tourist seeking for variety of information , in order , to organize every aspect of a trip.

Information sources have an outstanding role in choosing a concrete destination, which vary considerably. The information sources that tourists employ form the basis for vacation planning have a great impact on the process of tourist decision-making.(McIntosh &Goeldner, 1986).

The concern of Decrop andSnelders, (2005) about information search can prove the above statement, as they suggested "Information search is an ongoing process, which can predate the generic decision to go and which does not end after booking."

Information search can be defined as "the motivated activation of knowledge stored in memory or acquisition of information from the environment" (Engel et al 1995).

Based on this definition, a search can be either internal or external. "Internal search is based on the retrieval of knowledge from memory, while the other consists of collecting information from the marketplace" (Engel et al 1995).

3.3.1 Internal Search vs. External Search

Two type of information search behavior identified, while tourist looking forinformation. It is categorized as internal and external information searching.

According to the nature of information search which can take place either internal or external, internal search is directly linked with the experience and memories of individual and external search is related with acquiring information from outside environment such as magazine, brochure ,recommendation from family and friends.

The first, internal search refers to recapturing relevant information from memory or genetic tendencies. (Blackwell,Miniard&engel2001). Internal information search rooted in memory and mostly occur prior to external information search.

Internal sources include "personal experiences, either with the specific destination or with a similar one, and the knowledge accumulated through an ongoing search" (Schul& Crompton 1983; Vogt & Fesenmaier,1998) , while the internal information cannot fulfill the expectation of Tourist in the related decision-making, they mostly utilize external information sources from their surrounded environment.

Travelers tend to make a decision which fulfill their expectation and meet their needs, thus applying information searching to the entire process of their planning increase the likelihood of arriving at such a pleasant decision.

According to Snepenger and Snepenger (1993), there are four broad external information source when Tourist planning their trip: "family and friends, destination specific literature, media, and travel consultants.

External information searches "indicates the active information searching through outside information sources" (Engel, et al., 1995).

External search is associated with the degree of attention, perception, and effort directed toward obtained environmental information related to the specific purchase situation (Beatty & Smith, 1987).

To this end, although, both internal and external search are related together, but Travelers are more likely to use external information sources rather than internal one accordingly to Gursoy and McCleary, (2004), mentioned that"For most tourist decisions, search is predominantly external."

3.3.2 Information Source

In the tourism literature, the research on tourist information search has mainly focused on use of various information sources.

According to Schmallegger, and Carson, 2008, the variety of sources travelers use when searching for information related to destination choice, has received abundant attention. Hence, the first issue is, toidentify the different sources whichtravelers use in order to collect needed information for their trip.

 The tourism and travel literature indicates various sources, which are classified in different categories. For instance, Engel et al.(1995) determine four main sourcesin traveler's information search, which composed of: 1. Personalsources (e.g. friends and family), 2. Commercial sources, 3.Public sources (e.g. Television and newspaper) and 4.Experimental sources (e.g. direct use or observation), moreoverMoutinho (1987) considered that "the tourist's personal experience, advertising and publicity, word of mouth, travel agent influence and travel literature and brochures"

The interest of this research isto study external information sources, as a consequence, the focus is on the distinction proposed by those, who only centered external information sourcesin thetravelers' destinationdecision.

Accordingly, Snepenger and Snepenger (1993), also Chen and Gursoy (2000), proposed main sources which tourist are more likely to use when planning their trip. It is categorized as "1) family and friends, 2) destination specific literature, 3) media, and 4) travel consultants."

Moreover, in parallel with technological development internet is considered as one of the most common and importantelectronicallsource among travelers. , regarding to Gursoy&McCleary "the internet should be added as another external source". In order to, clarify the importance of these sources among travelers,Schmallegger, and Carson (2008) reported in their paper as:

> "For tourism destination choice, Gitelson and Crompton (1983) reported that 74% of all respondents had received travel information from friends and relatives, whereas 20% of the respondents had received travel information from newspapers and magazines (Um & Crompton 1990: 434)."

To summarize this part,general overview of some of the most cited studies in the field of tourism information-searching, is shown in Figure, 9.
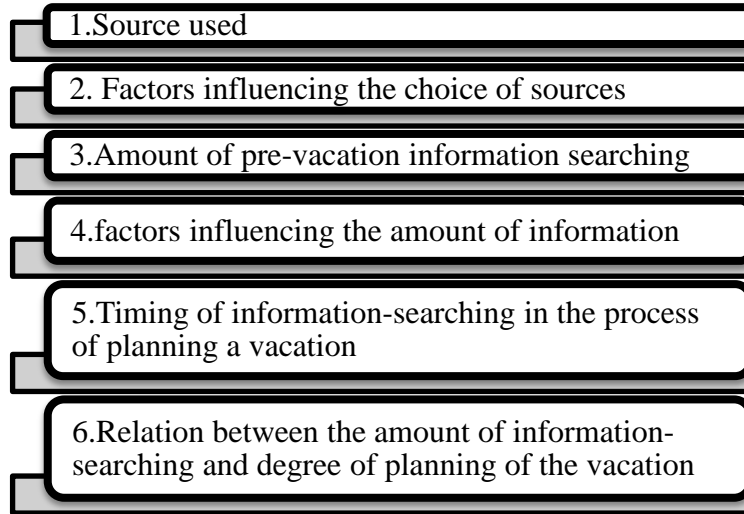
1.Source used

2. Factors influencing the choice of sources

3.Amount of pre-vacation information searching

4.factors influencing the amount of information

5.Timing of information-searching in the process of planning a vacation

6.Relation between the amount of information-searching and degree of planning of the vacation

Figure 9: Issues Identified in Related Studies
Source: Hyde, 2006; adapted from Bronner&Hoog, 2013.

3.3.3Theoretical Background

The literatures of consumer behavior have identified three fundamental theoretical

streams(Schmidt &Spreng1996;Srinivasan, 1990)

Central Approaches to Information Search Behavior

Psychological/motivational
Approach

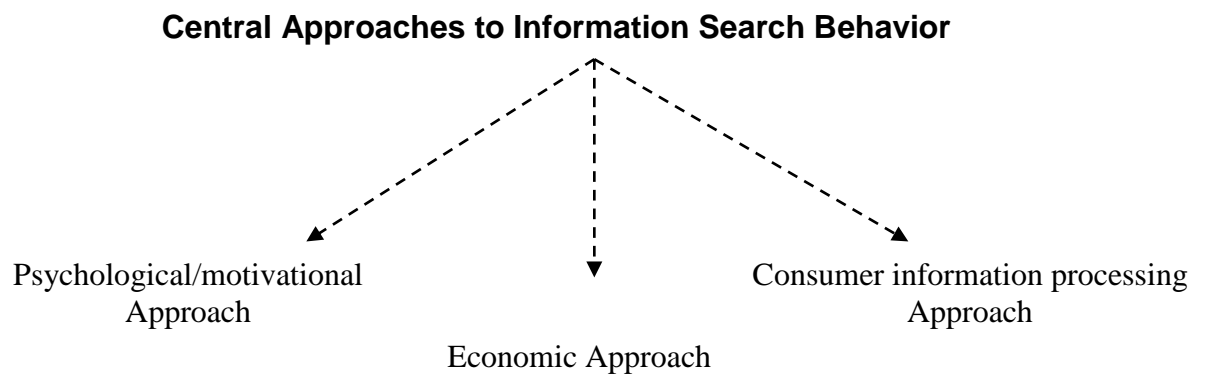Consumer information processing
Approach

Economic Approach

Figure 10: Fundamental Approaches
Source: Adapted from Erawan, Krairit, &Khang, 2011.

The first approach is Psychological/motivational approach, which mainly focuses on socio-demographic characteristic in describing the information sourcing behavior,such as age, gender and income. It is embedded in motivation theory and incorporating the individual, the product class, and the task related variables such as beliefs and attitudes (Duncan &Olshavsky, 1982) andinvolvement (Beatty & Smith, 1987).

The second approach, Economic approach established by Stigler (1961). This approach is originated in the economics of information theory and implies the cost-benefit framework to study information search .on this basis consumer are assumed as rational decision makers who weigh up the cost and benefit of information when making search decision, as expenses during the research process may include time, energy andmoney. Consequently, this approach apply in literature whenever, information phase is to support the purchase decision.

The third approached is the consumer information processing, proposed by Bettman (1979), this approach relies on memory and cognitive information processing theory.

Here, the main focus is mainly on the process of information search rather than on the action itself. Furthermore, Erawan,et al.,(2011), in their study suggested that "in this stream, motivated consumers are viewed as information processors who search for information in order to accomplish their goals.

3.3.4 A Review of Alternative Models

In Tourism literature, there are two fundamental theoretical framework used in Tourist's information search behavior "Strategic Model" and "Contingency model". Most of related studies applied one f this two most importance models in their studies.

AccordinglyFodness and Murray,(1997) argued that" studies of travelers' information search behavior have followed one of the two most influential theoretical frameworks, which proposed to enhance the understanding of tourist's 'Information search behavior".

The strategic model characterized information searchstrategies as the combination of information sources used in the travelers' decision-making process. On the other hand, the Contingency model, characterized informationsearch regarding to individual characteristics, effort, and the number of sources used, situational influences, product characteristics, and search outcomes(Schul& Crompton 1983; Fodness& Murray 1999).

❖ **Strategic Model**

The strategic model was proposed by Snepenger, Meged, Snelling and Worrall (1990) they define search strategy as "the combination of information sources used by a travel party to plan trips".

Different studies examined information search strategies used by tourists, the result of these studies indicated that travelers are likely to utilize four broad external information sources while deciding to travel to the specific destination. These sources consist of 1)

family and Friends, 2) destination specific literature, 3) media, and 4) travel consultants (Woodside &Ronkainen, 1980 ;Snepenger&Snepenger 1993).

However , the strategic model demonstrating the idea that , travelers use mainly the combination of external information sources,in their travel planning , but it doesn't address the reason of why travelers choose external information sources as a basis for acquiring relevant information to their trip.

Several studies developed their findings base on strategic model, for example,Gitelson and Purdue (1987), conducted a research to investigate the effectiveness of welcome centers, and Howard and Gitelson (1989), didcomparison among users and nonusers of state welcome centers. Kendall and Booms (1989)examined consumer perception of Travel agencies.

The studyof Woodside and Ronkainen (1980),focused on the users of three different sourcesselfplanners,motor club users, and travel agent users, in order to find the main differences among mentioned user.

The later work of Snepenger et al. (1990) focused on the users of single information source, travel agents, in comparison with those who utilized a combination of externalsources.

As it is considered above,all these studies focused on the combination of information sources used by travelersand differentiation was concerned through socio-demographics.

❖ Contingency Model

The contingency model proposed in advance, by Schul and Crompton (1983) and later, Fodness and Murray (1999) extended this model by including situational factors and product characteristics.

In contrast with strategic model, contingency model identified information search in terms of "individual characteristics, such as travel specific lifestyles, effort such as amount of time spent, previous trip experiences, the number of sources used, situational influences, and product Characteristics, and search outcomes" (Schul& Crompton 1983; Fodness&Murray 1999).

First contingency model,measured the prior product knowledge through the previous visit to a destination, theyidentified that travel-specific lifestyles and individual differences are more important than socio-demographics variables in predicting external information search behavior.

This is despite the fact that, in review of literature, the prior product knowledge is not a uni-dimensional construct.(Alba & Hutchinson, 1987).

Fodness and Murray (1999) examined the influence of situational factors (nature of decision-making and travel party.), product characteristics (purpose of trip and mode of travel tourist) Tourist characteristic (family life cycle and socioeconomic status) and finally Search outcomes (length of stay, number of destinations visited, number of

attractions visited, and travel related expenditures) on travelers' external information search behavior.

Their findings in support to previous model stressed that tourist information search strategies are the consequence of a dynamic process in which travelers use several types of information sources to respond to internal and external probability.

3.3.5 Recent Studies

Along with previous studies, numerous recent studies have been conducted in the context of tourist information search behavior, in order to provide better understanding of Tourist behavior.

❖ **Pan and Turner**

Pan and Turner (2006), proposed an extended framework of Tourist Information Search and Acquisition. Their model includes five phases: 1) ongoing search, 2) pre-purchase search, 3) planning search, 4) en-route search and 5) after-trip search.

❖ **Luo, Feng and Cai**

Luo,et al., (2008)Studied tourist information search behavior related to tourist characteristic, they compared the usage of internet with other forms of external sources and also test the overall impact of the usage of internet vs. other sources on destination perception and trip outcome.

Results showed that demographic characteristic of gender;householdincomes as well as situational factors of trip purpose and travel party were mostly related to traveler's choice of information sources.

❖ **Erawan, Krairit andKhang**

Erawan,et al., (2010), in their study "Tourists' external information search behavior model" expand a model of tourist external information search behavior based on the three fundamental approaches of information search behavior.

What distinguished this study is the evaluation of four variables related to tourist's external information search behavior, which had not been identified previously. These variables identified as information sources usefulness and accessibility, perceived personal risk, subjective norms and ability to search. The findings of this study disclosed the information sources usefulness and accessibility was the only variable, positively linked to external information search behavior of travelers.

❖ **Bronner andHoog**

Bronner and Hoog(2011) in their study "A new perspective on tourist information search: discussion in couples as the Context" argued that "Information-search for vacation decision-making can occur in two different contexts: an individual one, in which one forms one's preferences, and a social one in response to discussions with partners and family members." The research finds that the amount of discussion among couples varies in different type of sub-decisions and consequently there is an extension in the usage of different information sources.

Bronner and Hoog (2013), , in another study took Further step and studied the Tourist information search behavior from another perspective , they have examined the role of information searching in economizing on vacation .the findings suggested that tourist are more likely to involved with the more economizing information .the most importance one identified as travel guide , brochure and elctronical word-of-mouth.

❖ **Tan and Tang**

Tan and Tang (2013), examined that whether personality affects the information search and feedback behavior, and consequently they argued that "personality can be used to predict tourisminformation search".

3.4 Destination perception

The topic of an image of a destination and destination perception has gained great attention in the literature. According to Gartner (1993)Image formation can be defined as:

> "The development of a mental notion based on limitedimpressions coming from a single information source. Intourist destination image, this information originates innumerous and diverse sources"

In other hand Kotler and Armstrong (2001) definedimage asthe sum of the beliefs, thoughts and Impressions a tourist has of a place.

However, "Image is difficult to define and universally accepted definitions are hard to identify"(Frochot&Kreziak, 2008),however, it is typically accepted as a "tourist's subjectivemental conception or picture of a destination".

The intangibility of tourism products, make image formation as constant and dynamic process. Tourists continuously and subconsciously create mental images of destinations from information which gathered through a wide range of sources.

According to Ingram and Grieve (2013), theliterature suggests that Human minds form images and perceptions of hospitality and tourism productsfrom a wide range of influences. These influences include information sources such as media, Commercials, Brochures and internet.

These images are powerful and become deep-seated in the mind and even the most logical people are not exempt from the emotion of these images. In fact, People process information unconsciously and verify it in a number ofways, whenever ,there is a need or desire to purchase Tourism products including destination choice.

In fact, "image" is an important element in the context of Tourist's information search behavior and destination decision-makingprocess, as it is discussed byUm and Crompton (1999) that "image emerges as a critical element in the destination choice process".

Furthermore, the role of image as an important factor for destination marketers have been attracted attentionin the area of tourist's information search Behavior "so as to differentiate their destination in this highly competitive market (Yilmaz et al., 2009).

Besides, a review of the literature indicates that there are variousfactors that influence destination perception or the image formation about the particular destination, forexample, in the following model twofactor as personal factor and information sources are considered as influential factor on the formed image (Beerli& Martin, 2004).
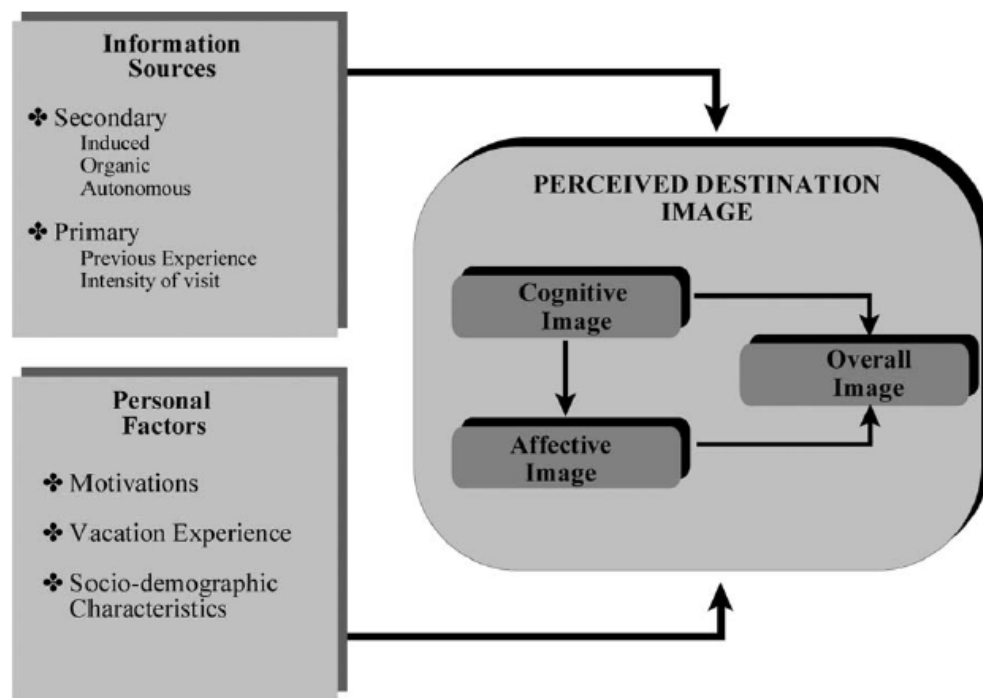

Figure 11: The Formation of Destination Image
Source: Adapted from Beerli& Martin, 2004

3.3.1 Relevant Studies

Numerous researchers in Tourism literature have emphasized the role of information source in forming destination image   (Um & Crompton 1990; Woodside &Lysonski

(1989); Sönmez&Sirakaya, 2002; Echtner& Ritchie 2003; Gursoy&McCleary 2004 ;).

Also in recent studies, this importance has been taken under consideration.

❖ **Molina, Gómez, and Consuegra,**

Molina, et al., (2010), in their study suggested that "tourist information is a valuable concept in understanding destination image and the destination choice process of tourists." And their finding supports that brochure has an important impact on Tourist's destination image.

❖ **Ingram and Grieve**

Later work of Ingram and Grieve, (2013), provides a "general exploratory review of perception and image in hospitality and tourism" they have acknowledged that tourist seeks for information through variety of sources, and then by evaluation these alternatives, they try to create the balance among the perceived image and reality which ultimately enhance their final purchase decision.

3.4 Summary

According to the review of literatures, this study aims to examine the relationship among external information sources, overall destination perception as well as destination decision-making process.

"For most tourism decisions, the search is predominantly external, involving considerable time and a variety of sources" (Fodness& Murray 1997),on this basis , the

focus of this study is on the external information sources, these sources consist of "Family &friend, Media, Travel consultants and destination specific attributes.

This supports the fact "when searching for tourist information, one must consider the variety of sources used (Beatty & Smith, 1987; Srinivasan&Ratchford, 1991)and "From both theoretical and practitioner perspectives, it is particularly useful to study theImportance of specific information sources that tourists use for selecting services (Seabraa, Abrantesa,,& Lagesb,2007).

Furthermore, in order toanalyze the study variables, this research is follow by two theoretical models which have been reviewed in literature.

First,the*Strategic Model*(Snepenger, et, al 1990) which refers to" the combination of information sources used by a travel party to plan trips" and second, **Gun's model of leisure traveler,** "Gunn(1989) made distinct reference to changes in destination image as the consumer moves through the seven stages of the leisure travel experience." And it is stressed that the process begins with the accumulation of image through variety of information sources.

According to the nature of decision-making which identified in literature , as complex and multifaceted process , it is necessary to study decision-makingprocess from different perspective thus applying different approach into this study supports the fact that:

> "A Particular theory is likely to explain specific aspect of an individual's decision in a givencontext but Multiple; theories when used togetherare

likelyto explain a wider range of decision behavioracross an expanded range of contexts".Sirakaya, &Woodside, 2005).

To this end,this study aims to develop a new conceptual model in Tourist's information search behavior and destination decision-making by focusing on several external information sources rather than single one.

Besides,for the first time ,this study aims to testing the mediating effect of overall destination perception on the relations among external information sources and destination decision-making process.

Chapter 4

CONCEPTUAL MODEL ANDRESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

In this chapter, the conceptual model and hypothesizes are illustrated in figure11. Constructs of the model are taken from literature, to examine the effect of external information sources on the, destination decision-making as well as destination perception.Furthermore, the model tends to test, the mediating role of overall destination perception as a partial mediator between external information sources and destination decision-making process.

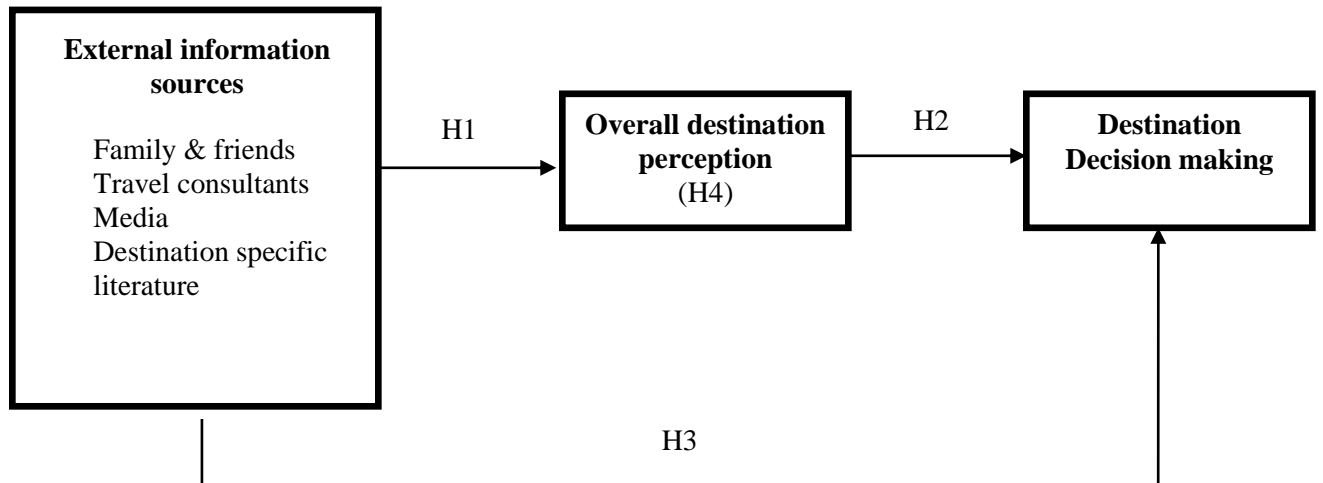Research, conceptual framework and hypotheses are illustrated in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Research Model

4.1Information SourceandOverall DestinationPerception

Destination perception can be defined as "the development of a mental notion based on limited Impressions coming from a single information source". (Molina,et al., 2010), in Tourist destination image, this information originates in various sources (Gartner, 1993).

Information about the particular destination would affect the destination image, as Baloglu and McCleary (1999) argued that"tourists utilize different information sources toportray a complete picture of the destination." Tourists use a set of information sources to collect relevant information about different alternatives before a travel decision made, in fact collected information provide an overall image in travelers' mind, while "These images are powerful and become ingrained in the mind" (Ingram & Grieve, 2013),so available information about a particular destination play an important role in forming the travelers' image of that destination.

There is an agreement among scholars, on the role of information sources in destination's perception. Which Either formal (e.g. .brochure) and informal (e.g. family & friends) sources have a great impact on the image formation or perception of a particular destination (Beerli& Martin, 2004; Crompton, 1979; Etzel&Wahlers, 1985).

Besides, Fondness and Murray (1997),in their study of "leisure tourist segmentation" have named a number of information sources utilized by the travelers while forming the image of a destination. Such as travel agents, media, recommendation from

friend&family as well as Destination specific sources. In fact, these sources, act as a complementary factor in tourist's image formation.

In other hand, Lennon,et al., (2001) identified the influence of external information sources on the destination perception. They found that such sources of information as news have a positive effect on perception. Furthermore, Walmsley and Lewis (1984) "suggested that tourists use information from various sources to compile pre-purchase destination images". These cognitive images serve as a basis for travel behavior (Aldskogius, 1977).

Consequently, as it is suggested, travelers use the gathered information to build destination image (Kokolosalakis,et al., 2006),and they select destinations with positive destination image (Woodside &Lysonski, 1989) .thus, this study developed first hypothesis as follow:

H1: External information source has a positive effect on the destination perception.

4.2Destination Perception and DestinationDecision-Making

In tourism area, the image of a certain destination is decisively important, since it is an intangible product; therefore image is a major subject, which potential tourists may use in order to obtain relevant information before a decision made (Sönmez, 1998).In fact"with experiential products like tourism and hospitality, image formation is an ongoing and dynamic process" (Ingram & Grieve, 2013).

According to Hsu,et al., (2009), one of the most important factors for travelers when deciding about a vacation, is destination image.

In the literature review, many evidence support the role of image on destination perception, many scholars have argued that while travelers' perceived an image about a particular destination, it has an influence on their destination decision-making.

In this regard, Um and Crompton (1999)mentioned that "image emerges as a critical element in the destination choice process", MoreoverMolina, Gomez andConsuegra (2010), emphasized on the importance of image as an influential factor on destination decisions.

According to the facts in literature, which demonstrated the relationship among destination perception and destination decision-making Jacoby (1983) declared that" At the most basic level, mere exposure to a vacation destination may result in perceptual enhancement of the destination image during the search for a vacation destination".

Verification by Pearce (1982);Woodside and Lysonski (1989), proved that there is an obvious relationship between positive perceptions of destinations and positive purchase decisions. Although these perceptions may not be formed on actuality or first-hand experience, they nevertheless have fundamental impact on a tourist's decision to visit a destination. Likely, negative imagesresult in a decision not to purchase (Morgan & Pritchard, 1998).

Consequently, due to the fact that "The destination image is a critical factor in choosing a destination" (Sönmez&Graefe, 1998) and "These images may or may not be accurate but they play a critical role in tourists' purchasing behavior with a strong relationship between a positive destination image and destination choice" (Ingram & Grieve, 2013),thesecond hypothesis is developed as follow:

H2: Destination Perception has a positive effect on the destination decision.

4.3 Information Sources and DestinationDecision-Making

The importance of external Information sources as an important factor have been demonstrated in many works, most of the tourist behavior models have focused on the external information search as an important component (Um & Crompton, 1990; Schmoll, 1977; Engel, et al.,1978; Bettman, 1979; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Woodside &Lysonski, 1989; Gursoy&McCleary, 2004) .

In other hand, some researchers have studied theimpact of information sources on tourists' preferences and intentions (Mayo, 1973; Milman&Pizam, 1995).

Review of literature, present numerous studies which have demonstrated the relationship between information sources and travel decisions as well as destination selection (Schmoll, 1977; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Gitelson& Crompton, 1983; Capella& Greco, 1987; Santos, 1998; Woodside &Lysonski, 1989; Um & Crompton, 1990; Wicks &Schuett, 1991, 1993; Goossens, 1994; Baloglu, 2000; Woodside &Dubelaar, 2002; Bieger&Laesser, 2004; Sirakaya& Woodside, 2005).

For many consumer product decisions, information acquisition is a fundamental important, similarly in Tourist's product decisions, information acquision is necessary for selecting a destination.(Gursoy&McCleary, 2004).Travelers need to specify their requirement before making decisions, thus they may go through the active information search and they tend to fulfill their expectation by gathering adequate information from several sources.

Once a destination to travel is chosen, the accumulation of information initially takes place, therefore, the role of information sources in destination decision-making process should be consider as a critical factor, as it is definite in such purchasing situation.

Accordingly, literature have defined the role of information sources in decision-making , particularly as vacation choices are categorized in high-involvement decision situations, such as vacation choice, travelers' decision mostly relies on the collected information coming from variety of sources. In fact, "Information acquisition is necessary for selecting a destination and for specific sub-decisions such as selecting accommodation, transportation and tours (Snepenger, et al., 1990).

On top of that, literature shows that vacationers use a variety of information sources (Fondness & Murray, 1999) in pre-vacation decision-making.(Bronner&Hoog, 2013). Also Bronner andHoog (2011) in another work "found that a wide variety of information sources play a role in decision-making process." In line with this, BronnerandHoog

(2013) claimed that" the combination of information sources play an important role across sub-decisions such as length of stay or choice of destination.

Even though, some scholars have identified different type information sources in Travelers' destination decision, but general assortment of external information sources proposed by Woodside andRonkainen (1980) ; Snepenger and Snepenger (1993).

 To give an example, the study of Um and Crompton (1990) identified "the importance of information sources (such as promotional material and media, friends and relatives and word of mouth) in the decision-making process". also, Correia andPimpão, (2008), emphasized that "The information used in the destination decision emerge through seven sources: "travel agencies, brochures and guidebooks, friends and family, advertising, books and films, articles and news, movies, and direct mail".

Besides, Woodside andRonkainen (1980) ;Snepenger and Snepenger (1993), suggested that travelers are likely to use four broad information sources, comprised of"(1) family and friends, (2) destination specific literature, (3) media, and (4) travel consultants"

To this end, in order to examine the relationship between information sources and Tourist's destination decision, the third hypothesis is developed as fallow:

H 3: External information sources have the positive effect on the destination decision.

4.4The Mediating Effect of Overall Destination Perception

The proposed hypothesis, is the major contribution of our model in this study, although the mediating role of destination perception is not examined in previous studies but scholars have paid greatattention to the role of destination perception in destination decision-making process, also it has been acknowledged that the information source are defined as the valuable factors which effects the Tourist's destination perception.

In the literature review, many evidence support the role of destination image on destination perception, and many scholars have argued that while travelers' perceived an image about a particular destination, it has an influence on their destination decision-making,confirmation by Pearce (1982); Woodside and Lysonski(1989), indicate that there is an comprehensible relationship between positive perceptions of destinations and positive purchase decisions.

in addition, Um and Crompton (1999), mentioned that "image emerges as a critical element in the destination choice process", likewiseSönmez andGraefe. (1998) made the same suggestion that "the destination image is a critical factor while choosing a destination"

Furthermore,Walmsley and Lewis (1984) "suggested that tourists use information from various sources to compile pre-purchase destination images". Besides, numerous researchers in Tourism literature have emphasized the role of information source in forming destination image   (Um & Crompton 1990; Woodside &Lysonski (1989); Sönmez&Sirakaya, 2002; Echtner& Ritchie 2003; Gursoy&McCleary 2004 ;). Also in

recent studies, this importance has been broadly taken under consideration.Consequently based on the above discussion the last hypothesis is formulated as follow:

H4: Overall destination partially mediates the effect of External information sources and Destination decision-making.

Chapter 5

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will focus on various issues associated with the methodology of this empirical study. This part will present information about the research approach, namely deductive approach, the reason of using this approach, sample of the study. Moreover data collection, questionnaire structure,and finally data analysis will be explained in the latter parts of this chapter.

5.1Deductive Approach

In conducting a research, there is a crucial need to clearly determine, which approach is being implemented, as the fact that "scientific inquiry in practice typically involves alternating between deduction and induction and both methods involve interplay of logic and observation. And both are routes to the construction of social theories" (Babbie, 2010, p.53).

The main point of differences in these two approaches refers to the relationamong hypotheses which are constructed in the study. Specifically, it has been noted that "two important functions that hypotheses serve in scientific inquiry are the development of theory and the statement of parts of an existing theory in testable form" (Singh and Bajpai, 2008, p.11).

While deductive approach work from the more general to the more specific, inductive approach acts vice versa, it goes from more observation that is specific to broader generalization. In deductive approach conclusion follows available facts, while in inductive approach, the conclusion likely based on the available facts but involves degree of uncertainly (Burney 2008).
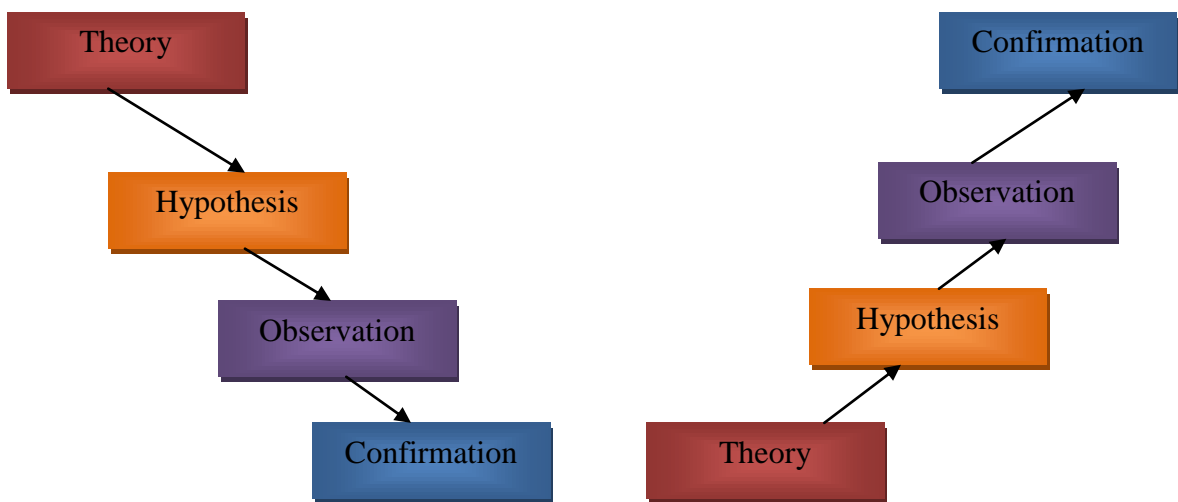
Deductive Approach Inductive Approach

Figure13: Deductive Approach vs. Inductive Approach
Source: Adapted from Burney, 2008

According to what is discussed on the nature of these approaches, this study tends to examine and test the conceptual model based on the deductive approach.Nevertheless, deductive approach is associated with qualitative data, but this is not to say deductive approach cannot be applied to quantitative study.

Deductive approach is also named as "top-down approach" which is a proposed description of Scientific method. This approach is concerned with "developing

hypothesis based on the current theory and then and then designing a research strategy to test the hypothesis" (Wilson, 2010, p.7).

Deductive reasoningapproach is used to test existing theories and hypotheses based on experimental observations. As it moves from the more general and narrow down to the more specific. Accordingly (pelissier, 2008, p.3) mentioned that deductive reasoning can be explained as "reasoning from the general to the particular" furthermore, Snieder and Larner (2009) acknowledged that in deductive approach begins with a theory and work down to develop a new hypothesis/hypothesizes, which requires to be confirming or rejecting as result of the research .

Monette et al (2005, p.34) describes deductive approach as "it can be derived from the propositions of the theory". Thus, deductive approach is concerned with deducting conclusions from premises or propositions. "Deduction begins with an expected pattern that is tested against observations, whereas induction begins with observations and seeks to find a pattern within them" (Babbie, 2010, p.52).

5.2 Sampling Method

Sampling methods are classified either as probability and non-probability. These methods consist of different sub-categories .non probability sampling includesof:

- ❖ Convenience sampling,
- ❖ Judgment sampling,
- ❖ Quota sampling,
- ❖ Snowball sampling.

In other-hand Probability sampling methods consist of:

- ❖ Random sampling

- ❖ systematic sampling

- ❖ Stratified sampling.

Probability sampling is also refers as representative sampling, in this method, sample are selected in a way as to be representativeof the wider population which speculate the characteristic of the population from which they are selected and each member of the population has a known non-zero probability of being selected.

As probability sampling provides the most valid results as the sample are the representative of a broader population, in other hand, non-probability sampling, and samples are selected from the population in some non-random manner.

While comparing these two, the advantage of probability sampling is that, there is a possibility to calculate sampling error, which is the degree to which a sample might differ from the population When inferring to the population, results are reported plus or minus of the sampling error.

Besides,in non-probability sampling, the degree to which the sample differs from the population remains unknown as some parts of the population have no chance of entering the sampling pool.

This study , use the Convenience sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling on this basis the sample is drawn from the part of the population which is close to hand by focusing.

Convenience sampling is a type of sampling where the first available primary data source will be used for the research without additional requirements. In other words, this sampling method involves participants wherever can be find and typically wherever is convenient.

The advantages of this type of sampling are the availability and the quickness with which data can be gathered. In other hand,thedisadvantages are the risk that the sample might not represent the population as a whole and it might be biased byrespondents. In support with thisAltinay and Paraskevas(2008) acknowledged that "The trade-offs made for the comfort of this technique is the non-representative nature of the sample, and the bias that is likely to be introduced into it".

5.3 Instrument Development

Questionnaire used in this research is developed from the relevant literature and all the items are measured based on the 5 pointlikret scales,in order to provide in depth understanding about the impact of information sources on decision-making process.

Six related sections are designed in Questionnaire, with overall of 35 items, including demographic information questions. All items in the survey instrument were performed in English and then translated into Farsi by using back-translation method (McGorry,

2000). The cross linguistic comparability of the questionnaire was further tested with the experts who were fluent in both languages.

The first part composed of items representing the importance of external information sources in Tourist's decision-making process. Based on the study of Spemger and Spenger (1993), four main, external sources in Tourism area , are measured on the Five- point likret scales, from not at all important to extremely important., The list includes: Family & friends, media, travel agents and destination specific sources/literature.

The second part tends to investigate how the image of a destination is seen by visitors . Travelers build their image while theyget informed by various sources. Hence,18 attributes were constructed suggested by Luo, Feng, &Cai(2004) and Echtner and Ritchie (1993). In this part, the five-pointlikret scale technique is also used to measure the visitors' perspective about North-Cyprus.

The Third part, composed of 3 statements which are designed based on the study done by Gursoy (2001), "Development of traveler's information search behavior model" these items are used in consistency with the main purpose of this research, and respondents are asked to indicate to which degree they are either agree or disagree with proposed items.

In the part Fourth, 2 items are used to measure the traveler'sdecision-making process ,these items are developed from the study done by Cacioppo and petty(1982) and it is measured on the five-pointlikret scale, strongly disagree-strongly agree.

Section Five , consist of two statements related to situational factors are given under this question; the numbers of previous which consist of two items as first-time Traveler and re-visit Traveler, further respondents are asked for their main purpose of their trip which consists of 5 items as pleasure and holiday, visiting friends and family, and other.

The last section consists of 6 items related to demographic information. demographic question are designed as gender, education, age, occupation and Household income.

Demographic information is necessary in the survey in order to investigate how the possibility and choices differs among different group of respondents.

5.4 Pilot Study

A pilot test is conducted to find infirmities indesign andalso to provide preventative data for selection of a prospect sample .According to Huley and Stephen (2007, p.168-169)

> "A pilot study, is a small scale preliminary study conducted in order to evaluate possibility, time, cost, adverse events, and effect size (statistical variability) in an attempt to predict an appropriate sample size and improve upon the study design prior to performance of a full-scale research project".

Pilot study are carried out prior to examining large-scale in quantitative research, in order to avoid an inadequately in designed project, therefore usually members are chosen from the relevant population and they will be excluded from the main sample ,

this is because of that their later behavior may change while participating in a full-sample of research as they have already been involved in the survey.

This research in an attempt to , obtain sufficient data , have chosen 30 people who already traveled to North-Cyprus, in order to pre-test the degree of intelligibility of questionnaire before distributing to larger scale.

5.5 Population and Sample

According to Saunders, et al., (2007), "sampling is one of the most crucial components of studies that involve the collection of primary data from the population."Sampling is the act of selecting some members of the wider population to be involved in the study for primary data collection based on the specific sampling principle.

Brown (2006) summarizes the advantages of sampling in the following points:

1.Makes the research of ant type and size manageable

2. Significantly saves the cost of the research

3.Results in more accurate research findings

4.Provides an opportunity to process the information in amore efficient way

5.Accelerates the speed of primary data collection

Figure 14: Advantages of Sampling
Source: Brown, 2006, Retrieved from:
http://research-methodology.net/sampling

Iranian travelers above the age 18 years are considered for the sample survey, the minimum age is chosen to ensure selection of mature respondents as sample.

Respondents were selected by using the convenience sampling method as well as the interviewer's judgment.Data were gathered during the months of March-May in a single city of Iran, Tehran.

However, a total of 400questionnaires were distributed among the selected population,49of questionnaire were excluded from the analysis, cause either some were returned as an empty paper and some did not provide adequate responses for data analysis, consequently, in this quantitative survey the valid of 351 questionnaires were used as the basis of data analysis.

5.6 Data Collection Procedure

This study focused on convenience sample of Iranian Tourist, who either visited North Cyprus or are likely to visit.

The purpose of this ,necessitated to focus on individuals whose interests paralleled the research objective, in consequence , questionnaire were distributed to the Travelers who contacted travel agencies and also some questionnaire were distributed at airport during the departure time to North-Cyprus in order tobenefit from the right respondents that would fulfill the need of this study.

In order to have an access to traveler's contact address ,at first, a meeting with the manager's of three travel agencies, in different areas of Tehran have been arranged to get an authorization from these companies, ,next ,name and address of Travelers who contacted travel agencies for either getting information or buying a ticket to Ercan airport(North-Cyprus) was obtainedthrough their professional mail list.A final list of travelers consists of 204 people. The questionnaire was distributed to all 204individuals and in return,only 160questionnaires provided complete response to be used for data analysis.(44 questionnaire were excluded).

Further, questionnaires were distributed at Imam Khomeini international airport of Iran. After informing about the time of departure to either North-Cyprus (as direct flight) and Turkey (as an indirect-flight) to Aircan airport, the questionnaire were distributed to 196 Iranian tourist ,who were travelling to North-Cyprus, and in return 191 questionnaires provided complete response to be used for data analysis.(5 questionnaire were excluded).

5.7 Measurement and Data Analysis

Likret scales have been used in this study, due to the fact that Likret scale are simple for respondents to answer and also it can be easily be analyzed. "unlikely in semantic differential scales where consumers have to guess what each number in the scales means, Likret scales provide information for each number in the scales, so consume know exactly what they are selecting(Schiffman, 2008,pp 33).

Five points Likret has been used in the questionnaire, from (1) not at all important to (5) extremely important and (1) strongly disagree to (2) strongly agree, these scale have accordinglyapplied to each question in the survey.

According to the structure of questionnaire, the importance of external information source in both destination decision-making and destination perception have been measured by using the 5 point from not at all important to extremely important.

Furthermore, the 5 point from strongly disagree to strong agree have been applied to measure the effectiveness of information sources on destination perception, kind of perceived image as well as the decision-making process.

Finally,for demographics questions single selection scale was used where the respondents mark the option that fit.

After collecting all the data ,the process of analysis begins., for quantitative data analysis, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is used as a tool of examining data as "it provides transformation survey data into analyzable data, data reduction, replacing missing data, transforming new variables, frequencies, compare means ,cross tabulations, T-test and logistic regression".(Fritsche et al, 2011). On this basis, Missing values, outliers and distribution of all measured variables have been examined in order to refine the data and reduce systematic errors.

5.8 Validity & Reliability

While designing a research, in order to minimize the possibility of getting the wrong answers, two factors need to be considered: validity and reliability. (Saunders,&Thornhill, 2003).

5.8.1 Validity

Several steps have been carried out, toensure the validity of this research:

- ❖ Data was collected from the credible sources(respondents)
- ❖ Questionnaire was made regarding to literature review and frame of referenceto ensure the validity of the result.
- ❖ Pilot test have been carried out to ensure the validity of questionnaire, it was pre-tested by reliable respondent, 30 people were chosen before starting the survey.

5.8.2 Reliability

Several steps have been carried out, to ensure the reliability of this research:

- ❖ Questionnaire was divided into five sections, in order to ease the answering for respondents.
- ❖ There are clear explanations upon theories which are the basis of this study.
- ❖ The objective of the research is clear as another researcher tends to work on the same subject; it would lead to the same results.
- ❖ Data have been analyzed by the SPSS software which offers "Reliability Analysis Statistics."

5.9 Regression Analysis Model

Regression analysis is a statiscal technique for evaluating the relationship between variables, it is defined as the technique used to drive an equation that reveals the

criterion variables to one or more predictor variables which are held fixed at various levels (Churchill, 1979).

Multiple regression analysis has been used in this research in attempt to; identify the relationship among independent and dependent variables and to determine the effect of each independent variable on the dependent one.

Chapter 6

RESULTS

6.1Demographic Characteristic of the Sample

According to table below, 143 (40.7%) of respondents out of 351, were male and the rest, consist of female, for a total of 208 (59.3%). Furthermore, Most of the respondents were singles168 (47.9%) and 155 (44.2%) were married and only 28 (8.0%) were divorced among respondents.

The highest frequency is related to the age group 26-35 fora total of 132(37.6) and the lowest frequency is related to the age group 55 or above, for a total of 28 (8.0%).

Table 14: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	143	40.7
Female	208	59.3
Total	351	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	168	47.9
Married	155	44.2
Divorced	28	8.8
Total	351	100.0
Age		
18-25	42	12.0
26-35	132	37.6
36-45	105	29.9
46-55	44	12.5
55 or above	28	8.0
Total	351	100.0

Education Level		
Less than diploma	18	5.1
Diploma or above	46	13.1
Bachelor	133	37.9
Master	98	27.9
PhD or above	56	16.0
Total	351	100.0
Occupation		
Manager	57	16.2
Academician	30	8.5
Engineer	53	15.1
Doctor	20	5.7
Other	191	54.4
Total	351	100.0
Income Level		
Less than $30.000	94	26.8
$30.000-59.999	134	38.2
$60.000-89.999	74	21.1
$90.000-$119.999	27	7.7
$120.000 or above	22	6.3
Total	351	100.0

(N=351)

Among respondents, only 18 (5.1%) had education level, less that diploma and 46 (13.1%) of respondents had educational background related to the group diploma or above, the rest of the respondents had shown achieving fairly a high level of education, while 133(37.9%) held bachelor degree, 98(27.9%) had Master degree and 56 (16.0) of respondents held PhD degree or above.

Also table.14indicates that, respondents had different occupation while the lowest frequency referred to doctor with only 20 (54.4%), and the highest frequency is related to the item ,other   which indicates that 191 of respondents (54.4%) have different occupation than those items mentioned in the questionnaire as Manager, Engineer and academician.

Regarding to the income earning, most of the respondents for a total of 134(38.2%) had

an annual income between 30.000- 59.000 $, also 94 (26.8%) of respondents earned

less than $30.000, while 74 (21.1%) earned between 60.000-89.999. the lowest

Frequency refers to those with the highest annual income as 27 (7.7) earned $90.000-

$119.999 and only 22 out of 351 have an annual income around $120.000 or even more

than this amount.

According to Table.15, the situational characteristics of samples arestudied as below.

Table 15: Situational Factors of Respondents

Number of Travel	Frequency	%
First-time Traveler	201	57.3
Re-visit Traveler	150	42.7
Total	351	100.0
Trip Purpose		
Pleasure & Holiday	98	27.9
Visiting friends & family	117	33.3
Gambling	85	24.2
Other	51	14.5
Total	351	100.0

(N=351)

According, to the result, the number of Travelers as First-time traveler to North-cyprus,

were 201 (57.3%) and re-visit Travelers are shown with lower frequency, for total of

150 (42.7%) respondents.

Furthermore, there were 98 respondents (27.8), who travelling to North-Cyprus with the

purpose of pleasure and holiday, 117 (33.3%) were likely to visit their friends and

family while 85 of respondents (24.2%) consist of those who travel with the aim of gambling. only 51 (14.5%) respondents mentioned "other" as their trip purpose.

6.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 16, consists of components regarding to an information search behavior., destination perception as well as destination decision-making The table demonstrates the number of respondents to informationsources components, and the minimum and maximum score, which is 1, 00 to 5, 00, have been shown as well. Mean score and standard deviation are also demonstrated in the table 16.

Exploratory factor analysis was performed with varimax rotation, the latent root criterion of 1. Was used for factor inclusion and a factor loading of 0.40 was used as the benchmark to include items in a factor. All of these procedures were performed using SPSS 19.

Table 16: Components of External Information Source, Overall Destination Perception and Destination Decision-Making.

Question	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
The importance of External information sources based on 1-5 scale					
1.Family and friends	351	2.00	5.00	4.5755	.51755
2.Travel consultants	351	1.00	5.00	4.3903	.59887
3.Media	351	2.00	5.00	4.3960	.64133
4.Specific destination source	351	1.00	5.00	3.9544	.92778
Attributes based on 1-5 scale					
5.A unique destination	351	1.00	5.00	4.1054	1.01009
6.Affordable Place	351	1.00	5.00	3.0969	1.30571
7.Safe place	351	1.00	5.00	3.8519	.83887
8.Good place for family	351	1.00	5.00	3.6866	1.37480
9.relaxing atmosphere	351	1.00	5.00	3.9088	1.21076
10. Fascinating nature	351	1.00	5.00	3.8319	1.09686
11.Historical attraction	351	1.00	5.00	2.6781	1.21728
12.Cultural attraction	351	1.00	5.00	2.6154	.87027
13.Ease of accessibility	351	1.00	5.00	4.3362	.77521
14.High-quality restaurant	351	1.00	5.00	3.0741	1.19771
15.High –quality Hotels & casino	351	2.00	5.00	4.2308	.68098
16.Good place for couples	351	1.00	5.00	4.3305	.99379
17.Sport facilities	351	1.00	5.00	2.8689	1.36274
18. Transportation	351	1.00	5.00	2.3704	1.06080
19.Entertainment facilities	351	1.00	5.00	2.6382	1.37222
20.Good place for gambling	351	1.00	5.00	4.4558	.96075
21.Beach holiday & sunbathing	351	1.00	5.00	4.5783	.89697

22. Shoopping facilities	351	1.00	5.00	2.1909	1.16645
Overall destination perception based on 1-5 scale					
23. The visit to this to this Tourist destination exceed my expectation	351	1.00	5.00	4.1709	.90355
24. Overall image of this Tourist destination has been very valuable to me	351	1.00	5.00	4.5128	.81712
25. When I close my eyes I can easily picture the destination	351	2.00	5.00	4.5755	.51755
Destination Decision making based on 1-5 scale					
26. When I make decision I am likely to rely on other people opinion (e.g. Travel agents, friend and relatives opinion)	351	1.00	5.00	4.3903	.59887
27. Before, choosing vacation destination, I am likely to consider all the facts, I know about the destination.	351	1.00	5.00	4.5641	.73350

6.3 Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis

6.3.1 Tests of Research Hypotheses

Table 17 represents means, standard deviation, and correlation of the study variables. As

the figure shows, there is a significant and positive relation between external information

sources and overall destination perception (r=0.122). Therefore, there is a support for

hypothesis 1. Moreover, as reported in table, overall destination image is similarly significantly and positively related to destination decision-making (r=0.210). Consequently hypothesis 2 is also supported.

What is more, the results indicates that there is a positive and significant relation between external information sources and destination decision-making (r=0.200). Hence there is a support for hypothesis 3.

Table 17: Means, Standard Deviation, and Correlations of the Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3
1. External Information Sources	1.000		
2. Overall destination perception	0.122*	1.000	
3. Destination decision making	0.200**	0.210**	1.000
Means	4.33	3.62	3.16
Standard Deviation	0.36	0.29	0.37

Note: Composite Score was Computed for each Variable. **p<0.01, *p<0.05(Two-tailed Test).

Based on the research done by Baron and Kenny (1986), there must be three pre-requisite for testing mediation effect of the study constructs. More specifically, as reported in table 17, external information sources is significantly related to overall destination perception. Moreover, destination perception has a positive effect on destination decision-making as a dependent variable. Besides, external information sources as an independent variable has significant and positive relation with dependent variable, destination decision-making. Accordingly, as three conditions are met in this

study, we may be able to test the mediating role of overall destination perception in the model.

Table 18 demonstrates the mediating effect of overall destination perception in the relation between external information sources and destination decision-making.

Table18: Results, Mediating Effect

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	
	Destination decision making	
	Step 1	Step2
External Information Sources	0.20*	0.18*
Overall destination perception	-	0.19*
F	14.50	13.11
R^2 at each step	0.04	0.07
ΔR^2	-	0.03

*$p<0.05$

As shown in table 18, the size of the effect of external information sources on destination decision-making is reduced by inclusion of overall destination perception (t= 0.18, p< 0.05). However, this effect is still significant. Therefore, overall destination perception acts as a partial mediator among external information sources and destination decision-making. Therefore, hypothesis 4 is also supported.

Chapter 7

DISCUSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to develop a theoretical model of Tourist information search behavior and destination decision-making process.

In this regards major external sources that are likely to influence the both destinationdecision-making and overall destination perception were evaluated,further, this study focused on the overall destination perception as the partial mediator in turn whichpersuade the Tourist decisions making process.

Consequently, this chapter provides a discussion of the empirical findings that emerge through our research. Accordingly, some managerial implication were made for tourism destination managers and practitioners .Furthermore, this is followed by the Limitation of this study, as well as future research direction.

7.1 Evaluation of Discussion

This study have developed, 4 Hypothesis based on the review of relevant literature which all these proposed Hypothesis were accepted , based on the findings of this study. The first Hypothesis, "External information source has a positive effect on the destinationperception" was significantly supported,this findings is consistent with the previous study of Fondness and Murray (1997) "leisure tourist segmentation", as they mentioned the important role of external information sources in Tourist's destination

perception., further , the sources which have been mentioned in this thesis are in consistency with the study of these authors as they have named a number of information sources utilized by the travelers while forming the image of a destination. Such as travel agents, media, recommendation from friend& family as well as Destination specific sources which act as a complementary factor in tourist's image formation.Information sources were identified as the important factor in tourist's destination perception. Further, some other studies confirmed the relationship among information sources and destination perception such as Molina, et al., (2010).

The second hypothesis, which formulated as,"Destination Perception has a positive effect on the destination decision-making". were also significantly supported, this hypothesis as the accepted one, is in the consistency with previous studies ofIngram & Grieve, (2013), as they focused on the nature of perception and image and how they influence the decision-makingprocess of and consequently they have acknowledged that image and perceptions of the destination will contribute considerably to tourist's destination decision-making process.

The third Hypothesis "External information sources have the positive effect on the destination decision-making" was also supported this findings is consistent with previous studies. There are numerous studies which have demonstrated the relationship between information sources and travel decisions making (Schmoll, 1977; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Gitelson& Crompton, 1983; Capella& Greco, 1987; Santos, 1998; Woodside &Lysonski, 1989; Um & Crompton, 1990; Wicks &Schuett, 1991, 1993;

Goossens, 1994; Baloglu, 2000; Woodside &Dubelaar, 2002; Bieger&Laesser, 2004; Sirakaya& Woodside, 2005).

The last hypothesis, "Overall destination partially mediates the effect of External information sources and Destination decision-making." was significantly supported as well. The findings indicate that overall destination perception partially mediate the relation between the usage of external information sources and tourist destination decisions.

Although the mediating role of destination perception have not been investigated in previous studies , but the important of destination perception in destination decision-making process have been acknowledged in the Tourist literature as it is already discussed in this study.

7.2 Conclusion

The findings of this research indicate the importance of external information sources in destination decision-making process. The recommendation from family and friends are suggested as the most important source, while tourist, deciding to travel to North-Cyprus. Also other sources such as Travel consultants (travel agents) and media play a role in tourist decision-making.

In other hand the destination specific sources such as convention and visitors bureau the last external were slightly important for tourist who travelling to North-Cyprus.

Furthermore, the results acknowledged the value of information sources on the overall perception of tourist about North-Cyprus.

In parallel with this result,the findings of Molina, et al., (2010), can prove the above suggestions asthey proposed that "tourist information is a valuable concept in understanding destination image and the destination choice process of tourists."

However the significant relationship among external information sources and destination decision-making is supported in this study, but it is suggested that this relationship can be partially mediated by the overall destination perception, in view of that, how tourist perceived the destination image may affecttheir ultimate destination choice.

On this basis, this research emphasized on the importance of coming information from available sources which have the great impact on the destination image.

In this regard we can conclude that while positive image derived from gathered information, it ultimately leads to the destination choice and better destination decision-making.

Different possible attributes of North-Cyprus were also measured in this study, in attempt to find out the feeling of visitors toward North-Cyprus.

Generally, respondents were perceived North-Cyprus as a good destination for travelling with the fascinating nature and beaches. But the results also suggested negative perception towards some attributes such as transportation, shopping and sport facilities. Measuring the situational factors of tourist indicate that the most important Trip purpose for Iranian tourist is visiting friends and family , and it is followed by the purpose of holiday and pleasure as well as gambling .

To this end, this study is consistent with several past researches as it is discussed both in the previous section and in the review of literature.

7.3 Managerial Implication

The findings of this research have an added value when planning tourist destination promotion strategy; due to the fact that this research contributes to the study of information sources in the travel decision-making process and destination perception as a means of promotion.

Also, the findings of this research provide significant managerial implication for the practitioner as well as tourism marketers and managers for marketing hospitality and Tourism destination.

These findings are likely to help tourism marketers and managers to understand the Information search behaviors of current and potential travelers and target their marketing communication more effectively. Certainly understanding the external information

sources utilization will help managers to enhance their promotional mix to meet the needs of particular market segment.

The comprehensive understanding about information sources as which are complements and which are substitutes can help marketing managers design mutually marketing programs. In addition, when Tourism marketers understand how Tourists search for information they can provide more effective campaigns to fulfill travelers' expectation.

Understanding how customers acquire information is important for marketing management decisions and this is especially "true for services, travel and tourism products" (Molina,et al., 2010), in fact providing accurate and better information about the particular destination help travelers be better prepare for making decision.

further insight into tourist information search behavior is not only interesting from an academic view, but also providing strong implications for Tourism marketing, the more in depth the search for information through external sources is conducted, the greater control a destination manager will have, while travelers make their decisions, in fact it is during the information search process that marketers can influence tourists' decisions for buying either tourist products or destinations.

For tourism managers, who seeks to better understand the Tourist information search behavior and differential needs which driving their decision-making process, requires to have better insight of things relate to the kind of information that should be made available by information suppliers. This especially important within a competitive

market in Hospitality and Tourism industry where even improvements in understanding and meeting customers' needs can lead to competitive advantage.

The findings of this research will help Tourism marketing professionals to design and provide information which better respond to specific tourists group's demands, as different tourists have different types of information needs.   Further, it enables destination managers and marketers to better build their communication strategy.

In other hand, as consumer images and perceptions provide significant implications for the marketing of hospitality and tourism products and destinations. It has become crucial for destination's marketers to have comprehensive understanding of their target markets' images about the destinations. From these insights, "marketers can then develop a strong positioning strategy by creating distinctive place for their product/destination in the minds of potential visitors" (Kotler et al., 1993).

The findings of this research suggest that the image formation of travelers toward a destination can be improved by marketers through external information sources, where available information for tourists can change and influence their destination perception.

Therefore, Destination's marketers in hospitality and Tourism industry can improve the Tourists destination perceived image by providing valuable information about a destination for Travelers who intending to Travel to their destinations.

To this end, the findings imply that it is essential to incorporate image variables and dimensions of information search to the marketing of destinations which help marketers to determine the image of the destination perceived by visitors and better satisfy Travelers' expectation.

7.4 Limitation

The findings of this study are not free of limitations. From a conceptual perspective, first, the research is limited to relations of its own objectives, while the study tries to examine several external information sources that affect destination perception and destination decision-making process, other factors were not included.

Secondly, this study was testing only the influence of four kind of external information sources on Tourist's decision-making process while other sources were excluded, and the effects of further sources have not been investigated in the context of Tourist information search behavior.

Therefore, one of the main limitation of this study is that the internet is excluded from the study, as the impact of internet on tourist's destination perception and destination decision-making, have not been discussed while internet in today's global market have become one of the most common sources utilized by travelers while planning their trip Thirdly, another important limitation of the study is the consideration of the impact of destination's image and information sources as the only influencing criteria at the pre-stage of decision-making, thus the impact of the information sources and the perceived

destination image at different stages of decision-making have not been taken into consideration.

From a methodological perspective, this study also provides some limitations, which affect the generalization of its results. Firstly, the area of research is culturally limited as it restricted to the single nationality "Iranian participants", in this way this study would be limited the generalizability of its findings to broader population.

Second, the utilization of convinces sampling as a non-probability sample in this research are limited with regard to generalization. Because they do not truly represent a population, we cannot make valid inferences about the larger group from which they are drawn.

finally, the final instrument , the questionnaire in the current study may inflated the relationships among constructs as it provides only the participants' definite answer and there were few questions to extract the respondents' opinion of the importance of external information sources in either their destination's image formation and their decision's making for having a trip.

7.5 Future Research

The findings of this study can provide bases and direction for future studies, and ultimately, Tourism industry would benefit from further research to better understand tourists' information search behavior and destination decision-making.

According to the limitation which have been considered in the previous part, firstly, this study suggest that additional research are needed to test the proposed relationship in the model in order to provide broader insight in this context, therefore, it is encouraging future studies to investigate how the information sources construct is associated with other variables, such as type of tourists, reliability of the information sources.

Secondly, as this research is limited to few external sources, thus the further research should consider more sources such as internet as more and more Tourist are using the internet and online sources for their information needs, it is suggested that future research attempts to investigate the impact of this importance in the context of tourist information search behavior. Even it is recommended to study sources that are not related to tourism such arts, movies and novels are recommended as they may also influence decisions.

Thirdly, it is suggested that future research can use broader and multi-national samples, it is better to include Travelers from different countries to improve the understanding of information search behavior. In fact testing the proposed model on Tourist from different countries and various international cultures is necessary to see the consistency of findings.

Fourthly , different sampling methods required to be explored in future studies as validity can be increased by approximating random selection as much as possible, and making every attempt to avoid introducing bias into sample selection.

Also, different destinations should be considered, in order to gain a better understanding about the nature of external information sources' impact on destination image.

Accordingly, Future research should cover the different strategies which manage different information sources, hence image formation process take precedence over destination decisions, such strategies help in directing the information sources towards accomplishing a desired image that needs to be created among the targeted tourists.

Finally, it is recommended that future studies should examining the effect of perceived image and information coming from variety of sources at different stages of decision-making in order to provide comprehensive understanding of Tourist's decision-making process.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Dear respondents

This survey questionnaire is about utilization of information sources in your vacation decision-making behavior to North-Cyprus. Any sort of information collected during our research will be kept in confidential .and you will remain anonymous.

.If you have any questions about our research, please do not hesitate to contact, through e-mail address: soggoll @yahoo.com.

Thank you in advance for your kind participation in this survey

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Gazimagusa, TRNC
Via Mersin 10, Turkey

Please indicate your best answer by crossing the appropriate number, accordingly, using either Scale A or B.

| 1= not at all important |
| 2=slightly important |
| 3=neither important nor |
| unimportant /Neutral |
| 4=important |
| 5= extremely important |

| 1= strongly disagree |
| 2=disagree |
| 3=neither agree nor |
| disagree/neutral |
| 4=agree |
| 5=strongly agree |

Section I.
Information Sources

Please indicate the importance of fallowing sources while deciding to travel to North-Cyprus.

INFORMATION SOURCES	1	2	3	4	5
1.Recommendations from friend and family	□	□	□	□	□
2.Travel consultants (e.g. Travel agents)	□	□	□	□	□
3. information from media (e.g., TV, Magazine and advertisement)	□	□	□	□	□
4. information from specific destination sources/literature (e.g., convention and visitors bureau and chamber of commerce)	□	□	□	□	□

Section II.
Attributes

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement on the following statement.

DESTINATION PERCEPTION	1	2	3	4	5
5.A unique vacation travel destination	□	□	□	□	□

	1	2	3	4	5
6.Affordable as a travel destination	□	□	□	□	□
7.A safe travel destination	□	□	□	□	□
8. A good place for family to visit	□	□	□	□	□
9.Relaxing atmosphere	□	□	□	□	□
10.Fascinating nature & landscape	□	□	□	□	□
11.Historical attraction	□	□	□	□	□
12. cultural attraction	□	□	□	□	□
13. ease of accessibility to different cities /a high degree of accessibility by roads	□	□	□	□	□
14. offering High-quality restaurant /café	□	□	□	□	□
15. Has enough High-quality Hotels & casino	□	□	□	□	□
16.A good place for couples to visit	□	□	□	□	□
17.offering many sport facilities and activities for travelers	□	□	□	□	□
18. offering High-quality transportation facilities	□	□	□	□	□
19. offering various unique entertainment activities for vacation	□	□	□	□	□
20.A good destination for gambling	□	□	□	□	□
21. A good place for beach holiday & sunbathing	□	□	□	□	□
22.offering several shopping facilities	□	□	□	□	□

Section III:
Perceived destination image

Please indicate your disagreement or agreement, on the following statements.

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
23. The visit to this to this Tourist destination exceed my expectation	□	□	□	□	□
24. Overall image of this Tourist destination has been very valuable to me	□	□	□	□	□
25. When I close my eyes ,I can easily picture the destination	□	□	□	□	□

Section IV:
Destination decision making

Please indicate your disagreement or agreement on the fallowing statements

STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
26.When I make decision I am likely to rely on other people opinion (e.g. Travel agents, friend and relatives opinion)	□	□	□	□	□

27. Before, choosing vacation destination, I am likely to consider all the facts, I know about the destination.	□	□	□	□	□

Section IV.
Situational Factor

Please indicate your answer by marking the appropriate box

28. Travelling to North-Cyprus as □ **first-time Traveler** □ **re-visit Traveler**	
29. Trip purpose □ **Pleasure & Holiday** □ **Visiting friends & family** □ **Gambling** □**other**	

Section V.
Demographic Information

 About you

30. Gender □ **Female** □ **Male**	
31.Marital Status □ **single** □ **Married** □ **Divorced**	
32.Age □ **18-25** □ **26-35** □ **36-45** □ **46-55** □ **55 or above**	
33..Education □ **Less than diploma** □ **diploma or above** □ **Bachelor** □ **Master**□ **PHD or above**	
34..Occupation □**Manager** □ **Academician** □ **Engineer** □ **doctor** □**Other**	
35. Household income in US dollar □ **Less than $30,000** □ **$30,000-$59,999** □ **$60,000-$89,999** □ **$90,000-$119,999** □ **$120,000 or more**	