

What is the Impact of Tourism on Persian Carpet in Iran

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ABSTRACT

Persian Carpet is considered to be the greatest masterpiece not only in Iran, but as one of renowned globally known handicrafts for their richness of color, variety of patterns, and quality of design. Iran is very well known for the production of carpet for almost four hundred years.

In this research, the aim is to understand the effect of tourism demand on the Persian carpet, followed by an understanding of the relationship between tourism culture and Persian carpet. In addition, exploration continues on the relationship between tourist shopping satisfaction and Persian carpet.

In order to collect and analyze data a qualitative approach to research was used. 11 expert carpet designers and carpet sellers were interviewed using semi-structured interviewing techniques.

The analysis of the data showed that the demands of the tourism industry over the years had impact on the Persian carpet.

Keywords: Persian carpet, tourism, tourist shopping satisfaction, tourism culture, tourism demand, demonstration effect.

ÖZ

Turizm ve turizm talebini anlamak, büyük dikkat gerektiren önemli bir yönetimsel kaygıdır. Sosyokültürel bir olgu olarak arařtırmacılar turizmi anlamının yollarını belirlediler. Ana konulardan biri, turizm ve yerlilerin görelili baęlantısıdır. Ekonomik bir kök ile, gösteri etkisi, yerel halkın turistlere olan ilgiyi artırma ve daha yerel olarak satın alma eğilimidir. Buna gösteri etkisi denir.

İranlı Halı, sadece İran'da deęil, aynı zamanda renk zenginlięi, desen çeşitlilięi ve tasarım kalitesi nedeniyle dünyaca ünlü el sanatlarından biri olarak kabul edilir. İran neredeyse dört yüz yıldır halı üretimi ile tanınmaktadır.

Bu arařtırmada, turizm talebinin İranlı halısı üzerindeki etkisini ve ardından turizm kültürü ile İranlı halısı arasındaki iliřkiyi anlamak amaçlanmıřtır. Ayrıca turistik alışveriş memnuniyeti ile Farsça halı arasındaki iliřki üzerine arařtırmalar devam etmektedir.

Bu arařtırmadaki metodoloji nitel bir yaklařıma dayanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İranlı halı, turizm, turistik alışveriş memnuniyeti, turizm kültürü, turizm talebi, gösteri etkisi.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Iranian carpets are widely known as Gelim. Many believe that for the purpose of floor covering, this is the oldest type. The land of Persia, now Iran, is generally the home of rugs, carpets and floor runners. Throughout history, the Safavid era (from 1499 to 1722), is the most important time for Persian carpets. It is estimated that there are more than 1,400 designs from this period. Some of these can be viewed at museums, and some are in the hands of private collectors. Much of the trade and commercial activities relating to carpets occurred in the period between 1571 and 1629. This is the Shah Abbas era. Carpets that were introduced in this era were made from threads of gold, silver and silk. (Alam, M., & Subrahmanyam, S, 2007).

Carpets no longer reside solely in the halls of the wealthy as conspicuous consumers; with just a quick trip to Ikea, middle class families in Europe and North America can adorn their living room floors with luxurious carpets hand-woven in Iran. To keep up with the demand from the West, modes of carpet production have shifted from the traditional and intimate sphere of the rural household - where carpets are primarily made by women - to urban workshops where carpet makers tend to be men. In spite of the general market demand for Persian carpets, there still exists the desire for authentic carpets produced through rural craftsmanship. There is a significant understanding and

knowledge about the authenticity of indigenous woven carpets among the general public and scholars (Glassie, 1999; Helfgott, 1994; Spooner, 1986).

Today, the income generated by the export of Iranian carpets is second only to the income generated by the export of oil (Iran Chamber of Commerce, 2014).

Academic research on several marketing dimensions including branding and image has grown considerably as researchers have witnessed that places, including nations, compete intensely for tourists, foreign direct investments and exports (Balakrishnan, 2009; Che-Ha, N., Nguyen, B., Yahya, W. K., Melewar, T. C., & Chen, Y. P. 2016). It is a fact that shopping is often one of the main appeals of visiting a tourist destination and is among the most pervasive of tourist activities (Keown, 1989; Turner and Reisinger, 2001; Timothy, 2005). Although carpet is often perceived as a luxurious artifact with relatively high premium price, some studies suggested that relative prices between countries are the most important motive for tourists to shop (Keown, 1989; Timothy, 1999; Hobson and Christensen, 2001). However, the work of Tosun, C., Temizkan, S. P., Timothy, D. J., & Fyall, A. (2007), demonstrated that the relatively low prices in a specific region are not necessarily the most important influence in respondents' decision to purchase an authentic product. This brief statement clearly identifies the importance of tourism and its significant effect on Persian carpet.

1.2 Factors Affecting Tourism and Carpets

Researchers have tried to understand the factors affecting tourism demand on local products. One of the main areas of research has been looking at the relative connection between tourism and locals. The demonstration effect is the tendency of local people to try to increase the interest in tourists to consume and to purchase more locally

(Bleasdale, 2006). Several dimensions (such as Language, Dress, Handicraft, Food, Souvenirs) are clearly identified as important factors which influences the demand.

Tourism in Iran is underdeveloped and the government and policymakers are being urged to understand what is required to develop tourism. On the other hand, when you look at the tourism industry worldwide, many reports are proof of a globally recognized industry that is the largest and fastest in terms of size and pace. In Europe alone, during the past two decades, tourism demand has more than doubled, and its economic impact is equally impressive (World Tourism Organization, 2016).

The development and growth of a tourism culture industry is now considered as one of the important signs of the comprehensive strength of the region which can promote the rapid and healthy development of the local economy and reflect the development trend of local economies, societies and cultures (Xin & Zheng, 2016). Tourism culture is affected by the culture and actions of visitors themselves (Wilson, 1997), their hosts (Smith, 2009). Richards' (1999) definition included 'any form of tourism to another place (that) involves the visitor experiencing all of the "cultural" aspects about that place, its contemporary lifestyles. Thus besides the carpet as an artifact itself, carpet Designers and Producers are also the front-liners playing a significant role as hosts and contribute to Tourism culture.

In the report of UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2016) it is stated that, on average, \$920 is spent on shopping by tourists. To support this, those travelers for whom the main appeal of tourism is shopping (also known as shopping tourists), are found to spend more and stay longer at the destination compared to vacation tourists (Roulston, K., & Choi, M. 2018; Sundstrom, M., Lundberg, C., &

Giannakis, S. (2011). Recent studies also state that tourism is creating a desire among tourist to visit Iran and to go through the experience of buying a carpet (Making, 2019).

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Research

The aim of this research is to investigate the impact of tourist interest on the authenticity of Persian carpets. In this thesis, there are three research questions to be studied. The following research questions are formulated based on the gap in the available literature in order to find answers to the aim of the research. The issues to be addressed are as follows:

RQ1: What is the Tourism Demand's Effect on Persian Carpets?

RQ2: What is the relationship between Tourism Culture and Persian Carpets?

RQ3: What is the relationship between Persian Carpets and Tourist Shopping Satisfaction?

1.4 Methodology

In this section the methodological approach of the research is covered. In this study a qualitative approach is considered. A qualitative research needs to be comprehensively defined to do justice to its key characteristics (Yilmaz, 2013), thus all necessary variables related to the research questions are thoroughly studied in the literature review chapter of this thesis. The reason for choosing such an approach is due to the need for developing a deep understanding of the topic from the expert participants' point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research approach is often favored by researcher as it leads to an in-depth analysis of a population lives or issues in their settings excluding any standardization (Yilmaz, 2013). Thus in order to understand the

effects of tourism on Persian carpet and obtain results, in this research qualitative approach is chosen.

In order to develop an understanding on this topic, 11 semi-structured interviews were collected from Persian carpet designers and sellers.

1.5 Sampling and Data Collection

Qualitative studies aim to provide illumination and understanding of complex psychosocial issues and are most useful for answering the humanistic 'why?' and 'how?' questions (Marshall, 1996). A group of 11 individuals (using judgmental sampling) were selected from the population to be interviewed.

1.6 Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of five main chapters. These are described as follows:

Chapter 1 consists of the introduction of the topic. The aims and the objectives of the research were clearly indicated. Methodology, methods and the sampling technique were also introduced.

Chapter 2 covers the literature review including detailed explanations on the history of carpets in Iran, and its relation to the tourism industry and tourist demand.

Chapter 3 covers the methodology. In this chapter research methodology, methods research design, and sampling are reviewed.

Chapter 4 covers data analysis. In this chapter each research question is analyzed.

Chapter 5 covers the discussion on findings, limitations and implementations.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Iran is a large country with natural resources like oil and gas. However, one of the key components of the economy is carpet production. Today, carpet weaving is by far the most widespread handicraft in Iran; it is also the best-known one abroad. Persian carpets are renowned for their richness of color, variety of patterns, and quality of design. One-third of Iran's nonoil earnings come from exporting carpets to world markets. Experts believe that carpet weaving has an 80% value added, while the foreign exchange needed to supply the required raw materials is less than 10% of the total production cost. It's the vital asset to attraction of tourism in Iran (Katsumata, S., & Song, J. 2015).

Cohen (1979) stated that, to investigate the behavior of tourists, motivation, satisfaction and quality must be analyzed. To a very great extent, research concluded that there is no relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, mainly because satisfied customers still defect. However, it is not possible to deny the positive correlation between these two constructs (Woodside, A. G., Frey, L. L., & Daly, R. T, 1989; Biong, 1993; Taylor & Baker, 1994; Anderson, E. W., Fornell, C., & Lehmann, D. R. 1994; Jones & Sasser, 1995; Gassenheimer, J. B., Sterling, J. U., & Robicheaux, R. A. 1989; Hallowell, 1996). However, the correlation between satisfaction and loyalty is not direct one but under the influence of perceived quality and it is also non-linear

(Bitner, 1990; Bowen & Chen, 2001). The main reason is the lack of adequate measurement of experiential and holistic determinants in tourism with scales and constructs of service quality (Fick & Ritchie, 1991; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001).

Many authors described and studied the importance of the tourism industry and its contribution to economic growth. It has been pointed out that in order to attract more tourists and create outstanding revenues, services should be of a high quality (Samimi, A. J., Sadeghi, S., & Sadeghi, S. 2011 ; Satrovic & Muslija, 2017). In addition to services that are offered, various goods which are purchased by tourists during their travels, such as souvenirs are witnessed to have the largest share of expenditure in their purchasing behavior (Lehto, X. Y., Cai, L. A., O'Leary, J. T., & Huan, T. C. 2004 ; Turner & Reisinger, 2001).

Persian carpets are often regarded as one of the unique, luxurious and premium souvenirs, purchased by tourists. The Persian carpet is also often regarded as an item of ownership that attracts numerous tourists.

2.2 Authenticity and Quality of Persian Carpet

According to Schlick (1968) there are five basic factors for characteristics of an oriental carpet: pile material construction, design and color composition, border design, foundation threads, and backing. And also carpet size and density determine the price of a modern oriental carpet (Schlick, 1968). For a thick mass of woolen threads is still hanging on the front. By this means, the thick firm pile of a carpet is achieved. Now the tighter and closer a pile is knotted, the shorter it can be cut.

A very famous Persian proverb says: "*The thinner the carpet the richer the Persian*". This statement is not aiming to propose that thin carpets are good. An excellent hand woven carpet has very tight knots that are very firm, resembling a straight and hard board that cannot be folded or bent. This form of knotting, provides an advantage to illustrate all the precision paintings, art and in the form of a picture. On the other hand, a loose knot illustrates an ambiguous silhouette. An excellent carpet also has very even knots. Furthermore, as stated by Haack (1972) when an individual looks at a carpet, colors, design and pattern should be clearly visible.

Iran is very well known for production of carpets for almost four hundred years. From the sixteenth century (Safavid era) through to the nineteenth century (Qajar era) was an extraordinarily rich period which witnessed a dramatic expansion from a traditional focus on regional and national economies to the emergence of a global economy.

According to Keschull & Sahasranaman (2018) although the demand for hand-woven Persian carpet is growing slowly, the supply is rapidly increasing. This situation creates price fluctuations. Despite many arguments which believe that the market is saturated, hand-woven carpets have more durability. This durability can be ascribed to the materials used. In addition, the authors stated that the future for the carpet industry is promising.

Production of handmade carpets continues to be concentrated in some developing countries of the world including India, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. In industrialized countries, the production of handmade carpets is negligible. The trend is here for less hand knotted, but still increasing volume, of handmade carpets. Suffice it to say that of handmade

carpets, supply is increasing, but demand is growing slowly or stagnating, resulting in pressure on price which was particularly visible in the first decade of the current millennium. One may say that this market is somewhat saturated. Another rather curious reason for stagnating demand is the increasing longevity of handmade carpets made with better raw materials; hence, fresh demand is slow to develop, especially replacement demand. (Kebeschull, D., Sahasranaman, A,2018).

In the following sections, branding and the image of carpets in Iran are covered.

2.2.1 Branding

Before discussing branding definition, broadly, a product is anything that could be offered to a market to satisfy a want or need, including physical goods, services, experiences, events, persons, places, properties, organizations, information, and ideas (Kotler & Keller, 2015). A brand is a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers (American Marketing Association).

Currently competition and rivalry in numerous industries which offer goods and services is at an extremely high level. The same applies to the tourism industry where countries, organizations and national industries are involved. To challenge the competition, managerial implication and business-related strategy are researched and with their development, organizations reach sustainability (Farhangi, 2015).

For carpets, their brand plays a key role as it could generate large amounts of income, cost reduction, and profits increase. Literature illustrates a bond between brands and country of origin. Several goods, such as Persian carpets provide a practical example.

Therefore, it is very important to develop a brand value, in such a way, that the general image and perception is precise (Picotitic & Ward, 2007).

Nowadays, successful companies pay a great amount of attention to branding. Because of its importance, a powerful brand can help to differentiate the product from its competitors and thereby achieve a competitive advantage (Keller, 2001; Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). Rationally, according to Kumar et al. (2003) to build a long-term success in branding, an organization must monitor various strategies to create a stable and sustainable action plan. Moreover, brand equity needs to be conducted in order to gain larger market share. In addition, Curtis, T., Abratt, R., & Minor, W. (2009) argued that brand management should not be neglected. With good brand management, an organization reaches the global market with an easier approach.

With regards to the topic of tourism, Buil et al. (2016) asserted that branding, brand management, brand communication and related activities result in a positive and significant influence on the tourism industry.

In addition, in a piece of research by Latif et al. (2016), branding influence is found to be significant and positive on leading tourism products to a competitive advantage. Moreover, overall the tourism industry is subject to enhancement.

Ross (2006) investigated the importance of brand equity. The attention towards the topic is found to be high, and many company investments had been witnessed as a managerial implication for better branding.

Branding is endowing products and services with the power of a brand” (Kotler & Keller, 2015).

Iranian Carpet exporters believe themselves to be brand-oriented, but from an importer’s point of view, they have not achieved brand recognition to a high degree yet. In addition, exporters believe that the overall results are acceptable, yet studies prove that it’s not an attainable strategy and one may not implement the local marketing strategy in a foreign country (Gholipour, H. F., Tajaddini, R., & Al-mulali, U. 2014).

Last but not least, brand leadership was defined by Keller (2008). He stated that any characteristic that a brand has that leads to the consumers’ acceptance of its services and productions is brand leadership, if the outcome is a strong and global market presence.

2.2.2 Image

To understand the image, first, it is better to learn about the Brand Equity Theory. Brand Equity Theory states that certain stimuli are used, cues are created, and cues form a belief. Sometimes, this belief can be manipulated by a stereotype belief (Srikatanyoo & Gnoth, 2002). For example, a certain country that produces a certain product should have either a positive or negative influence on importers and exporters. This belief then leads to evaluation. If the outcome of the evaluation is positive, it results in a purchase. With an extrinsic product cue, many types of researches consider the country of origin to be one of the cues (Bilkey & Nes, 1982; Cordell, 1992; Han & Terpstra, 1988; Hong & Wyer, 1989; Thorelli et al., 1989). Thus, consumers are known to develop stereotypical beliefs about products from particular countries and the attributes of those products. Therefore, the country of origin image has the power

to arouse importers and consumers' belief about product attributes, and to influence evaluations of products and brands (Srikatanyoo and Gnoth, 2002).

Nagashima (1970) expressed that any illusion including a belief, a picture, or a reputation that is attached to goods, is a country of origin image. This is the very first concept of this topic. In addition, traditions within a country, history, economic stance, political situations, can all contribute to this image.

Later on, Parameswaran & Yaprak (1987), Han & Terpstra (1988), and Srikatanyoo & Gnoth (2002) introduced a new view from the stance of the industry. They believe that in the eyes of a consumer, products with a high standard of quality are manufactured only in a certain country.

When reviewing literature it is commonly agreed that, country of origin, has a significant influence on the purchase of a brand or product. To support this, the label of "Made in ..." is the clear pre-purchase evaluation attribute (Johansson, 1989; Khachaturian & Morganosky, 1990; Knight, 1999; Piron, 2000). Ajzen & Fishbein (1975) introduced behavioral theories, and the intentions of an individual are found to be influenced by the country of origin via social norms.

The carpet industry outside of Iran spreads to the East from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India, and to the North from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kirgizstan, and to the West, from Turkey. From a trending point of view, countries are also shifting from hand-woven carpets to machine-made carpets, but at a very slow pace. The overall evaluation of a carpet is linked to its country of origin at some point, and, according to Bilkey & Nes (1982) this can effect tourists' perceptions.

2.3 Tourism Factors of Research Study Questions

In this section the three research questions that are proposed in this thesis are covered along with relevant available literature.

2.3.1 Demand

In terms of globally acknowledged tourism demand, including traveling and the migration of people, means the outflow of money from the home country of the tourists to the hosting country. In order to attain a very good and solid analysis of this subject, scholars have suggested that tourist behavior should be analyzed as an initial step, followed by the aggregate level of demand as the final step (Stabler, M. J., Papatheodorou, A., & Sinclair, M. T. 2009; Candela & Figini, 2012).

Many of the business decisions that are related to the tourism industry are based on the tourism demand. Therefore, and the proportion of demand are the results of analysis. There are two theories underlining demand in tourism offered by Becker's and Samuelson (Stauvermann, 2017). In Becker's theory, the consumption hypothesis is vital to analyze tourism demand. First of all, insights with regards to tourism behavior basis of the environmental economies and tourism industry. In Samuelson's theory, the hypothesis is the fundamental theory of consumers' behavior which includes all reasonable observable consequences of the indifference curves. Both theories manifested on the preferences wherein tourism is considered the demand. Demand has effective factors such as prices, tourist income and the relationship with the artifact product (with the aim of this thesis, the Persian Carpet is the artifact) and awareness of the product.

Then, sufficient data can be further used to form models and forecast demand. This forecast can help plan the business, most importantly when dealing with souvenirs and goods (Song, Haiyan, Stephen F. Witt, and Gang Li. 2009).

To forecast any change in demand, determinants of demand, must be identified, measured, and analyzed. Then results should be compared with ones in the past. This helps a better prediction (Peng, B., Song, H., & Crouch, G. I, 2014). These are the pillars of efficient planning. Turner & Witt (2001) illustrated that tourism demand can clearly define international business. There is a relationship between trade volume and demand. The correlation is even stronger when it comes to retail sales. It also increases overall GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

And finally, tourists' country of origin, and tourists' country of residency, has a different magnitude of travelers, various economic stances, and eventually an analysis of demand helps to identify a significant relationship (Allen, D. Yap, G. and Shareef, R. 2009).

One must understand the fact that the tourism industry is always considered as an appropriate option to attract investment and a tool to facilitate entrepreneurship (Bagherzadeh & Keshavarz, 2016). In fact, Allan (2015) posited that if compared with production industry, the tourism industry is beneficial in terms of the economy and it has fewer limitations. Iran has the same robust potential to rehabilitate the tourism industry. It has been observed that in great societies, many job opportunities with high salaries are created, foreign direct investments obtained, and these are mainly the outcome of the tourism industry.

In research by Rafiei Darani & Asghari (2018) it is declared that tourism demand leads to the development and improvement of a country's infrastructure. This creates an attractive scenario for motivating investors. It leads to a large amount of demand in both the product and services sectors. Various sectors of the economy of the host country then are active which, as a result, creates market power.

Customers' perceptions of product quality are affected by marketing and de-marketing factors. One de-marketing tool is to increase the product price where the relationship between price and quality is not justifiable. Generally, higher prices indicate product quality (Seeleste, 2016). In terms of tourist demand, in research conducted by Benur and Bramwell (2015) tourism product supply, tourism product features and processes, and tourist demand and product use are classified into a framework. Therefore, as clearly stated in their findings there is a need for more research with a consistent focus on understanding the features and relationships associated with primary tourism demand for products in host countries, where in the specific scenario of this research all aspects related to Persian carpets are considered. Trauer and Ryan (2005) suggest that in a given situation, tourism demand and product supply tourism demand are categorized into two components of intrapersonal and interpersonal motives. Hence the following research question is proposed to be studied in this thesis:

RQ1: What is the Tourism Demand's Effect on Persian Carpets?

2.3.2 Culture

Culture has become an important component of the tourist experience (Richards, 1996). Before we learn about cultural tourism, it is recommended that we learn about the concepts separately, that is culture and tourism.

According to Mousavi et al. (2016) tourism is divided into two categories; (1) the “Conceptual” definition of tourism, dealing with the core meaning of tourism, and (2) the “Technical” definition of tourism, focused on evaluating and measuring the value of tourism which is particularly variable in different countries.

On the other hand, culture is widely viewed as a “*complex whole, which delivers a unifying concept for the extensively varied ways of life*” (Richards, 1996, p.119). Two available uses of this concept are, culture as: (1) Process: with process, culture determines content production socially, and what people perceive of life. (2) Product: with product, activities by groups or individuals create meanings, and culture can be high or low. High culture refers to arts and masterpieces, whilst low culture refers to less values items such as TV soap programs.

Ashworth (1995) in relation to tourism, categorized three designations of culture: (1) Art Tourism; this is the basic form of culture and it is mainly associated with masterpieces, handicrafts, art, and even performances like concerts and festivals, or venues like opera houses and museums. (2) Heritage Tourism; landscapes, sights, structures and monuments that are manifested with events both historically and personally. (3) Place-specific Tourism; which is dedicated to attitudes, values, norms and behaviors of a social group.

Stebbins (1996) suggested that cultural tourism is either generalized, or specialized. In this categorization, the area of interest is far from any scheme in terms of the economy.

Following the general categorization, it is possible to assign a class to tourists (Tighe, 1986). Moreover, Stebbins (1996) suggests that when knowledge is the core

motivation of the destination, tourism is classified as cultural. Elements such as traditions, religion, music, and, more importantly, history and art are the essence of the destination's culture. In addition, McKercher (2002) argues that, besides the objective of the journey, an individual who attends an event, or visits a cultural attraction, is defined as a cultural tourist.

Earlier literature also suggests that, since the tourist spends money in the host country, they receive hospitality from locals. (Hughes, 1987). For cultural tourists, the journey is not limited to fine dining and relaxation, they also incorporate some form of activity in their trips. (Jovicic, 2014). Richards (2002), believes that a destination is visited by tourists who want to learn and discover more about the destination. Some scholars argue that even leisure tourists pay tribute and visit some of the historical places (Hall & Zeppel, 1990). In addition, Jovicic (2014) categorizes leisure tourists as cultural tourists, despite their main motivation being leisure.

There might be some confusion about the rural tourism definition. However, to clearly identify this, Skuras et al. (2006) in their research define rural tourism as a sophisticated combination of product and service. This combination is offered together. For example, a destination offers an overnight in a local house, with local meals for breakfast and refreshments, and carpet weaving as an activity. Furthermore, scholars suggest that this concept helps to identify the tourist experience in terms of "peak" or pure and "secondary" or supporting.

Scholars like Crouch & Ritchie (1999) stated that in the new millennium tourism will become the most important sector. The undeniable and significant share of cultural tourism has a great influence in achieving this position.

Another concept to investigate is the tourism culture. It is witnessed as a result of interactions between the host and visiting cultures in a specific location, where the outcome is a new and distinctive emergent culture, in turn shaped by and shaping the local tourism context (Canavan, 2016). As mentioned earlier in the introduction section of this study, tourism culture is affected by the culture and actions of visitors themselves (Wilson, 1997), their hosts (Smith, 2009), and influenced by the unique requirements and processes of hosting tourism (Cooper, 1995).

The Persian carpet is considered as art and rose from the roots of the rural heart of Iran (Moallem, 2018). Furthermore, Pereiro, (2002) argues that from this standpoint, cultural tourism can be defined in a different way; *“as a process of commodification, nostalgia for heritage and the past, a psychological experience, process of learning and curiosity, a modern form of pilgrimage, as an industry which represents cultural values and as a specific way of cultural consumption”*.(86)

Table 1 below categorizes the cultural tourism and tourism culture, its categories and the main authors.

Table 1: Culture Tourism and Tourism Culture

	Cultural Tourism and Tourism Culture	Author	Year
Category	Specialized Generalized	Stebbins	1996
	Art tourism Heritage tourism Place-specific tourism	Ashworth	1995
	Process Product	Richard	1996

The Persian carpet is a product. It is also an art, and cities which are famous for carpet weaving are heritage areas. Tourism and cultural tourism attractions can be appealed from carpet and such characteristic of carpet and importance of cultural tourism, with the taste of arts tourism to be more specific is a relatively considerable research question. Thus, the second research question proposed in this study is:

RQ2: What is the relationship between Tourism Culture and Persian Carpets?

2.3.3 Tourist Shopping Satisfaction

According to Oliver (1999) satisfaction, is defined as the individual's sentiment that consumption provides outcomes against a standard of pleasure against displeasure.

In tourism, satisfaction is measured when a tourist makes purchases. And this data is then compared with the overall satisfaction of the same individual (Castellanos-Verdugo, M., Oviedo-Garcia, M., & Vega-Vázquez, M. 2017).

In an earlier study by these scholars, it is suggested that there is correlation between a positive word of mouth and the level of shopping. Further, there is a correlation between overall tourist satisfaction and the value of purchases made by tourists. Value is under a partial mediation from tourist shopping satisfaction, and simultaneously correlation between overall tourist satisfaction and shopping value is under total mediation. For further reading, it is suggested that the work of Vega- Vázquez et al. (2017) be reviewed.

The literature suggests that shopping has always been part of the tourism experience (Shaw & Coles, 2004). In terms of tourism retention and attraction, an important role is played by shopping in general (Švab, 2002).

Before reviewing satisfaction, it is essential to understand the determinants of shopping. Timothy (2005) states that there are intrinsic or extrinsic variables. Intrinsic variables include:

- 1) Demographic profile (age, gender, ...)
- 2) Cultural background (ethnicity, nationality, ...)
- 3) Behavioral outcome (collection, gifts, souvenir, ...)

And extrinsic variables include:

- 1) Store characteristic (size, type, ...)
- 2) Features (rural, metropolitan, beach, town, ...)
- 3) Price
- 4) Quality (originality, variety, ...)

According to Timothy (2005), the list alludes to the major influences on tourist shopping satisfaction.

In addition, Kozak & Rimmington (2000) argued when implementing promotional and marketing campaigns for products and services in the tourism sector, satisfaction evaluation is vital. The product in this case is the Persian carpet, thus tourist satisfaction and overall satisfaction from shopping for a Persian carpet is an important topic.

To some extent numerous researchers are commonly suggesting that gender directly influences tourist shopping satisfaction (Egresi & Polat, 2016; Tayfun & Arslan, 2013; Xu & McGehee, 2012). The finding illustrate that women have better shopping experiences than men.

Another aspect of satisfaction is the region of origin. Based on the work of (Barutçu et al., 2011; Kikuchi & Ryan, 2007; Tosun et al., 2007; Yuksel, 2004), the findings are evidence for this argument. It appears that tourists from different countries, rate a certain product at a diverse level of experience.

Additionally, in some researches (Buliah et al., 2018) the role of region of origin is concluded to be mediating.

Ryu, et al. (2010) argued that the utilitarian value significantly affected customer satisfaction and intention. Price is a utilitarian value, and has an effect on the tourist shopping satisfaction as stated by Barutçu, S., Doğan, H., & Üngüren, E. (2011).

Lesser & Hughes (1986) identified shoppers based on their behaviors:

- 1) Inactive shoppers; with a restriction on lifestyle and shopping
- 2) Active shoppers; with a demanding lifestyle and activities
- 3) Service shoppers; active yet concerned with quality
- 4) Traditional shoppers; a mindset of “do it ourselves”
- 5) Price shoppers; a mindset of “price consciousness”
- 6) Transitional shoppers; early stage family-life-cycle
- 7) Convenience shoppers; a mindset of “easy buying experience”
- 8) Innovator shoppers; a more upscale market with impulse purchasing behavior

Tourist shopping satisfaction as a whole, can partially explain overall tourist satisfaction. With the help of the literature reviewed, other major determinants are also covered. To sum up, the final research question is proposed as follows:

RQ3: What is the relationship between Persian Carpets and Tourist Shopping Satisfaction?

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the relevant literature is covered and research questions are fully described to create an insight for the purpose of the study. In the next chapter, selection of research design and the methodology of this study are covered.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined qualitative research as any type of research that produces findings not gained by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. Qualitative research is a systematic scientific inquiry which seeks to build a holistic, largely narrative, description to inform the researcher's understanding of a social or cultural phenomenon (Astalin, 2013). It is also referred to as an approach to the study of human behavior that relies on the analysis of narrative data to create an interpretation of the meaning of these behaviors from the perspective of the participants themselves, within their own social context (Cobb & Forbes, 2002).

The qualitative research approach is often favored by the researcher as it leads to an in-depth analysis of a population or issues in their settings excluding any standardization (Yilmaz, 2013). Thus in order to understand the effects of Tourism on Persian carpets and obtain results, in this research the qualitative approach is chosen. And with qualitative research, this research explores what it assumed to be a socially constructed dynamic reality through a framework which is flexible.

3.2 Method

In a qualitative research, a researcher has different options to collect data, including observations, textual or visual analysis (from books or videos) and interviews with individuals or groups. However, the most common methods used are interviews

(Britten, 1995; Silverman, 2013; (Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. (Eds.). 2013).

In a semi-structured interview which is the most commonly used type, the researcher sets the outline for the objective of research, and respondents have more freedom to digress when answering questions. It is very helpful for the sample group to be able to influence the direction taken by the interview (Beverly, E. A., Ritholz, M. D., Brooks, K. M., Hultgren, B. A., Lee, Y., Abrahamson, M. J., & Weinger, K. 2012). Because of clarity, the collected data is not only reliable, but the researcher is also able to compare the outcomes thoroughly.

To make the respondents less tense, the researcher adopts an informal approach, which leads to better, meaningful and more relevant questions. (Cohen & Crabtree, 2016).

For the purpose of this research semi-structured interviews were used. Semi-structured interviews are very useful when the respondent is interviewed in some detail in order to explore the issue from the perspective of the respondents (Neuman, 2016).

Considering the nature of this thesis, it was decided to use semi-structured interviews as the form of data collection.

3.3 Sampling

It is not possible to interview a large population. So it is important to select a reliable sample. In qualitative research, the main objective is to overcome a complex issue, and achieve an understanding.

For the purposes of this research, purposeful sampling technique was used. According to Marshall (1996), a sample that is productive ought to be selected. A framework is subsequently developed. Subjects could be able to offer useful and potential recommendations for study. Purposeful sampling allows the researcher to choose the concrete participants based on their own knowledge.

According to (Bhat, 2019), this method could be the most effective in situations where there are only a restricted number of people in a population who own qualities that researcher expects from the target population.

3.4 Sample

In order to collect data 11 respondents were selected who were relevant to the area of research. They were either designers and/or sellers, who were very knowledgeable about the topic. Since the researcher is also a carpet designers herself it was not difficult to identify and make arrangements for the interviews. Table 3 below provides information about the respondents.

In total 9 males and 2 female Persian carpet designers and/or sellers were interviewed. They were between the ages of 38 and 67 year old age group. All of the interviews were conducted in Persian since all of the interviewees were Iranian and not all of them were proficient in English. All of the interviews were than transcribed and translated in to English.

Note that all of the interviews took place in November 2019 and each took between around 20 to 30 minutes.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Interviewees

	Respondent	Occupation	Age/ Gender	Marital Status	Nationality
2019/11/20	R1	Designer/Seller	52/M	Married	Iran
2019/11/20	R2	Seller	67/M	Married	Iran
2019/11/20	R3	Seller	63/M	Married	Iran
2019/11/20	R4	Designer/Seller	45/M	Married	Iran
2019/11/20	R5	Designer/Seller	42/M	Married	Iran
2019/11/20	R6	Designer/Seller	38/F	Single	Iran
2019/11/20	R7	Designer/Seller	65/M	Married	Iran
2019/11/20	R8	Designer	58/M	Married	Iran
2019/11/20	R9	Seller	53/M	Single	Iran
2019/11/20	R10	Designer	40/F	Married	Iran
2019/11/20	R11	Designer	58/M	Married	Iran

3.5 Analyzing Data in Qualitative Research

There is no one way of analyzing qualitative data (Neuman, 2016). As Patton said:

“Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. No formula exists for that transformation. Guidance, yes. But no recipe. Direction can and will be offered, but the final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when—and if—arrived at” (2002, p. 432 cited in Schutt, 2015).

In order to analyse data a variety of guidelines provided by different authors were followed (Harding, C., Janes, R., & Johnson, D. 1998; Hardin & Whitehead 2013). Table 3 below provides information about the specific guidelines taken into consideration by the researcher.

Table 3: Qualitative Data Analysis

Step	Action
Categorization	The logical grouping
Coding	Transforming the raw data into a standardized layout for analysis, through identifying and labeling recurrent words, themes or concepts
Constant comparison	A process of fundamental analysis where the data are collected and coded, and simultaneously analyzed by comparing to other pieces of data, then more data are collected and analyzed in the same manner and so on.
Thematic analysis	Typically used for self-report interview data but can also be used to analyzes text as long as the questions asked are open-ended

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research methodology, method, data collection approach, sampling method, and data analysis in qualitative research are covered. In the next chapter, the analysis of collected data is covered.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The principles of case are subject and object. Thus, any data relevant to the objective of the study, via interviews, observations and notes taken from the field, are important to analyze (Hardin et al., 1998).

As indicated in the earlier sections of this thesis, the interview with a sample is designed in the form of semi-structured interview, with a population based on judgmental sampling (a group of 11 individuals were selected to be interviewed).

In general terms, there are two stages composing this study. The First concerns the Persian Carpet, and second is with regards to Tourism. The interview questions were based on the three research questions proposed.

4.2 Data Analysis

There are guidelines that a researcher should consider before analyzing data. According to Hardin and Whitehead (2013), to implement a perfect analysis in a classic grounded theory, such as this research, categories and codes should be identified. Then a constant comparison taken into consideration that is followed by thematic analysis.

First the following table illustrates an insight to the interviewees' demographic profile.

4.2.1 Study of the Interview

In order to achieve results to investigate the research questions, a set of questions were prepared for respondents to answer during the interview. Each research question represents a broad statement, thus a series of open-ended questions, and short answer questions, are added to each subject to aid the analysis.

As mentioned earlier, one stage of this research is dedicated to the Persian carpet. So first it was confirmed that each of the interviewees have a clear knowledge about the Persian carpet.

The following section covers the answers received by respondents. These answers represent real opinions, and are original based on institutional culture and practice.

4.2.1.1 Tourism Demand

The first research question is about the tourism demand's effect on the Persian carpet. The interview opened with some questions related to the theme. When respondents are asked about the effect of tourism demand on the Persian carpet, the answers are highlighted as follows:

R1: *“There are many factors to consider in general when discussing tourism demand. In our line of work, budget comes first. Buyer comes in, ask for a carpet about with his money limit. Another colleague calls and ask what he can get with €1000. We often recommend sizes, as you already know the famous 140 × 210, is the best size to carry.”*

R2: *“If by tourism in general, we consider foreigners, they tend to consider budget first. What is their purpose? Is it for their house? Is it a souvenir? Then they want to know about the designer, then they want to know about the design, the pattern. As you*

know the brand we are representing is very important. They pop in, ask if we can directly deliver this specific brand to Europe or not”

When continued with more in depth analysis, in terms of whether a potential factor is missing or not, the following respondents (R3, R4, R8 and R7) opened up their replies with two statements (1) *“Material is the essence of our work”* and (2) *“Market demand is first to consider.”*

R5: *“Nowadays tourists use social media. They see pictures, videos, Instagram posts, and they hear from each other, that Mr. X and Mrs. Y, recently relocated to a new house. They purchased from our store the modern Persian carpet. They purchased the Abbasi pattern. Classical or modern? This is the topic now.”*

R9, also added this note that *“Tourists have more knowledge on the product, design, and even stories behind the design.”*

R6, R10 and R11 are commonly considering color to be a determinant factor. They are trying to make the importance of color very bold in tourism demand.

When interviewees were asked if the current tourism demand is high, except R9, all were agreeing that the current demand for Persian carpets is very high.

R9 expresses that *“sanctions are making Turkish carpet as a threat to Iranian carpet”*

With a further question on tourism demand, when the respondent is asked about carpet characteristics:

R1: *“Most of our customers already know what they’re exactly seeking. They know the knot, they know the pattern, thickness, size, even know the starting point of the weaving. So for them, carpet characteristics, is the key. They choose to travel to Iran, to visit us and purchase.”*

R2: *“When travelling as an individual, you visit different cities. You come to Isfahan, you see the mosques, paintings, you fell in love and you wish to buy a carpet with a story of the mosque, you wish to buy a carpet resembling the monarch palace.”*

Similarly, R3 mentioned that *“designers in different cities are well reputed”* and R4 added that *“with most of the designs, designers bring creativity to the old versions”* and finally, R8 and R10 commented that *“product development is needed if we wish to stay in the market. This is something that we need further studying.”*

Then respondents were asked if the tourism industry will directly affect Persian carpets in the future:

R1 firmly replied: *“Yes”*

R2: *“of course the effect is not deniable.”*

R3: *“I can’t make any statement on this, but to support my previous comment, I can say that if more designers are introduced globally, maybe something will happen to tourism and Persian carpet relation.”*

R8: *“Again I would like to add that, without product development, market demand, tourism demand, and demand in general, and Persian carpet, will lose the market in*

the future. We have very good designers, Iranian patterns are very famous, but we are living in a competitive market.”

4.2.1.2 Tourism Culture

The second research question is the relationship between tourism culture and Persian carpets. First a simple yes/no question was asked to check whether the respondents agreed that there is a relationship between tourism culture and Persian carpets. The answers are highlighted as follows:

In general term, all 11 respondents agreed that there is a relationship, and, in addition, they commented on the preferences of tourists.

For instance, R4: *“Depending on the nationality of the tourist, they have different cultures. Europeans from the Mediterranean area, they follow a same behavior, or better say, they have similar tastes.”* And as an addition, R8 and R11 pointed out that *“Many tourists seek Persian carpet because of Iran. Specific to their desire.”*

R5 brought up the subject of lifestyle, *“lifestyle, fashion, bloggers, and the trend to understand countries around the world. Tourist likes arts. Persian carpet is like an art. You buy painting, you can buy a carpet for life.”*

Next they were asked about the reasons they can support, and they replied:

R3: *“Many tourists come to Iran, to visit Iran and cities. They visit sights, and often encounter with touch points that create very strong emotions. My experience suggests that a set of emotional behavior is the driving factor to purchase”*

R6: *“Colorful Persian designs creates and involvement between you (the tourist) when you visit a palace in Tehran for example”*

R9: *“I think you buy clothes to wear, and if you don’t like it, you leave it in your closet. But when you see a tourist buying a carpet, this is something that often resembles a heritage to their family. There’s a great bond between the owner and the carpet”*

R10: *“As soon as they learn more about the history of Iran, as soon as they set foot in Iran, for many reasons, they get attached to the country emotionally. They enjoy the food, they even find it locally in their countries, but a Persian carpet is something they can keep for long time, this emotion never ends.”*

Another parameter commented by R2 and R4: *“You buy everything for a purpose. Buying carpet definitely has a great purpose for the buyer”*

To support this, we can refer to a comment by R7, as quoted *“In many cultures, you can see that they walk around the house without shoes, they have the floors covered with runners and carpets. If they travel around, they go to places to find exquisite runners and carpets”*

The last question on this subject was, if they think that the country and region of origin of the tourist has a relationship with the Persian carpet:

R1: *“definitely yes”*

R2, R3, R4, R7 and R10: *“Yes”*

R5: *“When I travel around the world, I try to compare what I see in the destination with my home. I believe same is recognizable for general tourists as well. Despite their purpose of travel, their background and home culture will encourage them to approach to our shops.”*

4.2.1.3 Tourist Shopping Satisfaction

The third and final research question is the relationship between the Persian carpet and a tourist’s shopping satisfaction. First, respondents are asked if they can categorize the tourists based on their Persian carpet purchases. The followings are the answers:

R1: *“Chinese and Korean tourists are different from European tourists”*

R2: *“Americans and European tourists purchase more than Asians”*

R3: *“Middle-eastern tourists value different aspects. But I think best buyers are European tourists”*

R4, R6, R8 and R10 commented that demographic characteristics and income level are also important when categorizing tourists.

R5: *“again I would like to point that, what you hear from them is mainly related to their location. They may be Italian, but living in UAE, so they purchase luxury and modern Persian carpet. Because they live in UAE.”*

Then the question is asked from the point view of behavior, and the answers are as follows:

R2 and R3 illustrate the combination of knowledge on product and destination as quoted *“when you want to buy Jajim, you know where to go, but if you wish to buy*

Kilim, you know who to contact”. Furthermore, R3 recalls the fact that, today tourists, thanks to the influence of the Internet, have better knowledge about the products they wish to purchase.

R8: *“For a tourist, buying experience is important. In our line of work, we know the carpet like our own children, but we need to deliver all the information to tourist, so it creates something like an attitude inside the tourist. This is how they choose to travel to a destination, this how they choose to eat a certain meal. So I may say that product consciousness specifically (Persian carpet) is the driving factor.”*

R9: *“I believe you buy the carpet to give yourself a value. Or sometimes you find the opportunity as the investment.”*

R11: *“I feel that most of my customers are revisiting Iran, because of the shopping or let’s say buying experience of carpet.”*

Finally, the satisfaction of purchasing a Persian carpet from the tourists’ point of view is questioned, and the answers are:

R11: *“the satisfaction is something that comes from an original art and masterpiece.”*

R2, R4, R5, R7, R8 and R9 all agreed that *“word of mouth drives satisfaction.”*

4.2.2 Coding

When coding data, each line, sentence, statement when recording an interview should be carefully examined. This step helps when creating a set of codes to further implement a label or categories. From the previous section, each statement that was

given by an interviewee on the specific question is covered. Here in this section, the aim is to put recurrent words together.

The following table illustrates the recurrent words;

Table 4: Coding Table (Alphabetical Order)

Item	Recurrent Word
1	Budget
2	Coloring
3	Cultural Influence of Tourist
4	Emotional Behavior
5	Market Demand
6	Material
7	Modernity
8	Persian Carpet Brand
9	Persian Carpet Design on Demand
10	Persian Carpet Designer
11	Preferences
12	Product Development
13	Product Knowledge
14	Purpose of Purchase
15	Sizing
16	Story Behind Designs
17	Tourist Country and Region of Residency
18	Word of Mouth

According to Hardin and Whitehead (2013), there are two possible options of (1) axial coding and (2) selective coding. In order to reach a conclusion, to categorize and group concepts selective coding is undertaken. In the following section categorization is covered.

4.2.3 Categorization

Based on the collected data and further analysis, there are four general categories that are given in the following table;

Table 5: Categorization Table

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
Demand Determinants	Carpet Characteristics	Tourist Behavior	External Factors
Market Demand	Persian Carpet Brand	Preferences	Tourist Country and Region
Coloring	Persian Carpet Design	Emotional Behavior	Product Knowledge
Sizing	Persian Carpet Designer	Purpose of Purchase	Tourist Country and Region of Residency
Budget	Story Behind Designs	Cultural Influence of Tourist	Word of Mouth
Material	Product Development	Shopping Experience	
Modernity			

To conclude, it is possible to interpret that there are four categories to further analyze the data.

- 1) Demand Determinants
- 2) Carpet Characteristics
- 3) Tourist Behavior
- 4) External Factors

4.3 Conclusion

In this section, data analysis of the interviews is conducted and four categories are founded. Each category is further investigated and summarized for conclusion and discussion.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In this thesis, a broad conceptualization of the relationship between tourism and Persian carpets is studied. These questions were based on the gap in the available literature.

In this chapter, findings of the research are discussed. Then the limitations are examined.

5.2 Findings

In terms of tourism demand, upon analyzing the interviews, several factors including market demand, physical appearances (color, size and material), price and modernity of the Persian carpet (product) are extracted as determinants. In research by Wondirad & Agyeiwaah (2016), these factors served as visualization propensities of tourists' expenditure through interventions. In addition, Matsumoto et al. (2016) looked at whether such factors affect the trends of tourism demand.

Researchers like Stabler et al. (2010) and Candela & Figini (2012) stated that to understand tourism demand, research should be conducted on behavior. From the analysis of the interviews, tourist behavior has been found as a set of preferences, emotional behavior, and purpose of purchase. To support this, referring to the work of scholars such as Rugg (1973) and Papatheodorou (2001) it is obvious that until the

1970s tourist behavioral studies were rare. And later on, the first theory was hedonic theory with a great attention from scholars to suggest managerial implementation to services and products of the tourism industry (Sinclair et al. 1990; Taylor 1995; Thrane 2005; Falk 2008).

As an external factor, word of mouth has a key role in initiation of tourism demand. According to Zhang (2017), audience involvement has a positive and significant influence on tourist experiences and audience involvement has a positive impact on word of mouth behaviors.

Regarding tourism culture, tourists' country of origin is as important as their residency country. Depending on the purpose in general, another important determinant of whether or not tourists show an interest in specific products such as Persian carpets is the physical distance of the product or service origin (Yıldız & Khan, 2019).

The shopping experience is another determinant in terms of tourism culture. According to Li (2019) tourism culture interacts with other areas of society through tourism activities as the main form, and this interaction is the influence of tourism culture. This interaction is only achievable from their direct purchase of Persian carpets from Iranian shops.

When investigating shopping satisfaction, several carpet characteristics are extracted: Brand, design, designer, and story behind the design. Referring to the work of Albayrak & Çömen (2017) shopping satisfaction in one city varies from another. Each city of Iran is home to designs, designers, and stories behind each carpet are exclusive.

Tourists read and learn about destinations, attitudes, language, products, food, and in addition, tourist shopping satisfaction mediates the shopping value and the overall tourist satisfaction relationship (Vega-Vázquez, 2017).

5.3 Limitations

Sometimes the research context is not well-suited to limiting the data analysis to one strategy or another. In this research the selected product is the Persian carpet. The analysis and outcome of this study is based on this stimulus. Different countries in the region are producing carpets, but for the objective of this study, only the Persian carpet was selected.

Iran is selected as the destination of tourism, thus the involvement of souvenir shopping and shopping in general was limited to one country.

5.4 Implementation

From one aspect, it is possible to conclude that understanding the categorization of shopping attributes with respect to nationality should follow individual strategies for market segments.

Another aspect is the focus on attraction of more tourists to Iran. Tourism culture in general should be deeper. However, the focus should not be limited to only a few cities, but cultural brand is important, along with innovation. This can lead to more tourism flow.

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