Security and Growth in Tourism Industry in Yasuj

Darab Tayebi[1*], Jamshid Rahman-nasab[2]

[1]Management Faculty, Islamic Azad University, Lendeh

[2]Management Faculty, Bakhtar Institute of Higher Education, Ilam

ABSTRACT

Since the police undertake personal, financial, psychological, and social security of tourists, they can play an instrumental role in gaining satisfaction of foreign tourists and increasing tourism numbers. The aim of this article is to contribute to an improved comprehension of the role of police in tourism industry growth and to untangle possible relationship between police presence and services and tourism numbers in Yasuj tourist resorts. A researcher-made questionnaire was distributed among 325 tourists who visited the city in 2014 to obtain their attitude toward security in the city. In light of the results, international tourists were highly satisfied with the current state of security in Yasuj. However, they were far from satisfied regarding police communications of security, their supervision over performance of tourism infrastructures, and overwhelming presence of police in some tourist resorts. Many tourists also intended to revisit the city or recommend it to friends and relatives.

Introduction

Requirement of tourist visitation is perception of safety. Social unrest, the perceived violations of human rights, violent protests, civil wars, terrorist actions, or even the mere threat of these activities can all lead tourists to change their travel attitudes (Hall & O'Sullivan, 1996). Tourism industry comprises a series of activities which are performed in order to serve tourists. Tourism includes all phenomena and relations resulting from interaction of tourists, presenters and sellers of tourism goods, governments, and host

communities in the development and hosting processes (McIntosh, Goeldner, & Ritchie, 1995).

In developed countries, tourism industry growth leads to variety in income and reduced economic harmony. With tourism generating receipts of 476 billion dollars in 2000 and annual growth rates above 5 per cent, tourist destinations have a lot to lose if they lose their attraction (Neumayer, 2004). In developing countries, tourism provides an opportunity for exports whose growth rates are higher than traditional forms of export. In addition, many developing countries derive a much higher share of their gross domestic product (GDP) from tourist receipts than developed countries. The regions of developing country, with the fastest-growing tourism, have much to take advantage of providing low-skilled and labor-intensive tourism services that can generate a stream of income which is steadier than the volatile receipts from natural resource extraction. Thus, in many developing countries tourism represents an important contribution to economic development (Neumayer, 2004).

Tourists are often considered as becoming eager for relaxing and unconcerned holiday making. There is no doubt that there are adventure tourists who are not put off by conflict. Many, however, drop the idea of travel to destinations associated with danger. Tourists are only keen on travelling to foreign places in large numbers if their journey and stay are harmless and shielded from events that threaten a joyous holiday experience (Neumayer, 2004). In fact, security is of paramount importance to growth and sustainability of the tourism industry and economy. In addition, economic theory in the tradition of Lancaster (1971) supposes that tourists consume particular characteristics of a tourist destination rather than a single feature. Unless these features are very peculiar to the country that tourists will switch to another destination without difficulty. There is no problem that the likelihood of being significantly affected by an event of violence is maybe smaller than being struck by lightning, for example, because even the minimum likelihood may put the tourist off and may be adequate to stimulate them to select different targets.

The 20th century is called the age of utilization of business opportunities in services sector. World tourism industry turnover of this century is estimated to be greater than aggregate industry turnover and will amount to at least 2 trillion dollars in the next few years. In this process, countries such as Iran, which possess great tourism attractions, will hopefully reach 1 per cent of the value of turnover in this industry, i.e. approximately 20 billion dollars. This amount is a considerable one for economies like Iran and can influence all economic activities of the country. Top priority is to be given to the issue of tourist security.

Nevertheless, Iran, despite having great tourism attractions, has an insufficient share of world tourism. This issue requires a thorough analysis of leading causes and factors (Kerr, Barron, & Wood, 2001).

It seems that country's income diversification and non-reliance on oil exports can help tackle this problem. In addition, there are evidences that plan for making optimal use of tourist attractions and devoting considerable attention to investment in tourism infrastructure are also effective solutions. Therefore, plans must be implemented for regional spatial tourism development plans. Besides, tourism industry should aid the non-oil economic growth and utilize positive and economic ramifications of goals to enhance people's lives in different parts of the country (Mikaeili, 1996). Past research shows that one reason for the drop in foreign visitor arrivals in the country in recent years is the negative image created by international media (Armaghan, 2008; Sonmez & Graefe, 1998).

Tourists base their perceptions of risk on the images conveyed by external and often exaggerated media sources to the extent that many tourists admit that prior to their arrival personal security and health were major concerns for them. In most situations the media represents the strictness of security incidents happening at tourist destinations more critically than the actual reality. This tarnishes the target's positive image and paralyzes or severely affects the local tourism industry. Aside from negative advertisements, incidents which have happened to some tourists have further contributed to this negative image. Such incidents include taxi kidnapping, theft and larceny by hoodlums, bag theft by motorists, market pickpocketing, pickpocketing in bus terminals, anesthetizing tourists by sleeping pills, ignoring traffic rules, hazards due to accidents, aircraft incidents, lack of trust in Iran aircrafts, and presence of addicts in terminals, airports, and main streets. Security incidents at tourist destinations result in diminishing tourist arrivals. The ramifications of a perceived high-risk image of the affected destinations can be long-term and highly difficult and expensive to recover from. Moreover, when countries are reliant on tourism receipts, groups that desire to destabilize the government will observe it pleasing to cut off some of the government's finance by probing to reduce tourism (Neumayer, 2004).

Tourist destinations should conduct well-coordinated efforts to retain tourists' trust. Yasuj, as a historic city with plenty of tourist attractions, is naturally ripe for development of international tourism. One vital prerequisite for sustained development of tourism is security. Here the police, as a key provider of security, can play a significant role. However, a major issue of concern is the extent to which police can increase security and generate a feeling of

security in tourists. Another important issue deals with the extent to which security provision can impact tourist intentions for revisiting the city and recommending it to friends and relatives. The present research attempted to provide an accurate explanation of the role of police in tourism development and in provision of social and psychological security for tourists as well as the impact of police presence on security enhancement in Yasuj.

The Literature Review

Bailey (1982) proposed a scientific theory of security which predicted and explained security and tourism issues through identification of relationships among a number of factors such as crime, terrorism, civil war, and street riots which influence insecurity. In his theory, he examined some phenomena including tourism demand variables at tourist destinations, declared or undeclared motives of criminals, victims' behavior, and time and location of crime. The ultimate goal of this theory was to discover the relationship between security variables and some crime occurrences and increase in the number of crimes perpetrated against tourists. According to Baily (1982), negative advertisements exert substantial influence on tourist withdrawals. He also found that presence of a large number of uniformed tourist guards to ensure tourist security in tourist destinations lowers tourist revisits because tourists regard overwhelming presence of police in a specific destination as an indicator of insecurity in the area (Pizam & Mansfield, 1982).

Another theory pertinent to security and tourism is Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs theory. It is one of the most popular theories which explain human phenomena including customer behavior in tourism and defines each level of human needs and predicts their relative importance. However, much evidence is against this theory. The theory holds that individuals try to satisfy their basic needs and, meanwhile, attempt to meet higher level needs such as love or belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. In an article on current state of tourism in Arabic countries including Egypt, Steiner (2006) points out that these countries despite possessing special tourist attractions have been a failure in generating large income. He also analyzed the effects of such inefficiency and attributed it largely to the lack of security and presence of social and psychological threats as well as lack of optimal services. Steiner (2006) concluded that devoting great attention to tourist safety is highly influential in tourism promotion. Hall (2008) compared current state of tourism across different countries and examined some major barriers to personal and psychological security. In addition, he strongly recommended that developing countries tackle this problem through deploying more

tourist guards. Maleki (2002) carried out a sociological analysis of factors influencing tourist satisfaction and stated that there is a positive relationship between tourist demographic and economic factors, tourist awareness and experiences, advertising, political situation of Iran, tourist attractions, religion, and nationality on the one hand and tourist satisfaction on the other.

Overall, the existing literature shows that industrial countries, in comparison with Iran, have a longer history of research into police services aimed at boosting security and promote tourism.

Theoretical Framework

Generally, police protect tourists from actual and potential dangers. Some steps police take to ensure security of tourists and protect them from possible hazards are monitoring tourists' activities, protection of monuments and recreation centers, issuing timely and accurate security communications, supervision over the performance of tourism service infrastructures such as hotels, restaurants, and travel agencies, creating a feeling of security in tourists, implementing tourist education programs to train tourists in local values, rules, and regulations and instructing them to respect these values and observe security precautions, building awareness of possible dangers in specific times and places, domestic prosecution of tourist and non-tourist criminals, and preventing of any immoral or illegal activities against tourists. According to Tarlow (2005), tourist guards have four major roles in ensuring tourist security including protecting visitors which facilitates growth of local economy, provision of optimal security services which portrays a positive image of the community, establishing standard of living which is then pursued by security officers in their personal lives, and opening up opportunities for tourists to understand different cultures and values. Regarding tourist security and safety in tourist destinations, World Tourism Organization (WTO) (1997) notes that according to the fundamental security principle, a guest is responsible for their security at a hotel. However, the hotel is expected to create necessary conditions for the guest to fully perform this personal responsibility (Chiang, 1996).

It is the responsibility of police to protect the life of guests and tourist personnel and their properties from theft. Some security measures taken by police involve easy availability of police in emergencies, improving lightening of pedestrian areas and building exterior areas, security provision for parking lots and hotel and room entrances through modern technologies and without need for much visible presence of police, supervision over hotel watchmen, and

checking guest room keys. Security communications of police and their timely presence may have a strong influence on lowering such dangers. Police also have a major bearing on recreation and historic preservation and conservation of historic and cultural buildings and monuments. With regard to protection of natural environment, police is expected to adopt appropriate methods to increase tourist security. These palaces show culture, art, history, and civilization of a country, therefore, their theft or destruction damages the civilization of the country. One frequently used method is mobile police presence or establishing temporary police boxes.

Every country experiences particular security issues and challenges relative to its political, economic, geographical, social, and cultural characteristics. Some instances of countries and their relevant challenges are provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Tourism Challenges in Different Countries

Country	Tourism Security Issues	Crisis	Role and Performance of Police
European Countries	Disappearance of Girls	E.U.'s media and communication rules of European authorities	The police are very professional in police affairs, but extremely weak in communications.
Jamaica	Unabated Crime, Murder, and Racism	Recent drastic decrease in the number of tourist arrivals	The police are poorly trained and corrupt. Majority of people have little trust in force of law.
Kenya	Crime, Corruption, and Terrorism	Plagued with extensive terrorism	The police are notoriously corrupt and do not receive reasonable salary and training.
England	Terrorism	Considerable number of tourists and widespread use of English makes it difficult for the police to set apart residents from tourists.	The police are extremely professional. Surveillance cameras are widely used.
Mexico	Crime and Murder	Police agencies are completely devastated, especially in borders of U. S. and Mexico as well as Mexico City.	The police are totally corrupt and do not receive reasonable salary.

Measures Taken by Yasuj Police to Offer Security Services to International Tourists

Police activities for better provision of foreign tourists with security services include establishing special police boxes for foreigners, security measures to prevent crime, prosecution of criminals perpetrating crimes against tourists, particularly theft, and identification and prosecution of street robbers and offenders. Other police activities deal with setting up tourism patrol units, issuing security warnings, inspection of tourist residential areas, seeking assistance from other police units in protecting tourist residential areas, providing visitors with directions for travel on safe and well-patrolled routes, and pursuing court cases of tourists.

Despite hard efforts of the police to ensure tourist security, tourist incidents are inevitable. Molestation, theft, disappearance (tourists' getting lost due to unfamiliarity with their

surroundings), fraud, and mayhem are rampant crimes against tourists. The most notorious crime, however, is theft. It is imperative to mention that many thefts attempted at tourists are immediately discovered by Yasuj police at the site of the incident.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses are hoped to be answered in current research:

H₁: There is a significant relationship between security services of police and motives of international tourists to revisit Yasuj.

H₂: Personal and financial security of international tourists is significantly associated with their intentions for revisiting Yasuj.

H₃: There is a significant relationship between security services of police and social and psychological security of foreign visitors.

H₄: There is a significant relationship between increased police presence in tourist sites and social security of foreign tourists.

H₅: Increased police presence in tourist sites is significantly associated with tourists' personal and financial security.

H₆: There is a significant relationship between security services of police offered in tourist sites and the level of personal and financial security of tourists.

H₇: Security services of police are significantly associated with psychological security of visitors.

H₈: There is a significant relationship between increased presence of tourist guards and police in tourist sites and a feeling of psychological security on the part of tourists.

Methods

Participants

The present study was a cross-sectional one, and the research population was all foreign tourists who entered Yasuj in 2011 and visited its popular tourist resorts and recreation centers. The sample of this research incorporated only tourists visiting Yasuj. To test our hypotheses, we gathered data from 325 foreign tourists, the number of which was estimated through Cochran method. Non-probability, convenience sampling technique was chosen for the purpose of the study.

Procedure

This research fits within the category of applied research. Correlations among variables were analyzed through Pearson's coefficient. The data are obtained from primary, i.e. survey questionnaire and secondary (library) research methods. Participants who were foreign tourists were asked to fill a researcher-made questionnaire concerning their attitude towards security in Yasuj.

Results

Yasuj possesses plenty of tourist attractions and recreation centers. Black and Sinclair (2003) believed that tourism is particularly influenced by security and health concerns. The focus of this article was the extent to which tourists are satisfied with security in Yasuj. The results revealed that 79 per cent of foreign tourists were highly satisfied with the current state of security in the city; 19 per cent were quite satisfied; and just a very limited number, i.e., 2 per cent were not satisfied. Such a large number indicated that tourists almost had no concerns about their security in the city.

   As Table 2 shows, approximately 90 per cent of international tourists were highly satisfied with their financial security in Yasuj, whereas 9.4 per cent were moderately satisfied and 13.3 were hardly satisfied. In many top tourist destinations, for example Turkey, tourist police communicate enough information regarding potential incidents and issue security warnings. According to Table 2, approximately 53 per cent of visitors were highly satisfied with security communications of Yasuj police; 45 per cent were quite satisfied; and 2 per cent were far from satisfied. With regard to police supervision over performance of hotels and restaurants, the figures show that 52 per cent of foreign tourists were highly satisfied, whereas 47 per cent were quite satisfied and 1 per cent was hardly satisfied. Concerning tourist satisfaction with safety of transportation vehicles and routes and absence of accidents, 85.6 per cent were highly satisfied, while 11.9 per cent were moderately satisfied and 2.5 per cent were not satisfied. In addition, 88.4 per cent were highly satisfied with the current state of security in the city and absence of uprising; 11 per cent were quite satisfied; and just 0.6 per cent was anything but satisfied, which was trivial compared with the number of those who were extremely satisfied.

The results of this study suggested that approximately 21 per cent of tourists believed that increased presence of police strengthens security and generates a feeling of fearlessness. 60 per cent considered this effect to be mediocre, and 22 per cent considered it minimal.

The extent to which tourists are interested in the city and satisfied with it considerably affects their intentions for revisit and recommendation. As Table 2 shows, approximately 78 per cent of tourists expressed great interest in the city and had strong motives of revisit, 19 per cent had average interest and motives, and 3 per cent had little interest and motives of revisit. Additionally, approximately 83 per cent showed high intentions for recommendation, medium, and 2 per cent, little intention to recommend the city to friends and relatives.

Table 2
Tourist Attitudes towards Security and Tourism

Indicator	Frequency			Percentage		
	High	Average	Low	High	Average	Low
Satisfaction with Financial Security	286	30	4	89.4	9.4	1.2
Satisfaction with Police Communications of Security	170	145	5	53.1	45.3	1.6
Satisfaction with Police Supervision over Performance of Hotel, Restaurant, and Travel Agencies	166	151	3	51.9	47.2	0.9
Satisfaction with Personal Security and Absence of Incidents in Tourist Destinations	274	38	8	85.6	11.9	2.5
Satisfaction with Personal Security and Absence of Riots and Unrest	283	35	2	88.4	10.9	0.7
Satisfaction with Increased Police Presence	253	60	7	79.1	17.8	2.2
A Feeling of Personal and Property Security	288	20	12	0.90	6.2	3.7
Extent of Revisit Intentions	70	179	71	21.5	55.9	22.6
Extent of Intentions for Recommendation	251	60	9	78.4	18.8	2.8

To analyze the possible relationship between police services and security, as independent variables, and increase in motives of revisiting Yasuj, as dependent variables, we performed step-wise regression analysis. According to determination coefficient, 0.25, and justified determination coefficient, 0.23, reported in columns four and five of Table 2, approximately 23 per cent of visitor motives of revisiting the city could be attributed to security services of police and current state of personal security in the city. The remaining 77 per cent derived from other factors. In addition, multiple correlation coefficients estimated at 0.48 indicated an average correlation between dependent (X) and independent (Y) variables. Given F, which is 48.5, at 99 per cent significance level (Sig= .000), there was a strong correlation between the dependent and independent variables.

Table 3
Correlation, Determination, and Justified Determination Coefficients and Significance of the Relationship between Security Services of Police (X_1), Security (X_2), and Tourist's Revisit Intentions

Sig.	F	Justified Determination Coefficient	Determination Coefficient	R	B
0.00	48.5	0.23	0.25	0.48	$X_1 = 0.27$
					$X_2 = 0.26$

Table 4 shows the relationship between the police presence in tourist sites and their security services on the one hand and the level of tourists' social security on the other. As Table 4 shows, approximately 56 per cent of satisfaction with social security stems from security services of police and their presence in tourist sites, and the remainder comes from other factors. The multiple correlation coefficient, 0.61, showed a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The level of F, 60.1, at 99 per cent significance level (Sig= .000), also proved that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables was statistically significant.

Table 4
Correlation, Determination, and Justified Determination Coefficients and Significance of the Relationship between Security Services of Police (X_1), their Visible Presence (X_2), and Tourists' Social Security (Y) Intentions

Sig	F	Justified Determination Coefficient	Determination Coefficient	R	B
0.00	60.1	0.56	0.58	0.61	X_1= 0.39
					X_2 = 0.14

According to determination coefficient, 0.38, and justified determination coefficient, 0.37, approximately 37 per cent of tourist security comes from security services of police and their presence. Multiple correlation coefficient of 0.61 also showed that the correlation between independent variables, i.e., police presence and their security services, and dependent variables– personal and financial security of tourists, was strong. F and significance levels, 94.2 and .000 respectively, proved that the relationship between the dependent and independent variables was statistically significant.

Table 5
Correlation, Determination, and Justified Determination Coefficients and Significance of the Relationship between Police Presence, their Security Services, and Tourist Security

Sig.	F	Justified Determination Coefficient	Determination Coefficient	R	B
0.00	94.2	0.37	0.38	0.61	X_1= 0.51
					X_2 = 0.17

Finally, we analyzed the relationship between police presence and security services, as independent variables and psychological security as dependent variable. The results appear in Table 6.

Table 6
Correlation, Determination, and Justified Determination Coefficients and Significance of the Relationship between Security Services of Police (X_1) and Tourists' Psychological Security (X_2) in Yasuj

Sig.	F	Justified Determination Coefficient	Determination Coefficient	R	B
0.00	158.3	0.33	0.34	0.68	0.61

As mentioned earlier, to analyze the relationship between dependent and independent variables, step-wise regression analysis was performed. In the first step security services of police was inserted into the equation and its correlation coefficient with dependent variable (R), psychological security, was estimated at 0.68. At this stage, determination and justified determination coefficients were, respectively, 0.34 and 0.33 which showed that there was a strong correlation between these two variables and that there was a strong correlation between security services of police and psychological security of tourists. Justified determination coefficient also showed that 33 per cent of psychological security of tourists stemmed from security services of police while police presence was excluded from the equation and could not explain the dependent variable. Thus, the correlation between increased police presence and psychological security of tourists was weak. In the remainder of this section, results directly relevant to the research hypotheses are presented. Next section deals with discussing these results.

Discussion and Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to explore the impact of increased police presence on psychological security of tourists. There are two important theories with regard to the impact of increased police presence in tourist sites. One theory holds that increased police presence increases security and generates a feeling of fearlessness. On the contrary, the second theory argues that overwhelming presence of police gives rise to tourist anxiety and fear since tourists attribute increased presence of police to lack of security in the area.

Firstly, the results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between security services of police and tourist intentions for revisiting Yasuj. Thus, H_1 was confirmed. Secondly, personal and financial security of tourists were significantly associated with revisit intentions; therefore, H_2 was supported too. Thirdly, there was a significant relationship between visible police presence and social and psychological security of tourists. H_3 was also confirmed. Fourthly, increased police presence came to be significantly related to social security of tourists. Thus, the fourth hypothesis was supported. Next, there was a significant relationship between security services of police in tourist sites and personal and financial

security of tourists. This led to the confirmation of H_5. The results further revealed that the relationship between security services of police and security guards and personal and financial security of tourists was of statistical significance and that security services of police and tourists' psychological security were statistically associated. These two findings led to confirmation of H_6 and H_7. Finally, presence of police and security guards in tourist sites and psychological security of tourists were negatively associated. Therefore, the last hypothesis was rejected.

Today, the involvement of tourism with both developing and industrialized countries is so strong that any downturns in the level of activity in the industry are elements for concern. The ramifications develop beyond activities directly connected with tourism, airlines, hotels, and catering, to those supplying intermediate or final goods purchased by firms and employees in the industry, so all sectors of the economy are affected to a greater or lesser extent (Blake & Sinclair, 2003). Peace, safety, and security are essential situations for successful tourism development (Pizam & Mansfield, 1982). Therefore, due to central importance of tourism industry and the income it generates for top tourist destinations, it is extremely important to devote particular attention to security of foreign tourists. Police and security services have instrumental role; therefore, they offer tourists many top tourist destinations have embarked on establishing tourist police.

The results of the present study revealed that there was a high level of satisfaction with the current state of security in tourist resorts, recreation centers, and tourist residential areas in Yasuj. This is good news for the police. However, there was not enough satisfaction with regard to the police security warnings and their supervision over performance of tourism infrastructure. Most surprisingly, the tourists were not satisfied with overwhelming presence of police in tourist sites and had negative attitudes toward it. What follows is a discussion of the responses to research hypotheses postulated at the beginning of the study.

H_1 asked whether there was a relationship between security services of police and tourist intentions for revisiting Yasuj. Security services of police came to be significantly related to revisit intentions. Security services of police include all measures taken by police to provide security and comfort for tourists. Such activities encompass issuing security warnings, providing visitors with directions for travel on safe and well-patrolled routes, offering guidance on how to buy products, protect children and the elderly, use ATM machines, exchange currencies, use ID cards, and raising awareness of economic corruptions, money laundry in some shopping centers, and awareness of how to use foods and drinks

appropriately. Therefore, the greater security services of police, the higher the possibility of tourist revisits. H_2 addressed the possible relationship between personal and financial security of tourists and tourists' revisit intention. According to the results, there was a significant negative relationship between these two variables. Put differently, the lower personal and financial risks are, the higher the possibility of tourist revisits.

H_3 inquired if security services of police were significantly associated with social and psychological security of tourists. There was a significant positive relationship between the two variables. H_4 dealt with the relationship between police presence in tourist sites and social security of tourists. The relationship between these two variables was statistically significant too. H_5 asked whether there was a relationship between police presence in tourist resorts and personal and financial security of tourists. The two variables were closely related.

H_6 targeted the relationship between increased security services of police and tourist guards and tourist personal and financial security. The results revealed that there was a relationship between the two variables and that the relationship was significant. Thus, the more police forces are visible in tourist sites, the greater the presence of privacy and individual and social freedom, as indicators of social security. H_7 inquired if there was a significant relationship between security services of police offered in tourist resorts and psychological security of tourists. The significant negative relationship between the two variables indicated that the more efficient security services of police are, the fewer tourists are concerned about their psychological security and the more tourists will feel that their human rights including rights for privacy and individual and personal freedom are respected.

Ultimately, H_8 addressed the relationship between presence of police and security guards in tourist sites and psychological security of tourists. We expected that more presence of tourist guards and police would enhance psychological security of tourists. However, the results revealed otherwise. The variables turned out to be negatively associated. In other words, the larger the number of police and security guards present at tourist sites, the less secure the foreign tourists feel because they attribute the overwhelming presence of tourist police to insecurity in the area. This finding is partially in line with Baily (1982) who suggested that presence of a large number of tourist guards gives tourists the impression that the area is insecure and, thus, lessens revisit intentions.

To put it in a nutshell, the current study aimed to investigate the impact of police presence and their services on tourist satisfaction, tourist intentions for revisit and recommendation, and increasing tourism numbers in Yasuj. It was a particularly interesting question for

countries, such as Iran, which possess great tourist attractions. The results of this study shed further light on the current understanding of the role of police, as security provider, in tourism industry growth. The study found that foreign tourists were satisfied with the current state of security in Yasuj. However, they showed little satisfaction with communications of police regarding security incidents and issuing warnings as well as their supervision over the performance of tourism infrastructure. More importantly, our findings indicated that foreign visitors were not satisfied with the level of police visibility in tourist sites because they regarded overwhelming presence of police as a sign of insecurity in the area. There was at least one limitation in this article. Our results were merely based on subjective data, i.e., responses participants provided to questionnaire items. These conclusions needed further support through follow-up studies that target the issue empirically. Below some suggestions are made for enhancing tourist security in Yasuj.

Firstly, greater attention needs to be granted to the issue of tourist security in Iran, in general, and in Yasuj, in particular. This calls for the establishment of an organization with sufficient labor force who are skilled in using the international language, with uniforms specific to tourist police, provision of necessary tools and equipment for protecting tourists, and familiarity with different city areas including tourist resorts, tourist residential areas, restaurants, hospitals, clinics, and shopping centers. This helps meet tourists' security and communications-related needs.

Secondly, setting up tourist guards in important tourist sites of Yasuj, namely bus terminals, airports, historic places, and shopping centers and police patrols in natural tourist resorts can also be instrumental in provision of security. Thirdly, substituting excessive presence of police in tourist sites with electronic devices such as surveillance cameras is influential because overwhelming presence of police creates the impression of an unsafe tourist destination. Even when tourists are not concerned about their personal safety, they may be repelled by police forces needed to protect them from incidents. Fourthly, diversification of security services of police through utilizing the methods used by top tourist destinations as well as suggestions proposed in the current paper can help increase the level of tourist satisfaction and, thus, positively impact the flow of tourism.

Another suggestion is greater investment in and attention to advertising the secure environment of Iran in particular Yasuj. Availability of image enhancement programs can help bring the tourists back to the destination and help offset the negative impacts of the

image portrayed by international media advertisements. The negative image fades as time goes by.

Other constructive suggestions include seriously following foreign tourist complaints by police to gain tourist satisfaction, and careful supervision of police over the performance of hotels, transportation systems, travel agencies, and shopping centers; enhancing residents' culture concerning human rights, namely privacy and social and psychological rights, of tourists through schools, universities, and media; and more collaboration among police, cultural heritage, handicraft, and tourism organizations.

Implications

Since tourists are sensitive to the negative image of a tourist destination, actions of violence can influence a tourist destination long even after the event has happened. Tourism will only bounce back to its before-incident level if the negative image disappears from their minds. This might even take years, depending on how sustained the incident has been. This article is a start in an area ripe for further research. Future studies may target the time necessary to eradicate the negative image from the minds of tourists and bring tourists back in incidents such as theft, larceny, pickpocketing, bag theft, and kidnapping.

Countries with a negative image due to past events often attempt to improve their image with aggressive advertising campaigns to portray themselves as entirely safe destinations. More research can be performed to see how an image due to propaganda, rather than past events, can be eradicated from tourists' mind and the time it will take. In addition, despite its significant importance for tourism, the influence of incidents such as violence has rarely been given great scholarly attention (Sonmez, 1998). Finally, studies, especially those performed on violence, focus on specific countries, or at best, a region. To the best of our knowledge, so far no study with a global coverage has been undertaken.

References

Armaghan, S. (2008). *Tourism and its role in geography*. Tehran: Islamic Azad University Publications.

Baily, K. D. (1982). *Methods of social research* (2nd ed.). New York: Free Press.

Blake, A., & Sinclaire, M. T. (2003). Tourism crisis management: U.S. response to September 11. *Annals of Tourism Research, 3*0(4), 813–832.

Chiang, L. C. (1996). Strategies for safety and security in tourism: A conceptual framework for the Singapore hotel industry. *Journal of Tourism Studies, 11*(2), 69–89.

Hall, C. M., & O'Sullivan, V. (1996). Tourism, political instability, and violence. In A. Pizam and Y. Mansfeld (Eds), *Tourism, crime, and international security issues* (pp. 105–121). New York: John Wiley.

Hall, C. M. (2008). *Travel and tourism in the third world*. New York: Rotledge.

Kerr, B., Barron, G., & Wood, R. C. (2001). Politics, policy, and regional tourism administration: A case examination of Scottish area tourist board funding. *Tourism Management, 22*(6), 649–657.

Lancaster, K. J. (1971). *Consumer demand*: *A new approach*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Maleki, H. (2002). *Sociological analysis of factors affecting tourist satisfaction* (Unpublished master's thesis). Shiraz University, Shiraz.

Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

McIntosh, R. W., Goeldner, C. R., & Ritchie, J. R. B. (1995). *Tourism: Principles, practices, philosophies* (7th ed). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Mikaeili, T. A. R. (1996). *Physical planning of recreational land use in Gilan province of Iran* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Chukurova, Turkey.

Neumayer, E. (2004). The impact of political violence on tourism: Dynamic cross-national estimation. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 48*(2), 259–281.

Pizam, A., & Mansfield, Y. (1982). *Toward a theory of tourism security*. London: Longman.

Sonmez, S. F. (1998). Tourism, terrorism, and political instability. *Annals of Tourism Research, 25*(2), 416–456.

Sonmez, S. F., & Graefe, A. R. (1998). Influence of tourism risk on foreign tourism decisions. *Annals of Tourism Research, 25*(1), 112–144.

Steiner, C. (2006). *Social distance, security threats, and tourism volatility*. Germany: University of Mainz Publications.

Tarlow, P. (2005). Dark tourism: The appealing dark side of tourism and more. In M. Novelli (Eds.), Niche tourism: Contemporary issues, trends, and cases (pp.47–57). Oxford: Elsevier.