Evaluation and Identification of Barriers to Tourism in Islamic Countries

Seyfi Ozguzel[*]

[*]Cukurova University, Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Today, tourism is recognized as the world's largest and most diverse industry. Despite their significant potential in attracting tourists, Islamic countries have not been that successful in this area. The main question raised in the present study is that: what are the barriers to attracting tourists in these countries? The research was carried out by a library method, and the results showed six categories of barriers to tourism in Islamic countries, including: 1) structural, 2) cultural and religious, 3) economic, 4) human, 5) legal, and 6) political and international barriers.

1. Introduction

Tourism now ranks third in the world in terms of revenue generation. Extensive efforts have been dedicated to the improvement and development of this industry by continuous designing of programs to establish excellence, earn revenues and create jobs through this industry (Najar Vazifedan, Rahbari, & Zarin, 2010). Recognition of the importance and tourism capacities in the national development strategy and global development plans is a reality. Tourism is recognized by the United Nations (UN) as one of 10 sectors affecting the green economy. In addition, tourism is among the sectors that can create the potential for establishing "significant cooperation in the field of sustainable development" through interaction with other sectors. Moreover, tourism is suitable for creating job and business opportunities (Mataranlouei, 2015). Tourism plays a significant role in economic development and growth. Not only the activities in this field lead to the investment of the private sector, but also most governments spend a lot of their human and financial resources on such national income (i.e., tourism), which has had considerable impacts on the economic growth of countries, decreasing their economic dependence on a single source (Lotfi, 2008).

A review of the geography and history of Islamic countries shows that the Islamic world can have good potential in the tourism industry. Several Islamic countries such as Egypt, Iran, Turkey are countries that have a long civilization due to having great power. In addition, they have many historical places such as mosques, city squares, old cities, as well as old and adobe shrines and villages, which can be an important factor for tourism attraction. Every tourist that comes in creates different jobs within each country. Even if we look at it from an eco-tourism point of view, it is clear that many Islamic countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, especially Lebanon, Iran and some other Arab and African countries have a very attractive climate and nature and suitable geographical and natural environment, which can be a factor for tourist attraction. While the Muslim world could be a good base of tourism, we have seen many countries take full advantage of this industry in Asia, particularly Taiwan, China, and many European and African countries that are not members of the Islamic world. Even among Islamic countries, Turkey and Malaysia have taken advantage of this issue to some extent.

Compared to many other sources of economic income generation, tourism can be a huge source of income for Islamic countries, provided they have tourist attraction components. According to the WTO forecasts (World Trade Organization), countries in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, most of which are Islamic, will still have a small share of the industry's revenues) by 2020. Meanwhile, most Islamic countries such as Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Lebanon, Malaysia, Tunisia, Indonesia, and Morocco are among the most popular and attractive tourist destinations (Donya-e-Eqtesad Newspaper, 2010). Evaluation of the direct link between tourism and foreign exchange earnings and achieving economic development encourages experts to offer solutions to attract foreign tourists, especially from rich and wealthy countries. Some experts only address the problems and their importance, whereas others provide solutions as well. Nonetheless, their solutions often remain unused in libraries and the related authorities may not be eager to even read the solutions. Countries that have the requirements of sustainable tourism can attract more of the world's tourists. Without a doubt, advanced countries are more successful in this field due to the current conditions and technological, economic and scientific inequalities. Meanwhile, the majority of Islamic countries are developing and among the third-world countries (Varesi & Heydari, the role of Islamic tourism in the convergence of Islamic countries, 2010).

As one of the largest political and economic organizations in the world, the organization of Islamic cooperation (OIC) has put the development of tourism industry on its agenda in the field of cooperation among Islamic countries, especially south-south cooperation, taking effective steps in this regard such as naming the year 2010 as the year of Islamic tourism (Varesi & Heydari, the role of Islamic tourism in the convergence of Islamic countries, 2010). The Islamic world and OIC members are a vast and diverse set of environmental, economic, social and cultural conditions, which have a variety of tourism attractions. These features have created excellent capacities for the development of different types of tourism. Despite the geographical diversity and cultural richness of the OIC member countries, they have a small share of the tourism market and most of the tourism market is limited to a few Islamic countries. Meanwhile, tourism can play a significant role in the economic-cultural development of these countries (Rezvani, 2010).

The World Economic Forum (WEF) releases a biennial report on the competitiveness of the tourism industry, in which the countries of the world are assessed in terms of many indicators of this area. The index of tourism and travel competitiveness is measured based on four main components of environmental empowerment, tourism policies, infrastructure and natural and cultural resources, each classified with more detailed components. Overall, the travel and tourism competitiveness index include 14 criteria. According to the WEF report in 2017, Spain ranks first in travel and tourism competitiveness index for the second time, followed by France, Germany, Japan (with a five-level leap), United Kingdom, United States of America (with a two-level decline), Australia, Italy, Canada (with a one-level leap), India (with a four-level decline).

Iran has been among the Islamic countries with a high potential in terms of tourism attraction. According to the latest WEF reports, Iran was ranked 114th out of 139 countries in 2011, 98th out of 140 countries in 2013, 97th out of 141 countries in 2015, and 93rd out of 136 countries in 2017. With an average of 5.2 million international tourists arriving in Iran and about $3.5 billion in spending in 2017, the average income per tourist was $665.1 in Iran. Overall, the $10.1 billion value added in the travel and tourism industry accounts for 2.5% of Iran's total GDP, and with 476,000 jobs, this area accounts for 1.9% of the country's total employment (Iran's Position in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index, 2017).

2. Tourism Industry

An art phenomenon and the invention of a variety of technology borne by the human mind and hands, the industry is used in the flow of transaction turnover of incomes obtained from the economic wheels of countries. In tourism, which is a profitable phenomenon economically, the entrance of tourists to countries increases their foreign exchange reserves. Tourism is considered an industry since in the age of communication, tourism is necessary for flourishing and introducing the Islamic culture (Ketabi, 2007). This industry is so profitable that many countries have made revenues from this low-cost and highly profitable industry as much as the oil revenues of Iran. In fact, the tourism industry is the third job and asset generating industry following oil and automotive manufacturing industries. Therefore, most governments, economic authorities, and experts have focused on the development of the tourism industry in the past few decades with more sensitivity, attempting to achieve a greater share of the global market in this regard. Tourism has become one of the most important economic activities of countries in the past decades. According to the forecast by UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization), the income generated by international tourism will reach $1.6 billion by 2020. As a global system, a significant part of the world's GDP is related to this industry.

2.1. Tourism History in Turkey

Sometimes, it seems that tourism is a new phenomenon in human history while this unit or industry has roots in the collective human life since ancient times and has existed in various forms of tourism. In prehistoric civilizations, people traveled to get food and avoid danger or move to areas with a better climate. In the next periods, the motivation for trade and commodity exchange was added to the above reasons. With the expansion of the ancient empires, official government trips began to send the governor's representatives to distant places, to start wars, or to receive taxation. During the reign of the royal families in Egypt, trips were made with business and entertainment purposes. Centuries before Christ, the Phoenicians, who were traders, traveled by sea and land to sell their products and buy goods and other products. Their courage and acceptance of danger paved the way for the spread of civilization and different cultures and familiarization with other nations. In addition, Roman businessmen traveled within the vast territory of the Roman Empire.

Ancient Greece improved and developed traveling and tourism at two stages; first by mintage and second by expanding the Greek language across the Mediterranean area, which made it easy for travelers to communicate with each other. During the Middle Ages (fifth to fourth centuries), travel and commerce lost their importance and most of the trips were ordered by the Christian Church for pilgrimage. In the 14th century, traveling for pilgrimage had become a massively organized phenomenon. During the Renaissance (fourteenth to seventeenth centuries), most trips were made with goals such as increasing knowledge and learning experience. The Industrial Revolution, lasting 1750 to 1850, became the basis for tours.

Social changed modified jobs and expanded the middle class of societies. In fact, the middle class was able to more travel and have leisure time. The industrial revolution also led to the emergence of machines, locomotives, and ships that worked with steam power. Another important phenomenon affecting the tourism industry was new banking technologies, such as travel checks designed by the Americans. Increased revenues, increased leisure time, and the development of fast and cheap transport networks all created conditions that boosted tourism (Lotfi, 2008).

2.2. Tourism History in Islam

In post-Islamic times, there was an increase in the popularity of tourism and travel, and many tourists of the Islamic world, such as Ibn Battuta, who was globally known and his travel memoirs have been used as an important source of modern studies. At that time, the Hajj pilgrimage was an important motivation for long trips from different parts of the Islamic world, including Iran. Tourists would travel to Mecca with this motivation and then visit other parts of the world. Saadi Shirazi enrolled at the Nizamiyya University in Baghdad in the early seventh century AH to gain knowledge, and started his long trips after that. Nasir Khusraw was another famous Iranian poet and tourist, who traveled a lot during his life and his name is remembered as one of the

travel literature writers and tourists of the Islamic period. Most lands were discovered by Muslims for the first time. For instance, Sulaiman al-Tajir was the first person to describe the land of China and Ahmad ibn Fadlan provided the first report on Russia (Kordi, 2017).

The link between Regionalism, Tourism, and Development

Over its 60-year history, regionalism has been divided into different periods and its last period is the new regionalism, where evolution and its peak since the 90s are mentioned. The basis of regionalism is motivation, persuasion and even formation of regional blocks in east, south, and southwest of Asia to prevent the penetration of communism. Today, the history of international relations also reflects the different tendencies of people around the world towards regionalism and the approach of countries to create a new legal order, which can be formed on different bases such as geographical, ideological, and political affinity. Regionalism is often evolutionary, and the scope of cooperation is gradually deepening. The trend of regionalism shows that in today's world, especially with the process of globalization and its impact on the practice and ways of thinking about the international organization at the global and regional levels, there are differences with the background of early regionalism. In fact, globalization with the information technology revolution exacerbated the need for transnational (regional and trans-regional) organization and transnational activities require transnational management.

New regionalism thinkers have several implications for it (Eftekhari & Hasanpour, 2009):

- The consolidation of shared values through the overlap of national identities of regional members
- The decrease in the risk of confrontation between members and achieving regional security against surrounding threats
- Appropriate structures for achieving common security in defense and economic areas

According to the theory of the "security community" proposed by Karl Deutsch in 1957, Islamic countries can, at the international level, provide their interests if they can communicate with one another in a way that they would think with each other, see with each other, and ultimately, act with each other. Therefore, in addition to material factors, the role of factors such as knowledge, beliefs, and influences from the same normative environment is also crucial. Accordingly, the cultural and normative similarities are the main context of cooperation, including regionalism, which must meet the following criteria (Eftekhari & Hasanpour, 2009):

- Collective identity
- Shared political identities
- Stable interactions and interdependence among members
- Multilateral institutionalism in decision makings
- Strengthening the sense of mutual trust between members
- Strengthening shared ideas and norms among members

Accordingly, the member states of the Islamic Conference must strive for a clear and coherent policy in order to realize these principles. According to the criteria, conditions, and factors that shape regionalism, a specific pattern of regionalism can be implemented in each region since the conditions, cultures, and characteristics of each region are different from those of other regions. As such, the pattern of a region cannot be completely used in another region. Despite the fact that the Organization of the Islamic Conference is essentially a political organization, the idea of expanding economic and commercial cooperation among its members has emerged as one of its important goals since its establishment. Islamic countries believe that these partnerships can play a constructive role in enhancing the political solidarity of member states in addition to boosting their economic growth and development. In addition, this affiliation can further expand their cooperation. Moreover, these partnerships have been emphasized in the Islamic Conference Organization Charter. Given these considerations, the Islamic countries have made efforts to achieve the objectives of these partnerships since the adoption of this Charter. In addition to bilateral actions at the regional level, these countries have made arrangements for convergence. In addition, they have sought to further strengthen the scope of cooperation within the framework of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and by concluding agreements and raising the issue of establishing a common Islamic market. Regardless of political considerations, tourism development is one of the most important factors playing a fundamental role in the expansion of regionalism. As a new activity paradigm between countries, tourism cannot be excluded from this topic since transnational management and planning at the regional management and planning level for tourism is an evolutionary chain and link with global tourism management and planning that can play a competitive and alternative role in regional economic, social, cultural and political contexts. Furthermore, it can be recognized as a method to support tourism management and planning among the countries of a region. In other words, countries try to prepare themselves for global spheres by organizing regional tourism. This type of thinking and feeling of need is also important because it facilitates entry into the global economy and regional agreements. With this approach, regionalism in tourism is one of the key indicators in the global economy today and can impose its dominance on national economic policies. This is mainly due to the increased economic motivations, especially the regionalism business, compared to other aspects. In this context, regionalism is recognized as open regionalism, where the presence and participation in the multilateral commercial system and support of multilateral commercial release are of paramount importance in order to increase the degree of guaranteeing more effective cooperation in the global economic system. Another goal is minimizing the level of concerns and marginalization instead of being concerned with the dependence on the world economy. Moreover, the economic implications of regional tourism are not limited to economics and commerce. The most important effects of regional tourism convergence are attracting foreign investment, improving trade relations, cultural exchanges, regional stability, and security, motivating reform consolidation and enhancing bargaining power. Therefore, in order to succeed in implementing tourism policies, a systematic, closed-minded approach to policies such as quality of human resources, financial resources, local participation and power and independence in responsibilities is essential. Policies and regulations should be structured and operationalized based on time and some form of delegated authority and decentralization and central area. Implementation of a uniform policy model in geographic regions will not be very successful if forced by decision-making centers (Eftekhari & Hasanpour, 2009).

3. Theoretical Background

Most writers consider tourism a unique economic opportunity. As a non-polluting industry, tourism has its own enablers and fans in the present age. The huge growth of tourism in the past 50 years is indicative of the significant economic and social importance of this phenomenon. According to the World Tourism Organization, the total number of tourists in the world was about 25 million in 1950 and about 700 million in 2000, expecting to reach one billion and 600 million people by 2020. These figures represent a seven percent increase over 50 years (1950-2000). In addition, tourism revenue was $105 billion in 1980, which reached $476 billion in 2000 and is expected to reach about $1 trillion and $590 million by 2020 (Mehrabi, Khalili, & Khalfi, 2012). Given the important role of travelers and tourists as a source of foreign exchange earnings, tourism plays a crucial role in the national GDP. The balance of payments, which represents the international transactions of each country, is a source of data on the economic importance of tourism. In this respect, Lewis Turner considered tourism as the most promising and complicated industry in the third world, believing that tourism has the most potential to replace other income-generating industries. Nonetheless, the economic role and importance of tourism should not lead to the overlooking of other dimensions, including the cultural area. The tendency of people around the world to find the easiest and most effective way to talk about cultures has made tourism's role in these interactions more vital. Tourism is politically important as well since people get to use the sweet and bitter experiences of governance throughout history and in different civilizations. In addition to establishing emotional links, people can view other cultures with a wider perspective, and the political relations of civilizations would be more balanced based on the economy and understanding of nations. Without a doubt, proximity and cultural ties of nations play a significant role in their comprehensive development since the foundation of their relationships is peace and friendship and consequently economic relations (Mehrabi, Khalili, & Khalfi, 2012).

In a research entitled "eco-tourism in the third world, obstacles, and perspectives to achieve sustainability", researchers attempted to assess the eco-tourism of several third-world countries, including Venezuela, Kenya, Belize, Ecuador, Nepal, and Madagascar. In the end, it was concluded that eco-tourism became important in third-world nations when their eco-tourism regions were visited and their considerable revenue was revealed. Moreover, they marked that eco-tourism must be established as one of the new tourism methods at a small scale and within the scope of local landlord activity. First, the structural, infrastructure, and financial investment opportunities are slightly expensive due to low tourism demand. Second, business activities do not fall within the framework of world economic relations (which include multinational tourism relations), and most of their efforts, products, and services are indigenous and local in scale. Third, the capital gains that exist in most third-world countries should remain in the destination country and be used in the economic cycle (Mehrabi, Khalili, & Khalfi, 2012).

In a study entitled "the effect of tourism industry on economic, environmental, social and cultural variables of Iran", Ebrahimi confirmed the importance of evaluation of economic, environmental, social and cultural factors in the sustainable development of tourism industry and strategic marketing management with an emphasis on cultural and value features of Iran. According to this scholar, the economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits and costs must be taken into account to reach sustainable development (Mehrabi, Khalili, & Khalfi, 2012). In a research entitled "a new look at the works of tourism looking at Iran", Beyk Mohammadi used the descriptive method and prepared documents to analyze the importance of the tourism industry and its economic effect on the world and Iran. According to the results, despite its rich civilization and historical monuments and numerous cultural and natural attractions, Iran has not made much use of these capabilities. Due to the dependence of the nation's economy on oil and the problems caused by the major economic powers, foreign exchange income fluctuations face severe economic instability in this country (Mehrabi, Khalili, & Khalfi, 2012). In the book "Anthropology of Tourism", Smith considered economic, political, cultural, social and religious barriers as the most important causes of tourism development (Mehrabi, Khalili, & Khalfi, 2012).

Caroline Ashley evaluated a wide range of tourism effects on Namibia in a research entitled "the effects of tourism" in order to achieve to goals: first, demonstrating a beneficial view of tourism industry to improve national benefits and showing the difference with the view of traditional tourism that solely focuses on job and revenue creation has a small share of national benefits. Second, the researcher attempted to indicate how tourism can be developed by the right decisions made in the field (Mehrabi, Khalili, & Khalfi, 2012). In 2004, Mousaei mentioned that the variable of feeling unsafe was the main barrier to tourist attraction. He believed that feeling safe is an emotional-cultural issue and we can establish safety by proper transferring of real information about Iran, providing the necessary teachings to citizens, and expanding cultural activities (Zardan & Bahmani, 2015). In a research entitled "development of tourists", Anvin evaluated the factors affecting the development of tourists in Estonia since its revolution, depicting social, economic and environmental impacts in this regard. In particular, the mentioned scholar considered that the benefits of tourists might be less than discussed or that many of the economic benefits of tourism had a positive impact on the economy of urban areas.

Richard and Sharpley explained much of the tourism concept and its limits and how to have tourism plans in a book entitled "An Introduction to Tourism". Authors in this book referred to articles, books as well as examples of case studies that made it easier to study topics. At the end of each section, they presented a list of resources to summarize and conclude each section, believing that tourism was only one of the most credible and successful ways to develop indigenous culture. In a research entitled "tourism development in Uganda and the Czech Republic", Jenny Holland, Michelle Barin, and Louise Doxy evaluated the development of tourism in Uganda and the Czech Republic from a historical and conceptual perspective. In the end, they mentioned plans and challenges of tourism impacts in rural regions of these countries (Mehrabi, Khalili, & Khalfi, 2012). In a study on the barriers to the development of rural tourism (case study: Hareer Village, Kermanshah, Iran), Popzan et al. (2010) considered lack of infrastructure and amenities, lack of proper understanding of villagers and rural tourism officials, diminishing rural cultural attractions, lack of proper and timely information network, lack of government attention, and limitations on lack of accurate statistical information and climate change as barriers to tourism development.

According to a member of parliament's cultural commission, the major need for tourism discussion is management stability, where marginalization has taken the place of managerial stability in the cultural heritage and tourism organization (Zarei, Rahimpour, Seyed Javadin & Bagheri, 2012). Moreover, Jangchi Kashani (2004) asserted that if an area was rich in attractions but lacked amenities, it would fail in tourist acceptance (Zardan & Bahmani, 2015). In a research entitled "evaluation of facilities and limitations to tourism development in Islamic countries in the form of models and tactics of planning and strategies", Vazifedan, Rahbari & Zarin (2010) talked about tourism in Islamic countries, such as Iran. They explained issues and regulations that tourists must adhere to when entering an Islamic country, and how to plan and develop tourism in these areas despite restrictions on foreign tourists, using

models such as SWOT and EP to assess and determine levels and strategies for the tourism industry (Najar Vazifedan, Rahbari & Zarin, 2010). In an article entitled "evaluation of barriers to the development of tourism industry in the Islamic Republic of Iran", Mehrabi, Khalili & Khalfi (2012) sought to find an answer to the question of: why Iran has failed in attracting foreign tourists? using the opinions of experts in the field to evaluate the barriers to the development of tourism. According to their results, weak infrastructure was the most important barrier to tourism development, followed by political and cultural (Mehrabi, Khalili & Khalfi, 2012).

Studies by Frank Michel have shown that tourism plays a significant role in promoting development indicators in developing countries. The development of the tourism industry, on the one hand, increases the demand for domestic products and, by transferring part of the purchasing power of foreign nationals, generates foreign exchange profits for the host countries. On the other hand, by improving the infrastructure and facilities of this industry, the host countries create the conditions for the development of tourism in the region and thus accelerate the economic growth of their countries. Providing the necessary infrastructure for the development of the tourism industry requires investment and spending by the public and private sectors (Maghsoudi & Arab, 2016). Dean (1989) believes that the popularity of tourism destinations depends in part on the promotion efforts of the industry in countries. This scholar argues that Islamic countries are generally unpopular among international tourists. The tourism industry in Muslim countries is quite different, and these differences stem from the politico-religious views and attitudes of policymakers and decision-makers in these countries.

In this regard, we can point out two completely different views in Turkey and Iran. These differences do not necessarily stem from differences in the attitudes of the people of these countries, rather from the attitudes of the big policymakers in these countries towards tourism. The important point is that the essential role in whether or not to pay attention to the development of tourism and the policies and programs for the development of this industry depends more on the type of governments in the countries. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between Muslim countries such as Turkey and Tunisia and Islamic countries (e.g., Iran) in tourism policy and planning. Overall, the greater the sensitivity of macro-policymakers and decision-makers of a country to the negative social and cultural impacts of this industry, the greater the constraints and barriers to tourism development (Khaksari, 2012).

4. Results

Esposito and Ramezani (2001) pointed out that: "unlike Sunnis, Shiites refer to their religious teachings in both religious and political guidance." Therefore, tourism is undoubtedly a very sensitive social, religious and political issue in Muslim countries, especially Shiite countries (Khaksari, 2012). Tourism is in all respects compatible with Islam and encouraged by its teachings. Religion also necessitates restrictions on behavior, clothing, food, and prayer. Because of differences between countries, the interpretation of religions is not the same, which might be the reason for different socio-cultural influences. Generally, communities tend to preserve their traditions. Political factors are also important, and religion has become a political issue. Islamic scholars have great influence in most Middle Eastern countries, where governments are very strict in applying Islamic law. This is known as religious governments described by Cham Bern (1980) in his dictionary as: where God is regarded as the sole power of possession and the only law ruling that land (Najar Vazifedan, Rahbari & Zarin, 2010).

Research Conceptual Model

According to the research background and a series of studies, the barriers to tourism development in Islamic countries are classified as follows:

- Structural barriers
- Cultural and religious barriers
- Economic barriers
- Human barriers
- Legal barriers
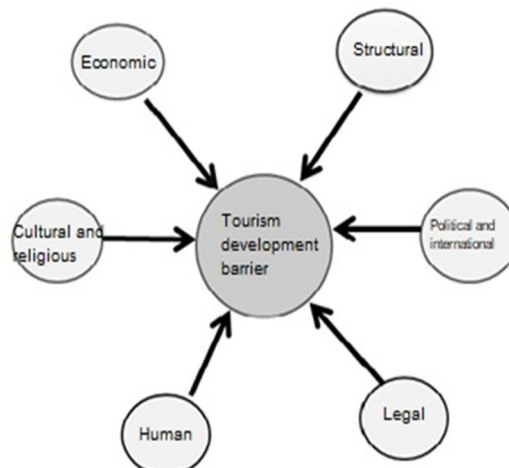- Political and international barriers

Figure 1. Barriers to tourism industry development in Islamic countries

A) Structural Barriers

The discussion of the destination's potential to provide proper services to tourists is among the issues considered by tourists when deciding about their next destination. In fact, the quality and quantity of services provided to tourists will determine the fate of their future trips, as well as future tourists. Paying attention to and investing in this issue will improve tourist attraction. Infrastructure is a basic organizational and physical structure needed to run a community or organization. In other words, the infrastructure is services or capabilities essential to operating an economy. The importance of infrastructure in the tourism industry is such that it is sometimes ranked first in terms of tourism attractiveness. This issue was broadly explained in a comparative study on tourist attractions of Iran and Australia by Naderpour: "tourism industry is a combination of different activities, services, and industries and is divided into two categories: tourism resources and infrastructure" (Akbari & Aboonoori, 2012). The infrastructure involves all base and superstructure constructions in a country and mainly includes communication systems, health systems, air, ground, underground, and sea transport and their components, hotels, resorts, campsites, restaurants, catering & healthy drinks, shopping centers (traditional & modern markets), and recreational centers (healthy and unhealthy).

However, the transport sector is of particular importance to the extent that some experts believe it can be considered as one of the main pillars of tourism. The issue of security is also one of the most important and underlying principles in the formulation of tourism development strategy in the world and there is a defined relationship between tourism, stability, development, and security. In general, the development of tourism infrastructure is largely dependent on other activities in the area, supporting factors, security laws, information, coordination of related organizations and the development of transport in tourism, and any insecurity and the use of violence at various levels will cause irreparable damage to the industry. For example, if an international investment company fails to provide the desired environment and destination in terms of the appropriate security features and does not provide the tourist's financial security and safety, it will certainly not transfer its capital to that area. Therefore, the expansion of insecurity in life and financial aspects and endangering the interests of tourists leads to a reduction in the potential of tourism and its industry. Therefore, the major structural barriers to the development of the tourism industry in Islamic countries are:

- Infrastructure facilities in Islamic countries
- Security issues
- Mechanization and technology
- Inadequate advertising for the development of this industry
- Comprehensive strategic plan

B) Cultural and Religious Barriers

Tourists may encounter barriers to their entry into Islamic countries due to religious issues, especially since they should meet the hijab regulations of the destination country upon entry, and these laws become tourist restrictions, which decrease the travel attraction of Islamic countries. In other words, suitable tourism planning must not only maintain valuable, cultural components and values but also should involve the necessary measures to increase the level of tourist attraction. In this context, advanced and industrial countries have been able to properly exploit these restrictive components with a meticulously planned approach, which can both preserve our cultural principles and values and exhibit them to the tourists as cultural attractions. Therefore, these restrictive laws should be notified in a way that they would not prevent the travel of international tourists to Islamic countries. In fact, the restrictions in the tourism industry must be used as mechanisms to attract tourists. There will always be barriers to the attraction of non-Muslim international tourists as long as there are such structural bottlenecks.

Lack of the culture required for the tourism industry is another issue in the tourism industry of Islamic countries regarding the attraction of international tourists. This issue leads to an increase in political and security defenses against tourists and considering them as spies of the enemy, who increase corruption in the community with their corruption and prostitution. Other problems include the inconsistency of culture and community values with serving tourists, lack of valuating serving tourists in the public culture of the community, and inappropriate behavior of law enforcement, support, and administrative agencies with international tourists upon entry to Islamic countries.

C) Economic Barriers

- A cultural and not economic perspective to tourism
- Economic unsustainability and dependence of the economy on oil (single-product economy)
- Lack of assigning sufficient currency credits to the industry
- Most efforts and products and services are at the local scale
- The high cost of tourism in these countries
- Inadequate support of the private sector and persuasion to invest in the tourism section (due to lack of profitability)
- Lack of providing the necessary facilities for the private sector and guaranteeing the safety of investing in the tourism section by governments

D) Human Barriers

Another problem with this industry is the lack of development of human resources. Most forces used in the tourism industry have education in fields unrelated to the tourism industry and only come to the field with a business attitude to make revenues without paying attention to the features of the industry. This type of attitude increases costs and negatively impacts the tourism industry in Islamic countries. Some of the most important causes of an inadequate number of experts in the industry include inefficient educational system of the industry, lack of expert faculty in tourism, ineffective higher education system in tourism, lack of strategic plans for human resources of the industry, and failure to comply with the meritocracy system in recruiting human resources.

- Lack of a strategic and comprehensive plan
- Lack of proper cooperation between government organizations, which affects the tourism status
- Shortage in the number of expert staff

- Lack of using experienced experts familiarized with the tourism industry

E) Legal Barriers

The lack of comprehensive tourism law could be considered as one of the problems of tourism in Islamic countries that may be due to some other issues such as the lack of coordination of organizations and institutions involved in the tourism process of these countries. This has led to even some conflicting laws at the level of these countries that have created a serious impediment to the development of the tourism industry.

- Difficulties related to Visa
- Adopting different laws in conflicting institutions located in one country

F) Political and International Barriers

Another issue in the tourism industry at the international level is the relations with other countries, especially those whose inhabitants are more likely to travel overseas. Therefore, due to the lack of extensive communication with these countries, especially the European and other developed countries, in the tourism industry, most Islamic countries have not been successful in attracting foreign tourists. Another issue of the tourism industry in the Islamic countries is the image of traveling to these countries presented internationally to the world. The reality is that the Western media is promoting the bad image of the Islamic world, showing traveling to Islamic countries as a dangerous and insecure action, which has dire effects on foreign tourists.

- Lack of interaction between Islamic countries to develop the tourism industry
- Lack of international marketing for the tourism industry
- Problems with the interaction of foreign banks and foreign tourists using international credit cards
- The sensitivity of policy and decision-makers of these countries to the negative social and cultural impacts of this industry
- Activities of extremist groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Today, the tourism industry is becoming increasingly important worldwide, and some even believe that the tourism industry will soon become the world's largest industry. There has also been widespread competition among countries and organizations worldwide to attract tourists, and some Muslim countries, such as Turkey and Malaysia, have achieved remarkable success in this regard. While most Islamic countries have great potential in attracting tourists, both in terms of buildings and historical monuments, and eco-tourist attractions, they have not been successful in attracting tourists and developing their tourism industry. The WTO anticipates that by 2020, countries in Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia, most of which are Islamic countries in the region, will still have a small share of the tourism industry's revenues. It is, therefore, necessary to identify the major issues that hinder the development of this industry in these countries and take the necessary steps to address them. After a qualitative content analysis, six categories of barriers were recognized as the source and origin of the dominant problems in the tourism industry, including structural, cultural and religious, economic, human, legal, and political and international barriers. According to this classification, necessary measures should be quickly considered in the strategic plan of the industry to apply necessary solutions to expand the tourism industry in Islamic countries and achieve benefits in economic, social and political areas.

The following actions can be effective in promoting tourism in Islamic countries:

- Establishing an organization named "the tourism organization of Islamic countries" to develop this industry
- Creating economic, social, political and cultural stability in the region and increasing the level of financial safety and security of tourists
- Giving special discounts on group tours, compared to individual trips
- Strengthening the participation of the private sector to develop various parts of tourism
- Using different theses related to the discussion and collecting articles and studies
- Facilitating the issuance of visa rules and eliminating unnecessary and wasteful laws and regulations
- Developing effective media

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