

MALAYSIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY AND ITS INTERACTING FACTORS

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Abstract---*The objective of this study is to identifying important influential variables for attracting tourist of Iran in Malaysia, An empirical investigation. Tourism is considered an industry which can be highly profitable for nations and it can be viewed from a global perspective. The examination of this study in Malaysia interprets the image of the country which come from positive word of mouth has the most positive impact on Iranian tourists'. For the past few years a lot of Iranians came to Malaysia to visit the country recommended by their friends, relatives and families who are in Malaysia to study, and by a lot of Iranians who came to study in Malaysia. Cultural similarities, being a Muslim country, friendliness and hospitality of the Malaysians and the good quality of the universities and education have led to positive words of mouth. Those who visited the country recommend that their friends and families visit the country and it has become a favourite destination for Iranian tourists.*

Keywords---*Tourists, Tourist Visa, Word of mouth, cost & prices, Malaysia*

I. Introduction

Tourism is considered an industry which can be highly profitable for nations and it can be viewed from a global perspective. In 2012, Theobald highlighted that there are numerous factors that can affect the tourism industry. Geopolitical, cultural, and economic issues in addition to political stability, the country's image, and its policies regarding tourism can influence the tourism industry in a country. In the 1980s, tourism became a highly significant industry worldwide and the investment in new-fangled facilities and asset equipment is about 350 US dollars per year, which represents 7.3% of the world capital investment in total. Around 6.5% of the workforce in the business world is employed by the tourism industry. Because of the improved communications, there is more public awareness, international transportation systems are developed, and more personal income and leisure time are available because of the growth in the tourism sector (Moradi, Tabarsa, Choobdar, & Olfat, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2019; Nikhashemi et al., 2013; Pathiratne et al., 2018; Seneviratne et al., 2019; Tarofder et al., 2019). The Malaysian government has taken actions to encourage the improvement of the tourism sector as there has been a series of positive outcome.

South Asian country Malaysia, consists of two parts West and east Malaysia. The country share border with Thailand in the West Malaysia, is connected to Singapore, has coastline of the South China Sea, and has a border with Brunei and Indonesia from the East Malaysia. An effort was made to diversify the economy of the country to make it a bit independent on exports and it led to the desire to develop tourism in Malaysia more and more. Recently, tourism has been considered as the third major source of income for the country as it was accounted for 7% of the country's economy in 2005 and the country ranked 9th amongst the most visited nations in the world (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). There is a very helpful where you can

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find all the festivals and events in Malaysia as well as the cities, tourist attractions and all about Malaysia and the places you can visit.

“Last year, tourist arrivals from the Iranian market registered a significant drop of 38.5 per cent partly due to Air Asia X’s decision to suspend its services to Tehran beginning October 2012.” was articulated in 2014 news in english.astroawani.com.

Based on english.astroawani.com, the performance of tourism industry in Malaysia was above the expectation in 2013, as it exceeded the initial goal of RM 65 billion and there was a 8.1 % growth from 2012 to 2013. Based on the news on english.astroawani.com, it can be said that ASEAN market is the main contributor to overall tourist arrivals to the countries were among the top ten countries that tourists are come from. Besides, it is shown that there has been an increasing number of Turkish tourists to Malaysia. It is said that there has been increased tourists in plenty of countries except for Iran and Thailand.

These days, the requirement for future examinations to make long haul arranging and procedures for legitimate administration has gotten essential. The investigation of things to come of the travel industry framework is vital for its arranging and advancement. What's more, it is generally comprehended as a way to assist chiefs with predicting what's to come. These anticipated activities will reflect alternate points of view for present and future advancements, which can fill in as a reason for progressive activities in the framework (Fu, 2015). The current worldwide development of the travel industry brings about detailing vital plans, long haul arranging or advancement slants by governments to expand their commitments with the end goal that the travel industry development is profited. Right now, effects of the travel industry framework are the significant issues during the improvement of the framework (Butler & Richardson, 2013). The unpredictability and broadness of the travel industry framework is important to examine the travel industry impacts with a particular goal in mind. For the most part, impacts identified with the travel industry could be inspected in three fields: financial, sociocultural and ecological effects, in this way influencing the monetary, social, social and natural conditions of the networks. The idea of supportable advancement in the travel industry attempts to make a harmony between sociocultural, monetary and natural effects however much as could be expected. Henceforth, understanding the capability of the travel industry impacts being developed procedure is the essential and sensible presumption of maintainable the travel industry arranging. Be that as it may, absence of manageability in the travel industry can cause extreme expenses and rise of different difficulties (Badri & Panahi, 2018). As a rule, estimating of things to come by utilizing non-proficient ways and without pattern examination can cause numerous issues in completing the plans; subsequently, a precise take a gander at the subjects and utilizing master investigation of future patterns can turn into a fitting reason for diminishing the negative effects and improving positive effects in the travel industry domain. Iran has an enormous number and wide assortment of the travel industry attractions, giving it a solid potential for the travel industry improvement (Assaf & Josiassen, 2012). To arrive at the objective of a fruitful economical the travel industry advancement, Iran needs cautious arranging, orderly execution of the plans and a nonstop and successful administration. Today, the travel industry in Iran needs a logical insurgency and explicit changes in its structures. Right now, and policymaking as per the national manageable improvement of the travel industry, monetary, sociocultural, and natural circumstance and patterns of the nation is fundamental. The target of the travel industry advancement in Iran must be set in a significant setting and ought to contribute decidedly to the accomplishment of the expansive monetary, social, social and natural destinations of the country and nation (Jahandoost & Bahrani, 2013). Right now, the travel industry can't be arranged or oversaw in confinement. Iran's travel industry, particularly managing negative effects of the travel industry on condition, culture and economy, should be seen expertly by utilizing coherent reasoning and some progressively dependable logical strategies in the field of logical research and examination for its advancement. By and large, different future examination strategies, in light of the idea of the techniques, can be characterized into subjective

and quantitative. Right now, centre on cross-sway examination (CIA) as one of the most applied quantitative techniques at a national scale. A notable variation of CIA strategy proposed is MICMAC, which has been effectively applied in numerous fields. This investigation intended to dissect Iran the travel industry framework by thinking about the positive and negative effects of financial, sociocultural and natural viewpoints to discover the degree of maintainability or impracticality of the framework. Execution of long haul arranging dependent on these discoveries appears to be conceivable and plausible.

II. Literature Review

In light of a couple of meetings with Iranians living in Malaysia who are contemplating, having organizations or working in Malaysia, Malaysia is viewed as an extension for certain Iranians as it is anything but difficult to pick up section, thinking about the visa necessity, and has less expensive living expenses contrasted with Australia, Europe or western nations. Iranians come to contemplate yet frequently they will proceed onward to different nations for work and to settle down. Numerous Iranians who picked Malaysia as their "connect" share one thing in like manner; they love their nation profoundly, talking enthusiastically about their rich culture and common assets, yet completely disdain their legislature. "Would you be able to envision, none of my companions are strict and out of nowhere you have this person attempting to force all the Islamic laws on you, who wouldn't have any desire to flee?" says one Iranian who has lived in Malaysia since 2004 as an understudy, and is presently an English educator. The Iranian deluge is little however developing quickly. At present, as indicated by the Iranian government office there are in excess of 70,000 Iranians considering, working, or hanging tight for visas right now, as a generally agreeable, multi-ethnic Muslim-dominant part country. There are likewise a developing number of clubs devoting a day every week as "Iranian Night" highlighting Iranian DJs and music.

In a meeting, distributed in 2011, an Iranian said she wavers to disclose to Malaysians that she is an Iranian on the grounds that there is constantly a specific discernment about her nationality, here and there in a positive way, however frequently in a negative light. Another Iranian said he appreciates the opportunity in Malaysia, of whether to devour liquor, or to quick during the Ramadan month however communicated lament that Malaysian Muslims loath a similar opportunity. Numerous others likewise said that religion and legislative issues ought to never blend, highlighting Iran's history. Indeed, even in European nations, joining the two regularly finishes in slaughter. While it is as of now unusual to discover such huge numbers of Iranian eateries in a dominantly Chinese region, it is additionally bizarre to locate a developing network of Iranians as they are Shiite Muslims living in Malaysia, which names the adversary branch Sunni Islam as its official religion. Supporters of the two parts of Islam have taken on wars and conflicts until today over the confidence. Iranians are additionally the greatest gathering of Malaysia My Second Home members and are investors of in excess of 2,000 organizations.

Troubles in moving cash from Iran to Malaysia can be referenced. One of the difficulties is that the boycott applies to cash moves, which influence Iranians concentrating in Malaysia as their families presently need to pay additional charges to send even limited quantities to their kids. A few Iranians have said that since Bank Negara dropped all financial relations with Iran in 2009, they speculate that medications are being utilized as a mechanism of cash move. By closing the authentic financial roads, specialists are driving numerous towards ill-conceived channels. These authorizations are universal and have made exchange commissions high. Further, since 2007, Iran has been set as a high hazard nation under the Anti-Money Laundering Act in Malaysia.

Contrasting the climate of Iran and Malaysia there is an ocean of contrasts. There is an uncommon contrast in climate in hot and damp Malaysia, when contrasted with the dry, regular Iran. "You feel like a biting gum, strolling down the road," is said in an Interview. Numerous Iranians think that its difficult to become acclimated to the

Malaysian food. It is said that Malaysia nourishment is regularly a blend of various tastes. In any case, in Iranian nourishment, each dish has an unmistakable taste and smell and nothing is zesty. A great deal of Iranians like to adhere to their own nourishment as Malaysian charge to them is excessively sweet, salty or hot, precisely the preferences that make Malaysians fixated on what goes into their mouth. The multi-social society in Malaysia is one reason Iranian love it here, in spite of the fact that with regards to nourishment, they may miss their mothers' cooking. There are few Iranians who adjusted to the Malaysian culture and cooking effectively.

"Iranians are aesthetic, graceful, and inventive and they love the theater. In Iran, since it is an Islamic Republic, they have limits. They need opportunity, they need to rehearse their craft, they need to live their lives, they need their youngsters instructed in English, and they love greenery," an interviewee clarified why a significant number of them had decided to live in Malaysia.

Visa prerequisites for Iranian residents assume an essential job in the quantity of Iranian vacationers in Malaysia. Malaysia has halted the issuance of Visa on Arrival (VOA) for visitors from Iran following Australia's solicitation. This is to prevent them from utilizing Malaysia as a travel point for entering Australia wrongfully. Numerous Iranians in Malaysia are vexed about the closure of the approach that empowered them to get a 90-day visa on appearance (VOA), as indicated by the Malaysian Iran Friendship Association (MIFA).

Prior to 2013, Iranians could remain in Malaysia with their social (visitor) visa for 3 months. In 2013, Malaysia fixed visa rules for Iranians. Iranians currently should apply for a visa early, and the section record would just be legitimate for a 14-day remain in Malaysia. Iranian visitors may feel awkward to visit the nation following 8 hours flight and remain in the nation just for about fourteen days, a few Iranians state. This issue has likely influenced the quantity of Iranian visitors who visit Malaysia.

H1. There is positive relationship between visa requirements to travel for Iranian citizens to Malaysia and the number of Iranian tourists in Malaysia.

Positive verbal assumes a noteworthy job in cordiality and visitor the board (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). Verbal, or viva voce, is the death of the data from individual to individual by oral correspondence, which could be as straightforward as telling somebody the hour of the day. Narrating is a typical type of verbal correspondence where one individual recounts to others a tale about a genuine occasion or something made up. Oral convention is social material and customs transmitted by listening in on others conversations through progressive ages. Narrating and oral customs are types of informal exchange that assume significant jobs in old stories and folklore. Another case of oral correspondence is oral history the chronicle, conservation and understanding of authentic data dependent on the individual encounters and assessments of the speaker. Oral history conservation is the field that manages the consideration and upkeep of oral history materials gathered by listening in others' conversations, whatever position they might be in. In showcasing, verbal correspondence (WOM) includes the death of data between non business communicator.

Number of Iranian in Malaysia is being reduced because of a few reasons. More Iranian tourists used to come to visit Malaysia because of mouthy positive word, friendly environment and friendly people, and the other positive factors such as English as a second language which eases the communication.

Cost is a significant characteristic in a visitor's choice to pick one goal over another. This is particularly the situation when the travel industry items are bough as a bundle. The all out expense of a bundle assumes a noteworthy job in the determination

of a goal for all vacationers. The two classifications can impact vacationers' dynamic on goal choices. Actually, cost without anyone else is inadequate to be alluring to sightseers (Vinh & Long, 2013). Understanding vacationer consumption is basically significant in estimating the financial effect of the travel industry on the goal since the travel industry is a driven monetary movement.

It was uncovered the expense of the travel industry, salary versatility, and the costs of the travel industry in the contending goals were the significant determinants of the travel industry interest for Hong Kong the travel industry. Travel consumption designs for the Japanese explorers to US by look at the attributes and pay level of Japanese delight voyagers. The Japanese voyagers with allies will spend more whenever contrasted with Japanese who travel without anyone else. In addition, the higher pay voyagers will in general spend more than others. Consumption considers ordered into two gatherings. One gathering of studies was completed by travel industry financial analysts who concentrated on demonstrating singular voyagers use (Wang & Davidson, 2010).

Malaysia is an energizing and reasonable spot to live. On a sensible spending plan, you can cover your living and diversion costs and have cash to save for movement. Your genuine costs will fluctuate, as indicated by your area and way of life.

Living in Malaysia implies failing to run out of incredible nourishment alternatives. A tremendous decision of moderate and delightful Chinese, Indian and Malay dishes is never excessively far away. Costs run from low to high, contingent upon the setting. Inexpensive food chains have outlets in significant shopping and business territories, however they are regularly not as modest as nearby nourishment slows down.

Buying day by day necessities and staple goods are not an issue as the Bandar Sunway territory is loaded with shopping centres that generally incorporate a significant basic food item outlet. Studies appear, there is a connection among living and transport expenses and Tourism request.

H2: There is sure connection between positive informal exchange and number of Iranian visitors in Malaysia.

The activity of swapping scale and the ordinary expense for essential things are correspondingly noteworthy as a cheapening of Ringgit Malaysia and lower in the normal expense for fundamental things pull in more tourists in Malaysia.

In light of narrative proof, one of the explanations that Iranian sightseers stay with Malaysia is low living expenses and low costs of administrations, for example, lodgings and transportations contrasting with the European and western nations. It merits referencing that Turkey as a neighbor nation is increasingly costly than Malaysia.

H3. Costs and prices positively affect the number of Iranian tourists in Malaysia.

III. Research Methods

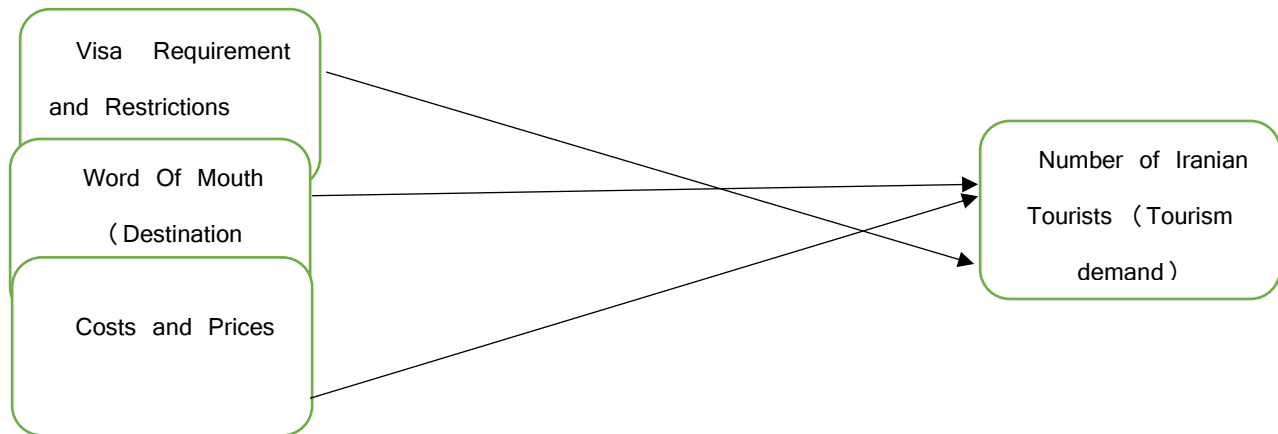
The aim related to prevailing research is to inspect the impact of visa requirements and restrictions, word of mouth and costs and prices on Number of Iranian tourists in Malaysia. As there is no sample frame (list of all Iranian tourists), then there is no other choice besides using convenience sampling that is easy/quick/economic and gives readers a general insight. Interviewees were conveniently selected from those Iranian tourists in Malaysia.

This research is devised to identify the crucial drivers of Iranian tourists in Malaysia. The study elaborates on factors affecting Iranian tourists' experiences. 200 respondents seem to be an ample sample size from an exploratory research that was conducted as preliminary research in the beginning. Convenience sampling was employed to select the elements of the population to study since there was no sampling frame (Cooper & Schindler, 2011; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). A questionnaire was developed, pilot tested then distributed.

Measures

The main variable namely Number of Iranian Tourists (Tourism demand) has 05 items for measurement, while predictors such as visa requirements 05 items for measurement, word of mouth has 05 items for measurement and finally costs and prices also having 05 items for measurement.

Theoretical Framework



IV. Findings

The findings of this investigations are as under.

Table 1: Descriptive Summary of the Respondents

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	77	48.1
	Female	83	51.8
Age	15 - 19 years old	33	20.6
	20 - 25 years old	73	45.6
	26 – 30 year old	42	26.2
	31 - 40 years old	11	6.8
	+ 40 years old	1	0.6
Marital Status	Single	113	70.6
	Married	30	18.7
	Others	17	10.6
Academic Degree	Elementary School	1	0.6
	High School Diploma	11	6.8
	Bachelors' Degree	89	55.6
	Master's Degree	54	33.7
	PhD or any Equivalent Degree	5	3.1
Income Level	Less than 5,000,000 Iranian Riyal	8	5
	Between 5,000,000 to 10,000,000 Iranian Riyal	14	8.7

Between 10,000,000 to 15,000,000 Iranian Riyal	49	30.6
Between 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 Iranian Riyal	78	48.7
Above 20,000,000 Iranian Riyal	11	6.8

Among the 160 respondents of the survey, there were 77 (48.1%) male and 83 (51.8%) female. Most of the Iranian tourists were between the ages of 20 to 25 years old and over 70% of the tourists have ages between 20 to 30 which shows that most of the tourists are young. More than 70% of the tourists are single. The results show that most of the Iranian tourists who travel to Malaysia are educated and have at least a bachelor's degree. In addition, the income level shows that 50% of Iranian who travels to Malaysia are making more than 15,000,000 RM per month.

Multiple Regressions

In this study, the reliability and consistency of measurement scales in the pilot test first needed confirmation. The consistency of inter-item or the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients reliability of the dependent and independent variables of this study have been collected. This step will be discussed elaborately in the next section.

Table 2: Pre-Test Analysis

Variable Items	Cronbach's Alpha for Each Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Variable 1		
Durations	0.773	0.856
3 Months Visa	0.774	
Restrictions	0.766	
14 months Visa	0.812	
Enough Visa Period	0.817	
Variable 2:		
Recommendation	0.721	0.834
Positive Feedback	0.744	
Suggestions of Friends	0.757	
Good Memories of Others	0.782	
Other Positive words	0.798	
Variable 3:		
Reasonable Prices	0.811	0.737
Low Living Costs	0.834	
Low Transportation Cost	0.727	
Cheaper Travel	0.731	
Low Costs	0.719	

Table 3: Result of the Pre-Test Analysis (Test of Cronbach's alpha)

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Tourist Satisfaction	5	0.878

Visa Requirements and Restrictions	5	0.856
Word of Mouth	5	0.834
Cost and Prices	5	0.737
Service Quality	7	0.869
Festivals and Multicultural Dimensions	5	0.746

Factor Analysis

This area started with testing the relationship of factors and all qualities in the connection grid in the range of 0.3 and 0.9, implying that there were no duplications or random factors. The outcomes for the Bartlett's trial of Sphericity and the KMO were 7892.614 and 0.813, individually with the essentialness of .000 that demonstrated the two tests which were profoundly and noteworthy and can bring about the factor investigation being proceeded.

The three determinants considered accounted for 75.74% of the total variance. Factor One (F1) accounted solely for 41.737% of the total variance.

About five components (factors) with eighteen values higher than 1.0, were extracted. Therefore, they were considered significant factors. Amongst all of the 27 items, these components accounted for 41.73%, 11.83%, 9.55%, 8.21% and 4.41% of the total variance, respectively. It can be noted that all R-values of the first five determined factors and the tourists' satisfaction are between 0.3 and 0.9.

Table 7: Pearson Correlations

		Word Of Mouth	Visa Requirement & Restrictions	Costs and Prices	Tourists' Satisfaction
Word Of Mouth	Pearson Correlation	1	.783**	.810**	.873**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0	0
	N	160	160	160	160
Visa Requirement & Restrictions	Pearson Correlation	.783**	1	.753**	.751**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0		0	0
	N	160	160	160	160
Costs and Prices	Pearson Correlation	.810**	.753**	1	.784**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0		0
	N	160	160	160	160

Tourists' Satisfaction	Pearson	.873**	.751**	.784**	1
	Correlation				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0	
	N	160	160	160	160

The predictor variables were Word of Mouth (X2), Visa Requirements and Restrictions (X3) and with the values $t = 4.894$, 3.850 and $p = 0.00$, .000 respectively. The STEPWISE regression method offered three models that explained 76.2%, 80.0% of the total variance with their proposed variables in each model, respectively.

Among all explanatory variables and their coefficients, only Word of Mouth ($t = 4.894$, $p < 0.01$) and Visa Requirements and Restrictions ($t = 3.850$, $p < 0.01$) were statistically significant. Moreover, these factors kept the overall model statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.809$, $p < 0.01$). The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 9 and 10. The R^2 value of 0.809 implies that the 3-predictor variables explained about 80.9% of the variance in Tourists' Satisfaction.

Table 1: ANOVA^d(Model 3/ Y_1)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
3	Regression	69.508	3	23.169	220.022	.000 ^c
	Residual	16.428	156	.105		
	Total	85.936	159			

c. Predictors: (Constant), Word of Mouth, Visa Requirements and Restrictions, Service Quality

d. Dependent Variable: Tourists' Satisfaction

This factor solely explains 76.2% of the whole variation in Tourists' Satisfaction (Tourists Demand) and also has the biggest T-value and lowest P-value compared to the other factors ($t = 4.894$, $p < 0.01$). Consequently, the final STEPWISE method model is written as (Equation 3):

Tourists' Satisfaction, $Y_1 = 0.235 + 0.439$ (Word of Mouth) + 0.199 (Visa Requirements and Restrictions) + e (Equation 3)

The R^2 value of 0.809 indicated that three out of five-predictor variables explained 80.9% of the variation in Tourists' Satisfaction. This model causes R^2 to change from zero to 0.809 and this change in variance explained the surge to an F-ratio of 196.891 significant to a probability of less than 0.0001.

V. Discussions

The results of the research showed that the image of the country which come from positive word of mouth has the most significant impact on the Iranian tourists'. For the past few years a lot of Iranians came to Malaysia to visit the country recommended by their friends, relatives and families who are in Malaysia to study, and by a lot of Iranians who came to study in Malaysia. Cultural similarities, being a Muslim country, friendliness and hospitality of the Malaysians and the good quality of the universities and education have led to positive words of mouth. Those who visited the country recommend that their friends and families visit the country and it has become a favourite destination for Iranian tourists. Visa requirements

was identified as the second contributing factor that affect the Iranian tourists' demand as Iranian can get a social visa on arrival when they reach Malaysia and can visit the country. Service quality including food, hotels, rooms and recreational facilities is the third factor that influences the Iranian tourists' demand. The results show that costs and prices and festivals and special events have a minor impact on the Iranian tourists' demand as it might be because of the lack of familiarity of some Iranians with the special events and festivals in Malaysia. Some Iranians might not be aware of the prices and costs in Malaysia and the type of festivals and special events in Malaysia. If there is a media that channels the introduction of Malaysian festivals to Iranians, there might be more Iranian who wish to travel to Malaysia.

VI. Conclusion

It was shown that three out of the three predictor variables explained 80.9% of the variation in Tourists' Satisfaction. To sum up, there are positive relationships between Word of Mouth, Visa Requirements and Restrictions and Tourists' Satisfaction. As a result, hypotheses numbers 1, 2 accepted while hypotheses 3 is not as justified by the results of the analysis of the collected data.

The results of the research show that most of Iranians receive positive feedback from those friends, relative and families who visited Malaysia. They recommend other Iranians to travel to Malaysia as there are cultural and religious similarities. It is told that the country is an interesting destination to visit regarding the good weather, tourists' attractions and varieties of foods and friendly and hospitable people.

VII. Limitations and Future Directions

This study is conducted as a masters' degree thesis. Therefore, there was limited time to conduct the study and the researcher considers it to be a limitation of the study. There was also a lack of resources as there was no present list of Iranian tourists who travelled to Kuala Lumpur and there was not a single existing sample frame available for any of the travel agencies to study.

In qualitative research, triangulation is used to augment the credibility and validity of the study outcome. For this study, qualitative research, including focus group and in-depth interviews is needed. Thus, it is recommended for future research, if there is sufficient time a triangulation time of research is suggested to be conducted.

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