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Article

Testing Activities in Tourist-Residents Social Contact. Measures for more Socially Sustainable Tourism

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Abstract: The actual types of activities which foster social contact between the tourist-resident and their impact on tourists' or residents' perceptions have received less attention. This study addresses this critical topic by assessing tourists' impression on the locals through examination of a tourist-resident social contact axis proposed by the authors from a selection of frequent tourist activities. The goal is to evaluate the nature and frequency of tourists' activities and their impact on their 'image' through five contact scenarios as constructs of social contact. An empirical survey-based study in Kashan, and data from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews from 165 travelers, we assumed that travelers' experience is heavily influenced by sociocultural practices of wayfinding, eating, shopping, and contact with locals. The results indicate a strong tendency among travelers to communicate directly with the locals on all constructs of their travel behavior. There is also a mutual reflection on behavior and manner.

Keywords: Social contact; Social Contact Measurement; Tourist Activities; Kashan; Iran

1. Introduction

Tourism impacts change by regions, economies, people, and individuals. Tourism impacts can be positive or negative; from economic, environmental and sociocultural perspectives (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005; Stylidis & Terzidou, 2014). Tourism can improve community services, creates jobs and generates incomes. It can also lead to destination crowdedness, soaring property prices, increasing living costs and environmental damage. Among the less tangible perspectives, are sociocultural, which studies residents' perception towards tourism, tourist-host social contact, and its impacts on tourists' travel attitudes and behaviors, interactions between residents and tourists, and their contribution to eithers experience and perception of one another and etc. Residents can show acceptance to tourists on some aspects and intolerance on others. Tourists on the other hand can chose to either come back to the destination or travel to another destination based on their image and perception of the destination and its residents.

Less studied in the extensive studies on tourist-residents contact and resident perception on tourism, are the actual types and classifications of interactions between tourists and residents and their impact on residents' or more important tourists' perceptions. Where do tourists experience contact with the locals? What types of tourist activities e.g., shopping, wayfinding, etc. form opportunities of contact with residents? What are the extends of contact with locals? Which activities contribute more to tourists' perception of a particular destination and its residents?

It is therefore necessary to examine tourist-residents contact through those activities which are more likely to increase social contact between the two groups. This study addresses this critical topic by assessing tourists' impression on the locals through examination of a tourist-resident social contact axis proposed by the authors from a selection of frequent tourist activities. The goal is to evaluate the nature and frequency of tourists' activities and their impact on their 'image' through five contact scenarios as constructs of social contact.

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Based on the dynamic nature of tourist-resident social contact, the novelty of this study is that it seeks to explore residents' attitudes from tourists' perspective and consequently tourists' perceptions towards locals on the following assumptions of relationship for those individual tourists who tend to get involved in the local society and have direct contact with the locals. The study uses established theories in tourism studies as a basis for constructing and its conceptual framework. The statistical analysis on hypotheses in the case study are tested and presented to be discussed and tested in the future studies.

2. Social Contact and Its Measurement in Tourism

Social contact is defined as direct interaction between people from different social and cultural backgrounds (Daisey, 2017; Yu & Lee, 2014). Contact among different groups in society can enhance mutual understanding and stop prejudice and stereotypes (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Kawakami et al., 2000; Binder et al., 2009; Kirillova et al., 2015). Bochner (1982) calls measures that define types of social contact such as purpose and extent of interaction, the frequency of contact and type of involvement. The purposes of social contact can explain the extent and intensity of social contact (Kirillova et al., 2015; Huang & Hsu, 2010).

Social contact happens in different scenarios and with different parties. There are tourist-resident, tourist-service employees, and tourist-tourist (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004; Pearce, 2005; Rihova et al., 2015; Wu, 2007). According to Cohen's (1972) tourist typology, the extent and variety of social contact are significant indicators to evaluate the impact of social interactions between tourists and locals. Therefore, tourists' contact with residents and consequently perception of their destination and its residents varies significantly based on the extend, frequency and intensity of their contact, and either directly or through the tour agents and service providers such as tour guides and hotel staff (Fan et al., 2017).

Several studies have measure activities of social contact and contact frequency as the primary measure of social contact (Rothman, 1978; Mo et al., 1993; Reisinger & Turner (2002); Woosnam & Aleshinloye, 2013), and quality and frequency of tourist-host social contact as indicators of residents' attitude to tourism development (Akis et al., 1996). However, only some studies examine visitors' perception and contact with locals in actual dimensions. Islam and Hewstone (1993) tested significance of the number of contact points, contact frequency, and contact quality. Berscheid et al. (1989) tested the relationship between frequency, activity, and intensity of social contact with interpersonal relationships.

In a more recent study, Fan et al. (2017) argued that both the quantity (frequency and intensity) and quality (activity, power and influence) of social contact should be considered to measure social contact and their impacts on tourists' perceptions.

In conclusion, the interaction between residents and tourists determines social distance, (Joo et al., 2018), or place attachment (Aleshinloye et al., 2019). An increased contact and interaction quality with residents will generate favorable tourist perceptions of the destination and a higher degree of destination loyalty.

The travel experience of tourists is incomplete without social interactions (Fan, Buhalis & Lin, 2019). Pleasant social contact with tourists could increase residents' positive attitude towards tourists and tourism development, perception changes, improving destination image (Carneiro et al., 2018, Fan et al. 2017, Aleshinloye et al., 2020, Tsaur et al., 2018), while a bad contact experience may and lead to social intolerance and resentment of the destination society (Pizam et al., 2000; Zhang et al., 2017).

From a resident viewpoint, frequent social contact with tourists could enhance their perceived impacts of tourism (Carneiro et al., 2018; Eusébio et al., 2018) and reduce the social distance from tourists (Joo et al., 2018; Aleshinloye et al., 2020; Yilmaz & Tasci, 2015). When contact exceeds to the point that residents see that their public resources are declined and their environment damaged, they show resentment towards tourists which can lead to conflict (Zhang et al., 2017).

3. Methodology

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This study continues the previous studies further on the relational exploration between social contact and tourists' attitude towards destinations to investigate the tourist-host social contact from tourists' perspectives. Most studies only employed one group for investigations and ignored paired and interrelated nature of social contact (Tsaur et al., 2018). It is necessary to study the tourist-resident relationship from both groups to obtain a comprehensive perspective since participant groups hold different benefits and expectations. The novelty of this research is that it employs constructs to explore the mutual perception of tourists and locals through the eyes of the tourists. Through hypothetical scenarios of tourist-local social contact, an empirical survey-based study in Kashan, and data from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, we assumed that travelers' experience is heavily influenced by sociocultural practices of wayfinding, eating, shopping, and contact with locals. The authors carried out a preliminary qualitative analysis. Respondents were selected from travelers who stayed more than two nights in a historical house accommodation in the historical district of Kashan from the beginning of the Persian New Year 1401 until the end of the second month of the Persian Calendar (21st of March-21st May 2023) during the high travel season to the city of Kashan.

The questionnaire consisted of forty-two questions and was divided into five sections. The first section included eight questions about the socio-demographic profile of the residents. Indicators include experiences, various forms of social encounters, and functional interactions to connections. Tourists' mental image of the residents' openness and tolerance of the local population of them is explored through four exploratory constructs of wayfinding, connections, cultural awareness, food, social contacts, and souvenirs.

4. Case Study: Kashan, Iran

Kashan has become an important tourist city within the national network of leisure and travel nodes in recent years in Iran. According to the statistics from 2017 show a steady growth in tourist visits (2018: 24%; 2019 19%; 2020: -77%; 2021: 325%; 2022:58%) and accommodation except during the COVID pandemic travel restrictions (2018: 7%; 2019 -31%; 2020: -94%; 2021: -26%; 2022:1800%). For tourist visit data, UNESCO World Heritage Fin Garden is a benchmark. With the historical city and its services economy geared increasingly towards tourist-generated earnings, infrastructure and businesses have upgraded rapidly. The historical city center has received an increasing number of visitors due to the walkability of most attractions. The high-rise restricted area in the historical center preserves vistas, historic houses, the bazaar, and walkable routes for travelers to explore the historic quarter. Many of these historic houses have turned into new guest houses accommodating the flow of tourists.

5. Data Analysis and Discussion

5.1. Descriptive Statistics Analysis

A higher percentage of respondents were female. Most are between 25 and 35 years old, mainly bachelors, self-employed, and living in a metropolis. A higher percentage of the respondents stated that tourism was their purpose for visiting Kashan. Most of them have traveled to Kashan for the second time. A higher percentage of the respondents traveled to Kashan by bus, mostly with their families (Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of the Respondents (n=85).

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	79	47/9
	Female	86	52/1
Age	24-18	35	21/2
	34-25	88	53/3
	44-35	27	16/4

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	54-45	5	3
	64-55	8	4/8
	65 and above	2	1/2
Education	High School or below	15	9/1
	Bachelorette	91	55/2
	Masters	49	29/7
	PhD, MD or similar	10	6/1
Marital Status	Single	86	52/1
	Married	79	47/9
no. of Children	none	133	80/6
	1	15	9/1
	2	15	9/1
	3 or more	2	1/2
Occupation	Manufacturing	11	6/7
	Administrative	48	29/1
	Service Industry	13	7/9
	Freelance	76	46/1
	Research, Student etc.	17	10/3
Origin	Metropolis	100	60/6
	Urban	33	20
	County	26	15/8
	Country	2	1/2
	Abroad	4	2/4
Purpose of Visit	Tourism	151	91/5
	Rest	12	7/3
	Job	2	1/2
Learning about Kashan	Friends	84	50/9
	Family	33	20
	Media	20	12/1
	Internet	27	16/4
	Books and Magazines	1	0/6
Frequency of Visit	1st	64	38/8
	2nd	76	46/1
	Once a year	15	9/1
	Several times a year	10	6/1
Means of Travel	Car	125	75/8
	Bus	26	15/8
	Train	10	6/1
	others	4	2/4
Travel Companion	Family	95	57/6
	Friends	69	41/8
	alone	1	0/6

 doi:10.20944/preprints202410.2177.v1

5.2. Confirming the Average Distribution Data

Based on the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirinov test, since the significance level for the variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, food, social communication, and souvenirs is greater than the error value of 0.05 (sig > 0.05), the variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, food, social communication, and souvenirs have a normal distribution. In order to check the research hypotheses, parametric tests were used since the research variables have a normal distribution (Table 2).

Table 2. Testing normal distribution of Data.

Variant	Kolmogorov Z	Sig. level
Wayfinding	1/263	0/082
Cultural Communication and Familiarity	0/965	0/309
Food	1/102	0/176
Social Communication	1/228	0/098
Souvenirs	1/048	0/222

5.3. Testing Research Hypotheses

In all variables, since the significance level value is equal to 0.000 and is smaller than the error value of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is confirmed. The measure of Pearson's correlation coefficient indicates a positive and direct relationship between the variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, food, social communication, and souvenirs (Table3).

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Test between the Variants.

	Wayfinding	Cultural Communication and Familiarity	Food	Social Communication	Souvenirs
Wayfinding	1				
Cultural Communication and Familiarity	0/364*	1			
Food	0/549*	0/435*	1		
Social Communication	0/336*	0/363*	0/454*	1	
Souvenirs	0/431*	0/266*	0/602*	0/357*	1

$* sig < 0/05$.

That is, the variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, food, social communication, and souvenirs do not differ based on the gender of the respondents (Table 4).

Table 4. T test for Respondents Gender.

Variable	Gender	Mean	T-Value	Degree of Freedom	Level of Significance	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Wayfinding	Male	3/11	-1/137	163	0/257	-0/24	0/07
	Female	3/19					
	Male	3/26	-1/614	163	0/109	-0/25	0/03

 doi:10.20944/preprints202410.2177.v1

Cultural Communication and Familiarity	Female	3/38					
Food	Male	2/91	0/020	163	0/984	-0/20	0/20
	Female	2/91					
Social Communication	Male	2/93	1/867	163	0/062	-0/01	0/45
	Female	2/8					
Souvenirs	Male	2/8	-0/465	163	0/642	-0/26	0/16
	Female	2/85					

The variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, food, social communication, and souvenirs do not differ based on the age of the respondents (Table 5).

Table 5. ANOVA Test for the respondents Age.

Variable	Index	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squared	F-Statistic	Level of Significance
Wayfinding	inter-group	1/419	3	0/473	1/895	0/132
	intra-group	40/173	161	0/250		
	Total	41/592	164			
Cultural Communication and Familiarity	inter-group	0/464	3	0/155	0/754	0/521
	intra-group	33/044	161	0/205		
	Total	33/508	164			
Food	inter-group	0/386	3	0/129	0/312	0/817
	intra-group	66/462	161	0/413		
	Total	66/848	164			
Social Communication	inter-group	0/595	3	0/198	0/345	0/793
	intra-group	92/562	161	0/575		
	Total	93/157	164			
Souvenirs	inter-group	1/375	3	0/458	1/015	0/388
	intra-group	73/720	161	0/452		
	Total	74/095	164			

The variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, food, social communication, and souvenirs do not differ based on the level of education (Table 6).

Table 6. ANOVA test results to compare the variables based on the education of the respondents.

Variant		Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Value	Level of Significance
Wayfinding	intra-group	1/402	5	0/280	1/109	0/358
	inter-group	40/191	159	0/253		
	Total	41/592	164			
Cultural Communication and Familiarity	intra-group	1/125	5	0/225	1/105	0/360
	inter-group	32/383	159	0/204		
	Total	33/508	164			
Food	intra-group					

 doi:10.20944/preprints202410.2177.v1

	inter-group Total	2/360 64/488 66/848	5 159 164	0/472 0/406	1/164	0/329
Social Communication	intra-group inter-group Total	1/267 91/890 93/157	5 159 164	0/253 0/578	0/439	0/821
Souvenirs	intra-group inter-group Total	3/556 70/539 74/095	5 159 164	0/711 0/444	1/603	0/162

In order to compare research variables based on respondents' marital status, the independent t-test is used. The variables of cultural communication and familiarity, food, and souvenirs do not differ based on the respondents' marital status. While the value of the significance level for the variables of wayfinding and social communication is smaller than or equal to the error value of 0.05, and the absolute value of the t-statistic is greater than the table value of 1.96**. Therefore**, the wayfinding and social connection variables differ based on the marital status of the respondents. Moreover, according to the average and the upper and lower limits, the average wayfinding and social communication in married people is more than that of single people (Table 7).

Table 7. Independent t-test results to check the difference of the variables based on respondents' marital status.

Variable	gender	Mean	T-statistic	Degree of Freedom	Level of Significance	Confidence Interval %95	
						Lower Limit	Upper Limit
wayfinding	Single married	3/08 3/23	-1/976	163	0/050*	-0/31	-0/0001
Cultural communication	Single married	3/28 3/36	-1/404	156/991	0/162	-0/24	0/04
Food	Single married	2/84 2/98	-1/402	163	0/163	-0/33	0/06
Social communication	Single married	2/91 3/17	-2/251	163	0/026*	-0/49	-0/03
Souvenir	Single Married	2/75 2/91	-1/524	147/821	0/130	-0/37	0/05

Variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, food, social communication, and souvenirs do not differ based on the number of children (Table 8).

Table 8. ANOVA test results to compare the variables based on the number of respondents' children**.**

Variable	Index	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squared	F-Statistic	Level of Significance
Wayfinding	inter-group intra-group Total	0/371 41/221 41/592	3 161 164	0/124 0/256	0/483	0/695

 doi:10.20944/preprints202410.2177.v1

Cultural Communication and Familiarity	inter-group	1/171	3	0/390	1/943	0/125
	intra-group	32/337	161	0/201		
	Total	33/508	164			
Food	inter-group	0/718	3	0/239	0/583	0/627
	intra-group	66/131	161	0/411		
	Total	66/848	164			
Social Communication	inter-group	0/882	3	0/294	0/513	0/674
	intra-group	92/275	161	0/573		
	Total	93/157	164			
Souvenirs	inter-group	2/225	3	0/752	1/684	0/172
	intra-group	71/840	161	0/446		
	Total	74/095	164			

The variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, food, social communication, and souvenirs do not differ based on the occupation of the respondents (Table 9).

Table 9. ANOVA test results to compare the variables based on the occupation of the respondents.

Variable	Index	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squared	F-Statistic	Level of Significance
Wayfinding	inter-group	0/377	3	0/094	0/366	0/833
	intra-group	41/215	161	0/258		
	Total	41/592	164			
Cultural Communication and Familiarity	inter-group	0/455	3	0/114	0/551	0/699
	intra-group	33/053	161	0/207		
	Total	33/508	164			
Food	inter-group	2/138	3	0/535	1/322	0/264
	intra-group	64/710	161	0/404		
	Total	66/848	164			
Social Communication	inter-group	0/574	3	0/143	0/248	0/911
	intra-group	92/583	161	0/579		
	Total	93/157	164			
Souvenirs	inter-group	3/350	3	0/838	1/894	0/114
	intra-group	70/744	161	0/442		
	Total	74/095	164			

The variables of cultural communication and familiarity and social communication do not differ based on the place of residence. While the value of the significance level for the variables of wayfinding, food, and souvenirs is smaller than the error value of 0.05, therefore the alternative hypothesis is confirmed; that is, the variables of wayfinding, food, and souvenirs differ based on the respondents' place of residence. LSD test is used to compare the difference between the wayfinding, food, and souvenirs based on the place of residence (Table 10).

Table 10. Results of ANOVA test to compare variables based on respondents' place of residence.

 doi:10.20944/preprints202410.2177.v1

Variable	Index	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squared	F-Statistic	Level of Significance
Wayfinding	inter-group	2/732	4	0/683	2/813	0/027*
	intra-group	38/860	160	0/243		
	Total	41/592	164			
Cultural Communication and Familiarity	inter-group	1/401	4	0/350	1/745	0/143
	intra-group	32/107	160	0/201		
	Total	33/508	164			
Food	inter-group	6/223	4	1/556	4/106	0/003*
	intra-group	60/625	160	0/379		
	Total	66/848	164			
Social Communication	inter-group	3/363	4	0/841	1/498	0/205
	intra-group	89/794	160	0/561		
	Total	93/157	164			
Souvenirs	inter-group	8/291	4	2/073	5/040	0/001*
	intra-group	65/804	160	0/411		
	Total	74/095	164			

There is no difference between the average of the respondents who live in a metropolis, city, or county in terms of the variable of wayfinding. However, the average of metropolitan respondents is higher than that of rural respondents and lower than that of foreign respondents. The average of city respondents is higher than the average of village respondents. The average of the respondents of the county is higher than the average of the respondents of the village. There is no difference between the average of the respondents who live in a city, country, or abroad regarding the wayfinding variable. The average of respondents from abroad is higher than those from cities and villages (Table 11).

Table 11. Multiple comparison of LSD test in the wayfinding variable based on place of residence.

Place of residence (J)	Place of residence (I)	Mean difference (I-J)	Significance level	Lower limit	Upper limit
metropolis	City	-0/06	0/513	-0/26	0/13
	County	-0/08	0/479	-0/29	0/14
	Village	0/82	0/021*	0/13	1/52
	Abroad	-0/55	0/029*	-1/05	-0/06
City	metropolis	0/06	0/513	-0/13	0/26
	County	-0/01	0/925	-0/27	0/24
	Village	0/89	0/014*	0/18	1/6
	Abroad	-0/49	0/064	-1/002	0/05
County	metropolis	0/08	0/479	-0/14	0/29
	City	0/01	0/925	-0/24	0/27
	Village	0/9	0/014*	0/19	1/61
	Abroad	-0/48	0/075	-1/00	0/05
	metropolis	-0/82	0/021*	-1/52	-0/13

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Village	City	-0/89	0/014*	-1/6	-0/18
	County	-0/9	0/014*	-1/61	-0/19
	Abroad	-1/38	0/002*	-2/22	-0/53
Abroad	metropolis	0/55	0/029*	0/06	1/05
	City	0/49	0/064	-0/03	1/002
	County	0/48	0/075	-0/05	1/00
	Village	1/38	0/002*	0/53	2/22

$* sig < 0/05.$

There is no difference between the average of the respondents who live in a metropolis, city, and village regarding the food variable. However, the average of metropolitan respondents in the food variable is lower than that of city and foreign respondents (Table 12).
The average of city respondents in the food variable is lower than that of county and foreign respondents. The average of the city respondents in the food variable is higher than that of the respondents of a metropolis, city, or village.

Table 12. Multiple comparison of LSD test in food variable based on place of residence.

Place of residence (J)	Place of residence (I)	Mean difference (I-J)	Significance level	Lower limit	Upper limit
metropolis	City	0/06	0/636	-0/19	0/3
	County	-0/43	0/002*	-0/69	-0/16
	Village	0/49	0/267	-0/38	1/36
	Abroad	-0/64	0/044*	-1/26	-0/02
City	metropolis	-0/06	0/636	-0/3	0/19
	County	-0/48	0/003*	-0/8	-0/17
	Village	0/43	0/338	-0/45	1/31
	Abroad	-0/69	0/035*	-1/34	-0/03
County	metropolis	0/43	0/002*	0/16	0/69
	City	0/48	0/003*	0/17	0/8
	Village	0/91	0/044*	0/02	1/81
	Abroad	-0/21	0/526	-0/86	0/44
Village	metropolis	-0/49	0/267	-1/36	0/38
	City	-0/43	0/338	-1/32	0/45
	County	-0/91	0/044*	-1/81	-0/02
	Abroad	-1/13	0/036*	-2/18	-0/07
Abroad	metropolis	0/64	0/044*	0/02	1/26
	City	0/69	0/035*	0/05	1/34
	County	0/21	0/526	-0/44	0/86
	Village	1/13	0/036*	0/07	2/18

$* sig < 0/05.$

There is no difference between the average of the respondents who live outside the country and in the city regarding the food. The average of foreign respondents in the food variable is higher than that of the metropolis, city, and village respondents.

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There is no difference between the average of the respondents who live in the metropolis, city, village, and abroad regarding the souvenir variable. However, the average of the metropolitan respondents in the souvenir variable is lower than that of the city respondents. The average of city respondents in the souvenir variable is lower than the average of county respondents. The average of the county respondents in the souvenir variable is higher than that of the metropolis, city, and village respondents (Table 13).
There is no difference between the average of the respondents who live abroad and, in the metropolis, city, county, and village regarding the souvenir variable

Table 13. Multiple comparison of LSD test in souvenir variable based on place of residence.

.	Place of residence (I)	Mean difference (I-J)	Significance level	Lower limit	Upper limit
metropolis	City	0/47	0/179	-0/08	0/43
	County	-0/5	0/001*	-0/77	-0/22
	Village	0/7	0/128	-0/2	1/6
	Abroad	-0/23	0/489	-0/87	0/42
City	metropolis	-0/17	0/179	-0/43	0/08
	County	-0/67	0/000*	-1/001	-0/34
	Village	0/53	0/261	-0/4	1/45
	Abroad	-0/4	0/240	-1/07	0/27
County	metropolis	0/5	0/001*	0/22	0/77
	City	0/67	0/000*	0/34	1/001
	Village	1/2	0/012*	0/27	2/12
	Abroad	0/27	0/437	-0/41	0/95
Village	metropolis	-0/7	0/128	-1/6	0/2
	City	-0/53	0/261	-1/45	0/4
	County	-1/2	0/012*	-2/12	-0/27
	Abroad	0/93	0/097	-2/02	0/17
Abroad	metropolis	0/23	0/498	-0/42	0/87
	City	0/4	0/240	-0/27	1/07
	County	-0/27	0/437	-0/95	0/41
	Village	0/93	0/097	-0/17	2/02

$* sig < 0/05.$

There is no difference between the average of the respondents who live in the metropolis, city, village, and abroad regarding the souvenir variable. However, the average of the metropolitan respondents in the souvenir variable is lower than that of the city respondents. The average of city respondents in the souvenir variable is lower than the average of county respondents. The average of the county respondents in the souvenir variable is higher than that of the metropolis, city, and village respondents. There is also no difference between the average of the respondents who live abroad and, in the metropolis, city, county, and village regarding the souvenir variable (Table 14).

Table 14. ANOVA test results to compare variables based on respondents' intention to travel to Kashan.

Variable	Index	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squared	F-Statistic	Level of Significance

 doi:10.20944/preprints202410.2177.v1

Wayfinding	inter-group	2/195	2	1/098	4/514	0/027*
	intra-group	39/397	162	0/243		
	Total	41/592	164			
Cultural Communication and Familiarity	inter-group	3/086	2	1/543	8/216	0/000*
	intra-group	30/423	162	0/188		
	Total	33/508	164			
Food	inter-group	1/780	2	0/890	2/215	0/112
	intra-group	65/069	162	0/402		
	Total	66/848	164			
Social Communication	inter-group	1/313	2	0/656	1/158	0/317
	intra-group	91/844	162	0/567		
	Total	93/157	164			
Souvenirs	inter-group	2/083	2	1/042	2/344	0/099
	intra-group	72/012	162	0/445		
	Total	74/095	164			

The average wayfinding variable of the respondents whose travel intention was tourism is higher than those who intended to rest. There is no difference between the other groups regarding the wayfinding variable (Table 15).

Table 15. Multiple comparison of the LSD test in the variable of navigation based on the intention of the respondents to travel to Kashan.

Intention (J)	Intention (I)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Significance level	Lower limit	Upper limit
Tourism	**Rest**	0/26	0/086	-0/04	0/55
	Work	0/88	0/013*	0/19	1/57
Leisure	**Tourism**	-0/26	0/086	-0/54	0/04
	Work	0/63	0/099	-0/12	1/37
Work	**Tourism**	-0/88	0/013*	-1/57	-0/18
	Rest	-0/63	0/099	-1/37	0/12

$* sig < 0/05.$

The average of the cultural communication and familiarity variable of the respondents who travel for tourism is higher than those whose intention was to rest and work. Regarding cultural communication and familiarity variables, there is no difference between the respondents who travel for work and those who travel to rest (Table 16).

Table 16. Multiple comparison of the LSD test in the variable of communication and cultural familiarity based on the intention of the respondents to travel to Kashan.

Intention (J)	Intention (I)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Significance level	Lower limit	Upper limit
Tourism	**Rest**	0/4	0/002*	0/15	0/66
	Work	0/84	0/007*	0/23	1/45
Rest	**Tourism**	-0/4	0/002*	-0/66	-0/15

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	Work	0/43	0/191	-0/22	1/09
Work	**Tourism**	-0/84	0/007*	-1/45	-0/23
	Rest	-0/43	0/191	-1/09	0/22

$* sig < 0/05.$

The value of the significance level for the variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, food, social communication, and souvenirs is greater than the error value of 0.05, therefore the variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, food, social communication, and souvenirs do not differ based on the way the respondents got acquainted with the trip to Kashan (Table 17).

Table 17. ANOVA test results to compare the variables based on the respondents' way of getting acquainted with the trip to Kashan.

Variable	Index	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squared	F-Statistic	Level of Significance
Wayfinding	inter-group	0/489	4	0/122	0/476	0/754
	intra-group	41/103	160	0/257		
	Total	41/592	164			
Cultural Communication and Familiarity	inter-group	0/616	4	0/154	0/749	0/560
	intra-group	32/892	160	0/206		
	Total	33/508	164			
Food	inter-group	1/094	4	0/274	0/666	0/617
	intra-group	65/754	160	0/411		
	Total	66/848	164			
Social Communication	inter-group	2/776	4	0/694	1/228	0/301
	intra-group	90/381	160	0/565		
	Total	93/157	164			
Souvenirs	inter-group	1/441	4	0/360	0/794	0/531
	intra-group	72/654	160	0/454		
	Total	74/095	164			

The variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, food, social communication, and souvenirs do not differ based on the number of times the respondents visited Kashan (Table 18).

Table 18. ANOVA test results to compare the variables based on the number of times the respondents have visited Kashan.

Variable	Index	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squared	F-Statistic	Level of Significance
Wayfinding	inter-group	1/046	3	0/349	1/385	0/249
	intra-group	40/546	161	0/252		
	Total	41/592	164			
Cultural Communication and Familiarity	inter-group	0/244	3	0/081	0/393	0/758
	intra-group	33/265	161	0/207		

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	Total	33/508	164			
Food	inter-group	0/489	3	0/163	0/395	0/756
	intra-group	66/359	161	0/412		
	Total	66/848	164			
Social Communication	inter-group	1/269	3	0/423	0/741	0/529
	intra-group	91/888	161	0/571		
	Total	93/157	164			
Souvenirs	inter-group	2/301	3	0/767	1/720	0/165
	intra-group	71/794	161	0/446		
	Total	74/095	164			

The variables of wayfinding, communication and familiarity Culture, food, social communication, and souvenirs do not differ according to the means of transportation (Table 19).

Table 19. The results of ANOVA test to compare the variables based on the respondents' means of transportation.

Variable	Index	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squared	F-Statistic	Level of Significance
Wayfinding	inter-group	1/228	3	0/409	1/632	0/184
	intra-group	40/365	161	0/251		
	Total	51/592	164			
Cultural Communication and Familiarity	inter-group	0/362	3	0/121	0/586	0/625
	intra-group	33/147	161	0/206		
	Total	33/508	164			
Food	inter-group	0/053	3	0/018	0/043	0/988
	intra-group	66/795	161	0/415		
	Total	66/848	164			
Social Communication	inter-group	0/833	3	0/278	0/484	0/694
	intra-group	92/324	161	0/573		
	Total	93/157	164			
Souvenirs	inter-group	0/614	3	0/205	0/448	0/719
	intra-group	73/481	161	0/456		
	Total	74/095	164			

The variables of wayfinding, communication and cultural familiarities, food, social communication, and souvenirs do not differ based on respondents' companions in their trip to Kashan (Table 20).

Table 20. The results of ANOVA test to compare the variables based on the respondents' companions in their trip to Kashan.

Variable	Index	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squared	F-Statistic	Level of Significance
Wayfinding	inter-group	1/414	2	0/707	2/850	0/061
	intra-group	40/178	162	0/248		
	Total	41/592	164			

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Cultural Communication and Familiarity	inter-group	0/158	2	0/079	0/383	0/683
	intra-group	33/351	162	0/206		
	Total	33/508	164			
Food	inter-group	0/661	2	0/330	0/809	0/447
	intra-group	66/188	162	0/409		
	Total	66/848	164			
Social Communication	inter-group	0/335	2	0/167	0/292	0/747
	intra-group	92/822	162	0/573		
	Total	93/157	164			
Souvenirs	inter-group	2/488	2	1/244	2/815	0/063
	intra-group	71/607	162	0/442		
	Total	74/095	164			

5.1.1. Additional Findings

Except for the ones with no asterisks, the rest of the wayfinding questions are related to the variables of cultural communication and familiarity, food, social communication, and souvenirs (Table 21).

Table 21. Pearson's correlation test results to investigate the relationship between the questions of the variable of wayfinding and other variables.

Wayfinding questions	Cultural Communication and Familiarity	Food	Social Communication	Souvenirs
1. I use signs to find places.	0/212*	0/300*	0/172*	0/213*
2. I use an application	0/166*	0/111	0/026	0/055
3. I get help from other travelers.	0/268*	0/346*	0/222*	0/252*
4. I get help from passersby.	0/094	0/266*	0/207*	0/233*
5. I get help from shopkeepers.	0/169*	0/390*	0/158*	0/211*
6. I get help from Bazaar tenants.	0/165*	0/422*	0/294*	0/330*
7. Other travelers help me find the places.	0/254*	0/424*	0/289*	0/304*
8. Locals help me find the places.	0/191*	0/179*	0/080	0/252*
9. Shopkeepers help me find the places.	0/266*	0/279*	0/206*	0/265*
10. Bazaar tenants help me find the places.	0/249*	0/321*	0/268*	0/322*

$* sig < 0/05$.

Except for the ones with no asterisks, the rest of the cultural communication and familiarity questions have a relationship with the variables of wayfinding, food, social communication, and souvenirs (Table 22).

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Table 22. Pearson's correlation test results to investigate the relationship between the questions of the variable of cultural communication and familiarity with the other variables.

Cultural Communication and Familiarity Questions	Wayfinding	Food	Social Communication	Souvenirs
1. I have asked friends and acquaintances about culture and customs in Kashan.	0/066	0/267*	0/163*	0/210*
2. I heard about culture and customs in Kashan on TV or radio.	0/285*	0/311*	0/081	0/216*
3. I read about culture and customs in Kashan on the internet.	0/140	0/326*	0/078	0/247*
4. I go to the tourist spots on foot.	0/366*	0/234*	0/195*	0/107
5. I drive to the spots.	-0/023	0/050	-0/112	0/144
6. I directly go to the tourist spots and do not visit anywhere else.	0/050	-0/027	-0/003	0/142
7. If I see a place along the way that I did not intend to visit, I stop and look.	0/073	0/264*	0/224*	0/104
8. I only visit the tourist places that I have in mind.	-0/047	-0/172*	-0/269*	0/004
9. I pay attention to recommendations while visiting tourist spots.	0/163*	0/211*	0/183*	0/166*
10. I pay attention to the lifestyle of the locals.	0/154*	0/263*	0/369*	0/136
11. I pay attention to the clothing pattern of the people.	0/222*	0/192*	0/167*	0/095
12. I pay attention to the shops.	0/285*	0/225*	0/248*	0/145
13. I pay attention to the shops in the Bazaar.	0/289*	0/320*	0/353*	0/225*
14. The locals pay attention to my behavior.	0/173*	0/195*	0/138	0/097
15. The locals pay attention to my clothes.	0/137	0/118	0/154*	0/002
16. Shopkeepers pay attention to my behavior.	0/149	0/190*	0/263*	0/065
17. Bazaar tenants pay attention to my behavior.	0/240*	0/241*	0/319*	0/088
18. Shopkeepers pay attention to my clothes.	0/128	0/174*	0/241*	0/026
19. Bazaar tenants pay attention to my clothes.	0/136	0/167*	0/222*	-0/027

$* sig < 0/05$.

Except for the ones with no asterisks, the rest of the food questions have a relationship with the variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, social communication, and souvenirs (Table 23).

Table 23. Pearson correlation test results to investigate the relationship between the questions of the variable of food and other variables.

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Food Questions	Wayfinding	Communication and Familiarity	Social Communication	Souvenirs
1. I have asked friends and acquaintances about the local food of Kashan.	0/239*	0/217*	0/138	0/279*
2. I have heard about local food in Kashan from TV and radio.	0/233*	0/233*	0/072	0/341*
3. I have read about the local food in Kashan on the internet.	0/195*	0/226*	0/173*	0/320*
4. I have asked other travelers about local food in Kashan.	0/322*	0/309*	0/236*	0/399*
5. I follow the signs to find the restaurants.	0/316*	0/306*	0/135	0/296*
6. I use applications to find restaurants.	0/079	0/312*	0/038	0/064
7. I get help from other travelers to find restaurants.	0/483*	0/329*	0/409*	0/445*
8. I get help from passers-by to find restaurants.	0/452*	0/190*	0/368*	0/415*
9. I get help from shopkeepers to find restaurants.	0/427*	0/222*	0/392*	0/425*
10. I get help from Bazaar tenants to find restaurants.	0/419*	0/265*	0/363*	0/408*
11. Other passengers help me find the restaurant.	0/201*	0/220*	0/324*	0/362*
12. Passers-by help me find restaurants.	0/372*	0/240*	0/322*	0/405*
13. Shopkeepers help me find restaurants.	0/359*	0/195*	0/428*	0/362*
14. Bazaar tenants help me find restaurants.	0/421*	0/235*	0/447*	0/436*

$* sig < 0/05$.

4 -Except for ones with no asterisks, the rest of the social communication questions have a relationship with the variables of wayfinding, cultural communication, familiarity, food, and souvenirs (Table 24).

Table 24. Pearson correlation test results to investigate the relationship between questions of the variable of social communication and other variables.

Social Communication Questions	Wayfinding	Communication and Familiarity	Food	Souvenirs
1. I like to communicate with other travelers.	0/096	0/281*	0/242*	0/138

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2. Other travelers communicate with me.	0/170*	0/411*	0/267*	0/136
3. I like to communicate with locals.	0/153*	0/209*	0/339*	0/144
4. Locals communicate with me.	0/315*	0/174*	0/438*	0/338*
5. I like to communicate with shopkeepers.	0/310*	0/265*	0/362*	0/353*
6. Shopkeepers communicate with me.	0/332*	0/378*	0/411*	0/443*
7. I like to communicate with Bazaar tenants.	0/330*	0/193*	0/343*	0/283*
8. Bazaar tenants communicate with me.	0/316*	0/290*	0/335*	0/313*

$* sig < 0/05$.

Except for ones with no asterisks, the rest of the souvenir questions have a relationship with the variables of wayfinding, cultural communication and familiarity, food, and social communication (Table 25).

Table 25. Pearson correlation test results to investigate the relationship between the questions of the variable of souvenir and other variables.

Souvenirs Questions	Wayfinding	Communication and Familiarity	Food	Social Communication
1. I have asked friends and acquaintances about Kashan souvenirs.	0/122	0/045	0/249*	0/135
2. I learned about Kashan souvenirs from TV and radio.	0/116	0/091	0/185*	0/028
3. I have read about Kashan souvenirs on the internet.	0/033	0/122	0/303*	0/135
4. I have asked other travelers about Kashan souvenirs.	0/273*	0/235*	0/517*	0/338*
5. I follow the signs to learn about Kashan souvenirs.	0/371*	0/301*	0/445*	0/166*
6. I use applications to learn about Kashan souvenirs.	0/123	0/119	0/322*	0/182*
7. I get help from other travelers to learn about Kashan souvenirs.	0/299*	0/126	0/523*	0/359*
8. I get help from passers-by to learn about Kashan souvenirs.	0/368*	0/154*	0/503*	0/345*
9. I get help from shopkeepers to learn about Kashan souvenirs.	0/368*	0/148	0/413*	0/160*
10. I get help from Bazaar tenants to learn about Kashan souvenirs.	0/362*	0/299*	0/426*	0/147
11. Other travelers help me learn about Kashan souvenirs.	0/224*	0/117	0/359*	0/339*
12. Passers-by help me learn about Kashan souvenirs.	0/319*	0/137	0/386*	0/346*

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13. Shopkeepers help me learn with Kashan souvenirs.	0/409*	0/235*	0/410*	0/290*
14. Bazaar tenants help me learn with Kashan souvenirs.	0/365*	0/209*	0/332*	0/299*
15. I follow the signs to find a place to buy Kashan souvenirs.	0/415*	0/341*	0/452*	0/214*
16. I use applications to find places to buy souvenirs.	0/106	0/044	0/194*	0/051
17. I get help from other travelers to find a place to buy souvenirs.	0/292*	0/214*	0/445*	0/242*
18. I get help from passers-by to find a place to buy souvenirs.	0/324*	0/077	0/444*	0/209*
19. I get help from shopkeepers to find a place to buy souvenirs.	0/264*	0/189*	0/309*	0/165*
20. I get help from Bazaar tenants to find a place to buy souvenirs.	0/357*	0/190*	0/394*	0/216*
21. Other travelers help me find the place to buy souvenirs.	0/205*	0/134	0/331*	0/327*
22. Passers-by help me find the place to buy souvenirs.	0/254*	0/118	0/338*	0/231*
23. Shopkeepers help me find places to buy souvenirs.	0/228*	0/191*	0/302*	0/225*
24. Bazaar tenants help me find the place to buy souvenirs.	0/197*	0/114	0/215*	0/186*

$* sig < 0/05$.

7. Conclusions

For Wayfinding items, those who used signs and asked help from shopkeepers and other travelers scored higher in items in Food Construct items. Travelers prefer finding their eating spot by asking the locals than using applications. Respondents seeking help from bazaar tenants and other travelers for direction scored higher in Food and Souvenir items.

For Culture and Communication items, those wary of the local customs or their attention towards themselves have a higher response rate to the items in Social Communication Construct.

For Food items, those who ask other travelers or follow restaurant signs responded higher in Wayfinding, Culture and Communication, and Souvenir Constructs. Those who ask other travelers, locals, and shopkeepers for places to eat correlate with Wayfinding, Social Communication, and Souvenir Constructs. Additionally, those respondents stated that shopkeepers, locals, and bazaar tenants guided them to eating places. They also responded higher in Wayfinding, Social Communication, and Souvenir Constructs.

For Social Communication items, communication with other travelers, locals, and shopkeepers correlates with Culture and Communication, Wayfinding, and Food items.

For Souvenir items, those respondents who stated they ask locals or shopkeepers or follow the signs scored higher in Wayfinding and Food items.

The results indicate a strong tendency among travelers to communicate directly with the locals on all constructs of their travel behavior. There is also a mutual reflection on behavior and manner (mainly clothing). In the case of Kashan, and Iran in general, a strong tendency for verbal communication is still evident as interaction with the locals is the main exercise in travel behavior in Kashan. Using travel applications is yet to be shared among travelers, which can be either the reason or the result of a tendency from tourists towards verbal communication with the locals or a lack of technological infrastructure.

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Therefore, to cultivate a pleasant tourists social experience, in the case of Kashan, keeping the already strong community perception and welcoming attitude towards tourists and educating them on negative aspects of possible hostility towards those not acceptable by the locals is necessary. Tourists also need to be informed about local culture and social norms to prevent negative perceptions of the locals.

Limitations and Future Studies

While limited in scope and results, this study provides a new perspective for future studies to construct a practical basis for tourist-local contact studies. Tourism studies must go beyond the local perception, focus on the nature and intensity of tourist activities, and relate them with tourism development and local perception and support for tourism.

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