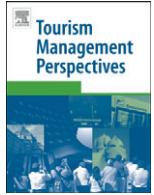




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

# Tourism Management Perspectives

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/tmp](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/tmp)



## Review

### Islamic pro-poor and volunteer tourism – The impacts on tourists: A case study of Shabake Talayedaran Jihad, Teheran – A research note<sup>☆</sup>



Neda Zarandian<sup>a,\*</sup>, Aliasghar Shalbfafian<sup>a</sup>, Chris Ryan<sup>b</sup>, Aliakbar Amin Bidokhti<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Tourism, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran

<sup>b</sup> The University of Waikato Management School, Hamilton, New Zealand

#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Keywords:

Tourists  
Volunteer tourism  
Attitude  
Poverty  
Skills  
Life

#### ABSTRACT

For the most part, researchers of pro-poor tourism have focused on the issues of poverty alleviation, and the recipient communities at the visited destination. By comparison relatively little has been said about the effect of travel and the tourist experience on the tourists themselves; a gap this study aims to correct. The present research is based on questionnaires from, and interviews with participants in the Shabake Talayedaran Jihad who were engaged in volunteer tourism in Iran. It was found that pro-poor volunteer tourism has positive effects on attitudes about poverty, life attitudes, and personal and social skills. Further, based on the interviews, 16 other effect indices have been found which relate to the above classification. This paper contributes to the literature by filling a gap in the English language academic literature that relates to Iranian volunteer movements and its volunteers.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

#### Contents

1. Introduction . . . . .	165
2. Method . . . . .	166
3. Results . . . . .	167
4. Conclusion . . . . .	167
References . . . . .	168

#### 1. Introduction

Much of the current research published on pro-poor tourism has understandably focused on the impacts that tourism has on the recipient communities, and whether it achieves its purposes (e.g. McCombes, Vanclay, & Evers, 2015 and Ven, 2015, being but recent examples). While the literature on volunteer tourism has filled some of the gaps about the impacts of pro-poor tourism initiatives on the tourists themselves, there still remain gaps. Much of the current academic literature is derived from Western based examples visiting the developing countries, and furthermore significantly overlooks (a) the

volunteer movements that exist within such countries and (b) has seemingly totally missed the significant contribution provided by the Islamic world. In doing so, it arguably omits some of the important cultural and religious motivations that might inspire many initiatives pertaining to pro-poor tourism and the volunteer movement.

This research note therefore focuses on Islamic tourists through a case study of Iranian students undertaking volunteer tourism activities organized by the Jihadi Campus through the auspices of Shabake Talayedaran Jihad, a NGO established to assist the poor in deprived areas.

As such, the case study provides an example of volunteer tourism, of which an increasing number have been reported in the literature. Examples include the work of Coughlan (2015) and Frilund (2015). The latter describes how the tourism authorities in Dharamsala, aware that many tourists are drawn to the city because of its Buddhist and Tibetan culture (the city is the site of the Dalai Lama's residence and the base for the Tibetan Government in Exile) started to advertise

<sup>☆</sup> This research has been adapted from my Master thesis at Tourism Management/ Tourism Planning.

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [nedazarandian@semnan.ac.ir](mailto:nedazarandian@semnan.ac.ir), [nedazarandian@gmail.com](mailto:nedazarandian@gmail.com) (N. Zarandian), [ashalbfafian@gmail.com](mailto:ashalbfafian@gmail.com) (A. Shalbfafian), [caryan@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:caryan@waikato.ac.nz) (C. Ryan), [aliaminbeidokhti@yahoo.com](mailto:aliaminbeidokhti@yahoo.com) (A. Amin Bidokhti).

opportunities for volunteer work in the local community. This has been successful because of (a) tourists already in the area are drawn to it by a wish to be closer to Tibetan culture, Buddhism and to be closer to the Dalai Lama and (b) the easy ‘drop in’ and ‘drop out’ arrangements that exist.

Dunn, Chamber, and Hyde (2015) provide an overview for the motives of ‘episodic’ volunteers, defining ‘episodic’ as the ‘one-off’ act of volunteering. They found that, in the case of volunteering for sporting events, that the sense of physical challenge was important, but a consistent theme across the 33 studies they reviewed was the importance of personal enhancement, making a contribution to society, and acting on sets of personal values. These latter values are also commonly cited in the literature relating to volunteer tourism. For their part Lee and Yen (2015) also examined the motives of tourists, but did so from the perspective of how those motive changed over time as a result of the experience of volunteering. Their approach was based upon theories of transformative learning that are premised on the concept that activities such as volunteering can be major life experiences that change perceptions, attitudes and values. Their study was also based on quantitative methods with respondents being derived from a Korean government sponsored scheme. Their study permitted comparisons between a pre- and post-trip subsample and a further control group. They note that the findings indicated enhanced scores for personally oriented motives such as to learn, to do different things, but interestingly the item ‘to combine a love of travel with a desire to give back’ declined over time.

There are very few, if any, papers that discuss volunteer tourism with respect to the Islamic world. Indeed a search using search sites such as Scopus, Google Scholar, JStore and wider search engines found no references in the English language to academic research relating to Islamic volunteer tourism. One of the very few was that by Hancock (2013), which is of interest in that in discussing American evangelical missions to the Islamic world, it refers to how many saw the ‘Islamic’ world as an ‘Other’ – a factor that has also emerged in some literature relating to volunteers to African countries, but otherwise the paper did not share the same focus as this research note – namely volunteering by members of the Islamic faith.

Yet Islamic volunteer tourism is very active, and global in its reach. For example in the UK, Islamic Relief UK (funded by the British Government through the Department for International Development) offers opportunities in many parts of world including Latin America. A search of the internet will quickly reveal a number of Islamic relief agencies and volunteer movements that seek the help of people and offer a series of working holidays. Many state their appeals in a broadly generic manner in terms of offering opportunities to make a difference, and are offering aid to all peoples regardless of gender, ethnicity or religious beliefs. For example United Muslim Relief states on its web page that ‘we believe everyone has a right to live free of poverty in a secure and more equitable world where they are able to realize their potential. Inspired by our Islamic ethos, we are open-minded and pluralistic. We believe that all people, regardless of race or religion should have access to clean water, to healthcare, to earn a sustainable livelihood and to have access to basic social services (unrelief.org, 2015).

Hoodfar (1998) provides a background to the Iranian volunteer movement. She notes prior to and after the Islamic Revolution the lack of diversity in Iranian socio-political structures meant that the development of NGOs did not spread spontaneously as in many other countries. Indeed it was State sponsored after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 because “The Islamic Republic, concerned with building its legitimacy, gave priority to meeting the population's most basic needs in an attempt to avoid alienating the Islamic regime's major constituency: the poor and less privileged. This ideological commitment was enshrined in the constitution of the new regime” (Hoodfar, 1998, no page

numbers). Indeed Hoodfar makes comparisons with the communal patterns of support found in China, which has also slowly permitted the growth of State licensed NGO sector (Hasmath & Hsu, 2015). Today NGOs in Iran are afforded both protection and rights under the Iranian constitution (Article 26), and among those rights are those that permit them to tender advice to governmental bodies, and indeed to demonstrate to further their cause (UNODC, 2015).

Shabake Talayedaran Jihadi started its work in 2007, focused on various Jihadi activities, especially at Jihadi Campus. It is motivated by a desire to fulfill God's wishes through good work, and is now located in Tehran, the capitol of Iran, and has about 50 members. Congruent with its work, and observed impacts its work has on the participant students, the study was based on three premises, namely:

- The pro-poor tourism program can significantly alter tourists' perceptions toward poverty;
- The experience of the program leads to an re-appraisal of life; and
- As a consequence of the experience and re-evaluations engendered, the tourists have enhanced social and personal skills.

## 2. Method

The research was conducted in two parts: qualitative and quantitative, and undertaken in the spring and summer of 2012. The quantitative data were derived from a questionnaire comprising 31 questions, of which six related to socio-demographic data. The questions used a 5-point scale ranging from ‘1’ Strongly disagree to ‘5’ Strongly Agree – the mid-point being ‘neither agree or disagree’. The respondents numbered 44 Shabake Talayedaran Jihad members selected by a simple random sampling based on Morgan's table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 software. These data refer to the views of the participants after they returned from their volunteer work.

The sampling adequacy and reliability of the data were tested by the standard statistical methods. As might be imagined, with such a small sample the Kaier–Meyer–Olkin statistic ( $KMO = 0.506$ ) indicated that the sample size was inadequate. On the other hand the internal structure of the data were reliable in that they met the conventional standards. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.782 (exceeding the recommended value of 0.7, Norušis, 2005) and the Spearman and Guttman split half coefficients both exceeded 0.8 (again more than meeting required standards Norušis, 2005). Using Tukey's test for non-additivity showed a non-significant F ratio of 1.444 but the residual nonadditivity was significant as required at  $p = 0.007$ , so implying that any variance was not dependent simply on differences among respondents (Norušis, 2005).

**Table 1**  
Socio-demographic variables.

Variable	Sub variable	Percent
Gender	Females	63.6
	Males	36.4
Age (Years)	15 to 20 years of age	11.4
	21 to 30 years of age	86.4
	31 years and over	2.3
Education	Technician or Bachelor	70.5
	Master's degree	25
	PhD	4.5
Presenting time in Jihadi Campus	During the year	63.6
	Summer	34.1
	Spring holiday	2.3
Would repeat the experience	Agree	97.7
	Disagree	2.3

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1013571>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1013571>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)