

# The Impact of Travel Destination on Tourist Behaviour

## Case of Qatari Tourist Visiting New York City, USA

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to explore the impact of a travel destination on tourist behaviour. The research focused on Qatari tourists visiting New York City. New York City was selected as a destination due to being one of the most popular and most visited cities in the world. One of the other reasons choosing New York City was its lifestyle and culture which are very different compared to Qatari culture and lifestyle.

The qualitative research approach was chosen approach of this. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand Qatari tourist behaviour and their decision-making process and feelings, before, during and after their trip. Saturation was reached after conducting 18 interviews with Qatari male and female tourists.

The findings of this research highlighted that the media has a big impact on selecting New York as a destination. The way media portrays New York City in movies and TV shows, has impacted the imagery of Qatari Tourists. In addition to the points mentioned, the image of a destination for Qatari tourists is mainly impacted by media and word-of-mouth. Moreover personality, lifestyle and background of the participants plays an important role when selecting a destination like New York.

Keywords: tourist behaviour, destination image, travel motivation, travel destination

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### 1. Introduction

New York is one of the world's most populous cities located in the metropolitan area in the United States of America. New York (NY) is also referred to as New York City (NYC) known as the fourth largest state has a population of 19.4 million as of 2019. The capital state of New York is Albany, and it is also known as the "Empire State" because of its wealth and resources. Previously, New York was settled by the Dutch who ruled it for 40 years as it was called "New Netherland". The spoken language in NY is English while the other most spoken language is Spanish.

New York holds many touristic sites that attract many visitors on a yearly basis, such as the Statue of Liberty, which was gifted by France in 1886 for its centennial celebration, the statue was shipped in 350 pieces and took 4 months to assemble and it is currently situated at Ellis Island (12 Interesting Facts About New York City, 2017). Tourists tend to go to New York to look at the Statue of Liberty either on the island or from

Battery Park. One of the most important official places in New York is the United Nations Headquarters which was established in 1952 after World War II. Central Park is one of the world's biggest park, also located in New York, this park is "a half-mile wide and 2.5 miles long", as Central Park has many attractions around it Central Park Zoo is one of the popular attractions (Law, 2019)

Over the past years the tourism industry in New York has grown significantly. New York City welcomed more than 65 million tourists in 2018 and it's expected to raise in 2019 by 2.8%. Forecasts show that the percentage of tourists visiting New York are likely to have annual visitor of 67 million tourists by the end of 2021 (NYC, 18).

This topic emphasizes on travel destination and its impact on tourist behaviour, and factors that impact their decision-making in selecting a destination, this research focuses on New York City, USA. In other words, identify the factors or motives that make Qatari tourists choose to travel to a certain country. It is important to understand the behaviour of tourists as the tourism industry depends on them, they are one of the main sources of success to the destination (Raj, 2004). Tourists visiting NYC, impact many aspects including the economy, the tourism industry, hospitality, stakeholders, it can also create job opportunities within the country (Bram, 1995).

Choosing a destination is never easy, as there are many aspects to consider before going to a certain country and the different tourists will have different interests and preferences. This research topic is very interesting as it explains both sides of the story firstly the destination, New York as well as understand the behaviour of the Qatari tourists.

This research is focusing on New York City as it is one of the most visited destinations in United States of America and around the world. The tourist behaviour that this research paper centres is Qatari tourist behaviour, since the researcher is a Qatari. In addition to that conducting primary research wouldn't be a hassle since it is done in Doha amongst Qatari's. This study will be of interest to many entities in New York City, USA as it gives them a more detailed insight of the profile of Qatari tourists choosing New York City and the reason behind it. The activity of tourists travelling to a certain destination impacts many entities in both the country where the tourist departs from and the chosen destination (Cianga & Sorocovschi, 2017). Because, there are many individuals involved in the process of travelling, such as airline companies, hotels, travel agencies, tour agencies, transportation companies, the retail shops and most importantly the economy of the chosen destination.

The tourism industry is an emerging industry that has developed over the past years which influences the GDP of a country (Bram, 1995). Tourists from all over the world have different preferences and choices when it comes to selecting a travel destination (Hsu, Tsai, & Wu, 2008). However, it is very important to identify the reasoning why certain destinations attract certain tourists; because there lie many aspects to consider before selecting a travel destination. Therefore, it is important to study the travel destination as well as the behaviour of the tourist travelling to that certain destination. This paper focuses on New York City (USA) as a travel destination and its impact on Qatari tourist behaviour. There remains a gap in literature that illustrates the Qatari tourist behaviour who choose New York City as a destination.

To what extent does travel destination have a positive or negative impact on the tourist behaviour when choosing a destination?

#### Aim of the research

The purpose of this research is to explore what drives the Qatari tourists to visit New York City in the USA as

a travel destination and study the impact of New York City as a travel destination on Qatari tourist behaviour. Specifically, this study aims to:

- To determine the trends in tourism in New York City, USA from Qatari tourist perspective
- To identify if tv/media has an effect on the tourist choice of destination
- To classify the factors in New York City that affect Qatari tourist decision-making process
- To understand if the culture and lifestyle of the chosen destination has an impact on the tourist behaviour before, during and after the trip
- To explore the relationship between Qatari tourist behaviour and New York City as a travel destination (by identifying the reason behind their travel to NYC as a travel destination and exploring the type of tourism they are going for as well as exploring the different interests that the Qatari tourists have when selecting the travel destination)

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Tourist behaviour

The term behaviour refers to the external actions of human beings including the internal mental processes and reactions (Kagan, n.d.). Behaviour is therefore an umbrella expression, from the 1880s to the 1930s it was explicit that the study of behaviour included experience. Behaviourism was an area in the study of psychology which started in the 1930s and in the 1970s the study of tourism arose (Pearce, 2005). During that time anthropologists, sociologists and marketers were interested to discover the mentality of the tourists, for that reason there was caution on using the term behaviour as it was linked to psychology (Pearce, 2011) In recent tourism writing the word experience is often used to express the same area of interest (Morgan, Lugosi, & Brent Ritchie, 2010) however, some writers believe that the word behaviour uses its fullest logic.

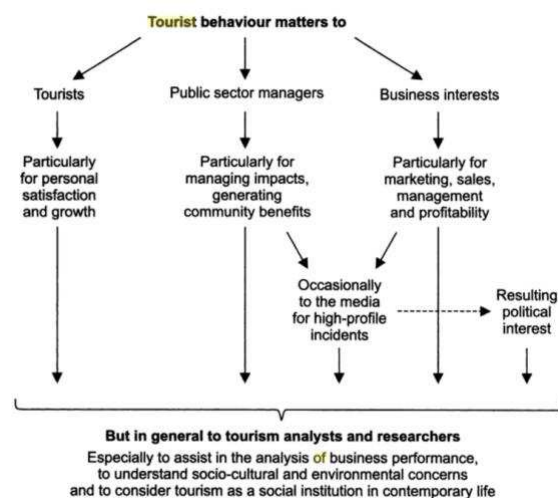


Figure 1: Tourist behaviour: matters

#### 2.1.1 Importance of tourist behaviour

Pearce (2005) came up with the framework shown in figure 1 which illustrates to whom is tourist behaviour important and why. The first and most important party are tourists themselves, because they are concerned with the experiences they get, the things they do and enjoy. Prior to tourists, the public sector managers are impacted by tourist behaviour. The reason being that they determine many things for the tourists themselves, their job focuses on decision-making, on policies and choices for tourist activities. Businesses are also very interested in tourist behaviour because some are marketers are “in joint public-private cooperate endeavours whose interests include factors that influence travellers to come to area A instead of B”. Therefore, businesses focus on the interests of the tourists, so that they can provide them the right products and services.

have different purposes of tourism when travelling to different destinations as they have different characteristics and high or low levels of familiarity and novelty (Kim, Chang, & Huh).

### 2.1.2 Tourist behaviour and travel destination

The relationship between tourist behaviour and travel destination:

One of the main psychological influences on tourist behaviour is travel motivation. Followed by finances and previous experiences. Which consequently influences the travel destination decision (Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011). Based on this, it is crucial for resorts for example to comprehend the behaviour of tourists since it helps improve product development, marketing strategies and formation of competitive advantage. A study by Clawson and Knetsch (1966) distinguished differences between tourist behaviour and consumer behaviour by these aspects: anticipation, travel to the site, the on-site experience, the return travel component and extended recall. Several authors (Van Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011) (Moutinho, 1987) have categorized the key elements of a tourism destination into primary, secondary and additional elements. The primary category includes the activities, the physical setting and the cultural attributes, whereas the secondary category holds elements such as catering, and shopping and the additional elements are the accessibility and the touristic information. Moutinho (1987), has stated some of the crucial advantages of a travel destination that make the destination suitable for tourists, such as “cost, attraction, amenities, travel opportunities, travel arrangements and travel information”. Hence, these gravitational elements would justify why tourists choose a certain travel destination (Moutinho, 1987).

According to Vuuren & Slabbert (2011) “the behaviour of a tourist is a result of the interaction between the personal and environmental variables”. This illustrates that the travel destination impacts the behaviour of the tourist. A research study that was done on Azerbaijan highlighted that travel destination with certain characteristics make it appropriate for certain tourists, as well as the type of the tourism destination which meets the tourists’ need and purpose depending on the geographical location and environment (Seyidov & Adomaitiene, 2016)

## 2.2. Factors Affecting Tourist Behaviour

### 2.2.1 Psychological Factors

#### A) Beliefs and Attitude

Psychological factors are very interesting and important to looking at when wanting to know the root cause of something, in this case knowing how the travel destination impacts the tourist behaviour. Therefore, the focus here is on the tourists, and one element of that impacts the tourists’ behaviour is their beliefs and attitude (Seyidov & Adomaitiene, 2016).

#### B) Travel and tourist motivation

Tourist motivation can be defined as ‘the total network of biological and cultural forces which give value and direction to travel choices, behaviour and experience’ (Pearce et al, 1998). There are many reviews on travel motivation in the tourism industry; these studies are related to post-travel consequences, expectations that anticipatory beliefs about the destination and the experiences being achieved.

Pearce (1988) proposed the Travel Career Ladder which has five travel motivators; they are physiological needs, safety/security, relationship needs, self-esteem/development needs and fulfilment needs. The first level of hierarchy is physiological needs, which can be identified into two categories external oriented; this includes an

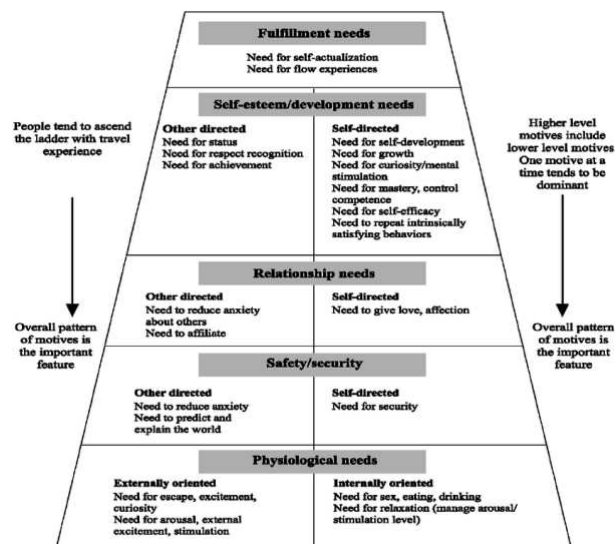


Figure 2 Travel Career Ladder

individual seeking for escape, some restful time alone or it can also be a vacation for relaxation and can have external excitement as well, whereas the internal oriented motivators incorporate the need for pleasure. Pearce also described the second travel motivator, safety/security firstly self-directed which means the travellers need for the security and secondly the other-directed which means having the need to reduce anxiety or arising out of worries about others. The third motivator relationship needs, can also be self-directed, meaning maintaining relationships or directed to other in a way by developing emotional attachments. Self-esteem and development needs are the fourth travel motivators, the need for growth, self-development, the need for mental stimulation by enhancing skills and hobbies are self-directed, whereas it can also be directed to others to acquire status, or the allure associated certain achievements. The last travel motivator that Pearce explained was fulfilment needs which is the need for self-actualization and the need for the flow experiences.

The Travel Career Pattern is a theory used to look at tourist motivation and provides an insight on rich descriptions of motives then asserting that they function as a driving pattern of focuses modified by travel experience and the life stages (Hsu & Huang, 2008) The Travel Career Pattern was proposed by Pearce and Lee (2005) based on Maslow's (1943) five-level hierarchy of needs and based on the Travel Career Ladder that had the five travel motivations associated with relaxation, stimulation, self-esteem, relationship and development or fulfilment. The main difference between the TCL and the TCP is that the TCL indicates that the travellers proceed up the travel motivation ladder while the level of travel experience increases going up. Whereas the TCP looks at these motivations as a compound and vibrant process that contains many levels at the same time. (Yousaf, Amin, & Santos, 2018) Although, the TCL and TCP models are appealing conceptual theories, according to Woodside & Martin (2007) there hasn't been strong experiential evidence that supports the assumptions in the theories proposed by Pearce. Ryan (1998) has argued that "travellers don't show an increase in the intellectual motivation for travel" based on his previous visits to a destination.

Thomas has identified 18 travel motivators which were then grouped in 4 categories that contain push and pull factors (Weeden, 2014). The categories were education and culture, ethic and family heritage, relaxation and pleasure and travelling for health, status, weather and sports. Whereas, Mayo and Travis (1981) have identified the major influences on individual travel behaviour (shown in figure 4); which is illustrated in a diagram. The travel decision maker is located in the centre of the diagram as it is affected by both internal and social influences. The second layer of the diagram include perception, learning, attitudes and motives; these are the psychological factors that impact travel behaviour. The third or outer layer of the diagram holds the social influences, that are divided into four parts: role and family influences, social classes, reference groups and lastly culture and subcultures.

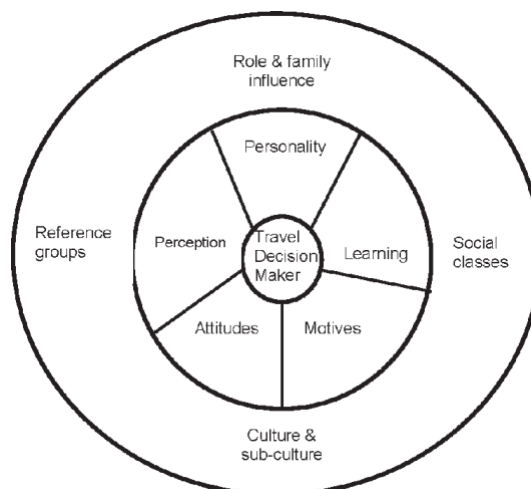


Figure 3 Major Influences on Individual Travel Behaviour by Mayo and Jarvis (1981)

### C) Impact of media

In today's world social media has become a tool that facilitates the exchange of information online, through conversations, interactions and sharing pictures and videos. According to a research conducted by Himangshu & Debashish & Raju. (2019), social media has become commonly used source of information for tourists when it comes to choosing a travel destination, people seek information in social media to identify alternatives, evaluate and make the decision. Moreover, tourism industries utilize social media to attract retain

and grow number of visitors to their destinations.

The effect of films on individuals' picture development has been broadly recognized in the writing (Butler, 1990; Riley and van Doren, 1992; Gartner, 1993; Schofield, 1996; Iwashita, 2003; Kim and Richardson, 2003). Movies are not by large delivered with the purpose to draw in travellers to an objective yet tend to influence watchers by implication as a foundation part of the film's message (Butler, 1990). This is on the grounds that they can give a large number of viewers substantial data about an objective, make a first time image or change a current image in a moderately brief timeframe (Hahm et al., 2008).

#### D) Travellers' experience

Experience involves "the interaction between the human being and the world" as explained by John Dewy (Hohr). In the tourism industry the experience of tourists is very important as it makes them decide they would go to a certain destination again or not. The experience will also have an impact on travel agencies, tours, hotels and the economy of the country as well. The reason being is, if the tourist has a pleasant experience, then he/she would likely recommend it and that would be considered as "marketing" for that destination or service by "word of mouth".

(Gunn, 1989), came up seven phases of the travel experiences within the context of a vacation travel, they are:

**1. Accumulation of mental images about vacation experiences:** in this phase the tourist has an image of the

**2. Modification of those images by further information:** once the tourist has the mental image of a certain destination, he/she expand that by getting more information to be able to decide whether or not they should go to that destination.

**3. Decision to take a vacation trip:** in this phase the individual decides to go on a trip based on his/her own circumstances which includes the budget, the time that's available and the expected image of the experience they want to get.

**4. Travel to the destination:** this is when the tourist physically goes to the selected destination, it can be a country, a road trip or any other place.

**5. Participation at the destination:** here the traveller gets the most experience as he/she would be involved in the different activities present at the destination; this can be hiking, skiing, shopping or even going on tours. The tourist would utilize the services available which will impact the way they perceive things and the way they will remember the trip.

**6. Return travel:** at this point the traveller's trip had ended and he/she is would now share their experience with fellow friends, family and travellers as well.

**7. New accumulation of images based on the experience:** this is when the travellers' experience is over and is replaced with different images based on the experience that they had when at the destination (Jenkins,

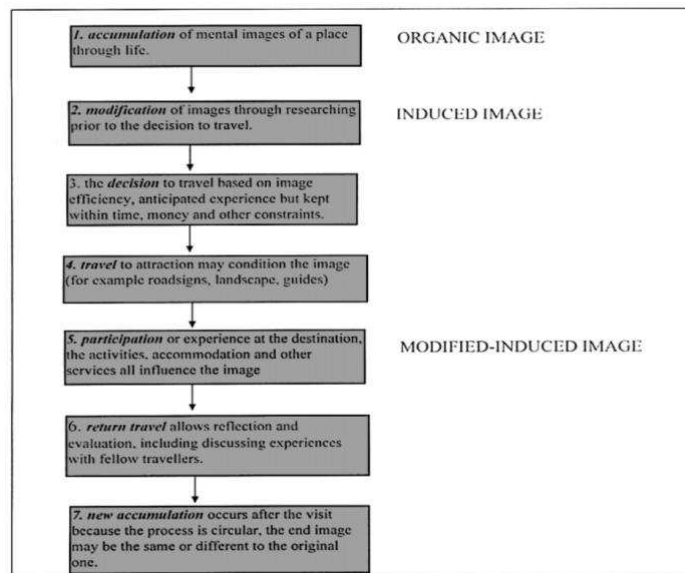


Figure 4 Seven phases of travel experience (Gunn, 1989)



1999).

### Memorable Tourism Experience

Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) has been studied by several authors (Kim J.-H. , 2014), some qualitative studies suggest different categories of the MTE, however there is no consensus among Four key dimensions of memorable tourism experience (Tang & Ritchie, 2011)

Dimension	Characteristics
Affections	It has positive emotions such as happiness, excitement and any component which leads to a memorable experience
Expectations	Unexpected events and surprises
Consequentiality	Important trip outcomes such as social relations, personal discovery and intellectual development
Recollection	Involves photographs, stories and memories of the trip

With memorable travel experience being categorized in the table above, there are three stages that a tourist experiences as well; they are the pre-trip stage, the on-site stage and the post-trip stage. In the pre-trip stage expectations about travelling generates happiness, regardless that planning the trip may be stressful. In the second stage which is the on-site stage, the tourist escapes reality and experiences new environments and diverse situations, that do not take place in a tourists' normal life. The last stage is the post-trip stage where the tourist reflects on his/her experience and emotional judgement of the memories gathered during the trip. A research conducted by (Jung & Cho, 2015) concluded that "memory plays a crucial role for travellers" because after their trip they rebuild and elaborate memories in their own perspective. The positive experience will result in positive memories and negative experience are most likely to become less negative as Mitchel et al. (1997) has referred to as a "rosy view". Therefore, throughout the different stages' travellers bring up memories from their previous travel experience in order to generate positive feelings. Furthermore, a crucial factor that's includes the choice of a holiday destination is travel boasting, for instance choosing places or destinations that your friends have not visited (Mutinda & Mayaka, 2012).

### 2.2.2 Personal Factors

#### Personality & self-concept

According to Murphy, Moscardo and Benckendorff (2007), the personality of a tourist becomes an essential aspect when selecting a travel destination to visit and different personality types impacts the choice of different travel destinations. The personality of the tourist can say a lot about them and their preference of the chosen travel destination their interest and their hobbies.

Therefore, this factor impacts the behaviour of the tourist before, during and after the trip as the individual would have different ways of thinking and will experience different things. For example, tourists travelling for leisure may be interested in the night life of the selected destination, that person would be more outgoing and social and may want to have a new experience. Whereas another tourist will also be travelling for leisure however, their way of having fun is different it could be by visiting a museum or a historical place. This conveys that the personality or the way the tourist is, would impact their behaviour and the travel destination would also have an impact on them positively or negatively that would depend on their experience.

#### Lifestyle

Dann (1993) mentioned that personality, lifestyle, tourist-role, social class and culture are substitute features that cause tourist with different nationalities to behave in a different way. Pizam and Sussmann (1995) addressed to nationality as one of the main factors which influences tourist behaviour. (Farahani & Mohamed,

2013). The lifestyle of the individuals impacts the way they behave and perceive things, the same is applicable to the tourism industry as different tourists would have different lifestyles. This factor would depend on their age, sex, status, etc.

### 2.2.3 Social Factors

#### Roles and status

In sociology, the word role is defined as the “position that a person occupies in a society” (Britannica, n.d.). Roles can be found everywhere, whether it is at work, leisure and the domestic life, whereas the term ‘social role’ extends this concept in a non-technical and interpersonal nature. In the tourism industry the social role of the tourist impacts their behaviour, as Smith (1978) explained a model that shows how “the tourist roles changed over time for any given destination”. Even tourists have general role responsibilities in the society and in the destination, they travel to, such as obeying the laws of that destination, not offending religious beliefs, not damaging physical environment and not over-using resources.

#### Reference groups

Demographic factors	Travelling style distinctions	Product and activity classifications
Age Gender Nationality Additional demographic factors: • expenditure • occupation • education	Accommodation used Activity participation Destination patterns Length of stay Trip purpose Distance travelled Travel party composition Seasonality/travel time Travel arrangements: • independent • package • mixed Transport mode	Cultural tourists: • heritage tourists • ethnic tourists Nature oriented tourists: • wildlife tourists • ecotourists Adventure tourists Educational tourists: • science tourists • volunteers Theme park tourists Casino tourists Urban tourists Agricultural tourists: • wine tourists • farm tourists Sex tourists: • romance tourists • companionship tourists Business tourists: • conference tourists • events tourists

There are different types of tourists that have different characteristics which make them all unique and make them have different preferences when it comes to the activities they do and to the destinations they select (Pearce, 2005). There has been broadly conceived stereotypes of tourists and their social roles have, have raised recurring themes. Figure 5 illustrates the different variables that describe the tourist groupings; it consists of demographic factors such as age, gender, nationality, occupation and education. It also includes the travelling style distinctions which covers the accommodation selected, the duration of stay of the tourist, the purpose of the trip, the time travelled; in other words which season and with whom and the arrangements and planning done for the trip. The last column covers the product and activity classifications, since every tourist would travel for a different purpose, there are categories for them; like cultural tourists, nature-oriented tourists who are interested in wildlife or ecotourism, adventure tourists and education tourists these can be tourists that go for science purposes or volunteering purposes. On the other hand, there are theme park tourists an example would

Figure 5 Individual variables describing tourist grouping (Pearce, 2005).

be Disneyland which is the most popular theme park for families (Sun & Uysal, 1994). There are groups of tourists that are called casino tourists and agricultural tourists, these visit wineries and farms and experience life away from the cities. Sex tourists are interested in romance tourism and companionships (Ryan & Kinder, 1996), Amsterdam attracts many tourists every year for this is known for this kind of tourism; as it has one of the most popular streets, The Red-Light District. Another tourist group are business tourists, these are usually for conferences, major events, or meetings that are held in different countries depending on the organization. In summary, every tourist visits a destination for a different purpose and has an expectation about that place (Pearce, 2005).



#### 2.2.4 Cultural Factors

Culture plays an important role in the lives of all the individuals. Culture is associated with many features such as language, morals, values, religion, tradition, music and food; it makes a society or individual unique by having different characteristics (Crotts, 2004). Therefore, culture has a great impact on everything that an individual does, it can be more or less important to a person depending on that person. In the tourism industry as well, culture is a great factor that impacts the tourism industry and impacts the behaviour of a tourist and the decision that tourist takes.

Culture is part of the external influences that impact the consumer behaviour. Some authors have argued that there are two different dimensions to culture, the first dimension looks at the values, norms and practices. Whereas the second dimension signifies features such as where the individuals travel to, eat, what they buy and how they behave while travelling. (Ozdemir & Yolal, 2016)

#### 2.4 Travel destination

Various scholars included multiple elements when defining tourism destination. As a result, a destination is defined as a collection of tangible and intangible products, services, imageries, and experiences (Sirgy, Perdue, & Uysal, 2012). A destination is also a cluster of essential and additional advantages like infrastructure, destination management and marketing functions, and superstructure that are available to the tourists (IGI Global, n.d.). In addition, each destination has its own identity and atmosphere. Moreover, a destination provides a level of satisfaction to the visitors by its push factors, unique characteristics, and the observed offered value. Finally, a destination is a key element that includes complex dimensions of the tourism industry contributing an extensive range of tourism products, offers, and services (Sirgy, Perdue, & Uysal, 2012).

##### 2.4.1 Tourism Marketing

The competition between travel destinations is high, a good understanding of the marketing principles will allow to achieve marketing objectives. The main aspects of tourism marketing cover strategy, micro-environment, prevailing market environment, planning, implementation and control.

##### Market Environment

The market environment consists of all the fundamental forces which exists in the environment and impacts the customer decision making. The market environment is divided into two sections, macro-environment and micro-environment (Devashish, 2011).

The macro-environment includes of all the factors that influence the industry from a macro perspective. It consists of six elements: Demographic Environment, Economic Environment, Natural Environment, Technological Environment, Political Environment and, Socio-cultural Environment. A tool which can be used to analyze the macro-environment are PEST analysis.

As for the micro-environment it indicates the forces that are close to the tourist destination and affect its capability to serve its visitors: bringing them to the destination, making them stay and visit the destination as well as taking them back. It embodies travel organizations, hotels, restaurants, souvenir venders and destination staff besides tourists themselves.

Studies have shown that in any travel destination the responsibility eventually lies in the attitude of the local public regarding tourists and tourism as an industry for the success of every travel destination. A tool which can be used to analyze the micro-environment is Porter's Five Forces Model (Devashish, 2011).

### Destination Image

Destination image has been defined by many authors, Lawson & Baud Bovy (1977) described it as “expressions of all objective knowledge, imagination and emotional thoughts of an individual or group about a particular location”. Whereas (Valls, 1992) defined destination image as the prejudiced interpretation of reality of the tourist. Hence, the destination image that tourists have is subjective depending on each tourist’s perception of that destination. (Lopes, 2011).

### Formation of image of destination

As the result of a perceptual and cognitive handle, the goal picture is shaped from a few sources of data. Hence, any individual can construct a picture of any goal (in their intellect) without ever having been there. In other words, the picture of the goal will be based on chronicled, political, financial and social in- arrangement which, in turn, will shape the picture that the individual as of now held (Echtner & Richie, 1991). The value framework of each person will in the long run impact the picture that they create of a traveller destination, by acting as a particular consideration channel (Moutinho, 1987). Moreover, the nation of root of the individual impacts

### Development of the image of a tourist destination

In 2004, a study was carried out by (Tocquer & Zins) that looked at the perceptual influences on tourists with a certain destination and therefore suggested the grouping of destination image into four stages of development,

- Stage 1: Vague and unrealistic imagery - is from advertising, education and word of mouth. It is formed before a tourist trip. In this sense, people look at the holidays as healthy.
- Stage 2: Image distortion - here a person decides to go on vacation, choosing the type of vacation, destination and type of tourism product. It is during this period that the image of holiday changes is being revised and expanded. The image created after the holiday project is completed becomes clear.
- Stage 3: Improved Image - When there is direct experience with a tourism product, the image is improved by removing the wrong or distorted elements and reinforcing the elements that emerge as correct.
- Stage 4: The resulting image - signifies a recent restful memory that can lead to nostalgia or regret. After that, a set of new images will be launched that will affect future decisions about the same tourism product.

## 2.5 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework

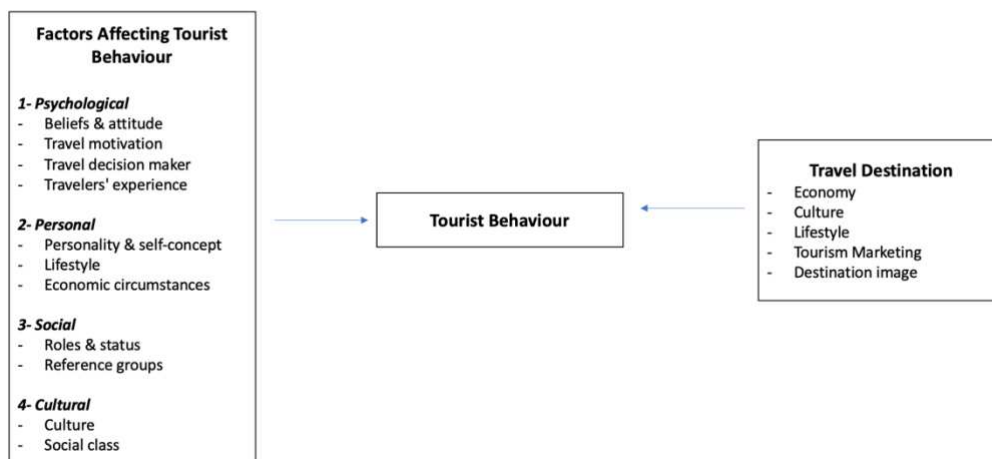


Figure 6 Conceptual Framework

For this research the conceptual framework consists of the two variables: independent and dependent. The conceptual framework in figure 7 illustrates the main concepts and sub-concepts of this research. Every concept is linked to another in a direct way. There are two independent variables that are directly linked to the main concept tourist behaviour that is the dependant variable. Therefore, factors affecting tourist behaviour has several concepts that have an impact; they are psychological, personal, social and cultural. Each factor has several components that is more detailed and explains for instance the psychological factors affecting tourist behaviour. Hence, the literature review section covers beliefs and attitude, travel motivation, travel decision maker and the traveller's experience under psychology. Followed by personal factors which includes personality and self-concept, lifestyle and economic circumstances. These factors are important to know as they have an influence on tourist behaviour, in other words, this section focuses on the individual or tourist. Social and cultural factors are also discussed in the literature review.

On the left side of the conceptual framework, travel destination is there which also has a direct arrow to tourist behaviour. Travel destination has several concepts that are important to consider when selecting a travel destination and influence the behaviour of tourists. The economy of the travel destination is an essential factor, as everything depends on the economy when it comes to tourism but also the currency in that country is impacted positively or negatively depending on the economy. In any destination, the culture and lifestyle are elements that tourists look at when selecting a destination, because in this research, there tourist are from Qatar and therefore have their Qatari/Arab culture whereas the destination New York (USA) have a completely different culture and lifestyle. Tourism marketing and destination image play an important role for the travel destination which has a relationship with the tourist behaviour because it impacts the way the tourist perceives the destination.

### 3. Methodology

The qualitative research approach was chosen for the research. Qualitative research produces detailed descriptions of the participants' feelings, experiences as well as their personal opinions about a certain area (Rahman, 2017). The chosen approach helped to understand the impact of New York City as a travel destination on Qatari Tourist behaviour. In addition to that, the research was ethnographic research where the researcher observed and interact with a study's participants in their real-life environment. Ethnography focuses on working closely with people as well as getting a view on the reality of the area studied (Sangausubana, 2011).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 participants. The questions were based on the main concepts of the research they are; tourist behaviour, travel motivation, traveller experience, importance of culture, consumer decision-making and travel destination. Saturation has been reached after conducting 18 interviews with equal numbers of male and female participants for this research. The sampling method was a random sampling technique to create a sample out of the "Qatari" population. The interviews were planned to be conducted face-to-face however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and for the health and safety of both the researcher and the interviewees; they were conducted through video calls.

The type of qualitative data analysis selected was content analysis, as this was the most common type of analysis as it refers to the categorization, tagging and thematic analysis of data collected. Part of content analysis is 'coding', which is an analytical process of transforming the data collected to a set of meaningful cohesive categories. In coding there are two methods of coding, 'deductive coding' where there the starting point is with a predefined set of codes then these codes are assigned to the data collected. On the other hand, 'inductive coding' is the opposite as it starts from scratch and the codes are created based on the data

collected from the interviews/observations. In order to avoid collecting biased results inductive coding was used in this research.

## 4. Results and Discussions

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of travel destination on tourist behaviour and see if there is a relationship between both elements, the case study was on Qatari tourists visiting New York City as a travel destination. This chapter includes the discussion of major findings from the interviews which have been conducted with Qatari tourists, and they have shared their travel experience as related to the literature on several points that have been covered in the research questions and the literature.

The main themes for discussion are obtained from the results of the interviews combined with theories and previous studies. Hence, the main themes or highlights are, destination image, impact of media, travel motivation, travel experience and consumer decision-making process; each theme is elaborated in detail below. As these are the main concepts that have been addressed at the beginning of the research and are part of the aim of this research.

### 4.1 Destination Image

Lawson & Baud Bovy (1977) described destination image as “expressions of all objective knowledge, imagination and emotional thoughts of an individual or group about a particular location”. This factor showed great importance in this research and was impacted mainly by the media and word-of-mouth for Qatari tourists. This is due to all the images and thoughts that has been build up from what is being showcased in movies and tv shows, that influences the expressions they got on New York as a destination. Therefore, the responses from the interviews support the literature by mentioning the images they had about New York before travelling to it. As a result, the media acted as a catalyst for selecting a destination such as New York in this study, also created the need to go and explore or see what is behind the screens.

### 4.2 Impact of Media

According Himangshu & Debashish & Raju. (2019), social media has become a commonly used source of information for tourists when it comes to choosing a travel destination. People seek information in social media to identify alternatives, evaluate and make the decision. In this research majority of participants agreed that the media plays a very important role when selecting a destination.

### 4.3 Travel Motivation

Pearce (1988) proposed the Travel Career Ladder which has five travel motivators; they are physiological needs, safety/security, relationship needs, self-esteem/development needs and fulfilment needs. These travel motivators were brought up during the interviews with Qatari tourists who have been to New York.

The first level of hierarchy is physiological needs, which is identified into two categories external oriented; this includes an individual seeking for escape, some restful time alone or it can also be a vacation for relaxation and can have external excitement as well, whereas the internal oriented motivators incorporate the need for pleasure. As most of the participants mentioned in their answers during the interviews the “need to getaway” or to explore something new and unique that is out of the natural setting of the tourists.

Pearce (1988) also described the second travel motivator, safety/security firstly self-directed which means the travellers need for the security and secondly the other-directed which means having the need to reduce anxiety or arising out of worries about others. This second travel motivator was supported by one of the Interviewee, a

25-year-old Master student, “I needed a break from stressing about university and going to New York was the best thing I did!”.

The third motivator is relationship needs, that can also be self-directed, meaning maintaining relationships or directed to other in a way by developing emotional attachments. This third motivator was present in one of the participants of the research, a 37-year-old married male, where he mentioned the reason for his first visit to New York was for his honeymoon, This also showed, that there are different reasons behind visiting New York such as a honeymoon, a getaway, reuniting with family and friends.

Self-esteem and development needs are the fourth travel motivators, the need for growth, self-development, the need for mental stimulation by enhancing skills and hobbies are self-directed, whereas it can also be directed to others to acquire status, or the allure associated certain achievements. The fourth travel motivator was also mentioned by some of the participants as some of them were students, therefore they went to New York for educational purposes but then explored the city. On the other hand, there are many conferences that are held in New York City as mentioned by Interviewee G, “I went to New York to attend The Youth Assembly Conference”. This also shows that some destinations or trips enrich a tourist when it comes to self-development and self-growth.

The last travel motivator that Pearce explained was fulfilment needs which is the need for self-actualization and the need for the flow experiences. Although this is the last motivator it is very important to feel the satisfaction at this point, as mentioned by Interviewee N, “I would give New York 10 out of 10 because it’s New York! It’s a very special place that has everything I look for in a destination”.

#### 4.4 Travel Experience

The four key dimensions of memorable tourism experience by (Tang & Ritchie, 2011) have clearly been visible throughout the interviews as the responses have identified each dimension. The table below displays the dimension and some of the expressions that have been used by Qatari tourists that fit the MTE.

Dimension	Characteristics
Affections	This has been seen throughout the responses of the Qatari tourists, where they used expressions like “it was amazing”, “it was magical” and “overwhelmed, happy and excited”
Expectations	“I was shocked from the crowd, and I was happy because the experience was beyond my set expectations”
Consequentiality	This dimension was not covered during the interviews and was not observed during the answers as well.
Recollection	“Even after a month of coming back to Doha, I was still talking about my trip at New York for my honeymoon, and had posted some of the pictures on Instagram”

Although most of the responses and experience that Qatari tourist mentioned during the interviews were positive, there were some other points of view. As mentioned by one of the Interviewee “I’d go there again I would just have less expectations”, also mentioned by several other interviewees where they state that it did not meet their expectation in some elements. One of the points which was highlighted several times was “there are horrible smells around the city that can be very disturbing” mentioned by Interviewees E, H and O. Therefore, when it comes to travel experience for Qatari tourists, it was different from a person to another and that was due to the duration of the trip, the places they visited, the people that were with them in the trip as



well as the season they chose to travel. All these elements impact the experience which they got when they went to New York. This leads to another important point experience-related as a research conducted by Jung & Cho (2015) concluded that “memory plays a crucial role for travellers” because after their trip they rebuild and elaborate memories in their own perspective. Hence, the positive experience will result in positive memories and negative experience are most likely to become less negative as Mitchel et al. (1997) has referred to as a “rosy view”.

## 5. Conclusion & Recommendation

- Importance of media

The findings of this paper highlighted the importance of the impact of media on the destination image, travel motivation and decision-making of the Qatari tourists when they selected New York as their travel destination. This, therefore, drew the attention on how powerful media has become nowadays and what is being posted on social media, displayed in the news, or even shown on tv shows and movies have an impact on Qatari tourist behaviour. As during most of the responses mentioned how they visited certain areas that they have seen in movies or tv shows, for example, The Plaza Hotel was one that was mentioned several times, it is a hotel that became very popular after it being in the movie “Home Alone”. In addition to that, even the attractions that Qatari tourists visited were a result of it being shown in tv shows as well such as Times Square, Brooklyn Bridge and The Statue of Liberty. Since media has been very important, for future research it would be interesting to study if what is being displayed in movies and tv shows from another country has an impact on tourists visiting that particular destination, Turkey can be taken as an example.

- Destination Image

Destination image was one of the most interesting factors that impacted Qatari tourist behaviour as it has shown a clear relationship with media as well as travel experience. Destination image impacts the behaviour of Qatari tourist behaviour before, during and after the trip, as supported by Lopes (2011) where he states that “destination image that tourists have is subjective depending on each tourist’s perception of that destination”. This elaborated on the point that what they have in mind about a certain destination, New York for this research would change based on what they perceive there. In addition to the points mentioned, the image of a destination for Qatari tourists is mainly impacted by media and word-of-mouth, this has been covered during the interviews.

- Decision-making and travel experience

The five steps of the decision-making process when selecting a destination has been identified throughout this research for Qatari tourists. As covered in literature there are several steps that an individual goes through to make the decision whether or not to travel to a certain destination or not. The interviews with the Qatari tourists have mentioned all the steps in their responses when talking about their preparation before going to New York.

Travel experience has been highlighted, in both literature and during the interviews as it is very important to know what a tourist experiences throughout his/her trip as this impact’s future decision-making whether or not to visit the destination. For Qatari tourists, their travel experience differed as each individual looks for different outcomes of a trip and have different preferences and needs. In other words, it can be positive or negative depending on their trip and if it has satisfied their needs or not. Part of travel experience is Memorable Travel Experience which has four key dimensions as explained by Tang & Ritchie (2011). Three out of four dimensions were visible from

the responses of the Qatari tourists, the one dimension which was not present is “Consequentiality” which includes “Important trip outcomes such as; social relations, personal discovery and intellectual development”. This could be focused on in future research to know to reason behind it not being discussed amongst the answers of Qatari tourists.

- **Personality and lifestyle**

As mentioned in literature by Murphy, Moscardo & Benckendorff (2007), “the personality of a tourist becomes an essential aspect when selecting a travel destination to visit and different personality types impacts the choice of different travel destinations”. From the interviews the personality, lifestyle and background of the participants plays an important role when selecting a destination like New York, as every individual has different preferences and interests. In other words, what an individual likes in terms of places, activities and vibes impacts their decision for selecting a destination.

## 5.1 Contribution and Importance of the research

For the industry:

The tourism and hospitality industry are booming industries and very important and beneficial to any country. As tourism contributes towards the growth and development of the country, by opening up job opportunities, brining economic value and benefits in addition to building a country’s image and identity. This paper would allow travel agencies get more background on what certain tourists are looking for, how long they stay and what are the activities they like and dislike, in other words have a profile for different nationalities. This will also be very important, as the income level of Qataris is considered high, therefore most of them would look for luxurious products and services, this will give an idea of how things can be improved in New York for example.

For the academia

The importance of this research lies within the gap that remains in literature focusing on the topic of tourist behaviour and what impact does a travel destination have on it, being more specific there isn’t much on the focus of the target group. Therefore, there haven’t been any previous research that talk about Qatari tourists, hence there isn’t any background on their behaviour as tourists and on their travel experience. There isn’t much research on the GCC countries when it comes to tourism and the topic tourist behaviour focuses on the psychological aspect of tourism trying to understand the tourists from a wide perspective.

In addition to that, the research design can be applied to a different target group and destination and compare if the results will be similar or different. It will be very interesting to have a comparison to see if different nations with different cultures have different outcomes due to their beliefs and values.

## 5.2 Recommendation

The recommendations are based on the finding of this research and what can be done in future researches and studies in the tourism field. Therefore, the recommendations of this paper are listed below:

- **Face-to-face Interviews**  
Conducting face-to-face interviews is highly recommended for future research, as it is more convenient, and it facilitates a two-way communication between the researcher and participant without any disruptions.
- **Including participant observation in the chosen destination**

To have a more in-depth and unique research in the future it is recommended to have participant observation as an instrument to compliment the interviews. This would add more value to the research as the researcher would be more involved when following an ethnographic research design.

- Exploring the impact of movies and tv shows on decision-making for selecting a destination  
The results of the research have raised many questions and areas for research and future studies, since media was one of the spotlights of this paper, it would be great to explore it in-depth in the future. Therefore, explore if different media channels for certain countries impact the tourism activity in that country.
- To study and see how routine and psychological impacts the travel decision-making that an individual take to select a destination  
This will give more room for improvement for focusing on the psychological aspect of tourism and studying the tourist behaviour, it will be very interesting to look at that aspect of tourism since, this hasn't been covered a lot in literature.

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