

The Effects of Political Non-recognition on the Tourists' Visitation Decision to North Cyprus

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Abstract

While the political status of a destination, non-recognition, and tourists' decision making research has turned considerable attention to the tourism economy in North Cyprus (N. Cyprus), there is no previous research that excludes the effect of the sequences related to the political status on the tourists' visitation decision. Thus this paper attempts to study how the tourists' visitation decision was being affected by the political non-recognition. In order to achieve this purpose, appropriate quantitative methods have been underpinned by the perspective of European tourists. The main findings revealed that although the political status of N. Cyprus has not been considered in the visitation decision, other agents such as; indirect flights, image of conflict and lack of diplomatic representative may discourage of such decision and subject to test the competitive advantages of such political non-recognition by eliminating the effect of these restricts.

Keywords: Tourism destination; N. Cyprus; Political non-recognition; Competitive advantages; Diplomatic representative; Image of conflict; Indirect flights

Introduction

Rarely does a reader face a case of political non-recognition in the tourism industry or economy literature. While N. Cyprus has not yet reached an international recognition as a sovereign state excluding Turkey, the tourism sector has displayed a significant growth despite the embargoes sanctioned [1,2]. Brand hotels chains had been built in different locations particularly in Kyrenia city and the Karpas peninsula [3,4]. Four decades from the division of the island into two attached lands, aligned with duplicitous international situations excluding Turkey. N. Cyprus has much potential to improve its resources and capability as a unique tourism destination attracts tourists from around the world [1,5,6]. Existing literature has not provided evidence of how the political non-recognition may thrive and make N. Cyprus a destination with a competitive advantage, and how tourists perceive and conceptualize their attitude to visit the destination in relation to such political situation. However, certain developments have created new trends toward peaceful tourism environment. Indeed, individuals' attitudes may change over time and governments' decisions may reverse the situation. For example, the 2004 treaty between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot allowed crossing borders and over four million visits had been recorded in that year. Moreover, the discovery of oil in the Mediterranean basin may bring the Turkish Cypriots into the picture, and create need of serious session of talks for final political settlement [7]. Moreover, the context of the shortage of drinking water in the island may be a consideration for any future agreement.

According to Webster and Timothy's study, as a result of the cross-border treaty in 2004, half of the southern Cypriot travelled to N. Cyprus [8] motivated by curiosity and other reasons to discover the other side. Yet the understanding of probable motive agents in such dilemma is still very limited and needs to update the investigation following the events. Furthermore, destination selection is commonly related to the probable certain helpful events multiplied in demographic and the individual perceptions. Previous research on N. Cyprus as destination has given attention to its tourism product rather than its main problems, and has stressed the negative impact of the political situation on the tourism industry rather than its competitive advantage [9]. From the separation day of Cypriots many events have taken

place and the tourism mobility toward the country prospered, this tendency help in building peaceful destination and civil societies [10]. While observers expected that the collar isolation would be intensified, the tourists' mobility toward N. Cyprus break the Dove's Ring (an Andalusia metaphor for peace). Until we well understand how the political status of N. Cyprus effect on destination selection, a study will remain required on how tourists perceive and evaluate the different sequences of the political non recognition.

Highlight on the Cyprus Negotiations

Since the division date in 1974 into two geographical and ethnic lines, 76% of the island population become Greek Cypriots, and 19% Turkish Cypriots live in N. Cyprus [11]. The non-recognised state of Turkish Cyprus imposes isolation in measure to its political and economic constitutions. The situation has been aggravated to suspend the country activities in relation to direct flights, postal connections, hosting sporting events. Few years later, some plans have been launched to start negotiations supported once by UN Peace building actions Ladini [12] and others by western auspices particularly United State according to a congressional report [13]. These intermitted efforts seek to settle the conflict similar to federal Swiss or Bi-communal alike the Belgian model (Freedom House) [14], through sharing sovereignty related to territory and constitutional representative [15]. Although that the settlement has not met yet any agreement, the hope was not eliminated and the recognition of political entity had been achieved. In an early study, Sonmez and Apostolopoulos stress on how the occurring contact between Turkish and Greek Cypriot provided opportunities for free tourism cooperation [16]. More specifically, this began with the U.N.'s "Set of Ideas" mediations in 1992, passing through the 1999's

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with talks reactivated again by Kofi Annan the Secretary General of UN in 2001 and 2002. Annan expressed of his vision that both sides "must and should be recognized" in any final settlement. Other than both of them had engaged in direct talks only in late 2002, while an official agreement allowed to travel between both states by 2003 [8].

Responding to Kofi Annan plan which fostered referenda on 24th April 2004 resulted in 76% of voters rejected Annan's project by Greek Cypriot, whilst the Turkish Cypriot voted in favour of the plan by 65% [17]. Despite this result, EU offered a membership to Cyprus in May 2004 where the situation became more and more complicated. The uncertain European position towards the conflict in the small island may be attributed to change its policies, and reconcile the situation for reunification or stop the Greek Cypriot veto to include Turkey in Europe [18]. In mid-2006, both sides argued his acceptance to keep discussions about "issues that affect day-to-day life". Followed by meetings during 2006, 2008, and 2010 under the U.N. umbrella, they missed again the offered opportunity of the bi-communal or bi-zonal model [19,20].

The declaration of talks between the two communities rekindles the optimism for settlement, even for Turkey which looks to resolve the conflict to increase its own EU aspirations through the Cyprus problem [21]. However, the hope of equal rights in federal constitution gathering the both communities or a future internationally acceptance has not stopped by Turkish Cypriots. Eventually, the continuity of Cypriot dilemma accompanying with recall of Annan Plan from time to time has generated an aspiration for tourism destination management in N. Cyprus toward challenging the political isolation.

Under the sensitiveness of the non-recognition and its impacts on the tourism then the economy as a whole, earlier studies (Safakh [5] Altinay [22] assessed the two potential alternatives on tourism sector on the long run; total liquefying or further strength with the Turkish economy and the federal reunification refereeing to Annan's plan. Other studies fluctuated between federal settlement or maintaining the cultural ties each nation with its mainland [23]. Altinay and Bowen highlighted the required need to balance political decisions with national commitments, and then its reflection on the tourism policies and development [24]. A competitive advantage that some wager on the future of the island and its potential to meet equal treatment for both Greek and Turkish nationals to the EU visa-free list to keep 'hopes on hold' [25]. Recently, the Europe Report No. 229 (International Crisis Group 2014) calls for new vision toward the Cyprus conflict, instead talking about federal solution a full independence with EU membership gifted to N. Cyprus [26] is the way to persuade both sides to set for realistic settlement. The report debates that Greek Cypriots will escape of their economic crisis and Turkish Cypriots will build their own state within the European body. To conclude, the follower of the events development finds a peaceful voice try to take action for possible solution. This impression in favour for Turkish Cypriot than Greek who have more tendencies to engage for any future contact [27].

Destination competitive advantage

Destination may build a unique competitive advantage from its own determinant agents alike: geographical location, resources and attractions, cultural diversity, legal institutions and structures Sainaghi [28], stability and freedom from strife [29]. Dinnie and Fola [30] argue that the destination in order to promote its tourism product and attract inward investment needs to focus now on its differentiation and image, in addition to providing value for money [31]. While previous studies continue to contrast the development of tourism in N. Cyprus with

its main rivals Ekiz [32] others refer to the potential economic and how tourism can penetrate its political isolation through its proper institutions [2,33].

Although the rejected global position to recognise N. Cyprus, there were some constituents of peaceful tourism industry had been arisen in the northern part of Cyprus. According to the international reports, the self-declared state has successfully kept the criminality in the lowest rates and political stability had been maintained. Civil government and democratic state has been built accordingly with respecting liberties of individuals [14]. Indeed, the general freedom of the human rights advanced the ranking of the free media [34]. Moreover, business practices and tourism may play a significant role in reducing the identity conflict and promote images of peace [35]. While Katsos and Forrer's study found that a limited change happened to promote peace in the island via economic activities, they suggest studying how common businesses gather against their opponents [36].

An overview on the literature of destination's attractiveness, N. Cyprus's tourism product is appealing as a healthy climate and modern resorts where the distinctive advantage for tourists. While some consider N. Cyprus as sand and sun attraction, others looked at its strategic location on the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa. This quite central geographical place and properties privacy were the discriminator power for long summer stay in the country according to Boyarkina's study. Beside its location, an effective positioning strategy may contribute to more incoming tourism ignoring the non-recognition phase. And more marketing and promotional plans may make N. Cyprus among the top mind of awareness and state the destination in their preference destination sets. In July 2011, the N. Cyprus Tourism Centre conducts extensive promotional activities through wide areas in UK. Indicative posters covered trains in sixteen British cities, in particular London buses and its underground stations. The campaign promoted the Turkish Cyprus in unresisting visible way to excess of two million people. Above 6000 entries had been recorded, proving their interest to visit the destination despite their knowing of the political status and responding to the campaign [37].

Attractions and barriers that affect the tourists' decision

N. Cyprus's superficies is 3355 square km coming as the third largest Mediterranean island, comparing to 9,251 square kilometres of the total island superficies. While the peninsula is only 224 km long, its coastlines exceed that length by 768 km. The state shares roughly one third of the Cyprus Island to occupy strategic location heading the Middle East area [38]. That island body has created a geographical and political importance benefiting of its dynamic location [1]. N. Cyprus has replaced its limited economic resources by its potential on tourism as a way to support its economic development keeping connection with the world, and through providing quality education in tourism [39].

While a dominant believe that tourism economy in N. Cyprus has not achieved the hopeful success Alipour and Kilic [33] there is no one ignore the mass tourism of some markets such as Turkish, German and British providers [40]. Moreover, the competitive advantages of such isolation for those segments need to be investigated more. The destination selection is a process of balance between the offered options, and the features of the destination itself. The importance of destination factors vary in its influence from person to another despite the dominant believe that pricing and creating convenient travel experience are the most important drivers [41,42]. After four decades of challenging such political situation, an early study by Ekiz has diagnosed some of these barriers that threaten its tourism

businesses; non-recognition and embargoes, indirect flight and ferries rather than Turkey, unfair EU attitude to the Cyprus dilemma, rivalry with other Mediterranean countries with a comparable climate, and image of conflict [32]. In addition to an independent physical body of tourism industry which escort due lack of coordination and policies development [43]. Moreover, figures display fluctuating hotel occupancy rates between 40 and 50% (Public Relations Department, 2014) [38] with 75% of tourists are Turkish outstanding 25% from other countries [39]. The research revealed the following elements most threatening upon the visit decision to visit N. Cyprus: 1) international isolation 2) lack of direct flights effect on the additional budget of their visit 3) market information and expectations, and 4) lack of diplomatic representative.

From the creation of N. Cyprus in 1983 alongside the non-recognition of its institutions, the local government strives to place itself as high demanded destination despite the barriers sanctioned by the international community and the southern part specifically for direct flights [32,44,45]. A leap has been achieved in the hospitality industry reflected positively on the whole economy of the country, through a group of policies and natural attractiveness [44,46].

Tourism achievement in North Cyprus

Significant effort has been spent to expand the tourism sector, some of them were simultaneously with the development of tourism in South Cyprus (Altinay, et al. [22] Alipour and Kilic [33] Altinay and Bowen [24]), and others were irrelevant (Alipour [43] Mehmet and Yorucu [47] Alipour and Vughaingmeh [3]). The N. Cyprus case contributed to found new tourists behaviours such as summering with long stay, relaxation resorts and casino tourism [4]. Globalisation has contributed in bringing new investment outside the traditional markets, alongside the modernization of the hospitality industry and media coverage of the area [48]. N. Cyprus is one of the best examples that has received continuously foreign investments in the tourism industry that displaying significant trend for the development of tourism.

According to Statistical Yearbook of Tourism, N. Cyprus had had a capacity of 12,222 achieving USD\$395.4 million as added value to the tourism sector in 2005. In the light of these provided figures, more than one third (38.0%) of the tourists visiting N. Cyprus are foreigners. Moreover, almost 62.1% of the tourists have visited N. Cyprus by package tours and 76.7% were above 40 years old (Statistical Yearbook of Tourism, 2005). A leap has been complemented and the tourism is becoming a major income for N. Cyprus economy. In 2009, North Cyprus tourism industry created 9,224 jobs to share the employment workforce by 9% [49]. The annual bed night's rate in 2011 was 2,287,869 achieving 41.4% occupancy. Nevertheless in 2013 were 2,877,564 total bed nights by 47.9% respectively, and 19, 346-bed capacity had been recorded till the summer season of 2014 year. In 2011, the N. Cyprus

tourism sector hosted tourists increased from 1,022,089 to 1,232,753 in 2013, with a 30% increase in incoming tourism from above 50 different nationalities. These figures display only the tourists coming direct to the country, while the total foreigners' arrival to N. Cyprus was 1,814,708 including those who came from Larnaca airport after opening the border between both Cyprus [50].

In 2014, official statistics estimated that the tourism contribution to the GDP achieved 8.7%, and the rate of occupancy till August 2014 was 31%. The northern part of the island has captured tourists from different nationalities around the world. UK tourists' arrival follows the mainland, then from western and eastern Europe [38]. A destination that has promoted it's untouched nature to become really "a Corner of Earth Touched by Heaven" [50]. Different types of tourism have been shaped and tourists from different nationalities come to experience the tourism product of N. Cyprus apart from the political situation. Tourism industry prospers day-after-day and renaissance counts all the its natural and resorts with other alternatives such as congress tourism [51] (Table 1).

Methods

The objective of this study is to outline valuable understanding about the effect of political non-recognition sequences on the tourism sector in N. Cyprus. In order to illustrate whether the restriction elements are competitive or passive advantage upon European tourists' visitation decision, a balance between the discouraging sequences of political non-recognition and the attractions of destination was measured.

Contextual setting

The empirical perspective for the study is undertaken in N. Cyprus, a peninsula destination that suffers of political non-recognition. A body of land was forced born of the Cyprus Island according to the split in 1974, and leaving twin states depending heavily on natural tourism resources. Although the political isolation, the country maintain its stability side-by-side with peaceful culture. By the time the current study comes to be carried out, where the bulk of attention with tourists from Western and Eastern European from where their countries do not recognise N. Cyprus.

Sample and data collection

Since the study investigates on the impact of the political status among European nationalities, it was important to include the Western and Eastern European tourists and excludes Turkish participants as their country recognises N. Cyprus. The purposeful questions were to find the most effective reasoning on the tourists' decision to visit N. Cyprus despite their countries do not recognise this part of the island. In order to measure the impact of the political non-recognition

Sector	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Gross National Product					
Trade-Tourism	229,839,26	900,033,65	282,182,67	1,216,786,13	302,003,63
Hotel and Restaurants	494,536,22	1,527,899,3	591,065,13	766,293,098	675,222,00
Growth Rate%					
Trade-Tourism	-8.7	18.3	6.0	6.1	1.4
Hotel and Restaurants	5.4	4.2	23.3	14.7	8.7
GDP%					
Trade-Tourism	14.3	16.0	18.7	19.9	20.1
Hotel and Restaurants	5.2	5.4	7.6	8.5	8.9

Source: State planning organisation

Table 1: Summary of statistics tourism industry in N. Cyprus.

on the tourists' decision, a quantitative approach through using a questionnaire survey has been carried out. This step comes to avoid low responses rate by participants and to achieve good quality of the questionnaire.

A research questionnaire was used to collect data via a sampling of 102 tourists in Girne city. Once the questionnaire was developed in simple English language version, quota sampling of different European countries has been used to match representative tourists' nationalities. All the tourists were asked willingly to fill the questionnaire survey in the Girne city and mainly in the Harbour area since this place have central location offering many tourist attractions and different nationalities are available. The data collection time lasted one week through repetitive visits for all the restaurants around the Harbour area in Girne city. 18 out of 120 questionnaires were excluded in the analysis as they were not complete achieving only 5% margin of error, and a 95% confidence that is statistically relevant.

In order to ensure the validity of the survey, the primary study with tourists indicated that the visitation decision to N. Cyprus was effected mainly by regarding the image of conflict, indirect flights, and lack of diplomatic representative. This exploratory research explained the inter-relation between political non-recognition independently and its sequences. Further findings also interpreted the tourists' vacation decision to experience the unfamiliar N. Cyprus destination. The second study has been developed to measure the value of each item and how it has affected the tourists' visitation choice. The questions were pilot tested by the academic staff of Girne American University for further wording clarity and improvement. This step also allowed refining the scale and modifying the non-significant questions, and then the researchers conducted it in May 2015 within the high tourism season. After providing some socio demographic information, the main question uses structured ended 16 questions to ensure responses. For the purpose of finding the impact of the political non-recognition on the destination attraction, the questions investigated in the importance of the political recognition on the tourists' decision making to find such competitive advantages of N. Cyprus tourism.

The research employed measuring methods through using the five-point scale of Likert in two sections to calibrate the related statements to the political status of the country. Strongly agree signifies the most intensive importance expected in the question, and strongly disagree refers to the lowest level of importance about the level of influence on the tourist's decision.

Analysis

The main objective from conducting this research was to calibrate the extent, impact and characteristics of political non-recognition upon the tourists' visitation decision to N. Cyprus.

In order to realise that purpose, the following hypotheses were tested:

H0: Political non-recognition does not affect the tourists' visitation decision to N. Cyprus.

H1: Political non-recognition has significant effects upon the tourists' visitation decision to N. Cyprus.

H2: Political non-recognition affect positively upon the tourists' visitation decision to N. Cyprus by excluding the effect of relevant restrictions (lack of direct flights, lack of diplomatic representative, and image of conflict that may struggle the visitation decision).

Thus, the program SPSS packages were used for the analysis of the results v16, clarifying the means and medians quantitative values of the participants' responses. The analysis measures the effect some of the restrictions of such political non-recognition that hinder the visit of the destination side by side with the destination attraction. Then the Pearson formula was used to find the strength of the correlation between the two categories. After identifying the nature of the relationship between the phenomenon components, the partial correlation was used to look at strength of the political non-recognition independently by removing the effect of its sequences. The outcomes of the analysis ensure that there were no redundant or overlapping among the respondents' answers. After identifying the effect of related obstacles facing the tourism in N. Cyprus, the instrument used high reliable questions to measure the respondents' accuracy. Consequently, the Alpha Cronpakh value was (0,702) which indicated highly internal consistency of all the analysed political agents, in addition to achieved 95% interval confidence and reliable statistics through appropriate hypothesis testing. Furthermore, the Person correlation technique permitted to identify the positive relationship between the political and attractive status of the country.

The next stage came to discuss the outcomes of the study through displaying the figures into meaningful predictions describing level of strength of each category and destination management strategies. This purpose has been achieved through the grouping into sub-categories of political non-recognition upon the tourists' decision, and through comparing the responses during their visit. By another stage the researchers noticed a disparity between the participants' geographical nationalities. Thus a need has revealed and a comparison between the East and West European participants was carried on to identify the effect of each category among them.

In order to produce further accurate results, the analysis was performed using Pearson correlation coefficient and hypotheses testing. In order to measure the possible statistical significance of the relationship between the definite variables, the statistics confirmed the correlation at a level of empirical significance by 1% (2-tailed). This allows finding how frequently the identified political non recognition agents affect separately on the tourists' decision. The outcomes derived from the data collected and analysed are obtainable in the findings section, parallel with an illustration supported by citations of previous studies. The analysis of the socio- demographic profile identified equal gender respondents. The majority of participants (51%) are aged more than 55 years old and almost of them are retired. Then followed respectively by the 40-55 age groups (31%) and only (20%) for the age group between 24 and 40. Most respondents (56%) are from West Europe while (46%) of the sample group is from Eastern European countries. Almost of the sample population (85%) are of those who travel in regular habit.

Findings

On several occasions, participants pointed out that the political status of N. Cyprus played a significant role in their visit decision. Their notion of this issue has not stopped them visiting, while it was related to such other factors as lack of direct flights and lack of diplomatic representative in addition to unclear image of conflict. International organizations had reported facts from N. Cyprus of respected human rights and media (Freedom House [14] World Press Freedom [34], in addition to untouched natural resources (The Washington Times [50], and convenient distance to travel [41,42].

Tourists considered competitive attraction and political situation

were general issues that were related to the perception of N. Cyprus as a tourism destination. However, from the tourists' perspective, particular agents of political isolation related to direct flights and diplomatic representative could be managed either with Turkey or South Cyprus in order to facilitate the tourists' arrival.

Examining the current elements of political non-recognition in connection to both European nationality sides of tourists, positive correlation has been noticed. Probable statistical of the significant relationship was tested empirically between both variables, and the correlation coefficient showing a positive Pearson's correlation at level of p-value of 0.46%. Therefore, the findings indicate that the political non-recognition has positive effect on the tourists' visit decision, and some are positively correlated to visit. No serious correlation has been noticed between the lack of diplomatic representative and the tourists' decision. These results are quite expected since, between the both Cypriots sides, and the treaty of crossing border where tourists are permitted to come through Larnca airport. As far as the short distance to reach N. Cyprus from European markets is concerned, then the research reveals the common practice business based on partial agreements in addition to the prevalence of linkage points with Turkey. Otherwise and from tourism marketing activities, holidaymakers offer affordable differentiation for the unknown holiday destination. These results are evidence for the potential cooperation forms with tourism holiday leaders to make sense with Beheshti and Zare [52].

By computing the means and deviations at 2-tailed level analysis, it was revealed a positive Pearson correlation between the political non recognition and lack of direct flights upon the visitation decision by 0.45, 0.47 respectively. While a slightly weaker correlation counted for both the image of conflict by 0.33, and the diplomatic representative 0.25. Correspondingly, with a Sig value no more than 0.01 which is less than 0.05 indicating there is a statistical significance between the political status of N. Cyprus and visitation decision.

In order to estimate the strength correlation between the political non-recognition agents and the tourists' visitation decision, the regression technique was applied to determine the parameter for each factor by using the method of least squares. The coefficient of determination given for regression (R-squared) indicates the fact that 27.2% of the visitation decision was explainable by the political non-recognition elements, and how much these agents affected on the tourists' visitation decision. Since the simple correlation(R) recorded by 0.522, which indicates a good degree of correlation. Moreover, ANOVA analysis indicates that the regression model predicts the dependent variable significantly well. This indicates the statistical significance of the regression model as the value of $p < 0.005$, which is less than 0.05. As an overall, the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable, which means it is a good fit for the data. These figures confirm the H1: there is statistically significant relationship between the political non-recognition and the tourists' visitation decision to N. Cyprus. Furthermore, this relationship is unrelated to diversified nationalities, and the following displaying will point out the correlation according to the geographical European countries. The above empirical

results indicate that H0 cannot be accepted, H1 can be accepted and H2 can partially be accepted (Table 2).

Hypothesis H0 is rejected because only 10% of the sampled tourists considered the negativity effect of the political non-recognition on their visit. Also, because the elements related to the political isolation result in uncertain image of conflict with lack level of knowledge and airlines barriers. Lack diplomatic representative as presumed by tourists' answers, are perceived as less important. The H1 is also accepted since above three quarter of tourists' decision are most often attracted to visit regardless the political situation or exciting by this situation as competitive advantage. Besides, the hypothesis is established statistically by the intensity of tourists' responses.

Finally, H2 can be also partially accepted. Namely, the research findings confirmed that the political isolation towards N. Cyprus would be diverse competitive advantage and increase its potential to capture tourists. The analysis found that the effect of political non-recognition has the less negative factor on the tourists' decision, and with excluding the restrictions related to this isolation a competitive advantage may add characteristic for future marketing activities. That confirms previous results led by Cansel [1] and Boyarkina [53], but to the contrary with Katsos and Forrer's study [36].

Political non-recognition

Findings from the current study are consistent with the results of Cansel [1] who argue of the competitive advantage of unknown destination, and contrast with previous study by Altinay who coupled between the prosperity of tourism with a common political settlement between the twin Cyprus [9]. According to the European respondents from this study, overall has not considered the political non-recognition to stop their interest to visit N. Cyprus. Adding to the attractions of the island, some Western and Eastern European, consider the political non-recognition like any other destination attraction. With the new business practices between North and South Cyprus also may add appeal to both as more exciting destinations to visit.

Due to the accurate nature of this research, and seeking to meet the research objectives, the sampled tourists were asked about the extent of political non-recognition has affected on their decision as competitive advantage to visit N. Cyprus. Tourists' answers display significant relationship to the political non-recognition on their decision to visit N. Cyprus. According to the 56 Eastern European tourists, there are 15 (27%) participants considered the country to visit based on its political situation, while only (17%) of Western European were driven to their visit the unrecognized country. this result may provide a sign to investigate the competitive advantage of the country and its reflect on the whole island. Moreover, turn the attention to study the advantage of this case on both Cypriots and its potential future. However, the history of the political negotiations between both sides has proven the peacefulness of the Cypriot destinations [54]. Additionally, the mass tourism that South Cyprus sumptuously enjoyed from decades was due to the peacefulness of the whole island destination. In the contrast,

Hypotheses		
H0	Political non-recognition does not affect upon the tourists' visitation decision to N. Cyprus.	-
H1	Political non-recognition has significant effects upon the tourists' visitation decision to N. Cyprus.	+
H2	Political non-recognition affect positively upon the tourists' visitation decision to N. Cyprus by excluding the effect of relevant restrictions (lack of direct flights, lack of diplomatic representative, and image of conflict that may struggle the visitation decision).	+/-

Source: Authors' Research.

Table 2: Research hypothesis.

N. Cyprus was prevented of the tourism flood due to the group of constrictions and not from its political non-recognition itself.

Then the sampled group answered on the extent of the passive advantage of the political non-recognition on their decision. While the purpose of this question was to help the participants for giving accurate answers for the whole question, nevertheless their responses came with insignificant effect of the political restriction on the visitation decision-making. A minimum percentage (about 10%) suggested that political non-recognition affected negatively in somehow upon their decision to visit. Although those people attitude toward the country, their initial attitude had not stop their visit to N. Cyprus and most of them expressed of various attitude during their visit [55]. A majority of the sampled tourists (about 70%) neglect any effect of the political situation on their decision. Additionally, there were not significant statistical differences between Western and Eastern Europeans.

Although Political non-recognition continues to challenge the tourism industry in N. Cyprus, the destination seemed to be widely attractive despite the political status by most of the participants with a mean of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 0.43. When compared, the tourists' visitation decision were affected in the light of image of conflict, Lack of direct flights, and lack of diplomatic representative according to the respectively means by (3.3, 3.3,3.4) and a deviation by (0.42, 0.46, 0.42). Thus not widely distributed, significance statistical difference was in appreciating to steer the attractiveness of the destination by eliminating the passive advantage of other restriction agents related to the political isolation. This can be seen in the following diagram (Figure 1).

Image of conflict

Since strong relationship between political non recognition and image of conflict has been observed with a Pearson's r value of 0.59, the passive advantage of the political embargoes associated with identity conflict established a significant absence of confidence toward political stability which is in significant relation to visit the destination. The tourists had been asked about the initial perceived political conflict image of N. Cyprus, some considered that image on their travel plan and some displayed a degree of uncertainty. During the tourists' visit of the island, the effect of the political status had not as severe as expected. Linking between the image of conflict and the destination as a whole, then the image produced during the visit. Observer finds the uncertainty between the image before and during the visit, which can be, correlated with lack of information and deficiency in marketing promotion activities. The correlation between the political status of any tourism destination and such image of conflict are evidently proven (e.g. Dinnie and Fola [30] Goodall and Ashworth [31], while the

continuity of the talks and its peacefulness may explain the impartiality of tourists' attitude.

And that is the peace talks created a climate of the stability of the country with a favour to visit N. Cyprus as peaceful destination and unfamiliar destination and comparing the cost with the south Cyprus which make sense with Scott [10].

Lack of direct flights

Ekiz reasonably believe the growing number in tourists' arrival is likely due to the continuity of talks and the availability of travel through Larnaca or Turkey airports and not necessarily due to lack of direct flights [32]. In particular when the parts signed the treaty of crossing borders and N. Cyprus reduced the effect of the big struggle to its tourism economy.

Despite the fact that most of the tourists believe the one- stop-flight between their countries and N. Cyprus increase the whole budget of their package travel, their responses came hesitated between the positive, negative and no effect on their decision. Some responses confirmed the positivity and negativity at the same level. Taking into account passengers travelled often with one stop flight, and the possibility to visit more than country increase the exiting experience of their trip. Moreover, the low coast airline companies being able to serve both destinations and bridging between Turkey airports and N. Cyprus from a side, Larnaca and N. Cyprus from another side. In order to continue its operations, N. Cyprus established direct flights and daily ferries at different locations with Turkey in order to keep the mobility of tourists towards N. Cyprus. However, trips from the different European countries usually do not last many hours to reach the island eventually. In the same time also regular round trip flights are conveniently scheduled to meet the daily demand. Affordable airline service and passengers satisfactions are a priority, almost with the positive image of the Turkish airlines around the world.

Lack diplomatic representative

In contrasting with Sainaghi who stressed on the importance of legal institutions and structures of a destination, this study reveals that the lack diplomatic representative and its effect upon tourists' visitation decision does not seem to be enough serious, and the outcomes from this research came different to the previous believe [28]. A minimal effect has been counted upon the tourists' decision, and negligible correlation has been recorded between the importance of existing kind of diplomatic representative and visitation decision in their own countries. One can suggest that travellers do not rely on getting information from the destination embassy or consulate. Destination marketing focus today heavily on Internet and through

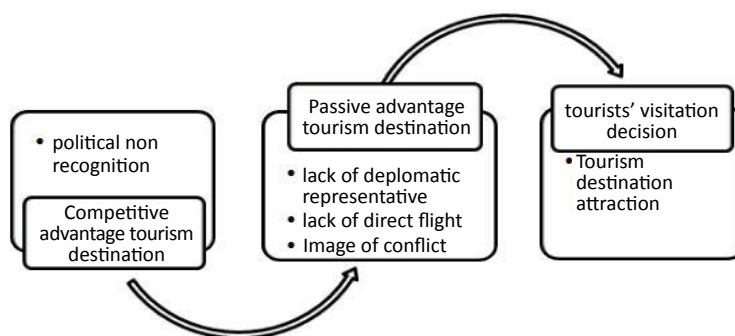


Figure 1: The effect of political non-recognition on visitation decision. Source: Author's Research.

mass media, an article in one of the magazine can introduce the destination for the public of tourism and replace any diplomatic agents. Additionally, destinations are promoted today through holiday leaders' more than official marketing campaign. Furthermore, the absence of the diplomatic representative was assessed in regard to the representativeness of N. Cyprus in his or her own countries. The researchers believe if the research instrument considered the presence of the tourists' diplomatic countries in N. Cyprus, the responses may give more importance for this agent.

Discussion

The political non-recognition of N. Cyprus imposes restrictions on direct flights operation, the diplomatic representative and creates an image of conflict, which influenced on the tourists' visitation decision to the country. However, all restrictions are different in their effect from each. New understanding of impact on tourists' decision to such barriers may produce an awareness of how tourism might affect tourists' arrival numbers. The contribution of this information is significant as the increase in arrival numbers will positively help the N. Cyprus tourism industry and its economy. The result of the current study suggests positive effects of the political non-recognition excluding the sequences related to lack of direct flight and diplomatic representative. Examining the impact of the political non recognition on the destination selection rely on difficult to assess, in particular for tourists who are already in visiting to the destination. Moreover for European citizens from where their countries do not recognize N. Cyprus as sovereign country (Figure 2).

The initial assignment was to explore what influence caused by the international embargoes on the country. For this objective, the research questions were shaped in accurate curiosity to avoid giving obvious answers. As might be expected, the political non-recognition had not independently negative impacts on the visitation decision, although overall responses were generally favourable. Most of tourists' respondents had positive responses and had reflected positive attitudes to repeat the visit. The positive attitudes towards N. Cyprus suggest a greater understanding to the nature of the Cyprus identity conflict and its peacefulness due to the continuity of the common negotiations from time to time. Although a minority of respondents expressed of the non-peacefulness of this conflict and its negative effect on their vision, this negativity does not hinder their visit and their vision had been changed within the visit. This result is reinforced by testing the impact of political non-recognition apart of its restrictions, and the impact of each of those sequences on the tourists' decision. The knowledge and media coverage of the country had narrowed the effect of negative image of conflict, while the attitude of others were objectively and more realistic to the situation.

In general, the positive attitude of tourists reinforces the uniqueness of N. Cyprus taking that advantage of its Undiscovered and unspoiled destination due to its political situation. And through depicting the image of the country in the international media as the "Touched by Heaven" [50]. Dinnie and Fola contend that a travel destination promote its attractiveness and its differentiation as well as its image [30]. To conclude, the island as a whole is situated in a very attractive place on the European flank, occupying a place where many attractions can offer a unique vacation experience. This assumption is supported by the democratic and peace reports, which imply political stability.

Conclusions and Limitations

Available statistics reveal that political stability has dominant importance for most tourism destinations. Although the advantages of unknown holiday destinations are multiple, so are their geographic locations. In agreement with Husnu and Crisp, cooperation with South Cyprus is a potential strategy for N. Cyprus (and Turkish support is needed) which may help to market its competitive tourism position [27]. Namely, tourism practices business creates virtual size, and lead to strengthen its market through flexibility in their negotiating business with south Cyprus. As such, it is more than ever convenient overcoming difficulties, which may result in incoming tourism size and attempt to overcome on the direct flights problem, in the same time to promote the both small destinations together which also enhance the image of safety and secure destination. Thus the results of this article calls for transition to further tourism practice business with South Cyprus, in addition to presenting incentives and advantages for South Cyprus travel companies with exemption of some taxes for some years to increase the cooperation size.

Incoming international tourism is in growing increase toward N. Cyprus in consistence with developing tourism in Turkey. At the time of collaborative arrangements with Turkey, a kind of diplomatic representative in the turkey embassies around the world, and marketing turkey and N. Cyprus in full packages still an opened idea of cooperation. Then broaden the linkage between airline and ferries with the most visited location are necessary. Furthermore, mega project in N. Cyprus may be an additional attraction to its natural recourses. In condition to include foreign investments like holiday leaders would be a leap forward.

Given the deeper knowledge of the competitive advantage of political non recognition on tourists' decision making and for future academic research, it is necessary to combine qualitative approach in order to have a profound understanding of further relevant elements to interpret the effect of the political non recognition on tourism, and test the attitudes of tourists before, during, and after their visit to N. Cyprus. A greater understanding of the competitive advantage elements related

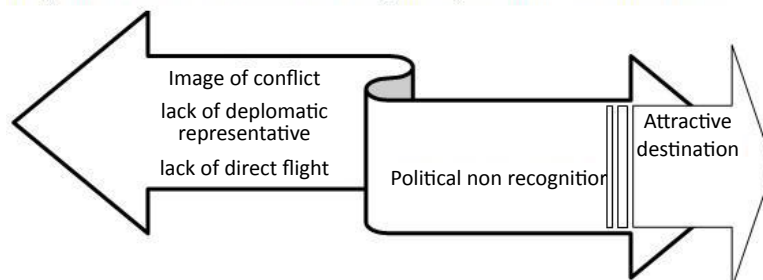


Figure 2: Partial correlation of non-recognition upon tourist's variation decision. Source: Author's Research.

to the political status of the country will help effectively to support marketing activities of N. Cyprus. Furthermore, this research adds a contribution to understand and interpret the recognition of destination values that, in turn, help to improve future marketing activities at N. Cyprus destination.

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