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TURKEY AS A MEDICAL TOURISM DESTINATION: A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVE MARKETING FACTORS ON PREFERENCES OF THE ARAB MEDICAL TOURISTS IN TURKEY *

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is the exploration of international travel experiences for the aim of medical treatment from the perspective of the patients and to develop insight and understanding of the effective factors in choosing a medical destination in the medical tourism field. Moreover, the study aims to provide critical feedback to whom may be interested in Turkey as an attractive destination for medical tourism. The study begins by reviewing different definitions of medical tourism and shows the differences between health tourism and medical tourism. Then it reviews the history of medical tourism, noting specific medical tourism destinations, presents various reasons for this increase in medical tourism. Later it continues to mention about some successful countries in this field including Turkey, referring general consumer behavior model. Then the study refers to the influencing factors on consumer behaviors in general then on medical tourists as they choose the medical destinations. Finally it ends with the evaluation of the relative effectiveness of these factors on Arab medical tourists. In this research, it is focused on determining the factors of the marketing mix model which includes product, price, place and promotion which affect the motivation of Arab medical travelers to come to Turkey for medical treatment purposes. The research uses in this study a quantitative research method, namely a survey questionnaire in order to assess the motivational factors that lead Arab customers to choose hospitals in Turkey for medical care services. Improved understanding of medical tourism provides additional information about a contemporary approach to health-seeking behavior. The results of this study provide increased understanding of those who seek health care internationally from the patient perspective.

Keywords: Medical Tourism; Health Tourism; Turkey; Arab Consumers; Marketing Mix; Consumer Preference.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a part of the general economic plan in all the countries all over the world because of the continuous increase in the number of tourists every year and especially in the

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21st century, and with this growing and flourishing in the tourism sector, new types have appeared; one of these kinds is health tourism or medical tourism.

Health tourism is one of the important types of tourism that includes travel in order to search for health treatments, or recreation in health spas, and also includes the income from health tourists through expenditures for different kinds of therapeutic or non-therapeutic things.

This type of tourism constitutes a key source of income for many countries, especially for the developing countries in the recent years. And for example, just noting the fact that approximately every single medical tourist spends about 2.500-3.000 dollars, and usually 650 dollars being spent in by a regular tourist for regular vacation purposes, is enough to realize how enormous and important effect medical tourism has on the economy of Turkey (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Health, 2012). Health Tourism is defined as patients' movement from one country to another for the purpose of treatment that patients seek, sometimes by passing services offered in their own countries.

Nowadays, health tourists believe that for considerably lower costs and with a shorter waiting period to receive the treatment they need, they can obtain treatment that is equal to, if not even better than, what they would receive at home. Some 20-30 years ago when the world was experiencing conflicts between blocs, no one could have talked about health tourism, but today because of the easy travel without visa requirements and the easy access through Internet to health care providers which have drastically contributed to develop health tourism worldwide, medical tourism nowadays has become a very important industry all over the world.

Turkey is one of those countries which had benefits from health tourism in the last two decades, Turkey is located between Europe and Asia and with its fast developing economy offers unequalled opportunities to those who search for treatment alternatives in its hospitals. Recently, Turkey has achieved important improvements in its health facilities, and too many private investors have invested heavily in highest quality hospitals equipped state of the technologies operated by highly skilled top medical staff that aim to treat and perform major cases in medicine. And this facilities have been attracting a lot of international patients or what it is called them medical tourism (Ansar, 2014).

Statement of the Problem & Research Question

The variety of medical tourism services, the quality of medical services, the price of medical and health services, advertising for medical and health centers, and others are the main effective factors that attract medical tourists in general.

The study attempts to identify the factors that determine how the medical tourists choose a destination for abroad medical treatment, and tries to understand how those factors affect medical tourists coming to Turkey, and which of them has a stronger effect. The main question that the study attempts to answer is: what are the influencing factors that lead Arab medical tourists to choose hospitals in Turkey as a medical tourism destination and which of them does have greater effectiveness.

Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study is the exploration of international travel experiences for the purpose of medical care from the perspective of the patients and to develop insight and understanding of the essence of the phenomenon of medical tourism. Moreover, the study aims to provide critical feedback to whom may be interested in Turkey as an attractive destination to medical tourists.

This study is mainly focused on Arab medical tourists, who travel outside of their home country to receive various medical treatments in Turkish hospitals. The objective of

this research study is to determine the influencing factors that lead Arab medical tourists to choose Turkey as their medical tourism destination. The purpose of identifying these factors is to assist decision-makers in developing policies that will be successful in promoting medical tourism in Turkey.

MEDICAL TOURISM INDUSTRY

Global Medical Tourism

The history of old health tourism or even the early medical tourism in the 20th century refers to the movement of patients from developing country to developed countries, and although the traditional pattern of medical tourism still continues, the recent trend of medical tourism shows the flow of medical tourism is mostly from developed countries to developing countries because of cost consideration as it is mentioned before, where several countries can be mentioned like Malaysia, Mexico, Taiwan, Brazil, Costa Rica, India, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea and Turkey as they became favorable medical destinations in the world for many reasons.

A large and increasing number of countries do promote medical tourism today, according to Gahlinger (2008), a total of countries accumulation of nearly 50 countries which many of them are developing countries from Latin America and Asia are making huge incomes from medical tourism today.

The region which attracts most patients in medical tourism is without a question Asia. There are millions of people who make their way to Asia annually, to countries like Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, India, and Malaysia, which have got enormous increase in the number of people coming for medical purposes recently. The whole medical tourism movement to these countries started in Thailand early in 1970s with transsexual operations and then showed tendency towards plastic surgeries (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Health, 2012). In 2008 an estimated number of 2 million people had left United States for medical treatment abroad (Bauer, 2009).

In Singh and Gill' study (2011) it is reported that USA has more travelers in the world now than ever before whom are traveling away from their country to get a good quality of medical treatments according to their budget, and the majority of them go to Asian countries, where a survey was done by a recognized consulting firm, McKinsey and Company, In 2008 regarding medical tourism. The survey was basically done with healthcare inner and outer circle including the patients, medicine subsidiaries of medical tourism and service providers which is covering more than 20 countries, according to this survey, majority of the North American medical seekers abroad have chosen Asian countries with a percentage of 45%, and 26% of them have chosen Latin America. So that mathematically means every seven people in ten (7/10) of the patients from North America who traveled abroad, either chose Asian or Latin Countries. And among European patients, 39% who sought health care abroad have traveled to Asia, 13% to the Middle East, and 5% to Latin America, nearly six in ten (6/10) of the European patients who sought health care abroad have traveled to a developing country (Ehrbeck et al., 2008).

Medical Tourism Industry in Turkey

Turkey is a modern country and has a young population around 75 million, which sits on a great historical heritage antique structures all the way from medieval ages, including monuments, churches and mosques not to mention the coastlines and old historical bazaars.

After mid-1980s, Turkey started to follow important tourism improvement policies by respective governments by various encouragements provided to the investors, several accommodation units have been constructed around the Mediterranean and Aegean shores (Köstepen & Öter, 2013).

During the last decade, Turkey also became recognized as a rising medical tourism center, where Turkey has developed its healthcare system by greatly advancing the quality and quantity of health services throughout the country. Adding the affordable cost and the access to the high quality of medical treatment and its unique culture and sightseeing areas, Turkey today is on the way to become a star in the medical treatment industry, and competes precedent countries in this industry such as India, Malaysia, Thailand, and Hungary for a share of the global medical tourism market.

Foreign patients treated in public or private or university hospitals have to be registered with the Health Ministry in Turkey. In 2012, Turkey had 261,999 medical tourists compared to 156,176 in 2011, and 74,093 in 2008. The following Table 1 and Figure 1 shows the distribution of the international patients receiving health care services in Turkey by years (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Health, 2013).

TABLE 1
Distribution of International Patients Receiving Health Care Services in Turkey by Years, 2012

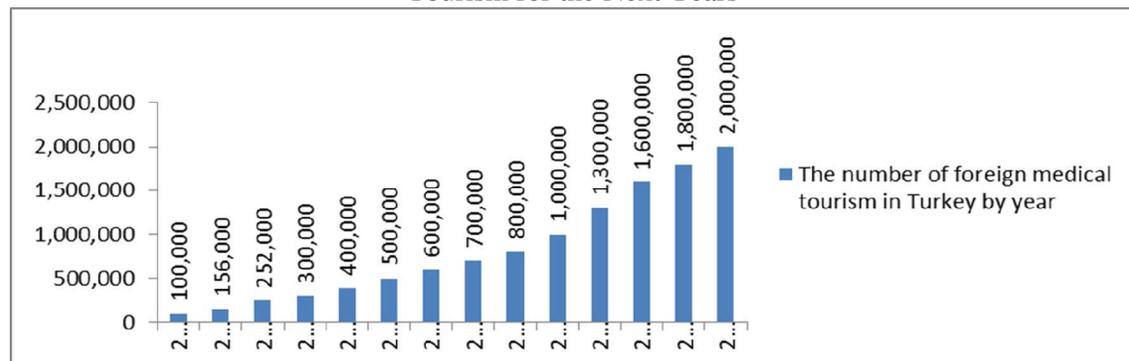
Years	Public Health		Private Health Care		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
2008	17.817	24,1	56.276	76,0	74.093	100,0
2009	21.442	23,3	70.519	76,7	91.961	100,0
20 10	32.675	29,8	77.003	70,2	109.678	100,0
2011	41.847	26,8	114.329	73,2	156.176	100,0
2012	43.904	16,8	218.095	83,2	261.999	100,0

(Source: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Health, 2013)

The government has been supporting medical tourism, and because of the fast growing in this section, Turkey has set for itself ambitious goals:

The Ministry of Development of Turkey has prepared the 10th development plan and it was published in the Official Journal in July 6, 2013, stating that by year 2018 a gross income of 5.6 billion dollars will be generated from medical tourism and It estimated a 750.000 medical tourists will visit Turkey in 2018. Moreover, The Ministry of Health plans to attract 2 million Health Tourists and 20 billion USD in gross income by the 100th year of the Turkish republic memory (2023) which will help Turkey to become the star of its region in this field. Besides, ten percent of these figures are expected to be admitted to public hospitals (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Health, 2012).

FIGURE 1
The Number of Foreign Medical Tourists in Turkey until 2012, With the Potential Medical Tourism for the Next Years



(Source: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Health, 2013)

The Ministry of Health realizes that by boosting medical tourism will enhance Turkey's economic as social development (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Health, 2013). Thus the general goal is strengthening the health tourism in Turkey, in term of reaching this goal, the Ministry has put strategies for the years between 2013 and 2017 as follows:

- a. Improving the management of health tourism.
- b. To have a research and development for the quality of medical tourism.
- c. Promoting and Advertising to attract health tourists.
- d. Enlarging the circle of health tourism sector altogether.

The Competitive Advantages of Turkey in Health Tourism

In recent years, Turkey has emerged with its improved infrastructures and health facilities offering affordable medical care services becoming a favorable destination for international health tourists.

Turkey has got some unique advantages, besides its advanced technology in the medical sector, which is claimed to be better than Central Europe, Balkans and Scandinavia, and some of its technology is used in some advanced hospitals in Germany and USA. The main advantages of medical tourism in Turkey can be determined as follows (Joint commission international, 2014; Istanbul Medical Tourism Fair, 2014):

- a. The technologically advanced equipment and the high quality of infrastructure.
- b. Competitive advantageous prices compared to other countries.
- c. The services and standards which match the western countries' standards where the medical doctors are highly educated.
- d. Natural and historical places with its pleasant climate.
- e. Tourism facilities have high standards with highly trained multilingual staff.
- f. Merging medical and health tourism with tourism in general by offering various tour programs.
- g. When it comes to thermal resources, Turkey sits at the top in Europe and comes only seventh in the world, not to mention the potential to apply types of natural treatment methods in spas, caves, seas, medicinal plants, where these methods could be applied under the umbrella of health tourism.
- h. Many hospitals in Turkey have domestic and international certification, their services affiliated with JCI (Joint Commissions International), the JACHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations), ISO (International Organization for Standardization) and western medical groups. There are 686 organizations around the world have JCI Accreditation, Turkey currently has 49 facilities that have received Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation, with approximately a percentage of 7% Turkey is ranked second in the world. The first JCI accredited facility in Turkey was the Istanbul Memorial Hospital in Istanbul which was first accredited in 29 March of 2002 and has been re-accredited twice since then, in 2005 and 2008 (Vequist & Gursoy, 2009). Turkey with a 49 accredited hospitals has JCI accreditation that is almost as much as the accredited hospitals in medical tourism destinations like Philippines 6, Malaysia 13 India 22 Mexico 9 combined which are considered ones of the leader countries in this industry. Turkey today with such a number of hospitals have JCI accreditation, is becoming one of the highest and most promising medical tourism markets worldwide, in addition that Turkey now is leading the European medical tourism industry in this section. Moreover, accredited hospitals receive the highest quality of American medical support, such as Harvard Medical School and Johns Hopkins Medicine are some of the supporting affiliates from United States who give the highest quality.

Arab Preference for Turkey as a Medical Destination

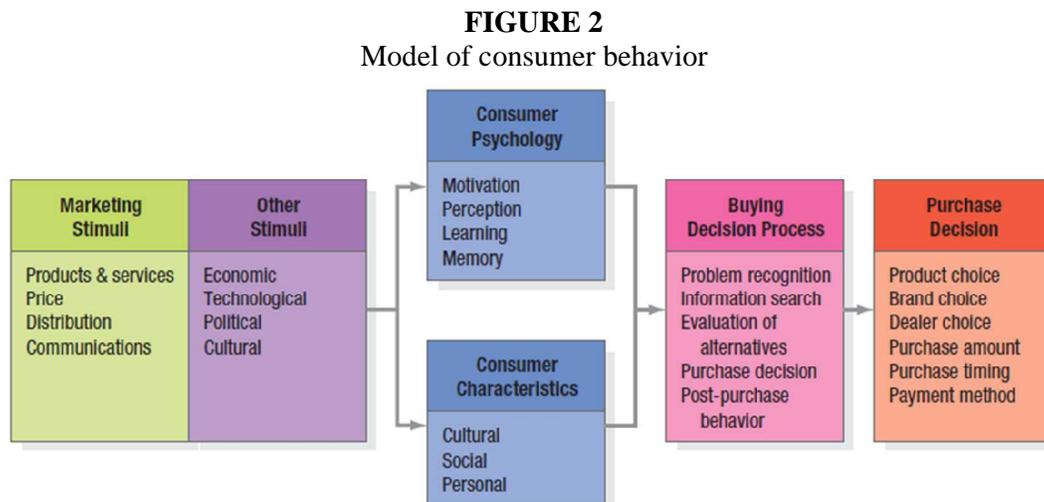
Turkey has been a popular tourism destination before it became a medical tourism destination; thus, the opportunity for the medical travelers to have a vacation in a popular tourism country gives another advantage to choose Turkey as a medical tourism destination especially for the Arab after the remarkable increasing in the Arab tourists in the recent years in Turkey.

The common history and tradition between Turkey and the Arab countries plays a big role in attracting the Arab medical tourists and the Arab tourists in general, besides the great Islamic roots of Turkey and the majority of population are Muslims, which reflects Islamic practices in hospitals. Without a doubt this fact also attracts Arab medical tourists, and some of the favorite destination cities are Istanbul, Bodrum, Yalova, Bursa and Antalya.

Consumer Behavior in Medical Tourism

Consumer behavior is the study how individuals, groups, and organizations select, buy, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants. Marketer must completely understand both the theory and reality of customer behavior.

The process of consumer buying involves three different stages, Input, process, and output stage. To understand how consumers actually make buying decisions, marketers must identify who makes and has input into the buying decision; people can be initiators, influencers, deciders, buyers, or users. Different marketing campaigns might be targeted to each type of person. The following figure illuminate the general model of consumer behavior.



(Source: Kotler & Keller, 2012. Marketing management 14th edition)

In the input stage there are marketing stimuli which are the famous marketing mix elements or four P's, the marketer can control these factors in order to market his product.

There are also other stimuli the marketer cannot control but yet must consider them in the marketing process; these stimuli are economic, technological, political, and cultural stimuli.

The Role of Marketing Mix's elements on Consumer Behavior

Marketing mix is one of the top marketing models and it is also indicated as the four P's, it is the total of leadership marketing decisions which are the combination of each

department in the sector which have been chosen sensitively according to market development. Neil Borden introduced the Marketing mix concept in the 1950s, then it was developed by Kotler in (1967). The Marketing mix model has four main elements, product, price, place, and promotion.

Marketing Mix Elements' Effect on Consumer Preferences in Medical Tourism

Industry

It was mentioned before the general reasons that make medical tourism popular nowadays and motivate many patients to make such a decision, and clearly these reasons could be categorized under the 4 elements of marketing mix model.

The Marketing mix is perhaps the most famous marketing model. The four elements of this marketing mix are product, price, place, and promotion. And for a better understanding what those 4 factors means in the medical tourism industry and especially in this study, the following Identifications of Terms are mentioned:

Product. Product in medical tourism industry is what the tourists come to see, which is the total of services accompanying medical treatment which are given by hospitals and other health centers, and also the accredited international hospitals that gives technologically advanced and fast services with all the splendid facilities and the excellence of the each worker in health centers including the doctors physicians and nurses.

Price. The price is what the customer pays for the product or service. In medical tourism industry, the price denotes to the affordability of the amount of the money which the medical tourist spends in the medical destination during the medical treatment period which includes medical treatment costs and any tour programs or other touristic expenses. On the other hand refers to the cost saving opportunities that medical travelers receive when they travel to the medical destination for medical treatment. The price also covers the cost of an added benefit of a holiday tour in a foreign destination after a medical treatment.

Place. Place in medical tourism industry represents the location of the health center or hospitals and its accessibility by local transportations. In a wider perspective, it also includes the nearness of these medical centers to where the medical tourist would like to go after or during the treatment, this could be malls, entertainment places or any other tourist areas. In medical tourism industry in Turkey, place includes the accessibility of the facility to foreign patients. It also indicates the hospital location environment as well as its closeness to tourist places and shopping centers.

Promotion. Promotion in medical tourism industry can be explained as the further benefits for medical travelers such as offering promotions on several medical treatment packages, airport pickups, visa extension services, hotel accommodations and tour discounts and bonuses in the medical destination, after or might during the medical treatment.

In medical tourism in Turkey, promotion includes the additional services offered by the hospital such as patient airport pickups and arrangement of visa extensions. Promotion includes the special package prices on various medical procedures as well as the promotion on hotel accommodations and travel tours in the country.

Previous Studies on Customer Preferences and the Motivations in Choosing a Destinations for Medical Tourism

There are different opinions in the literature about choosing the medical tourism destination. The choice of a destination have been described by many authors that it is

determined by the tourist's motivation to travel, and that motivation is to find the expected medical treatment at required quality at an affordable cost. This means that the destination is chosen to satisfy the tourist's particular motivation and the whole destination choice process in medical tourism. It can be brought down to two main parameters which play a crucial role in this industry, quality of the product and the cost (Jotikasthira, 2010).

While Smith & Forgione (2008) refer that the factors which effect in choosing the medical care internationally, can be lined into four as follows: Affordable and lower costs, hospital accreditation, quality of health-care, doctors and physicians training, and experience level. According to this study none of these factors alone is enough for the whole satisfaction in the industry and they are all related each other and they all play a crucial role in choosing healthcare destination, and these key elements evolve into two main factor, "Price" and the "Product" which have the most important role in choosing global medical facility (Smith and Forgione, 2008).

Even though the price is an important parameter, it is not the top indicator; the main factors are satisfaction of medical seeker with the given advanced technology. Countries like Singapore, Thailand and India surely are some of the leaders in the industry but it cannot match them with for example USA where the prices are still higher than those countries and it still receives medical tourists, that means the price is not the sole and most important factor. Medical tourism in USA is a good example for that, where lots of people still choose going there because of its technologically advanced medical equipments, in addition to the experienced and qualified workers, that means many people prefer qualified care and advanced technology regardless the cost (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Health, (2012).

Motivation for medical tourism is a common topic in the literature when it is talked about customers preferences and the effective marketing factors on preferences of the medical tourists in choosing a specific destination for medical treatment, based on the literature the most two influential factors from the marketing mix factors are product and price, and in the second degree come the other two factors which could be less important which are place and promotion.

The price and product are the most important factors from the marketing mix in term of choosing the medical tourism destination in many studies.

There are many studies in the literature have talked about the motivation and the effective factors for choosing a medical tourism destination, some studies have found that the price is the most effective factor to lead medical tourists to a specific destination, others have seen that still the product is the most influential factor and in some studies it is mentioned that both of them and no one factor is dominant in the decision, but all play a crucial role in choosing a healthcare destination on an international basis, as it is found in Smith & Forgione' study (2008).

In many previous studies in the medical tourism field, the main factors that influence in the decision of choosing the medical tourism destination are product, price, place promotion, and obviously, these 4 factors constitute the famous marketing mix model.

In this study we try to find out which factor from the marketing mix elements has more effective on the Arab medical tourist coming to Turkey for medical treatment, whether the product which means here the quality of the medical service offered or the price of this service, and the amount of the effect of the whole factors which are included in the four marketing mix factors.

METHODOLOGY

Research Framework

This study used quantitative marketing research techniques to thoroughly explore the factors that lead medical tourist to choose hospitals in Turkey for their medical needs.

Quantitative research methods were originally developed in the natural sciences to study natural phenomenon (Hohmann, 2006). To develop mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to the phenomena is the main objective of quantitative research. The quantitative methods can be used to validate hypotheses of a research study. In addition, the quantitative research model uses questionnaires and scales.

The questionnaire of this study consists of two parts, the first part contains questions of general information of the respondents. These elements were divided into 8 different classifications in order for the researcher to identify clearly the key factors that influence the respondents in choosing hospitals in Turkey for their medical needs.

Research Question and Hypothesis

The study attempts to identify the factors that determine how the Arab medical tourists choose a destination for abroad medical treatment. The main question that the study attempts to answer is: “What are the influencing factors that lead Arab medical tourists to choose hospitals in Turkey as a medical tourism destination? And which of them does have more effectiveness?”

The variety of medical tourism services, the quality of medical services, the price of medical and health services, advertising for medical and health centers in Turkey, and many others are the effective factors for attracting Arab medical tourists in Turkey. All the influence factors can be classified under four main factors which are: product, price, place, and promotion, which constitute the marketing mix model. In this study we try to understand how these factors affect Arab medical tourists coming to Turkey, and which of them has a stronger effect.

According to the International Monetary Fund (2013), 6 of the top 20 countries with the highest GDP per capita are Arab countries, that fact tell us that most of the Arab countries have a luxurious life with high rate per capita GDP (www.wikipedia.org), therefore the main motivation that make Arab patients choose to become medical tourists and have treatment abroad in the first place would not be searching for a better price but searching for the advanced medical technology and the high quality of the medical service they need, where we refer to these as the product in the marketing mix model, therefore the hypothesis of this study would be as follows: “The product has the greatest effect among the marketing mix factors on the Arab medical tourists preferences in choosing hospitals in Turkey for medical treatment”.

Data Collection and analyses Method

In order to answer the research question and prove the validity of the hypothesis, the research uses in this study a quantitative research method, namely, a survey in form of questionnaire in order to assess the motivational factors that lead Arab customer preference the most to choose hospitals in Turkey for medical care services. In quantitative data we are probably measuring variables and verifying existing theories or hypotheses or questioning them. Data is often used to generate new hypotheses based on the results of data collected about different variables. The quantitative methods can be used to validate hypotheses of a research study. In addition, the quantitative research model uses questionnaires and scales.

The research instrument used in the research is questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to Arab patients who came for medical treatment in hospitals in Turkey. The questionnaire which was distributed to the respondents was carried out in Arabic and using a 5-Points Importance Scale. The respondents selected the amount of importance on a scale from 1 to 5 as follows: (1).Unimportant, (2).Somewhat Important, (3).Moderately Important, (4). Important, (5).Very Important.

The identified rate of scale shows the importance of each influencing factor as viewed by the respondents. The factors will be used in this study are variables include the 4P's factors of the marketing mix model, which are the Product, Price, Place and Promotion. This was adapted from Ricafort' study (2011).

The questionnaire was only distributed to Arab medical tourists who chose Turkey for medical treatments. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first part of the questionnaire was the demographics of the respondents. The second part of the questionnaire was the Marketing Mix factors or 4P's, which includes the Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. This research study used the Statistical Program for the Social Science (SPSS) tool to analyze the data.

Sample and Sample Size

The general target population of this study was the Arab medical tourists travelling to Turkey seeking medical services in the Turkish hospitals. The population scope of the research study is the Arab medical tourists receiving medical treatment in Turkey, but because of the time limitation and place limitation, the questionnaire was distributed to convenience sample consisting some of the Arab patients coming to private hospitals in Istanbul for medical treatment.

The sample is a subset containing the characteristics of a larger population. Samples are used in statistical testing when population sizes are too large for the test to include all possible members or observations (Investopedia, 2014). The number of respondents is 102, the questionnaire was carried out in some private hospitals in Istanbul, and the respondents are from different Arab countries.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings we got from the data analyzed in the Statistical Program for the Social Science (SPSS) were as follows:

Findings Related to the Research Question

Research Question: What are the influencing factors that lead Arab patients' preference to choose hospitals in Turkey as a medical tourism destination? And which of them does have more effectiveness? In answering this question, means and standard deviations were calculated to rank the influencing factors according to respondents' perception of importance with respect to their decision in receiving medical treatment in the hospitals in Turkey.

The respondents ranked first rate and certified doctors (Mean= 4.46) as the top most important factor in choosing hospitals in Turkey. High technology medical equipment ranked second in the importance. High technology medical equipment (Mean = 4.32) ranked second in importance. Sited in a safe and secured environment (Mean = 4.29) ranked the third in importance. The following Table shows the rank of the whole factors.

Findings Related to the Hypotheses

The hypothesis of this study is as follows: "The product has the greatest effect among the marketing mix factors on the Arab medical tourists' preferences in choosing hospitals in Turkey for medical treatment".

From the finding we got from the data analyzed in the Statistical Program for the Social Science (SPSS), the product (Mean = 4.16) factor was the first and has the greatest mean among the marketing mix factors. Price factor (Mean = 3.88) came second. Place (Mean = 3.71) came third with a little difference behind price. Finally, promotion (Mean = 3.31) came last. These results suggest that product really does have the greatest effect among

the marketing mix factors on the Arab medical tourists preferences in choosing hospitals in Turkey for medical treatment, thus, research hypothesis is accepted, the price came second in importance, place was in the third rank in importance with a little difference behind price, and the promotion was last in importance with the smallest effect among the marketing mix factors on the Arab medical tourists preferences in choosing hospitals in Turkey for medical treatment.

TABLE 2
Influencing Factors Ranked by Importance according to Respondents (2)

Name of Factor	Category	Mean	Rank
First rate and certified doctors nurses and staff	Product	4.460784	1
High technology medical equipment	Product	4.323529	2
Sited in a safe and secured environment	Place	4.294118	3
Excellent patient care	Product	4.254902	4
Range of excellent medical treatments	Product	4.166667	5
Affordable medical treatment cost	Price	4.166667	5
Value for money	Price	4.147059	6
Fast service	Product	4.088235	7
International accreditation	Product	4.058824	8
Cheaper doctor and administrative fees	Price	3.852941	9
Cost of medical treatment plus travel cheaper than other alternative countries	Price	3.803922	10
Set in a quiet location	Place	3.784314	11
Superb facilities	Product	3.77451	12
Hospital's location near tourist attraction	Place	3.72549	13
Cost of medical treatment plus travel is cheaper than in home country	Price	3.676471	14
Situated in a famous city	Place	3.647059	15
Affordable travel tours after medical treatment	Price	3.637255	16
Hospital's location near shopping centers	Place	3.637255	16
Accessibility to local transportation	Place	3.568627	17
Extra services such as airport pickups and visa extensions	Promotion	3.401961	18
Special price on various medical treatment packages	Promotion	3.382353	19
Special rates for hotel accommodation with its partner hotels	Promotion	3.362745	20
Located in the central of the city	Place	3.323529	21
Insurance plan coverage and claims	Promotion	3.27451	22
Rates for travel tours after medical treatment	Promotion	3.156863	23

TABLE 3
Mean of Marketing Mix Factors

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mean of product factor	102	4.1611	.54228	.05369
Mean of price factor	102	3.8807	.63166	.06254

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mean of place factor	102	3.7115	.61469	.06086
Mean of promotion factor	102	3.3157	.80121	.07933

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha is a function of the number of items in a test, the average covariance between item-pairs, and the variance of the total score. The reliability of the scales was tested by calculating the coefficient alphas (Cronbach's alphas). It was first named alpha by Lee Cronbach in 1951, as he had intended to continue with further coefficients. Cooper and Schindler (2003) mentioned that a score of 0.7 is the acceptable reliability coefficient. The result of the reliability test is presented in the following table. The below table 4 indicates the Cronbach's alpha is above the acceptable reliability coefficient. Table 4 shows the rate of Cronbach's Alpha in this study (0.784%), this rate is considered acceptable.

TABLE 4
Reliability Testing: Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.784	.786	25

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The main result of the findings of this study was the answer of research question in determining the influencing factors that lead Arab medical tourists to choose Turkish hospitals for their medical treatment. The answer was that the quality of the medical service was in the first rank in importance including the hospital provides professional, top-notch, and certified doctors as well as hospitable nurses and staffs, and the hospital provides high technology medical equipment was in the second rank, which both of them refer to the product in the marketing mix model as it is the most influencing factor. The third factor in importance was the location of the hospital should be sited in a safe and secured environment, this shows that the lack of secured in some of these countries reverberated clearly in choosing the hospital. Libya, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia were the top three countries from the Arab countries with patients come to Turkey for medical treatment, hospitals in Turkey which seek to increase their share in the market from the medical tourists could pay more attention to those countries by special promotions and intensify advertisements in those countries. The most frequency occupation after housewife, was the commercial, then government sector came second, hospitals also could take advantage of these finding by trying to contract with some government organizations in these countries to receive employees from these organizations who are in need of medical treatment. Since the Internet has become the first resource of all kinds of information, in the medical tourism field the Internet is not exception, and the majority of respondents referred that the Internet was their resource to get information about the hospital they chose, that is why it should be given more attention to the Internet advertisements and the official websites of the hospitals, furthermore, the Arabic language can be added to these websites for an easier way of reaching the information to the Arab patients who are interested in medical tourism and searching for information about it, also customer service system in the websites could be activated to answer to the customers' enquiries and communicate with them easily, this also could be a recommendation to the hospitals which are searching for a better Ad system, relative and friends was in the second rank in the resource information question, that refers to the importance of the recommendations and positive word of mouth from the Arab medical tourists when they go back to their countries, middleman was in the third rank as an information resource,

enhancing the relationship with middlemen in the Arab countries could be another idea to increase the position of Turkey as a destination for medical tourism. Jordan, Lebanon, and Iran were mentioned the most in the answer of the respondents about the other countries they searched about before choosing Turkey, hospitals in Turkey with the support of the Turkish government can conduct some kinds of researches and special studies to indicate the advantages and disadvantages of these competitor countries with Turkey in medical tourism in the area.

Finally, we can say that the phenomenon of receiving medical treatment abroad has grown over the past several years, and many developing countries which took advantage of medical tourism have achieved high levels in this field and started to receive a great number of international patients with a profit of billions of dollars annually. Turkey one of those countries which developed rapidly in the last years in the medical tourism sector, and today too many hospitals in different cities in Turkey receive thousands of international patients every year, and with the increasing attention from the Turkish government, Turkey in the next few years could be one of the most important countries in this field not only in Asia but also all over the world.

Recommendations for Further Research

Start test from here. To the extent that time and monetary limitations are overcome, this study should be replicated with a larger sample including international patients from many different perspectives and enrich findings. Also, the level of satisfaction with the 25 different factors ought to be measured. Such a measurement may enable policy makers to learn which factors should be improved more urgently. This is important because satisfied outpatients will provide word-of-mouth advertising.

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