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Influence of Risk Assessment Factors on the Tourism Performance in Qatar: An Empirical Study

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This research focuses on the Risk Assessment Factors (RAF) to be considered in tourism with specific context to Qatar. As Qatar has taken a bold step to host FIFA World Cup 2022, it is likely to attract a large number of tourists during this event and there is a need to develop a full-fledged infrastructure to support tourism with all the necessary human resources planning and logistical support. So, this calls for a need to have a full-fledged Tourism Risk Management (TRM) system in place. The research approach was a mixed method approach with the qualitative component involving the assimilation and analysis of information and knowledge from informal interviews with the managers of tourism industry, and secondary sources of information. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using partial least square method has been used to test the fifteen hypotheses. The results have indicated that among the factors considered, tourist based risk factors, relationship risk factors and general risk factors have significant influence on tourism performance, which is measured in terms of financial, non-financial and operational performance. Based on study results, implications have been drawn which would benefit the managers of tourism industry in enhancing the TRM.

Key Words: Tourism industry, tourism risk, risk assessment factors, tourism perception, tourism performance

Introduction

Doha the capital of Qatar is in international news since the past several years. It has hosted 2006 Asian Games and the 2011 Pan Arab Games and hosted most of the games at the 2011 AFC Asian Cup. Doha is the host for the 2022 FIFA World Cup and has gained the international attention. In addition, Qatar is a sought out destination for business and tourism as the government is promoting both these activities to the extent possible and has recorded the highest GDP growth rate. The country has taken measures to promote tourism both qualitatively and quantitatively and has made large investments in this direction in building the physical and human resources (QTA, 2013). Risk assessment and management plays a very important role in any business including tourism business. Hence, there is a need to thoroughly investigate the risk factors involved in tourism from both the national and the tourist's perspectives, and put in place an effective tourism risk management system. This study is an attempt in this direction.

Literature Review

The literature is rich in theoretical models and frameworks on tourism but lacks empirical evidence to link the variables of research interest. Moreover, the risk factors differ from country to country to a considerable extent as the nature of risk and their impact may also differ. The models which are relevant to this research have been discussed based on which the hypothetical Risk Assessment Model has been developed.

Lubbe's Holiday System Model

Lubbe (2000) designed a systems based model to explain the interdependence of various factors shown in Figure-1. According to Lubbe's Holiday System Model, the Primary and Secondary elements are influenced by inputs and external influences and they produce the outcomes. Lubbe has identified the variables under each of the systemic factors as shown in the Figure-1.

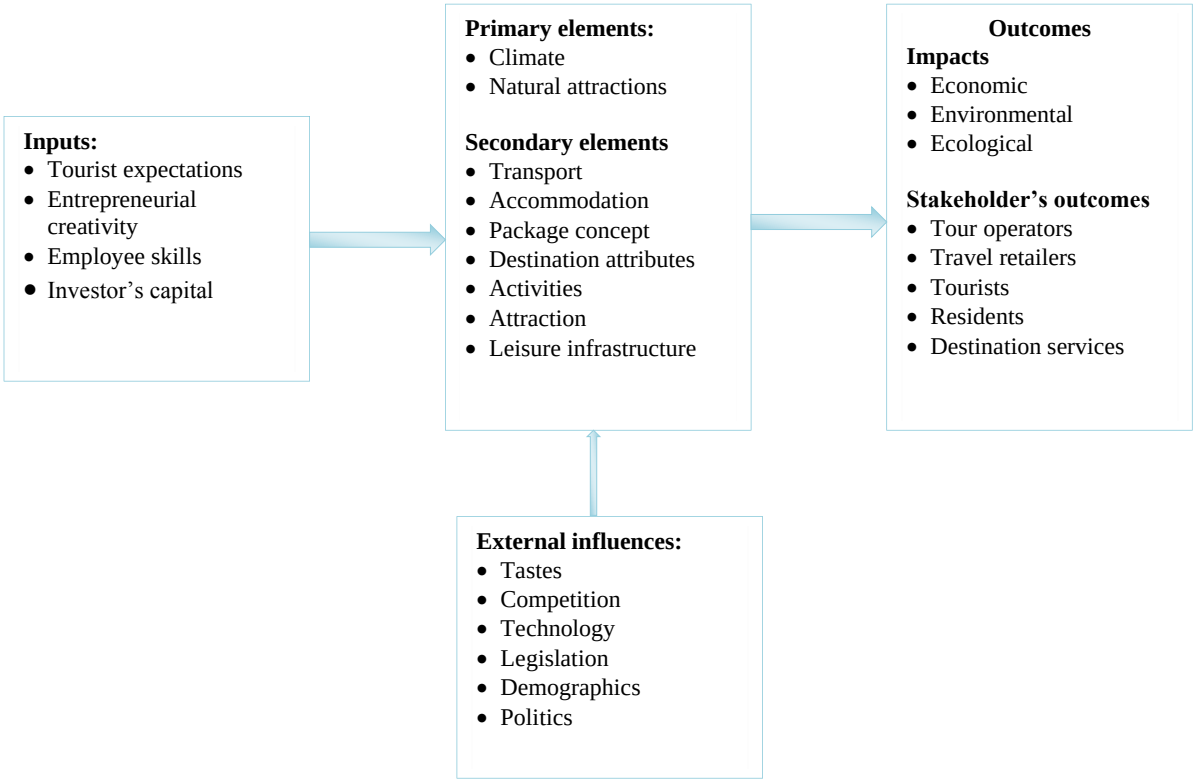

Figure 1: Lubbe's Holiday System Model (Lubbe, 2000)

Moutinho's model

This model establishes the link between the desires, expectations and motivation of the tourist against the risk of not being satisfied with these (Moutinho, 2000). The motivation to travel acts as a stimuli through the advertisements, travel literature, travel reports, and travel trade recommendations. Expectations depend upon the tourist socio-economic status, personality features, social influences and aspirations, attitudes and values. Information plays an important role in this model which includes confidence in travel-trade intermediary, image of destination, previous travel experience, travel constraints, time and cost, and also the risk assessment.

There are several other models of risk management. Burke (2000) developed and integrated model to study the interaction of risk control monitor and review with sequential steps of defining objectives, risk identification, risk quantification, and risk response, Cooper and Schindler (2001)based the assessment on processes, strategy, and model. Valsamakis et al., (2004) based the risk assessment sequential steps of risk identification, risk evaluation followed by the interaction of risk control and risk financing. These models give the procedure for risk management; however, the scope of this research is limited to risk assessment and the identification of the factors playing important role on it. Atkin and Brooks (2009) developed 19 key risk variables for risk assessment; inexperienced client function; inadequate planning of the implementation; misapplication of transfer of undertakings; poor relationship between contractor and contract manager; conflicts of interest when dealing with in-house tenders; unclear or imprecise roles, responsibilities; possible loss of control over the function; lack of standard; inappropriate allocation of risks and rewards; inadequate definition of the scope and content of services; financial failure of chosen service provider during contract period; lack of education and training; fraud or irregularities in the award and management of contract; absence or poor system for providing incentives for performance; absence of share ownership of outcomes; poor cash-flow position; vendor under performance. Similarly, a group researchers including Garrabrants et al., (1990), Anderson(1991), Baskerville(1991), (Caelli et al., 1991), Barki et al., (2001), Allen et al., (2006), Ramos (2007), Armenakis & Nirupama (2009), Nirupama (2012) and Nicola & Beech(2013)identified factors which need to be considered during risk assessment: cost, external influences, agreement, organizational structure, adaptability, complexity, completeness, level of risk, organizational size, consistency, usability, feasibility, validity, credibility, action plan, and top management, commitment, lack of understanding of the requirements, lack of customer involvement, failure to use end user expectations.

Drawing from these researches and combining the relevance of these factors in the context of tourism and grouping them into various categories, the following five factors have been considered in this research: tourist based factors, vendor risk factors, contract risk factors, relationship factors, and general risk factors.

Tourist Based Factors (TBF)

Moutinho (2000) has identified the following tourist based factors which need to be considered in risk assessment:

- Functional risk -the risk that the tourism industry will not perform as expected.
- Physical risk - the risk is that the tourist product/service will be harmful.
- Financial risk - the risk that the tourism will not be worth the cost, either in time or in money.
- Social risk - the risk that a poor tourism may result in embarrassment before others.
- Psychological risk - the risk that bad tourism choice will harm the tourists' ego.

When tourists visit a country for tourism in the back of their mind consciously or unconsciously these factors will be acting. They return satisfied if these risk factors are tackled by the tourism industry satisfactorily.

Vendor Risk Factors (VRF)

Outsourcing of the various activities is unavoidable in tourism industry and the success or failure depends upon the efficiency of vendor management. The inefficiencies from the vendor side would adversely affect the tourism industry. So, vendor risk factors need to be identified and analysed in details. Whitmore (2006) also developed a set of risk factors and grouped them under vendor risks, third party risks and esoteric risks. He classified political risks, war, forced divesture, selective discrimination, government acts and confiscation under the esoteric risk, while injuries to employers that occur in vendor's premises and child labour. Other vendor risk factors include the failure to replenish the office supplies in lead time, fraudulent business practices, risk of collaboration and coordination, clarity of policies and procedures, standardisation, changing rates, transaction integrity, event management, data security, communication gap, team morale, internal negotiations, breach of trust, change management, credit risk, technology adoption, and lead time (Adeleye et al., 2004; Adewunmi, 2009; and Ikediashi et al., 2013).

Contract Risk Factors (CRF)

The CRF can adversely affect tourism industry. Several researchers have identified the CRF which include poor relationship between contractor and contract manager; conflicts of interest when dealing with in-house tenders; unclear or imprecise roles and responsibilities, absence of benchmark quality cause, inadequate definition of scope of services, lack of standard forms of contract, inappropriate allocation of risks and rewards; inadequate definition of the scope and content of services; financial failure of chosen service provider during contract period, and fraud or irregularities in the award and management of contract (Whitmore, 2006; Redding, 2007; Atkin and Brooks, 2009; and Ikediashi et al., 2012).

Relationship Risk Factors (RRF)

Several studies on the risk factors associated with relationships between the stake holders of tourism. The RRF include poor relationships between the tourists and service providers, communication issues, Lack of IT-based relationship building tools, lack of proactive approach towards tourists, orthodox approach to tourism, xenophobic nature, improper organizational structure, lack of training, lack of team work, lack of information, lack of customer preferences, lack of multicultural approach, lack of positive attitude, lack of clarity of roles (Adeleye et al., 2004; Hoecht and Trott, 2006; Redding, 2007; Dhar and Balakrishnan, 2007; Dorasamy et al., 2010).

General Risk Factors (GRF)

In addition to the above specific risk factors there are also GRF which the tourism industry may have to face. Researchers have attributed GRF into fear of uncertainty, political risk, fear of losing good health, lack of infrastructure, lack of preparedness, natural calamity, terrorism, cultural factors, environmental factors, social factors, return for money, comfort related risks, language barrier, invasion into privacy of locals, security risk and the fear of the unknown (Gewald et al., 2006; Hoechtet al., 2006; Dhar, 2007; and Adewunmi et al., 2009)

Tourism Performance

Performance in general has many different context based definitions. It can be referred to profitability, market standing, and efficiency of operation, financial performance, non-financial performance, and operational performance. In the context of tourism which is the focus of this research, the following three measures of performance have been considered.

A performance indicator is a measure capable of generating a quantified value to indicate the level of performance taking into account single or multiple aspects (Parida and Kumar, 2006). Performance indicators could be used for financial reports, for monitoring the performance of employees, tourist

satisfaction, the health safety environment rating and overall equipment effectiveness as well as many other factors. If performance indicators are identified properly then it can provide or identify resource allocation and control, problem areas, the contribution, benchmarking, personnel performance and the contribution to maintenance and overall tourism business objectives. Of the various measures, the three major factors are the *operational performance*, *financial performance* and the *non-financial performance* (Kutucuoglu et al., 2001 and Wordsworth, 2001). The variables under each of the factor are as indicated in Figure-2.

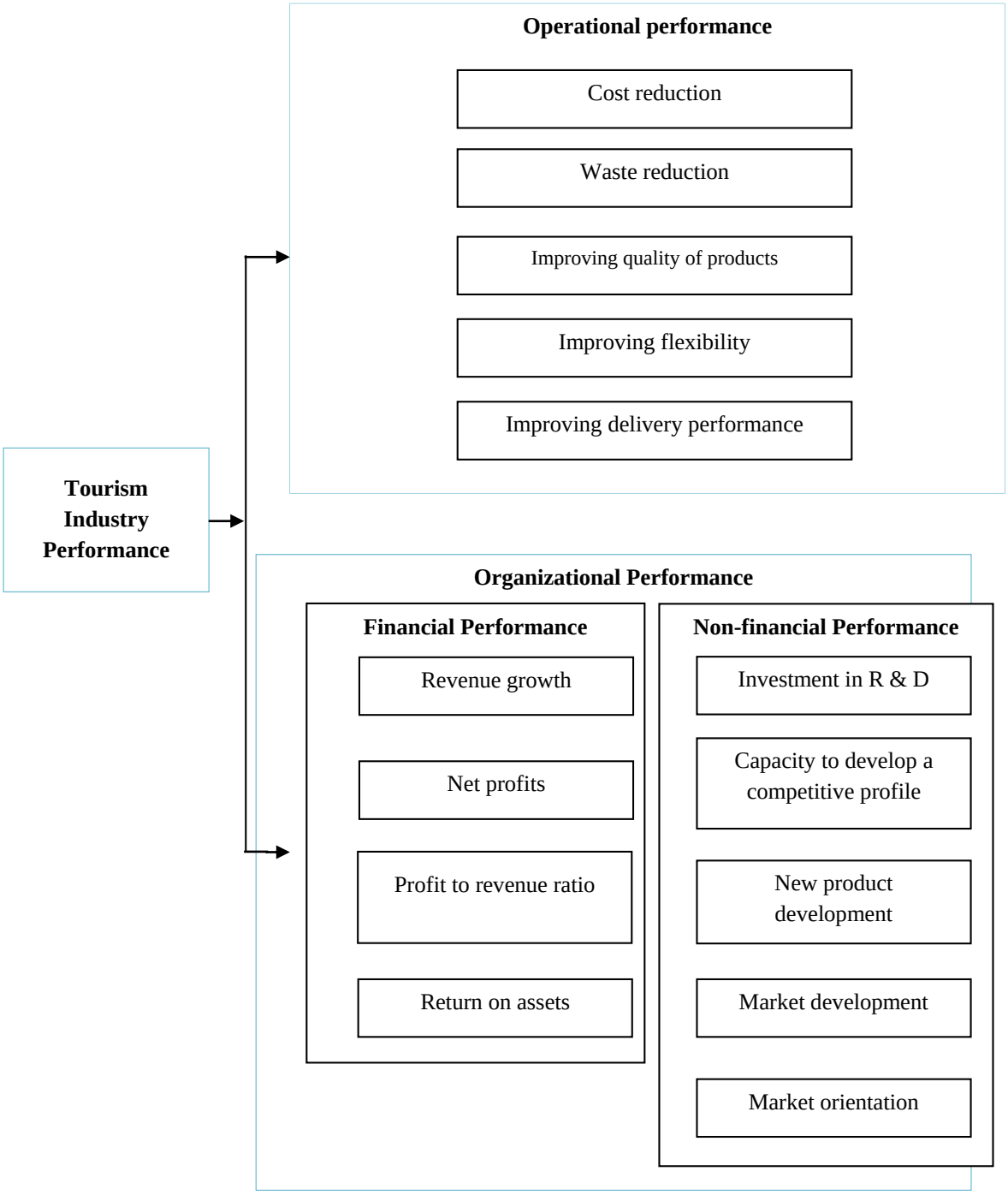

Figure-2: Indicators of the Tourism Industry Performance (Kutucuoglu et al., 2001 & Wordsworth, 2001).

Research Methodology

The Hypothetical Research Model

The literature review has identified the factors which need to be assessed in connection to tourism industry. The objective of the research is to link the risk assessment factors to the performance of the tourism industry so that it can be studied whether a good risk assessment strategy has influence on the performance of the tourism and if so which one of the factors are critical so that closer monitoring could be done. Following structural model has been the result of the literature review in Figure-3.

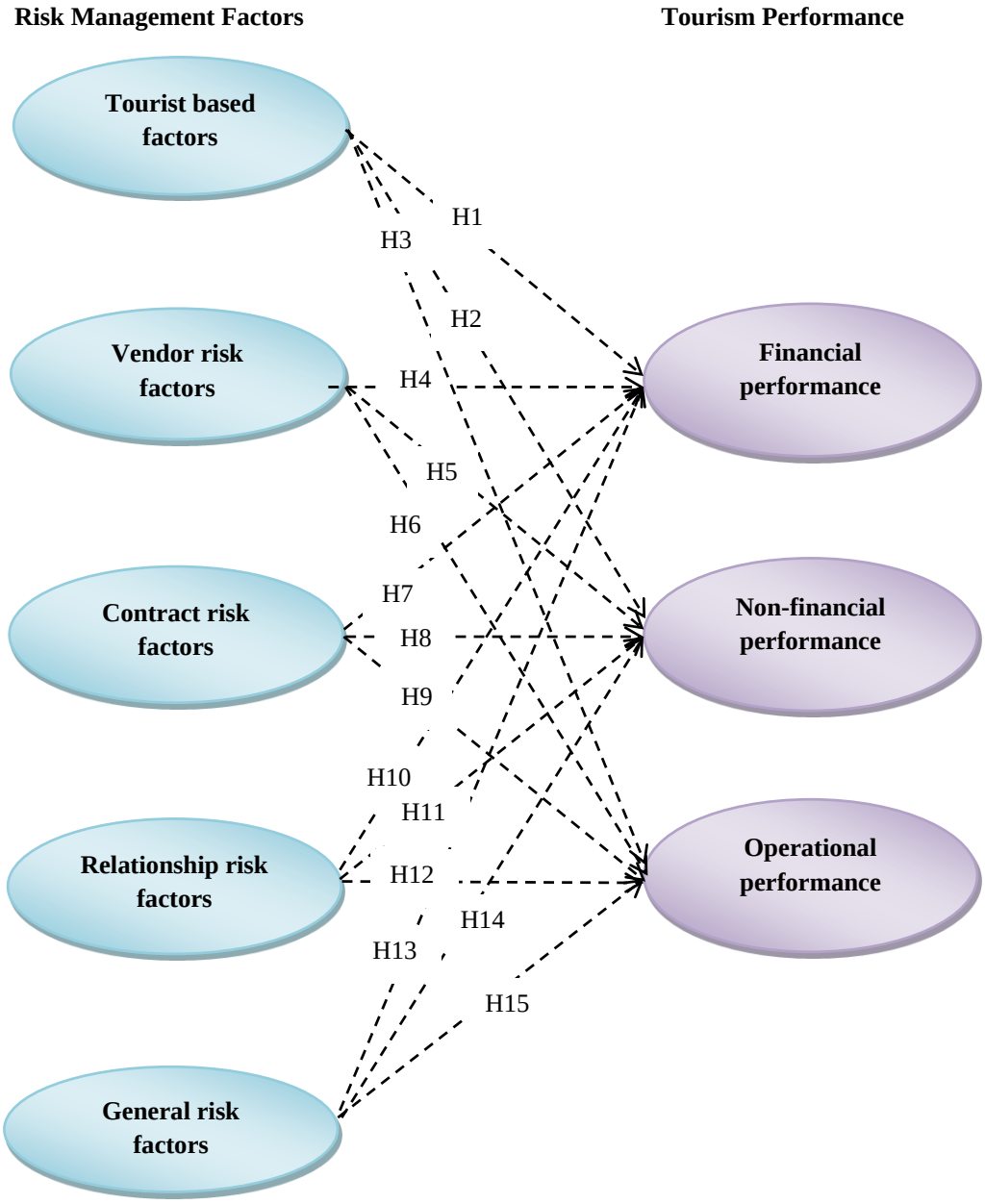

Figure-3: Hypothetical Research Model (Direct influences).

Direct influences

H_{1a}: Tourist based factors have a significant influence on financial performance.
H_{1o}: Tourist based factors have no significant influence on financial performance.
H_{2a}: Tourist based factors have a significant influence on non-financial performance.
H_{2o}: Tourist based factors have no significant influence on non-financial performance.
H_{3a}: Tourist based factors have a significant influence on operational performance.
H_{3o}: Tourist based factors have no significant influence on operational performance.
H_{4a}: Vendor risk factors have a significant influence on financial performance.
H_{4o}: Vendor risk factors have no significant influence on financial performance.
H_{5a}: Vendor risk factors have a significant influence on non-financial performance.
H_{5o}: Vendor risk factors have no significant influence on non-financial performance.
H_{6a}: Vendor risk factors have a significant influence on operational performance.
H_{6o}: Vendor risk factors have no significant influence on operational performance.
H_{7a}: Contract risk factors have a significant influence on financial performance.
H_{7o}: Contract risk factors have no significant influence on financial performance.
H_{8a}: Contract risk factors have a significant influence on non-financial performance.
H_{8o}: Contract risk factors have no significant influence on non-financial performance.
H_{9a}: Contract risk factors have a significant influence on operational performance.
H_{9o}: Contract risk factors have no significant influence on operational performance.
H_{10a}: Relationship risk factors have a significant influence on operational performance.
H_{10o}: Relationship risk factors have no significant influence on operational performance.
H_{11a}: Relationship risk factors have a significant influence on financial performance.
H_{11o}: Relationship risk factors have no significant influence on financial performance.
H_{12a}: Relationship risk factors have a significant influence on non-financial performance.
H_{12o}: Relationship risk factors have no significant influence on non-financial performance.
H_{13a}: General risk factors have a significant influence on operational performance.
H_{13o}: General risk factors have no significant influence on operational performance.
H_{14a}: General risk factors have a significant influence on financial performance.
H_{14o}: General risk factors have no significant influence on financial performance.
H_{15a}: General risk factors have a significant influence on non-financial performance.
H_{15a}: General risk factors have a significant influence on non-financial performance.

Survey and data collection

The development of the metric in the form of a questionnaire followed by the theoretical model specification entailed a four-stage approach including meta-analysis of literature, interviews with major stakeholders of tourism and the managers responsible for risk management, questionnaire development, and pilot testing of the questionnaire. The tourism sector includes hospitality, recreations, site-seeing, clubs, catering, transportation, restaurants, guest houses, hotels, etc., and the managers were selected from across these sub-sections of tourism industry. The sample size was based on convenience sampling. Convenience sampling has been chosen because the sample is finite but unevenly distributed and clustering or stratification is possible but not very relevant to the accomplishment of the objectives of the study.

Using the survey instrument, data was gathered from the tourism industry managers and the support staff through online survey and direct distribution in the form of hard copy. The study comprised 159 responses with managers (62%), mid-level executives (29%), and senior executives (9%) with 56% male and 44% female employees. Experience-wise about 20% had more than 15 years of experience, 40% had 10 to 15 years of experience, 15% had 5 to 10 years of experience and the rest had less than 5 years of experience. So, by and large, the respondents were quite competent to respond to the study and give inputs to the study. The original questionnaire comprised 37 items measuring five exogenous dimension and three endogenous dimensions, which was reduced to respond to 25 items through factor reduction. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used, where 1= Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree. In the data collected, there were seven discarded data sheets as entries were incomplete.

Measurement Model

Reliability and validity

Table-1: Skewness and Kurtosis

	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
VAR1	159	3.9748	.07621	.96094	-.859	.192	.654	.383
VAR2	159	3.6352	.08761	1.10477	-.633	.192	-.221	.383
VAR3	159	3.5723	.10073	1.27020	-.671	.192	-.502	.383
VAR4	159	3.0377	.10401	1.31152	-.122	.192	-1.084	.383
VAR5	159	3.5220	.08735	1.10142	-.488	.192	-.421	.383
VAR6	159	3.3522	.09149	1.15363	-.497	.192	-.434	.383
VAR7	159	3.4906	.09646	1.21628	-.459	.192	-.721	.383
VAR8	159	3.6101	.09182	1.15787	-.656	.192	-.178	.383
VAR9	159	3.4465	.09343	1.17811	-.552	.192	-.457	.383
VAR0	159	3.7296	.08682	1.09478	-.587	.192	-.317	.383
VAR11	159	3.7044	.09339	1.17760	-.772	.192	-.171	.383
VAR12	159	3.9057	.09046	1.14069	-1.057	.192	.513	.383
VAR13	159	3.7610	.09504	1.19841	-.958	.192	.180	.383
VAR14	159	3.7673	.08427	1.06257	-.772	.192	.192	.383
VAR15	159	3.6289	.08584	1.08239	-.732	.192	.181	.383
VAR16	159	3.6352	.08437	1.06392	-.503	.192	-.285	.383
VAR17	159	3.5283	.10048	1.26697	-.641	.192	-.693	.383
VAR18	159	3.9182	.07979	1.00611	-.665	.192	.022	.383
VAR19	159	3.7107	.08574	1.08117	-.770	.192	.004	.383
VAR20	159	3.6667	.09172	1.15653	-.737	.192	-.129	.383
VAR21	159	3.4025	.09532	1.20189	-.554	.192	-.319	.383
VAR22	159	3.4403	.09125	1.15063	-.471	.192	-.553	.383
VAR23	159	2.9686	.10383	1.30927	-.147	.192	-1.074	.383
VAR24	159	3.2390	.10191	1.28506	-.330	.192	-.897	.383
Valid N	159							

Normality assumption was not violated with an acceptable range of Skewness and Kurtosis statistics (<1.00 and -3 to +3 respectively) (Table-1). Therefore, the maximum likelihood method of estimation was chosen for conducting Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis. To verify the reliability of the latent variables in the model, internal consistency reliability measure, item reliability measure and composite reliability measures were calculated. Table-2 shows the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the composite reliability result for the final model. The alpha coefficient has the acceptable value ranging from (> 0.8), indicating a moderately high level of internal consistency. The result of item reliability (IR) measured as standardized factor loading (FL) ranged from 0.8 to 0.9 (Table-3). The composite reliability 0.9 indicating a high reliability score. The results of the convergent validity assessed based on factor loading and composite reliability indicate moderate to high acceptable range of factor loading for all items and good composite reliabilities in general.

To test for discriminant validity, the square root of average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct was compared with the correlation between the construct and the other constructs. Table 4 shows acceptable discriminant validity between each pair of construct, with all AVE square roots greater than the correlation between the constructs. This result can be accepted as very high measures and are indicated in all the methods of reliability and validity.

Table-2: Reliability Measures

	AVE	Composite Reliability	R Square	Cronbach's Alpha	Communality	Redundancy
CRF	0.6884	0.8689	0	0.7736	0.6884	0
FNP	0.7326	0.8915	0.7363	0.8176	0.7326	0.0686
GRF	0.8075	0.9263	0	0.8807	0.8075	0
NFP	0.7862	0.9168	0.675	0.8637	0.7862	0.0955
OPP	0.7734	0.9110	0.6308	0.8544	0.7734	0.2052
RRF	0.7141	0.8821	0	0.7993	0.7141	0
TBF	0.6903	0.8693	0	0.7722	0.6903	0
VNR	0.7256	0.8880	0	0.8108	0.7256	0

The Structural Model

The hypothesised model was designed to test 15 hypotheses built based on the contemporary research literature. The hypothesised model with path coefficient and the explanatory power (R^2) for each dependent construct is displayed in Figure-4. While path coefficients show the strength of relationship between the two latent variables, the t-values (Figure-5 and Table-5) are indicative of the significance of relationships which enable hypotheses testing.

Table-3: The Factor Loading after Item Reduction

	CRF	*FNP*	*GRF*	*NFP*	*OPP*	*RRF*	*TBF*	*VNR*
CRF1	0.8153	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CRF2	0.8418	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CRF3	0.8317	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FNP1	0	0.8525	0	0	0	0	0	0
FNP2	0	0.8587	0	0	0	0	0	0
FNP3	0	0.8565	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRF1	0	0	0.9168	0	0	0	0	0
GRF2	0	0	0.8976	0	0	0	0	0
GRF3	0	0	0.881	0	0	0	0	0
NFP1	0	0	0	0.8631	0	0	0	0
NFP2	0	0	0	0.9208	0	0	0	0
NFP3	0	0	0	0.875	0	0	0	0
OPP1	0	0	0	0	0.8989	0	0	0
OPP2	0	0	0	0	0.8718	0	0	0
OPP3	0	0	0	0	0.8672	0	0	0
RRF1	0	0	0	0	0	0.8348	0	0
RRF2	0	0	0	0	0	0.8786	0	0
RRF3	0	0	0	0	0	0.8206	0	0
TBF1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.7423	0
TBF2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8819	0
TBF3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8615	0
VNR1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8485
VNR2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8727
VNR3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.8339

Table-4: The Correlation Matrix

	CRF	FNP	GRF	NFP	OPP	RRF	TBF	VNR
CRF	0.83	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FNP	0.7304	0.9	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRF	0.7359	0.7856	0.9	0	0	0	0	0
NFP	0.6979	0.7984	0.7425	0.9	0	0	0	0
OPP	0.7175	0.7069	0.7346	0.7406	0.9	0	0	0
RRF	0.7432	0.7711	0.8194	0.7107	0.717	0.85	0	0
TBF	0.7248	0.7191	0.5998	0.71	0.61	0.6087	0.83	0
VNR	0.7358	0.6523	0.6491	0.588	0.6491	0.724	0.6601	0.85

Table-5: The t-statistics

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	Standard Error (STERR)	T Statistics (O/STERR)	Hypothesis
TBF -> FNP(H1)	0.3182	0.3222	0.0662	0.0662	4.8046*	Supported
TBF -> NFP(H2)	0.3788	0.3688	0.1071	0.1071	3.5385*	Supported
TBF -> OPP(H3)	0.0944	0.0891	0.1215	0.1215	0.777	Unsupported
VNR -> FNP(H4)	-0.0178	-0.0192	0.102	0.102	0.1746	Unsupported
VNR -> NFP(H5)	-0.1003	-0.1012	0.1077	0.1077	0.9316	Unsupported
VNR -> OPP(H6)	0.1008	0.1198	0.1245	0.1245	0.8095	Unsupported
CRF -> FNP (H7)	0.0673	0.0606	0.1101	0.1101	0.6109	Unsupported
CRF -> NFP(H8)	0.0932	0.0973	0.1575	0.1575	0.5914	Unsupported
CRF -> OPP(H9)	0.2208	0.2164	0.1681	0.1681	1.3139	Unsupported
RRF -> FNP(H10)	0.2557	0.2515	0.1137	0.1137	2.2496*	Supported
RRF -> NFP(H11)	0.195	0.1961	0.1254	0.1254	1.65**	Supported
RRF -> OPP(H12)	0.1632	0.1331	0.1325	0.1325	1.2319	Unsupported
GRF -> FNP(H13)	0.3473	0.3538	0.1047	0.1047	3.3183*	Supported
GRF -> NFP(H14)	0.3521	0.3615	0.1068	0.1068	3.2984*	Supported
GRF -> OPP(H15)	0.3163	0.3412	0.1464	0.1464	2.1614*	Supported

*Aplha = 0.05; **Aplha = 0.1

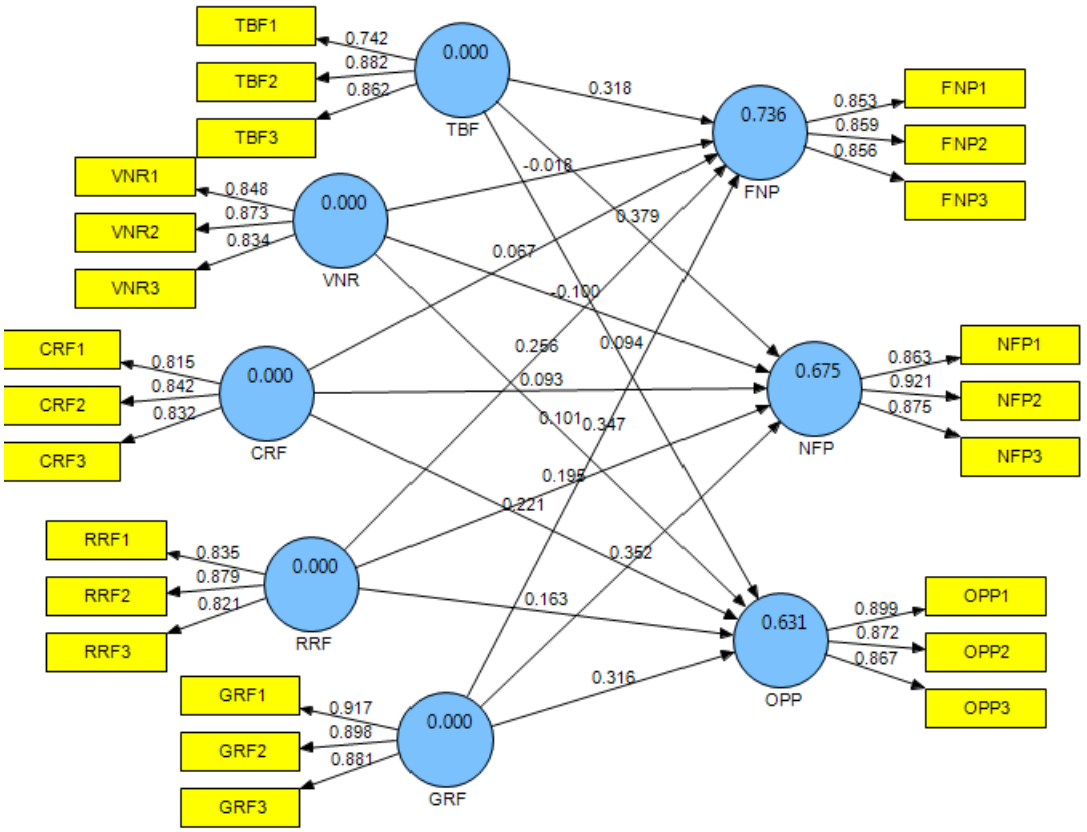

Figure-4: The Path Coefficients

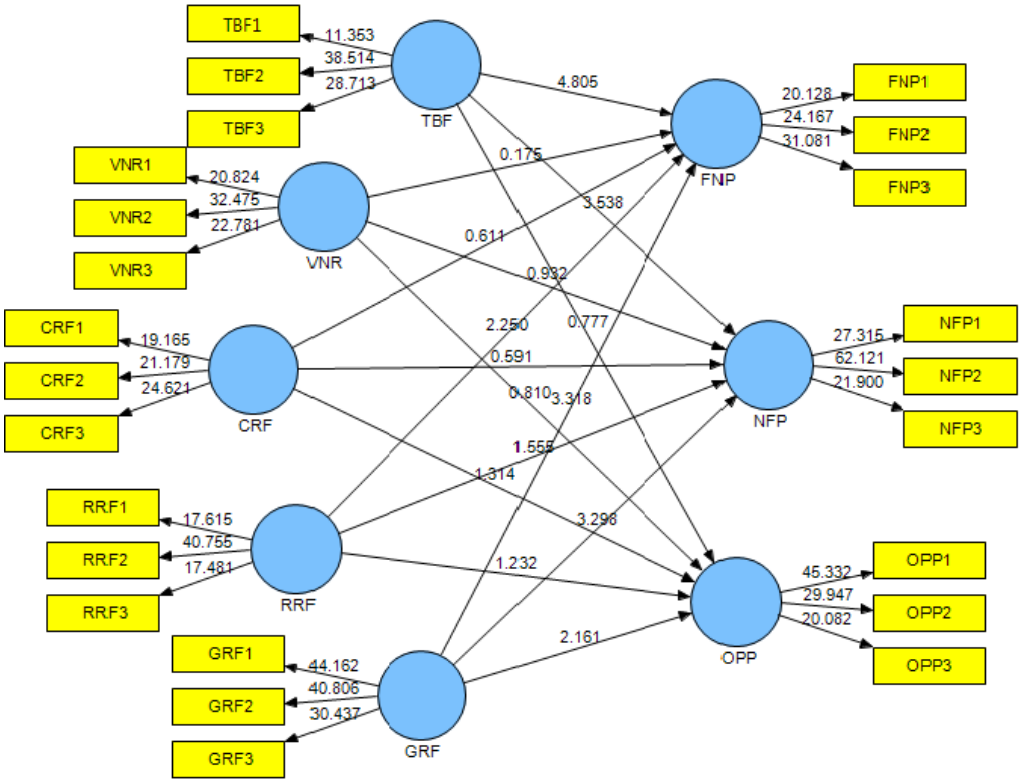

Figure-5: The t-values

Following Hypotheses were supported

H_{1a}: Tourist based factors have a significant influence on financial performance.
H_{2a}: Tourist based factors have a significant influence on non-financial performance.
H_{10a}: Relationship risk factors have a significant influence on operational performance.
H_{11a}: Relationship risk factors have a significant influence on financial performance.
H_{13a}: General risk factors have a significant influence on operational performance.
H_{14a}: General risk factors have a significant influence on financial performance.
H_{15a}: General risk factors have a significant influence on non-financial performance.

Following hypotheses were rejected:

H_{3a}: Tourist based factors have a significant influence on operational performance.
H_{4a}: Vendor risk factors have a significant influence on financial performance.
H_{5a}: Vendor risk factors have a significant influence on non-financial performance.
H_{6a}: Vendor risk factors have a significant influence on operational performance.
H_{7a}: Contract risk factors have a significant influence on financial performance.
H_{8a}: Contract risk factors have a significant influence on non-financial performance.
H_{9a}: Contract risk factors have a significant influence on operational performance.
H_{12a}: Relationship risk factors have a significant influence on non-financial performance.

Thus it is evident through hypotheses testing that *general risk factors* have influence on all the three measures of the performance of tourism industry. The *relationship risk factors* have influence on *financial and non-financial performance* of the tourism industry. Tourist based factors have influence on *financial and non-financial performance* of the tourism industry. The model has about 60 – 70% explanatory power (R^2), which indicates that the model fit is good enough (cut-off 10%). The variables which are supported through hypotheses have 0.2 to 0.4 path coefficient which do not indicate a very strong strength of relationship but they are statistically significant.

Discussions, Implications to the Tourism Industry Managers and Conclusions

As far as tourism industry is concerned, the integration of business resources, infrastructure, and management of the facilities is indispensable. Whenever facilities management is of concern the associated risk in inevitable and a suitable risk

management strategy need to be designed and implemented (Alaofin, 2003; Opaluwa, 2005; Ventovuori and Lehtonen, 2006; Adewunmi et al., 2008; and Adewunmi et al., 2009). In connection to the risk management in connection to the tourism industry among the factors considered, *tourist based factor*, *relationship risk factors*, and *general risk factors* play a major role as they influence performance of the tourism industry in one form of the other. As the performance of tourism industry with respect to *financial*, *non-financial* and *operational* terms are all important for sustainability of the industry, following are the specific implications of the study which would help the managers in enhancing the tourism performance. Qatar is in the process of preparation for the FIFA World cup 2022 and need to primarily aim at the three major factors which have significant influence on the performance of tourism industry. Following are the specific suggestions.

Tourist Based Factors (TBF)

The TBF of risk may be in several forms such as environmental, disease, financial, socio-cultural, product/service liability, property damage, and security (Fotiou, 2012). The tourists may be concerned about the environmental issues such as temperature, humidity, rains, desert storm etc., which need to be considered by the tourism authorities. Also the possibility of industrial accidents, traffic accidents, crime and terrorism, political conflicts etc., may also be the tourist perceived risks. Adequate information on these should be displayed in the web as well as information brochures sent to the tourists. The lack of information would aggravate the tourist based factors which may result in the cancellation of tour. The likelihood of certain disease may also be a concern to the tourists. The past record of health and safety should be available to the tourists in the web. The approximate amount finance involved for the stay for a given period of time which includes the range of tariffs in different accommodations, food, and local travel should also be made available which would reduce the tourist based risk.

Socio-cultural issues will also be a concern as the tourists need to be aware about the local culture. This could be in terms of the code of conduct particularly with reference to the attire and behaviour in public places. The tourists should not be caught by surprise by the rules of the land. Adequate information about the Arab culture and local tradition must be made available in the web and media. The product/service range in connection to tourism should be also made available. These precautionary measures would reduce the tourist based factors of risk from the tourists' point of view. Looking at the TBF in terms of the nation, tourism may have impact on the social, economic, and environmental issues. These aspects need to be considered critically, and sustainability should be the focus while strategizing on the tourism development.

Relationship Risk Factors (RRF)

In today's business world the relationship management between all the stake holders of a business plays a vital role in the success and sustainability of the business. The tourism business has a very large link of supply chain. The network includes the travel agents, tour organizers, hotels, restaurants, leisure managers, clubs, pubs, food and beverage, transportation, government/ nongovernment agencies, statutory boards, law and order departments, various ministries etc. There should be mechanism for fast, efficient, and accurate two-way or even multi-channel information transfer between the entire supply-chain. The ability of tourism industry to interact with the customer and maintain an on-going relationship provides firms with the ability to better identify latent consumer demands. Regular meetings and training programmes and benchmarking activities against the best in the trade would facilitate relationship building. Relationship building is of special importance because it would help anticipate the changing tourist needs and aspirations. It would also enhance competitiveness and help in identifying, evaluation and developing strategic plans of tourism. If the tourists' needs extend beyond the core competency of a country's tourism industry, it will be necessary to create strategic alliances, both horizontally and vertically, with individuals and other organisations to procure the required competencies. The question of how firms may better identify latent demands in the minds of consumers and its relative importance as a concept for driving the competitiveness and profitability of tourism related firms deserves increased research attention (Kandampully, 2002). This is where a better relationship management can help the tourism industry and the failure in relationship management would increase the (RRF). Moreover, innovation is the prime driver of any business in this competitive market and innovation cannot take place unless there is idea generation from all the stake holders of a business which demands a very effective relationship management.

General Risk Factors (GRF)

General risk factors in tourism are many. Health risk is one of the GRF which may be of concern to the tourists. WHO (2005) state that in their home environment people will be in a state of stable equilibrium with the various microorganisms, altitude and climatic conditions, but when they travel outside their territory they move towards an unstable equilibrium which may be a cause of

concern. Cossar (1996) states that immunisations and medications only protect against 5 to 10% of the problems encountered by tourists; the rest relate to personal behaviour. A person who gets infected will transfer it to others, so protecting the environment from possible infections of various diseases is a risk factor which tourism industry will have to look into and work with the health ministry of the country to take most appropriate measures in preventing infections and publicizing the measures taken to see that the tourists are aware that adequate care has been taken to ensure good health during their stay in the country. Crime in its various forms such as fraud, leaking of personal information, theft, injury, murder, sexual offense, or any other form is also a risk factor in tourism. This is a serious issue and even slight slack in control against crime may put the whole countries reputation at stake no matter if it is committed by tourists, expatriates, or locals. Political risks are also a concern in tourism in various forms such as financial crisis, attracting foreign investments, energy or other natural resources shortage, corruption, and social unrest. All these issues have bearing on general risk factors of tourism. So, there is a requirement of strategic planning in all these areas and a good advertisement to show that Qatar as a tourist destination is safe under all GRF.

This research has made an attempt to identify measure, analyse the factors of risk assessment in connection to Qatar tourism and make suggestions to the managers of tourism industry to ensure proper planning against the critical risk factors, as identified through the empirical study. The *tourist based risk factors, relationship risk factors* and *general risk factors* are found to be having significant influence on tourism performance (financial/non-financial /operational). The implication of the study in the form of suggestions could be used by the tourism managers to be better prepared for the identified issues in connection to each of the factors. When Qatar is in the process of making preparations to launch the FIFA World Cup 2022 it will surely attract a large number of international visitors and it is an opportunity to showcase the tourism potential in Qatar. The identified measures to asses, analyse, and evaluate the risk factors and have suggested an appropriate strategy to mitigate the risk to the best extent and it would pave the road for success in achieving sustainable growth in tourism.

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