

## Investigating a New Framework for Beauty Tourism Adoption: A Case Study on Iran

Seyedeh OMSalameh Pourhashemi <sup>a,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Engineering, Islamic Azad University Tehran Central Branch, Tehran, Iran

\* Corresponding author email address: [pourhashemi1986@gmail.com](mailto:pourhashemi1986@gmail.com)

The emergence of beauty tourism in the medical field has gained significant momentum in various countries and has the potential to contribute substantially to their economic growth. The purpose of this study was to introduce a new framework for the acceptance of beauty tourism. Specifically, the research focused on identifying the factors that influence individuals who travel to Iran for cosmetic surgery and aimed to develop a better understanding of the incentives and factors that prompt foreign individuals to seek medical assistance in Iran. The Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) and Human-Organization-Technology (HOT) frameworks, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the effect of advertisements were used in this study to present a hybrid model considering the influential factors in beauty tourism acceptance. An Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) was applied to determine a weighting coefficient for each criterion in multicriteria evaluation. The presented model and research results can help managers in tourism industry to make beauty tourism decisions so that appropriate financial resources can be dedicated to develop this new tourism industry.

**Keywords:** Beauty Tourism, Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE), Human-Organization-Technology (HOT), Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Advertising

### 1. Introduction

Health tourism includes traveling to countries other than one's own to obtain medical treatments (Smith and Puczkó, 2014). Beauty tourism refers to the patients moving from one place to another to undergo aesthetic procedures that have significantly developed in medical tourism field according to the patients in the selected area (Reisman, 2010). Perhaps, medical tourism and beauty tourism seems more complicated than other forms of tourism (Jones, 2008). However, beauty tourism is a tourism centre's or destination's attempt to attract tourists by improving health services, medical services and cosmetic facilities along with the common tourism facilities provided for the travellers'. As an example, unlike the services provided at a hospital, a medical spring can attract customers from all over the world. In many cases, the customers stay at these medical centres' instead of hotels. Of course, most of the customers also enjoy the entertainments and diversions in the city. Consequently, they are not different from other tourists (Stockhaus, 2012). A new type of medical tourism has been recently developed and is growing, called beauty tourism. There are different reasons in the international community to seek cosmetic surgery abroad. Users might seek the best cosmetic surgeons in the world. Nonetheless, the most common reason to travel abroad for cosmetic

surgeries instead of using the same services in one's country is financial. The surgeries performed outside England are far cheaper. Studies have shown that popular methods such as nose surgeries might cost about 2000 pounds cheaper in Czech Republic and Poland than in England. Consequently, the increase in the passion to undergo affordable cosmetic surgeries has led to an increase in the rate of such surgeries on holidays. Although the cosmetic surgery services that the new travellers' seek can be promising for qualified surgeons working in hospitals, they are very weak in commercial industry but beneficial according to surgeons (Griffiths and Mullock, 2018). The most common surgical treatments include implants, adjustable gastric bands, liposuction, dermal fillers, rhinoplasty and face lifts (Stockhaus, 2012). Cosmetic surgery is the result of any medical intervention or surgeries on body to reach beauty in terms of medical field. Cosmetic surgery is used to describe all surgeries. This term is not only used at the moment to refer to surgical operations, but also includes a wide range of methods such as collagen injection, Botox, sterile and chemical and laser treatments (Hurst, 2015). Cosmetic surgeries that are rarely covered by insurance policies is one of the most popular medical treatments in medical tourism market and have surely led to the medical tourism phenomenon (Heung et al., 2010). Over the last decades, the social attitude towards