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Comparison of Tourists' Pre- and Post- Intentionality Attitudes towards Tourism Effects

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2025-04-15 Accepted: 2025-06-07	Intentionality is a form of received and perceptual awareness through which humans relate to their geographical lifeworld. This awareness is acquired both objectively and, at times, subjectively, and is shaped through various mediating factors. In the context of urban tourism, the structure of such intentionality is grounded in phenomenological and post-phenomenological approaches, emerging from the relational dynamics between humans and tourism elements. The present study aims to explore the manner and conditions of tourists' intentional perception—tourists being positioned as the observer (subject) toward tourism artifacts and sites—considered as the observed (object). The research methodology is qualitative, based on phenomenological and post-phenomenological perspectives, and employs semi-structured interviews conducted with tourists in the city of Zanjan. Data were analyzed using the grounded theory model, involving open, axial, and selective coding. The resulting categories were interpreted and classified within the contextual framework of factors, mediators, and symbols of intentionality. Findings indicate that tourists' awareness and understanding differ between initial (prior) and subsequent (posterior) stages of intentionality and follow a developmental trajectory. Categories such as attractions, religion, handicrafts, traditional markets, contemporary history, and mummification—which characterized the initial stage—give way in the subsequent stage to religion, culture and beliefs, architecture and identity, history and civilization, diversity of heritage, and heritage preservation, reflecting a shift in the mental structure of perception. As a result, touristic intentionality is influenced by direct observation, length of stay, and various intermediating factors (such as services, support systems, interpretation, and guidance). Ultimately, it is a function of the volume and quality of information received from the objects (tourism elements) through the mediating role of the subjects (tourists).
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Introduction

Attention is described as the concept of being directed towards things, of being from or about something, of being about and being directed towards an object (Brentano, 1995). Attention is the ability to be aware of things or on things (Husserl, 1983). In fact, attention is an empirical act lived by humans that refers to the process of their knowledge and awareness of different objects (Heidegger, 1992). An object is revealed, objective, unmediated, and physical (Hardy, 2018). So that humans, through the act of thinking in the real world, gain cognitive experience of its factors and elements, and it is human thought and thinking that fills the gap between object and subject in an attentional process. "In fact, intentional experiences are experiences that include human lived experiences in a phenomenological environment (Daviran, 2025, p. 3)". or their reception through various intermediaries in a post-phenomenological environment. Place-based tourism is based on urban historical attractions as one of the intentional experiences of humans that is formed in the context of lived time in a lived place and creates an intentional mindset by creating experience. In this human experience, place is an event that is alive and opens itself to changes and is simultaneously formed with dynamic activities (Talebian & Uraz, 2018). A place where tourists gain a common experience of the destination culture (Arcos-Pumarola et al., 2023). The diversity of historical and cultural monuments of cities is known as tourist-attracting elements that lead to human presence in the tourism space with a mental background or background and create apparent and post-phenomenal attention through living in it. Attention that can cause the transfer, acceptance, and re-presence of the tourist and develop the desired mental space of tourism. What the tourist gains from interacting with the native culture is a mental souvenir that always remains in the mind (Krajnovic & Gortan-Carli, 2007) and this mentality is transferred to others and forms a chain of destination place souvenirs. The chain lingers in the tourist's mind, symbolizing tourism through the rejuvenation of mental associations. "Positive mental memory leads to a sense of loyalty, advertising, and re-presence" (Daviran, 2024, p. 14). Acknowledging that tourism has historically been mainly based on tangible assets and the diversity of these assets has been enhanced from buildings or museums to heterogeneous elements such as local contemporary art (Paquin, 2021). Therefore, measuring the tourist's mental perception of the presence and observation of tangible assets and comparing it with previous perceptions can better explain the human life experience of the environment and tourism elements and develop management plans to develop the mental perception of tourism. The type and manner of tourists' mental reception of the tourism environment play a crucial role in the development or stagnation of tourism. Positive perceptions lead to promotion and renewal of tourism, and by persisting in the tourist's mind, they contribute to the growth and sustainability of tourism. Environmental amenities, attractiveness, respectful interaction, tourist guidance, and related services are

key factors that can influence both initial and subsequent perceptions. For this reason, this study evaluated the direct and indirect attention of tourists to the tourism environment based on historical tourist monuments and works, and as a new experience of phenomenological research, it examined the conditions, ratios, and factors of tourist perception. The main basis of the research is based on phenomenological research and it is a post-phenomenon that explains the factors and mediators of tourist attention from the tourism environment, considering human experiences from the tourism world. The main question of the research is based on this structure: how is tourist attention from tourism elements formed and what conditions and mediators do the factors that create and promote it depend on?

Research Background

A review of the literature on urban tourism reveals numerous and diverse studies, some of which have examined the subjectivity and lived experience of tourists in the tourism environment. However, no study has specifically addressed the topic of perception and phenomenological and post-phenomenological considerations of historical tourist monuments and sites. Among the related and corresponding studies conducted in recent years, the following can be mentioned:

Ghaffari et al. (2019), in a study on investigating the role of tourists' mental image of the brand on the reputation of the tourism destination of Yazd City, using an applied research method and statistical approaches, concluded that tourists' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral mental image of the destination brand has a positive and significant effect on the reputation of the tourism destination.

Alinejad (2019), in a study on hermeneutic understanding of the tourism experience of sacred spaces, using a qualitative research method based on phenomenology, concluded that the establishment of religious places along mountaineering routes represents a natural upward movement and creates an unbreakable link between humans, mountains, and nature, resulting in a sense of transcendence and inner joy.

Khalilnezhad et al. (2021), in subject on typology of tourists' mental perspectives regarding the meaning of tourism destinations (case study: Shiraz), using an applied research method based on Q-analysis, identified seven types of tourists' mental perspectives: hedonists, collectivists, adventurers, serenity seekers, introspectives, distinct seekers, and commemorators. These extracted mentalities were then interpreted.

Nouri and Sobhani (2023), with study on examining the effect of host community behavior on tourist attraction with the mediation of tourists' mental image" (case study: Mashhad), using an applied research method with descriptive-survey nature and quantitative structural analysis, concluded that host community behavior significantly affects tourist attraction and that the tourists' mental image mediates this effect.

Pourfaraj and Ahmadi (2024), in a subject on the effect of perceived authenticity on tourist satisfaction and intention to revisit, using factor analysis and structural modeling, found that objective and existential authenticity of the tourism environment significantly affects tourist satisfaction and enhances loyalty and repeat visitation.

Vazin (2024), in a study on examining perceived values and cultural tourists' buying behavior towards handicraft souvenirs in Isfahan city, using a descriptive-analytical research method with quantitative analysis, concluded that authenticity, normative perceptions of the sales environment, and perceived behavioral control have a direct positive relationship with cultural tourists' purchase intentions.

Hashima et al. (2016), in a study on Youth Perspectives on the historical monuments of Johor Bahru, Malaysia," using continuous observation, found that young people are more interested in visiting modern areas of the city than historical ones, and despite the low attractiveness of heritage buildings and historical streets, they tend to visit them at night, mainly students.

Deng et al. (2020), in a study on the psychological ownership mediators of tourists' shared values regarding the perceived value of souvenirs, concluded that tourists' psychological perspective and mental perception mediate the relationship between shared tourist values and their perceived value of souvenirs, shaping an intermediary cognitive perception.

Birer and Adem (2022), in a subject on youth attitudes toward historical buildings in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, using continuous observation, found that youths are more interested in tourism in the modern city areas than in the historical zones. Given the low attractiveness of heritage buildings and historic streets, most young people tend to visit these places mainly at night, primarily students.

Aigwi et al. (2023), in a study on tourists' public perception of heritage buildings, using a qualitative research method based on interviews, found that the historical buildings in downtown Invercargill, New Zealand, are well-preserved and require attention. The findings indicate that properly maintained and restored historic buildings serve as urban identity heritage, shaping residents' and tourists' perceptions of the city center and creating a favorable mental image.

Reitsamer et al. (2024), in a study on destination attractiveness and attachment: the mediating role of tourist attitudes," using structural equation modeling, concluded that supportive welfare facilities and the description of historical monuments act as effective mediators in creating place attachment. They emphasized the necessity for policymakers to develop perceptibility of tourism elements and cognitive representation to enhance attachment.

Findings from previous studies indicate that tourists' attitudes toward historical heritage, including monuments and sites, are generally positive, depending on environmental awareness, services, and the quality of supporting amenities. Factors such as the maintenance of sites, authenticity of buildings,

preservation and restoration efforts, host behavior, and information provided to tourists have been key discussion points in recent research.

The process of intentionality is a concept that forms the foundation of phenomenology and post-phenomenology. Although the term "phenomenology" can be traced back to philosophers such as Lambert, Herder, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, it was Edmund Husserl who introduced it as a distinct philosophical approach and developed it into a completely new method. He is rightfully recognized as the father of philosophical phenomenology. Through his works and interpretations—such as intentionality, "toward the things themselves," reduction, suspension, horizon, and lifeworld—his students, including Heidegger, followed his path, albeit sometimes critically, and transformed phenomenology into one of the most influential currents in twentieth-century philosophical thought (Bala Mirzaei & Alborzi, 2017). Edmund Husserl (the father of phenomenology) developed the theory of phenomena in response to the crisis that had emerged in the intellectual sphere of the late 19th century. Due to the overwhelming dominance of empiricism and the epistemological challenge regarding the correspondence between mind and reality, philosophy faced significant difficulties. Husserl sought a foundation that could help him navigate this crisis, and he found it in an ancient idea: the phenomenon. By articulating this concept, he revitalized philosophical thought (Fayazi, 2019).

"Phenomenon refers to tangible, individual, form-receptive, and transient entities that possess a shadow-like existence and are contrasted with eidos (form and ideal) (Karami & Alizadeh, 2022, p. 4)." In other words, the study or recognition of phenomena includes everything that appears to the mind. Therefore, anyone who studies and describes the manifestation and appearance of things can be considered a phenomenologist (Dartigues, 2013). "Phenomenology is the direct and immediate perception and intuition of objects and phenomena without intermediaries. An intermediary in knowledge refers to anything—such as hypotheses, theories, categories, and philosophical or scientific frameworks—that helps articulate the essence of phenomena (Vasegh, 2019, p. 403)".

Phenomenology, unlike static philosophy, is a dynamic philosophy with an active and fluid current. Like any intellectual movement, phenomenology consists of several parallel subcurrents that are interconnected but by no means homogeneous, and they may progress at different rates. While they share a common origin, they do not necessarily have a predetermined or predictable shared destination (Spielberg, 2020). Husserl bases his fundamental concept of phenomenology on the notion of intentionality. He asserts that phenomenology is formed around consciousness and encompasses what is known as primary insight. In essence, Husserl's goal was to articulate a rational philosophy that explains cognition without any preconceived assumptions (Spielberg, 2020). Husserl's phenomenology, aimed at uncovering the meaning of objects and the contents of consciousness, suspends the external world and is founded on logical semantics. In his early philosophical work, he built phenomenology on

the analysis of essence, which he categorized into three types of awareness: nature, culture, and built environments. Later, upon observing fragmentation, decline, and crisis within European culture, he incorporated cultural essence into his framework as well. Husserl considered the goal of phenomenology to be the avoidance of interpretations and allowing objects to reveal themselves. The purpose of phenomenology is to imbue human life with a philosophical dimension, wherein individuals can grasp laws through their own experiences (Husserl, 1970). Husserl views the act of understanding as an intentional relationship between the object (the recognized) and the subject (the recognizer). This intentional relationship functions like a spirit flowing between object and subject (noesis and noema), and it can be analyzed from any perspective, whether through an object-centered or subject-centered interpretation (Welton, 1999). Thought and cognition bridge the gap between object and subject in the process of intentionality. Essentially, intentional experiences encompass lived experiences—those derived from the subject's presence in the environment while observing the object. According to Husserl, such experience plays a fundamental role in resolving crises and establishing the foundations for the science of the lifeworld (Faraji, 2021).

In the developmental process of the concept of intentionality—also referred to in this context as *el tafāt*—what is fundamental is the existence of a subject and an object, whose interaction forms the basis of awareness and experience. This process is largely founded on the objectification of subjective experience (Verbeek, 2001). Intentionality is essentially the directedness of consciousness toward an object. It denotes a conscious linkage between subject and object, one that manifests through various modes of intentional experience (Moran, 2012). In phenomenology, intentional experiences engage with objects in different ways, and these experiences themselves constitute consciousness. As Husserl notes, consciousness is always consciousness of something, and its contents reside within this directedness (Husserl, 2001; Levinas, 1995). Within this process of awareness, mediators arise that influence the type and quality of intentionality. These mediators can sometimes shift the subject's recognition of the object from an objective to a more subjective realm. Nevertheless, a complete and ultimate form of intentionality is one that is formed within objectivity and is completed through it. Mediators serve to accelerate and direct the intentional flow. These mediators may involve information conveyed about the object—either by another subject or by another object—to the primary subject. Human networks, technology, and books are among such mediating elements.

In fact, the background for transitioning from the paradigm of phenomenology to post-phenomenology must be understood in the context of technological development. In phenomenology, the subject and object (human and world) cannot be examined independently but must be understood in relation to each other (Tabatabaei & Tavakoli, 2018). "In post-phenomenology, intermediaries exist. Post-phenomenology, as a new approach in philosophy, revises Husserlian phenomenology and leans

toward pragmatism, focusing on human relationships through intermediaries such as technology (Mozaffaripour, 2021, p. 21)".

The leading figure in this movement is Don Ihde, the contemporary philosopher of technology in the United States, followed by Peter Verbeek, his former student, who has provided the most extensive interpretations of post-phenomenology (Verbeek, 2012; Verbeek, 2005; Verbeek, 2006). Don Ihde, influenced by Heidegger's perspectives, introduced a revised version of phenomenology, which became known as post-phenomenology. According to Ihde, whenever humans react to the world, it signifies the existence of the world, and this defines realism for him. From this perspective, the meaning of realism in his intellectual framework must be understood phenomenologically and, therefore, relationally. Phenomenology examines the relationship between object/world (organism/environment) (Ihde, 1998; Ihde, 2009; Selinger, 2009). In this process, intentionality serves as a foundational concept that shapes both phenomenology and post-phenomenology and determines the direction of its studies. In post-phenomenology, intentionality functions as the intermediary that establishes the connection between the subject and the object and guides their awareness. Mediated intentionality refers to the intermediary role that enables the world to be experienced not only in a purely objective and physically perceivable manner but also in subjective forms. Intermediaries act as connectors between humans and the world and influence the formation of human knowledge. According to Ihde, an intermediary exists between subject and object, transforming both and shaping the ontology of human existence and the world (Aagaard, 2017).

Human geography in the 1960s and late 1980s gradually adopted phenomenology, especially drawing on Martin Heidegger's phenomenology as a foundational framework for discussions on place and spatial experiences. However, more recently, geography has turned toward post-phenomenology, arising from a re-examination of phenomenology's understanding of the subject and the status of objects in relation to it. In geography, the objective context and the individual's mental space create a new platform for understanding natural and human phenomena, which is known as post-phenomenology. The objective context shapes the individual's mental space regarding the way they understand the lifeworld through various technologies (Daviran, 2024). In this process, if in the past humans recognized phenomena with the visible eye, this objective or visual experience, together with prior knowledge and data, is now far more complete and expressive with today's technological data (Rahdan Mofrad & Ramesht, 2020). Urban tourism, especially identity- and culture-based tourism, has historically been primarily reliant on tangible assets. Nevertheless, the diversity of these assets has expanded from buildings or museums to heterogeneous elements such as local contemporary art (Paquin, 2021). Furthermore, the concept of culture has transformed into a more active interaction, a place where tourists acquire a shared experience of the destination's culture (Arcos-Pumarola et al., 2023). What the

tourist gains from interacting with local culture is a mental souvenir that remains memorable (Krajnovic & Gortan-Carli, 2007).

Among urban elements, historical and identity-bearing monuments—particularly those located in the city's core (central texture)—play a crucial role in creating and reinforcing tourism pathways by showcasing authenticity and identity as cultural commodities. These monuments serve as gateways to the city's culture, history, and identity. The tourist's mental background prior to entering the tourism space, combined with their perceptions formed during visits and tours, reflects their phenomenological and post-phenomenological attentiveness to the tourism experience. The degree of data transfer and reception from tourism artifacts, as well as the gap between prior (initial, pre-visit) and posterior (secondary, post-visit) perceptions, explain the tourist's primary and secondary attentions toward the tourism environment. Attentional mediators play a fundamental role in explaining this gap, reducing discrepancies, and developing the tourist's attentiveness. In essence, tourism attentiveness is a relation between the positive mental representation initially formed in the tourist and the generated mental representation, which is then expanded or developed through physical presence and movement.

This development of attentiveness depends on various factors and elements that are based on the conditions of the tourism environment and the information provided. The preliminary mental representation represents the initial perception and is a motivating factor for presence in the tourism environment, while the final mental imagery is derived from actions taken within the tourism environment, leading to either the sustainability or lack thereof of tourism retention.

Therefore, phenomenological and post-phenomenological attentiveness to the tourism environment is shaped and sustained through mental imagery, which is formed according to the mode of physical objectification and the effect of mediating factors.

Findings from previous studies indicate that tourists generally hold a positive attitude toward the historical heritage of countries, including monuments and historical sites. This attitude largely depends on the level of environmental awareness, quality of supportive services, and facilities provided. Key factors discussed in recent research include the quality of preservation, authenticity of the buildings, conservation and restoration efforts, behavior of hosts, and the information delivered to tourists. These factors influence tourists' knowledge and awareness of the tourism environment and act as mediators in the process of their attentiveness toward heritage sites, both in its prior (pre-visit) and posterior (post-visit) dimensions. The present study focuses on the formation of primary and secondary attentiveness and the role of mediators in shaping the attentional effect, aiming to capture tourists' initial and subsequent mentalities regarding their presence and tours in the heritage environment, and to clarify the role of these mentalities in the development of urban tourism.

Zanjan city, as one of the mid-sized cities, has a population of over 430,000 and an area of approximately 7,000 hectares, located in the northwest of Iran. The central urban fabric contains numerous historical, touristic, and religious elements, including the Bazaar, Sabzeh Meydan Complex, pedestrian pathways, Jameh Mosque, Mohammad Rasulullah Mosque, Zolfaqari Mansion, and the Shrine of Seyyed Ebrahim—all of which contribute uniquely to the identity of the city center (Daviran, 2024). The historical-identity monuments studied in this research encompass 15 key touristic heritage sites in Zanjan, including the historic bazaar, Salt Men Museum (Zolfaqari Mansion), Sangi Caravanserai, Mesgarha Street, Knifemakers' Bazaar, the traditional laundry house (Rakht-Shuy Khaneh), Jameh Mosque, Shrine of Seyyed Ebrahim, Hoseiniyeh Azam Zanjan, Haj Dadash Traditional Bathhouse, Khanom Mosque, Chehel Sotoun Mosque, Davoodi House, and Sabzeh Meydan Tourism Complex (Figure 1).

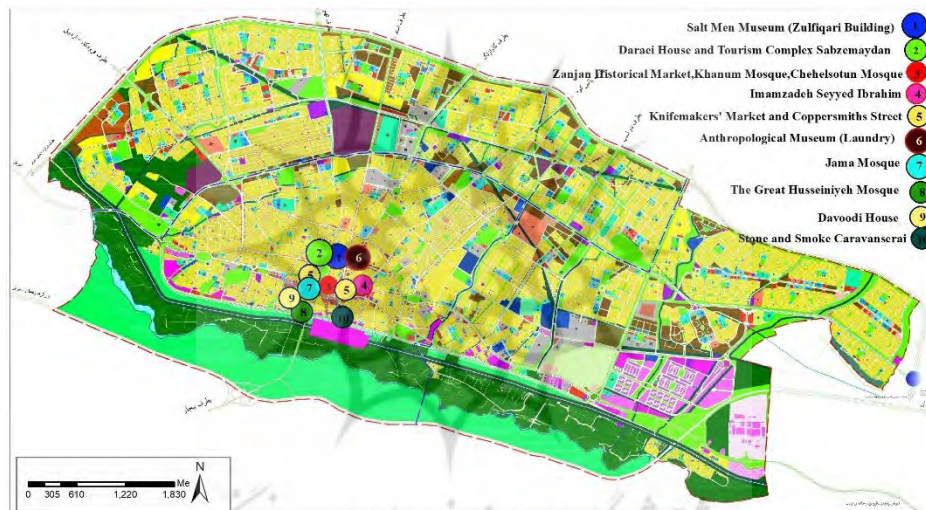


Figure 1. Distribution of studied tourism sites in Zanjan city

Research Questions

The central research question of this study is: How is tourist attention generated toward tourism elements, and what conditions and mediating factors influence and enhance this attentional process?

Research Methodology

Research Method

The present research is a qualitative study grounded in phenomenological and post-phenomenological approaches, conducted through the reception and interpretation of tourists' lived experiences of the historical and identity monuments in the Zanjan city.

Population and Statistical Sample

This qualitative research, grounded in phenomenological and post-phenomenological approaches, employs semi-structured interviews as an effective method for data collection. The study population comprises tourists who visited Zanzibar between March 15 and April 15, 2025, specifically those engaging with the city's historical sites. The sample size consisted of 35 tourists, representing a diverse group who collectively visited nearly all the studied attractions. Due to the variability in tourist numbers and the uncertainty regarding the exact population size, a non-probability sampling method was employed, specifically utilizing available (convenience) and purposeful sampling technique.

Data Collection Method

Data collection was conducted using a semi-structured interview approach. To explore both primary and secondary considerations, the study focused on interviewing tourists who were experiencing the city of Zanzibar for the first time and had chosen it based on their initial mindset shaped by media advertisements or prior indirect experiences (such as recommendations from friends or acquaintances). Given the abundance of tourist attractions in Zanzibar, the participants were selected from visitors at the city's historical and identity monuments. More than 15 such monuments, mostly located within the central area of the city, were included in the study.

Data saturation (i.e., repetition of responses) confirmed the sufficiency of the collected data. As responses became repetitive and no new information emerged, the data collection process was halted, and the classification and organization of the data commenced. To this end, tourists were asked to respond to the researcher's questions focused on their prior and current perceptions of the visit—either during the tour or while resting. In order to foster trust and ensure participant comfort, no audio or video recording devices were used during the interviews. Instead, the participants' responses were manually noted. The collected data were then analyzed using the grounded theory approach. Initially, open coding was performed on the gathered data. Shared and overlapping codes were subsequently merged during axial coding. Finally, the main categories and core concepts were extracted and interpreted by considering both prior and post-visit mental perspectives.

Data Analysis Method

A data-driven approach was employed to interpret and analyze the interview findings. Initially, the collected data were open-coded, followed by the identification and merging of common codes through axial and selective coding. Ultimately, the core categories and concepts were extracted and organized, distinguishing between primary (previous) and secondary (subsequent) considerations. These categories were then separately explained in relation to their effects on tourism (Figure 2).

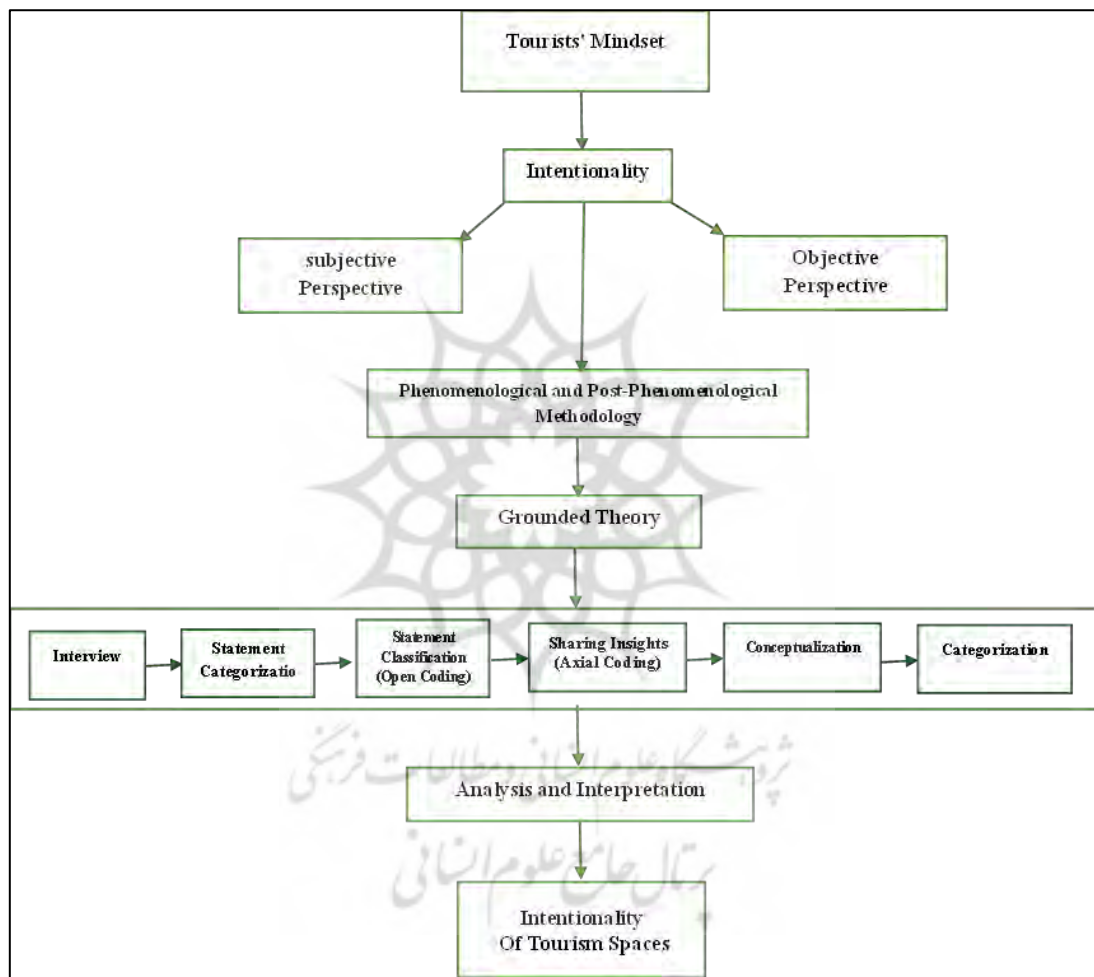


Figure 2. Methodological Process of Tourism Space Intentionality

Findings from Qualitative Data

The findings from interviews with tourists were categorized into two sections: prior intentionality (pre-visit) and subsequent intentionality (post-visit) after arriving in Zanjan and visiting the studied monuments. The interview data contained 450 statements, which were summarized by merging the common codes of prior awareness into 25 codes and final attentiveness into 54 codes. The results of

open and axial coding led to the identification of six main categories in prior intentionality: attractions, religion, handicrafts, traditional market, contemporary history, and mummies. In subsequent intentionality, six categories emerged: religion, culture and beliefs, architecture and identity, history and civilization, diversity of monuments, and heritage conservation.

Prior (Initial) Tourist Intentionality

The extracted statements and categories in prior intentionality reflect the extent of tourists' awareness and knowledge before entering Zanjan. This awareness is shaped through various intermediaries that provide information about Zanjan's tourism sites, leading to a relative understanding of them. In this phase, tourists primarily seek and receive their perceptions, mental images, and awareness of Zanjan's tourism attractions through others' experiences, promotional brochures, internet-based technology, and social networks. Intentional perception refers to everything that mediates between the tourist's reception (as the subject) and the tourism attractions (as the object) and functions as a tool for prior intentionality. These intermediaries facilitate tourists' physical presence in the city and their visit to tourism sites. The type and method of advertisements, the way information is presented, and the contextual introduction of tourism attractions play a crucial role in influencing tourist attraction and their conscious willingness to visit.

The initial intentionality of tourists to tourism capacities and their willingness to visit is a function of informational intermediaries that create the relationship between humans and the tourism world, through which they connect with the lived environment. These intermediaries shape the subject's perception of the object and guide their awareness. Primary intermediaries make the world not only objectively and physically experientiable but also perceptible in mental forms. These intermediaries create conditions where the tourist alters their perception of tourism sites and forms relationships between humans and the world. Overall, intermediaries play a crucial role in tourists' prior attention to tourism elements and act as a factor in attracting tourists to gain lived experiences. Although the categories of this attention are mentally constructed through non-physical intermediaries (indirect observation), they form an initial mental image of tourism sites. Findings from interviews with tourists indicate that intermediaries have emphasized the handicraft and religious aspects when providing initial awareness of Zanjan's tourism attractions. Zanjan has been introduced as a religious, traditional city with a historic market and handicrafts. Its historical buildings, such as the Zolfaghari Mansion, Darayi House, Salt Men, and the Rakhtshooy Khaneh, have been placed in secondary priorities. The repetition coefficient of initial intentionality categories and statements shows that the highest repetition rate among the studied tourism attractions in the tourists' prior mindset belongs to handicrafts (knives and copper) followed by religious elements (such as Hosseiniyeh A'zam). Some tourism attractions, such as Haj

Dadas Hammam, Davoudi House, Darayi Mansion, and Khanum Mosque, have been placed in the last priorities of attention, with tourists having less initial awareness of them. This situation shows that prior attention to Zanzan's tourism is mainly focused on handicrafts and religious-cultural aspects, and tourists have gained the most attention for physical presence in the city from these categories. Other elements serve as supporting factors, and tourists, in the later stage of attention, review and complete their perceptions through physical presence and direct experience. (Table 1)

Table 1. Concepts and Categories of initial intentionality to Zanzan's Tourism Attractions

Mediator Optional	Repeatability coefficient	Final code	Concepts	Category
Media and experience of acquaintances	79	Suitable and cool climate, cleanliness and purity, and the city's location as a midway stop	Climate, traditional, small-sized	Gravity
Media and lived experience of acquaintances – introduction of religious symbols	85	Mourning groups, religious ceremonies, various mosques, Great Hosseiniyeh, Great Zeynabiyeh, international display, devotion to Ahl al-Bayt, enthusiasm for Imam Hossein, reverence for Imams, purity and zealotry, devout and traditional, hospitality	Religious, Muslim, devout, traditional society, Ahl al-Bayt (People of the House)	Religion and Belief
Point of sale – advertising	98	Having handicraft production markets, copper, knives, online sales, sales and variety of copper and knife products, hub of knife industry and souvenirs	Knife and copper	Handicrafts
Media	74	Having a historic covered bazaar, product variety, traditional goods, handicraft sales, active market, historic nature	Covered, long, active	Traditional market
Media	68	Not very long historical depth of the city, presence of contemporary historical Iranian period relics, preservation of artifacts	Qajar, Pahlavi, Safavid	Contemporary history
Media	62	Display of primitive mummified humans, viewing ancient human corpses, mummy body coverings and structures	Mummified humans	Mummy

Findings from the interviews with tourists, classified by the key tourism elements (the 15 tourism sites) of Zanzan city, indicate that the primary factor influencing initial attention was mainly the media and cultural heritage activities at the city's entry points. This led to tourists' initial awareness of Zanzan's tourism sites and a willingness to visit and perceive them in the secondary (post) attention phase. The findings show that tourists at the city entrances, upon receiving promotional brochures and the city's tourism maps from kiosks, pause briefly to study these materials and, after gaining a general understanding, proceed to visit the details of the tourist sites. Among them, tourists who had a prior intent and purpose to visit the city of Zanzan paid the most initial attention to Mesgarha Street (mainly

for purchasing souvenirs like knives and copper products), the Great Hosseiniyeh (for visitation and religious purposes), and the historic covered bazaar (to observe architectural features and the city's historical identity). Other studied sites were prioritized later by tourists, with less initial recognition. The mediated attention generated by media and brochure distribution helped form symbolic attention toward these sites. The repetition of tourists' initial recognitions revealed the following ranking of initial attention: handicrafts located in Mesgarha and the knife-makers' markets, Great Hosseiniyeh of Zanjan, the historic covered bazaar, Salt Men Museum, Museum of Mortology (Laundry), Jame Mosque, Seyyedeh Ebrahim Shrine, Stone Caravanserai, Darayi Mansion, Khanum Mosque, Chehel Sotoun Mosque, Sabzeh Meydan recreational and pedestrian complex, and Davoodi House. These were the prioritized sites attracting the initial attention of tourists entering Zanjan city (Table 2).

Given that the intermediaries of attention in the pre-attention phase are primarily based on media and media advertising, these do not take on a concrete form in the minds of tourists. Instead, they provide only an initial and attractive description of the tourist attractions, which encourages tourists to visit. Therefore, pre-attention is fundamentally shaped by media flows whether spoken, auditory, or written—and serves as the main factor initiating the tourism experience. These intermediaries, by presenting engaging and visually appealing content and effectively describing tourist attractions, prepare the tourist to transform mental impressions into tangible experiences. They thus lay a practical foundation for concretizing the initial and raw mental images. In this context, the emphasis placed on specific attractions significantly influences the formation of the initial mindset. In this study, due to the creation of a media-based mindset around prominent tourism elements of Zanjan city (such as the knife-making and copper-smithing industries, Hosseineh Azam, the historic bazaar, the Anthropology Museum, and the Salt Men Museum), the initial perception shaped by intermediary factors focused primarily on these attractions. Other tourist sites were not effectively explained, and sufficient information to generate a strong initial attention towards them was not provided.

Post(Initial) Tourist Intentionality

In tourism, **post-visit Intentionality** refers to the awareness tourists have about the sites and attractions they have visited. It is essentially based on the level of perception, recognition, and mental challenges the tourist experiences regarding the visited attractions. Post-visit attention represents the transformation of prior attentions in a physical and tangible context, transitioning from mental imagination to forming emotional bonds and attachments, thus converting post-visit attention into a concrete perception. The gap between the initial imagination and post-visit attention determines the likelihood of a tourist's return, continued engagement, and the sharing of acquired information with others. Post-visit attention works in a way that, after the conclusion of their trip and upon returning home, tourists can mentally

visualize their perceptions and experiences, and by mentally reconstructing them, share these experiences with others (non-visitors). Through sharing this information, they stimulate others' interest in visiting. The tools that create post-visit attention interact in a multi-directional dependency with tourism management and services, management of tourist sites, the quality of visited attractions, and the information provided, all of which shape future developments. With the perceptions gained from post-visit attention, tourists can convey their lived experiences of the destination back at their point of origin. The more favorable the post-visit **Intentionality**, the more effective the transfer of lived experiences will be, which in turn creates a stronger initial attention in the minds of future tourists. Such attention promotes destination tourism through the direct tool of experience transfer.

To examine post-visit **Intentionality**, tourists who were visiting the cultural sites for the first time and participated in group visits at the tourism locations were selected. Therefore, efforts were made to interview tourists who had previously undergone initial mental monitoring during the prior attention phase. Spatial and temporal limitations related to access to these initial (prior) tourists in the post-visit phase resulted in a reduced sample size; however, theoretical saturation was achieved based on the collected propositions. Findings from interviews with tourists indicate that the perceptions gained from visiting the studied sites have expanded and changed compared to their pre-visit perceptions. The lived experiences of observation, information acquisition, and field intermediaries have led to increased awareness among tourists and created grounds for changing their initial attitudes about the tourism structure of Zanjan city. Coding and categorization of tourist statements show that post-visit attention is conceptualized in categories such as history and civilization, diversity of enjoyment and attractions, culture and beliefs, heritage conservation, religion, architecture, and identity. Results indicate that after visiting Zanjan's tourist sites, tourists have developed their attitudes and are receptive to a broader diversity of perceptions. Compared to prior attention ratios, they demonstrate deeper awareness and greater environmental perception of Zanjan's tourism attractions. Tourists shift from a one-dimensional view focused on dominant elements such as handicrafts and the Hosseiniyeh mosque to a multidimensional perspective that includes various tourism sites and dimensions.

The findings show that tourists, through visiting Zanjan's historical sites, altered their prior hierarchical prioritization and abandoned the exclusive focus on a few attractions, offering a diverse range of tourism propositions in Zanjan. This expanded categorization system embraces numerous concepts. The structure of tourists' attention shows increased repetition coefficients of tourism subjects and convergence of category coefficients, indicating the integration of perceived propositions and a unified attention structure toward the tourism environment.

Among these, intermediaries have had multifaceted effects on expanding and guiding attention. Attention mediators such as tourism guides, explanations provided by guides near attractions,

inscriptions and murals installed at tourism sites, displays featuring films, images near attractions, and supporting tourism services have facilitated positive tourist attention and enhanced their perceptions.



Table 2. Tourists' initial awareness (prior Intentionality) of the tourism products studied

Ranking of Initial Recognition	Symbol & Concept of Attention	Intermediary of Attention	Factor of Attention	Element
1	Symbol of copper utensil production and sale	Virtual networks, lived experiences, sale of Zanjan-branded products in other cities	Media – Experience of Others	Coppersmiths Street
1	Zanjan knife, symbol of identity and souvenir	Branded souvenirs, extensive media exposure, domestic consumption	Consumption in Various Regions – Zanjan Brand	Knifemakers' Market
3	History of early trade in Zanjan	Media advertising, websites, virtual networks, brochures distributed at city entrances	Media and Cultural Heritage Introduction	Historic Covered Market
6	Symbol of religion and Islam	Brochures at city entrance, websites, virtual networks	Media and Cultural Heritage Introduction	Jame Mosque
12	Symbol of women's role in mosque construction	Brochures at city entrance, virtual networks	Cultural Heritage Introduction	Khanum Mosque
11	Unique historical architectural symbol	Brochures at city entrance	Cultural Heritage Introduction	Chehelsotun Mosque
10	Historical remains and traditional activities	Brochures at city entrance, virtual networks	Cultural Heritage Introduction	Haj Dadash Traditional Bath
8	Symbol of trade and commerce	Brochures at city entrance, virtual networks	Cultural Heritage	Stone Caravanserai
7	Symbol of religion and the Imams	Brochures at city entrance	Cultural Heritage	Imamzadeh Seyyed Ibrahim
2	Symbol of Zanjan's profound faith in Imam Hussein and the Ahlul Bayt	Life experiences shared by locals, visual and audio media (esp. IRIB), social and virtual networks, live ceremonies broadcast	National Media	The Great Husseiniyeh
13	Symbol of homes and family life	Brochures and advertisements at city entrances	Cultural Heritage	Davoodi House
4	Representation of ancient human life and preserved mummified bodies	Media advertising, websites, virtual networks, brochures at city entrances	Media and Cultural Heritage Introduction	Salt Men Museum (Zulfiqari Building)
9	Symbol of Pahlavi-era architecture	Brochures and advertisements at city entrances	Cultural Heritage	Daraei House
5	Symbol of historical water scarcity and residents' usage	Media advertising, websites, virtual networks, brochures at city entrances	Media and Cultural Heritage Introduction	Museum of Mortology (Laundry)
14	Recreational and pedestrian space	Brochures and advertisements at city entrances	Cultural Heritage and Municipality	Tourism Complex Sabzemaydan

Findings show that tourists' perceptual attention is connected to the tourism environment. Spatial quality of the surroundings, preservation of adjacent sites and buildings, and quality of services in accommodation, hospitality, accessibility, traffic, and support services for tourism products have influenced the type of attention received from the environment.

Tourists acknowledged the identity and history of Zanjan city during their visits, and contrary to their initial **Intentionality**, they sought the city's identity in its historical and civilizational dimensions. Tourists, through their observations, articulated concepts such as religious devotion, identity orientation, reverence for the Ahlul Bayt (especially Imam Hussein and his family), traditional family systems, preservation of authentic Iranian-Islamic culture, honesty and respect toward tourists, the historical tribal and clan system, conservation and restoration of historic buildings and identity heritage, revitalization of the old and historic city fabric, diversification of handicrafts and their urban business presentation, handicraft branding, and preservation of the spatial organization of the historic city bazaar as their most important received attention from Zanjan's tourism (see Table 3).

Findings on the retrospective attention (post- **Intentionality**) to tourism sites indicate that tourists, through their presence, observation, direct reception, and the influence of mediators, form variable yet integrated perceptions of the tourism sites. Unlike initial perceptions, which were mainly focused on religion and Zanjan's handicrafts, the cognitive ranking in retrospective attention centers more on historical sites with diverse functional scales. Tourists, influenced by the mediators of observation and tourist guides (local narrators) as well as installed signage at the entrances of the sites, paid greater attention to historical buildings, whose essence more prominently reflected the city's indigenous and historical identity.

Historical structures such as the covered bazaar, the Zulfiqari Mansion (Salt Men Museum), the traditional laundry house (Anthropology Museum), and the Davoodi House stood out particularly in the eyes of tourists. The duration of tourists' presence and the extent of information received about these sites are factors that increase their perception. The provision of necessary information and narration of the formation and development of these buildings by local guides on one hand, and the presence of written signage at the entrances on the other, have led to an expanded level of tourist attention towards the tourism objects.

The study shows that the duration of tourists' stay, the amount of information provided, practical signage, supporting hospitality and service units, and the attention symbols of tourists towards tourism elements all shape their cognitive ranking. The categorized mental image of tourists from the obtained attention reveals that Zanjan's handicrafts gained importance not because of the streets and bazaars themselves, but due to the formal nature and branding of the products offered.

Table 3. Concepts and Categories of Post-Visit Intentionality from Zanjan's Tourist Attractions

Mediator	Repeatability coefficient	Final code	Concepts	Category
Brochures , tourist guides, installed indicators at sites	96	The presence of numerous mosques and tekkies, various mourning groups, the Great Husseinieh and Great Zeinabiyeh groups of Zanjan, multiple mosques in the city center, the Imamzadeh of Seyyed Ibrahim and congregational prayers, continuation of pilgrimages, women's hijab, strong belief in Imam Hussein and Ahl al-Bayt, the passion and consciousness of Hussein, iftars in mosques and streets, spontaneous restrictions during Ramadan, fasting and respect for those fasting, religious ceremonies in mosques, enthusiastic Quran completion gatherings, decoration of religious holidays in the city, religious propaganda in urban spaces.	People's religiosity, the passion and consciousness of Hussein, devotion to the Imams	Religion and Beliefs
Brochures , tourist guides	95	Simplicity of people's clothing, respect and sincerity of city inhabitants, respect for guests and tourists, helping fellow humans and guiding tourists, a strong sense of philanthropy, trustworthy merchants, fair pricing of goods, customer-oriented businessmen and traders, the traditional family system, the historical Khan and Khani system, Mahmoud Khan Zolfaghari, preservation of some traditional practices.	Traditional identity, simplicity, honesty, and trust	Culture and Beliefs
Brochures , tourist guides, installed indicators at sites	98	Active marketplace, restored historical buildings, clean and hygienic mosques, preservation of occupational identity in the city's historic market, presence of old businesses and guilds, timchehs, caravanserais, classification of trades and guilds, diverse and aligned marketplaces, diversity of goods, preservation of identity and artifacts, minimal intervention in urban fabric, preservation of traditional identity, traditional architectural features in buildings, traditional houses with spatial segregation, separation of privacy and family aristocracy in traditional houses, some traditional houses active according to past systems, dynamic organic texture, sense of belonging to the past, tourists' recognition and identification through traditional architecture of the city center, mosque-centered guild system in the central context, traditional guild neighborhood system in the city.	Spatial organization , traditional identity, tangible architecture	Architecture and Identity
Brochures , tourist guides, historical books	97	Antiquity and history of Zanjan – Ardeshir Babakan, millennia-old artifacts, salt men, family traditions of men and women, traditional baths and laundries, Sheikh Ishraq, the old active municipality (late Tawfiq), Khans and tribes of Zanjan, antiquity of the tribal and clan system, services provided by Khans, resistance to authoritarian systems, the people's historical freedom and zeal, efforts to provide necessary city services, credibility and trust in the traditional system.	Tribal and clan systems, historical roots and antiquity, traditional spatial organization	History and Civilization

Mediator	Repeatability coefficient	Final code	Concepts	Category
Branding, inclusion of Zanzan logo, brochures, tourist guides	98	Variety of goods and handicrafts including knives, jajim (woven fabric), kilim, charoq (traditional shoes), malileh (metalwork), numerous and diverse copper utensils, caravanserais and carpet workshops, carpet weaving, local cuisine, numerous historical monuments.	Diversity of local handicrafts and historical monuments	Diversity of Tourism Products
Historical pictures, brochures, tourist guides	93	Continuous restoration, preservation and prevention of destruction, heritage and density restrictions, creating visual perspectives for historical monuments and their surroundings, pedestrianization of paths leading to tourist sites, smooth traffic in the city center, preservation of the identity of old occupations such as giveh weaving, palandozi (saddle making), charoq embroidery, malileh crafting, employability of traditional guilds and industries, environmental advertising of handicrafts, tourist guides, environmental improvement of buildings and their surroundings.	Restoration, preservation, development, service, guidance, and control	Heritage Protection

The change in the cognitive ranking of tourism industries such as copperware and knives in retrospective attention is not due to the commodity nature of the goods but rather due to their non-dynamic, irregular nature and the poor visual and environmental quality of their locations. This has altered tourists' attention from the historic Masgarha Street (coppersmiths) and the knife makers' and sellers' bazaar. In interviews, tourists identified copper and knives as souvenirs of the city and relatively all of them purchased these souvenirs. However, tourism sites based on handicraft bazaars have not created favorable mental attention in tourists due to poor maintenance and relatively unsuitable environmental conditions.

Conversely, Zanzan's historical mosques (such as Khanom Mosque, Chehel Sotoun, and the Imamzadeh Seyyed Ibrahim) with their unique architecture have formed a unified symbol of attention, combining architecture, the city's religious-historical background, the role of women and nobles in mosque construction, and the teaching of sciences in mosques, which tourists perceive as symbols of social and educational gathering.

Overall, the findings from retrospective attention show that tourists, considering the organic nature of the city center's fabric, the presence of historical and traditional houses, attention to privacy and aristocracy in the urban system (such as separation and covered washing and bathing places for children, spatial organization based on traditional houses and families), traditional fabric and culture of the people, special respect and devotion to the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), the city's role as a midway stop (with caravanserais such as Sangi and Dokhan), and local handicrafts, have shaped their perceptions of urban tourism and experienced their life-world.

Retrospective attention represents a logical and final explanation of the subject's reception of the object(s), which, compared to initial attention, is broader in scope and is characterized by continuity, review, and mental re-examination, recalling past temporal relations (Table 4). The observer as a subject (tourist), by recalling a previously experienced word or title, reviews accumulated experiences in the mind and reconstructs the received attentions. The quantity, type, and quality of reception from observed tourism sites significantly influence the degree of representation of experienced attentions and their presentation to others.

The qualities of attention received from tourism sites contribute to the revitalization of tourism and foster a sense of loyalty, return, recommendation, attraction, and invitation of new tourists.

Table 4. Secondary awareness (post- Intentionality) of tourists about the tourism products studied

Supporting Factors and Elements	Cognitive Rank	Intentional Image and Symbol	Intentional Intermediaries	Attention Factor	Elements
Parking, accommodation, nearby lodging, temporary rest, restrooms, transport, signposts	8	Local industry, Zanjan brand, quality and identity	Guide to the effect, brand engraving, profiles	Direct view	Coppersmiths Street
Parking, accommodation, nearby lodging, temporary rest, restrooms, transport, signposts	8	Local industry, Zanjan brand, quality and identity	Guide to the work, engraving on the work, indexes	Direct view	Knifemakers' Market
Heritage protection, pedestrian-oriented, diversity, signposts, rest, access, cargo transport	1	Identity, city history, active and dynamic, conservation diversity, traditional architecture	Tourist guides, market stalls, indexes and signs	Direct view	Historical Market
Seminary, pedestrian-oriented, access, transportation services	9	Architecture, religion, religious education, community place	Tourist Guide - Seminary, Mosque Servant, Indexes	Direct view	Jama Mosque
Accessibility, transportation services	13	Qajar architecture, Zan Khan - Women's School	Mosque Servant	Direct view	Khanum Mosque
Inside market, environmental diversity, pedestrian-oriented	14	Traditional architecture, seminary, splendor, religion	Mosque Servant	Direct view	Chehelsotun Mosque

Supporting Factors and Elements	Cognitive Rank	Intentional Image and Symbol	Intentional Intermediaries	Attention Factor	Elements
Inside market, pedestrian-oriented, protected	10	Stone column, historic bathhouse, dining room and teahouse, attractive and pleasant environment	Tourist Guide - Building Operator	Direct view	Haj Dadash Traditional Bath
Access by car, city exit, protection, food quality	11	Caravan accommodations, dining room, rooms, coolness, traditional architecture, stone building	Tourist Guide - Building Operator	Direct view	Stone and Smoke Caravanseraï
Access to riding, rest, environmental diversity, surrounding services	12	Religion, Devotion to Imams	Mosque attendants, tourist guides, indexes	Direct view	Imamzadeh Seyyed Ibrahim
Access by car, city exit, surrounding services	4	Vast passion and consciousness of Husseini, diversity of religious services, devotion to Imam Hussein and Ahl al-Bayt	Mosque attendants, tourist guides, indexes	Direct view	The Great Husseiniyeh
Access by car, organic texture, service adjacencies, market, Hosseiniyeh	5	Traditional house, privacy, functional system, division of old houses	Building owner and tour guide	Direct view	Davoodi House
Pedestrian access, craft museum, heritage finds, antiques, neighborhood services	3	Salt mine, several thousand years old, preservation of the body, historical identity, Mahmoud Khan Zolfaghari, residence and prestige of the Khan system	Tourist guide, narrator, indexes, inscriptions	Direct view	Salt Men Museum (Zulfiqari Building)
Pedestrian access, service proximity	15	Pahlavi era, city tax building, introduction of new architecture to Iran, constructed by Armenian architect	Tourist guide, indexes, inscriptions	Direct view	Daraei House
Walking distance, nearby handicraft market, pantry, catering, parking	2	Towfiq, mayor of Zanjan, public service, local culture especially women, stone architecture, urban aqueduct, safe washing place	Tourist guide, narrator, indexes, inscriptions	Direct view	Anthropological Museum (Laundry)
Pedestrian and vehicle access, neighborhood services, Grand Mosque, Bazaar, environmental diversity	6	Traditional and new architecture, seniors, youth, large open spaces, environmental diversity, festivals, walking, good weather, rest and recreation	Tourist guide	Direct view	Tourism Complex Sabzemaydan

The findings indicate that the transition from pre-attention to post- **Intentionality** is accompanied by a tendency and willingness to see and mentally align with objective realities. After receiving initial mental impressions primarily derived from media intermediaries (pre- **Intentionality**) and expressing a desire for physical presence in the tourism environment, tourists attempt to reconcile their mental images with direct observations. Consequently, tourists explore the similarities and differences between what was mentally constructed during pre-attention and what is experienced during post- **Intentionality**. The degree of alignment between the mental truths formed during pre-attention and the observable realities encountered in post-attention results in either a synergy or a divergence between mindset and reality. The smaller the gap between prior mental images and the current (or subsequent) reality, the greater the attentional synergy, and the fewer the mental contradictions arising from information provided by intermediaries. This study shows that the weakness of information intermediaries in raising awareness about other attractions, combined with an excessive emphasis on highlighting certain tourist sites during the pre- **Intentionality** phase, leads tourists during post-attention to criticize the lack of prior **Intentionality** towards newly encountered attractions (which had low pre- **Intentionality** mediation). Therefore, in the post-attention phase, tourists tend to have stronger concrete attention toward lesser-known or previously unintroduced attractions and mentally visualize and represent them more vividly.

Tangible Findings practical implications for Tourism practitioners and Managers

The findings indicated that media intermediaries have the greatest mental impact during the pre- **Intentionality** stage. The more powerful the media is in conveying tourist attractions particularly when aligned with reality—the more developed the tourist's mindset becomes in the subsequent stage (i.e., post- **Intentionality** stage). It is therefore essential for tourism-related media to provide effective and relevant information during the pre-attentive stage.

According to the findings, visual and auditory intermediaries should present appropriate content about tourist sites at the point of origin, and tourism management must present the attractions of destinations in a realistic and appealing manner.

The establishment of tourism information networks and their effective promotion across intercity and intra-city spaces, as well as through various media channels, reinforces the pre-attentive awareness and increases the desire for physical presence at destinations.

The findings also demonstrated that supporting services surrounding tourist attractions significantly influence the formation of a favorable mental image. Urban management can play an effective role in enhancing these supporting services.

Diversification in information presentation and highlighting the various attractive aspects of tourism sites are instrumental in: Creating a strong initial mental image that encourages visitation.

Sustaining a positive mindset after the visit. Specialists and urban managers can have a significant impact by expanding intermediary tools, such as tourist guides, in both pre- and post- **Intentionality** phases.

The differences between a tourist's initial and subsequent perceptions stem from the extent and quality of information received through these intermediaries. Expanding and diversifying these intermediaries particularly through various social media networks plays a crucial role in the development of tourism.

The quality of tourism services provided during the post-attentive stage greatly affects the formation of tourists' mental perceptions. Effective information delivery, the continuous presence of tourist guides, and storytelling of the attractions significantly aid post-visit understanding and lead to *Stabilization of favorable perceptions, Concept transmission to others, and Repeat visits*. Collaboration among tourism professionals and managers can enhance the quality of tourism services.

The restoration and improvement of buildings and tourist sites have a profound effect on fostering a sense of identity among tourists and contribute to creating a favorable post- **Intentionality** perception.

Discussion and Conclusion

Tourists' mentalities toward the tourism environment explain their attitudes toward observations and lived experiences. Tourists develop an interest in visiting a destination based on prior perceptions, which motivates their visit to its attractions. Initial positive perceptions form the starting point of tourism engagement, while subsequent perceptions further develop it. Tourist attractions introduce themselves through various tools such as media technologies, environmental advertising, and interpersonal communication to invite people for physical presence and strive to expand awareness via informational intermediaries. These intermediaries serve as contextual facilitators, presenting visual appeal to attract visitors. However, the invited individual (tourist), as the observing subject, internalizes different awareness of the attractions and tourism environment through these intermediaries. The process whereby tourists are invited to presence via primary intermediaries and subsequently form tourism-related mentalities through direct observation and secondary intermediaries is termed phenomenological and post-phenomenological attention. During this process, tourists construct their attention to the tourism environment through two phases: prior and subsequent attention. Initially, tourists form prior attention based on preliminary perceptions derived from pre-existing mental backgrounds informed by media, brochures, advertisements, narratives, and others' lived experiences, creating an initial mental imagery of the destination. In this process, the extent of tourist attention to the environment depends on the amount, type, and quality of information received via intermediaries. Prior attention shapes tourists' mentality, interest, and motivation to visit the destination, essentially inviting tourism engagement.

However, prior attention represents an incomplete and undeveloped perception based on the information obtained through intermediaries, which is later completed in subsequent attention. Conversely, subsequent attention emerges after prior attention and physical presence at the destination, producing direct lived experience. In subsequent attention, tourists cognitively explore and reconcile their initial perceptions with actual experiences, with differences between initial and secondary mental perceptions illustrating the development and differentiation of attention. Direct observation and complementary intermediaries during subsequent attention shape tourists' attitudinal and cognitive structures toward attractions and serve as the final transmitters of the destination's tourism capacities and appeal to tourism gateways. Studies on prior and subsequent attention regarding the tourist attractions in Zanjan reveal significant differences between their explanatory categories. Tourists initially perceive Zanjan as a religious city relying on its handicrafts, acquiring information mainly from media intermediaries. However, subsequent attention following physical presence, observation of diverse tourist attractions, and direct informational support causes tourists to revise and expand their views, describing Zanjan as a historic city with social identity and cohesion, also known for its diverse handicrafts. Tourists' perception of Zanjan in subsequent attention is grounded in external lived experience, where factors such as the quality of supporting services, methods of delivering tourism information, duration of stay, and the scope of attractions significantly influence perception development. Consequently, this research suggests that providing information in the pre-attentive phase and demonstrating its development in the post-attentive phase can create effective cognitive alignment in tourists, facilitating and accelerating the transfer of tourism knowledge to other recipients. The outcome of this process is sustainable tourism development, strengthened by the communication and sharing of intermediaries connecting the human subject and object (such as technology), which gains momentum through dissemination to others. Although due to the novelty of phenomenological and post-phenomenological attention, direct comparison with other studies is limited, aligning this research with related works (e.g., Khalilnezhad, 2021; Nouri & Sobhani, 2023; Vazin, 2024; Ghaffari et al., 2019; Birer & Adem, 2022; Deng et al., 2020; Aigwi, 2023; Reitsamer, 2024) shows that the impact of services, facilities, and perceptual support plays a critical role in the nature of mental reception. Effective and desirable cognitive reception constitutes a key dimension of tourism development. This study emphasizes that supporting services act as effective intermediaries in forming desirable attention to the tourism environment, creating mental representations that lead to tourism revitalization.

The structure of this research is based on understanding the lived experience of tourists in two dimensions: pre- Intentionality and post- Intentionality stages (before and after visiting tourism landmarks). However, this study faced several limitations, such as time constraints in interviews, reluctance of tourists to engage in long interviews, challenges in monitoring samples continuously,

disturbances caused by prolonged presence near tourists, incomplete interviews due to unexpected departure, mobility and transportation issues, difficulties in collaborating with institutions and tourism sites, inability to record audio or video interviews, memory-related issues affecting tourists' responses, and financial restrictions. Despite these challenges, findings indicate that tourism operates within a highly functional and complex structure, and if attentional dimensions are overlooked, tourism development may suffer. By analyzing differences between pre-attentive and post-attentive perceptions, this study highlights that tourism environments interact with tourists' mindsets before and after their visit. The degree to which these mental perceptions align with the realities of tourism sites plays a crucial role in tourism expansion. Tourism management can develop effective planning strategies by studying and understanding tourists' perceptions of tourism environments to ensure sustainable tourism recovery. A systematic approach to creating a positive mindset during the attraction phase—through pre-attentive intermediaries (such as films, brochures, documentaries, advertisements, social media, etc.) helps build positive attitudes, interest, and motivation toward visiting a destination. Once tourists arrive at the site, the alignment between perception and reality (post-Intentionality phase) becomes crucial, requiring structural planning within the tourism environment. The use of intermediary and support mechanisms (such as adequate amenities, efficient access and transport systems, narrators and tour guides, institutional collaboration, integrated actions, time and location considerations, site restoration, beautification, enhanced tourism services, respectful treatment of tourists, brochures, and tourism indicators) fosters a positive tangible experience. In this scenario, tourists, after their visit and return home, act as tourism ambassadors, encouraging others to visit the same destinations.

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