

Determinants of Travel to Western Countries by Kuwaiti Nationals

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Abstract : Relatively little is known about the Arab travel market, especially the outbound travel market from Arab countries in the Middle East. The Kuwaiti travel market is the smallest yet fastest growing in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. The Kuwaiti travel market represents a great potential for the international tourism industry. Kuwaiti nationals have a very high spending power due to the Kuwaiti dinar being the highest-valued currency unit in the world. Although Europe, North America, and Asia/Pacific try to attract the Arab tourist market the number of Kuwaiti travellers attracted to these destinations is very low. The success in attracting the Kuwaiti travel market to Western countries must be guided by an analysis of the factors that affect its travel decisions. The objective of the study is to identify major factors that influence Kuwaiti nationals' intentions to travel to Western countries. A model is developed and empirically tested on a sample of 343 Kuwaiti nationals. A series of regression analyses are run to determine the effects of different factors on Kuwaiti's travel decisions. A Herman's single factor test and Durbin-Watson test are used to assess the validity of the regression model. Analysis is controlled for socio-demographics. The results show that the Muslim friendly amenities and destination cognitive image exert significant effects on Kuwaiti nationals' intentions to travel to Western countries. The study provides a better understanding of the factors that attract Kuwaiti tourists to Western countries. By knowing what encourages Kuwaitis to travel to Western countries marketers can plan and promote these countries accordingly. The study provides a foundation of future empirical research into the Kuwaiti/Arab travel market.

Keywords : Kuwaiti travel market, travel decisions, Western countries

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