

Full Length Research Paper

Effects of positive and negative rural tourism (case study: Rural Semnan Province)

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The most important purpose of tourism development is economic and social development of the tourism areas. Although a minor part of tourism includes rural tourism and plays an important role in economics of rural areas of developed countries, but other advantages and even received harms through these activities in rural areas should not be neglected. As some benefits may be obtained from tourist development, its inappropriate development will bring about losses and negative effects. Nevertheless, the level of these effects would be changed proportionate to different factors such as importance of local tourism industry, potentials of tourists and their activities, consolidation of local environment and authority of local cultures and customs. Certainly, tourism development would not be met unless some expenses are being considered for it and in line with this purpose the village's environment may be put at risk. Semnan Province has a diversity of rural residential areas and tourist attraction sites, and the most attractive sites which enjoy a higher potential for tourism enter this study. Here we have conducted field and library research using two types of questionnaires distributed to rural residents and organizations responsible for tourism. The data was analyzed through the statistical software of SPSS.

Key words: Tourism, rural tourism, development, effects, positive, negative, Semnan Province.

INTRODUCTION

People go to places for different reasons: Temporary change of location, relaxation, recreation, getting acquainted with traditions and spending the leisure time.

Nowadays, rural tourism has turned into a leading economic activity and studies show a positive relationship between developing rural tourism and an increase in income. It can be a suitable way to enhance economic advantage and employment. Considering the potentials for rural tourism, Semnan Province can act to enhance its economy and rural economy as well.

Today, the importance of tourism and the necessity of conducting research on it because of significant economic, and social, and cultural roles that it can play is known for everyone. It had turned into one of the most important factors to create wealth, job, dynamism, moving people, and national assets (Moshabaki and Malek, 2004). In any country, the entrance of tourist corresponds with income enhancement and economic.

Purpose of the study

As one of the largest industries in the world, tourism contributes to employment, enhance income, leisure time relaxation, fair distribution of wealth, cultural exchange and international friendship. It is also one of the surest and economical means of gaining exchange income (Rezvani, 2004). Of the most important objectives of rural tourism, increasing villager's income, and the employment of rural families are significant in materializing appropriate planning.

The purposes of the study with a higher importance are as follows:

- a. Reaching the means of increasing the rate of rural tourists in Semnan Province.
- b. Recognizing the capabilities and potentials of rural tourism in Semnan Province.
- c. The tourists' familiarity with tourist attractions in Semnan Province.
- d. Training individuals for giving service to rural tourism.
- e. Preparing individuals for establishing and managing rural small industries.

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- f. Preparing individuals to contribute in making decisions on developing rural tourism industry
- g. Training individuals in developing opportunities and guidelines to enhance rural tourism.

Theoretical studies

The motivation behind most villages is to escape limitations and the urban routine life and the regulations opposite to the free will and voluntary entertainment. Nevertheless, organizing the tourists is a crucial part in the procedures of rural tourism management (Taj, 2004).

The economic strategy in the regional development requires a small commerce perspective for rural tourism. In a two dimensional model, rural tourism is like a tile within a mosaic pattern. It helps consider a spot as a category to a regional planning, taking the regional system at the head category in order for hierarchical allocations to become equal as far as tourist attraction activities are concerned (Ziari, 2002)

The supply of rural tourism products corresponds with tourism demands in a region and the demand depends on the good value, services, and facilities. The direction of rural tourism demands is a variable which depends on domestic and international tourists visits (Gharah, 2008).

Rural tourism development has always been a valuable, growing economic strategy, and an advantage of low risks and costs and considering that resources are available, costs are low and plans are smaller compared to other tourism plans (projects). It helps to economic growth, create variety and stability in employment, dynamism in commerce and industries, creating opportunities to larger incomes in multiple activities, creating new markets for agricultural products and enhance a basis for the regional economy. One of the most important features of rural tourism economy is the motivation that the private sector has for investment in tourism because it is small, varied and simple. It is a rather important field in rural development which can build up opportunities and facilities especially for employment and regional income and play a crucial role in reviving and rebuilding rural regions. The role and importance of tourism In the process of rural development had been proved in many countries. At the present time tourism is considered an industry with potential stability.

Attractions, facilities, and capabilities of tourism development in rural regions are diverse and varied, but unfortunately they have not been properly exploited.

In the fourth phase of the national development plan and the 20-year prospect rural tourism has not received due attention; besides, in 'the national development plan and tourism and management', the concept of rural tourism or tourism development in the rural areas have not been properly dealt with (Papeli, 2007).

Considering the importance of tourism in the process of

rural development planning, it is of paramount importance to take it into account in rural planning and plans. For the purpose of playing the positive role of tourism in the process of rural development, paying attention to environment management, local contribution, firm laws, marketing and realistic planning in tourism seems necessary (Rezvani, 2005)

Rural tourism is an important means of enhancing employment and income and can help social and economic development of rural societies (Sharpley, 2001). It also takes account of the people who must have access to the villages, which makes it possible to get benefits to the local people. Therefore, having access must be in balance with other rural needs and a long-term protection of rural resources (Shsrpley, 2001). Due to globalization, the development of tourism in rural areas has been increasingly important, because there really no such concepts as traditional culture, lifestyles, and folklores, and therefore these concepts are going to be colorless and invisible.

The geographical aspect of development takes into account the logical use of environmental resources. In fact, people are required to make logical use of environmental resources and air in their free time.

Reaching a good development in rural tourism means considering such factor as appropriate organizational structure, planning for and training human force, setting regulations for tourism and raising capital. To gain a stable development in tourism industry, there is a crucial need of a synthesized management and coordination between state and private sector.

Research shows that the motivation behind visiting the rural areas goes more to psychological features such as makeup, peace, freedom, and rural traditions which are in contrast to the urban modern life.

Developing the tourism industry has an inseparable link with a number of organizations and state and non-state organizations. Therefore, any objective sitting, strategies, guidelines, and other plans must be executed with the cooperation o'f other organizations.

Tourism must be managed as a system because without a systematic perspective, there is no due account of all the aspects. The inputs and outputs interact together and finally showed their impact on the whole society.

In Europe as a whole, three critical issues in the development of rural tourism have been recognized. First, although visitors are attracted to rural areas by their distinctive regional social and cultural heritage landscape qualities and perceived cleaner environment these very qualities may be threatened by the impacts of tourism and recreational activity. Second, training for rural tourism provision is often not available or not taken up to assist improvement in the quality and appropriateness of rural tourism products. Third rural tourism products can be relatively isolated and in most cases will benefit from collaboration and networking in promotion and marketing

Environment Tourism

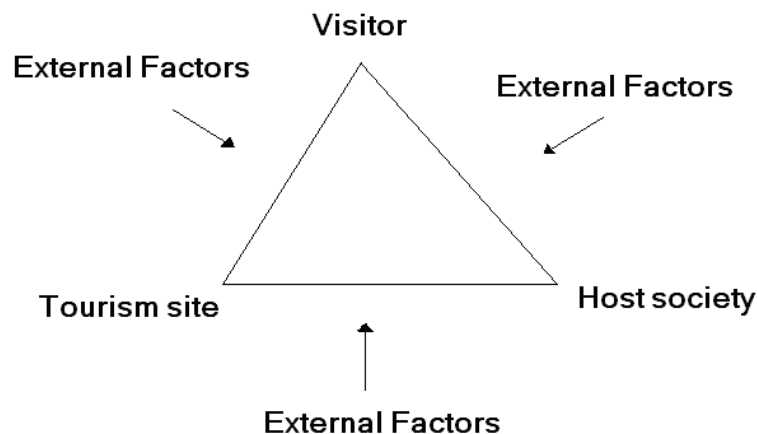


Figure 1. Environment tourism (Sharpley, 2002).

(Hall, 2004). Rural tourism is largely a domestic phenomenon with a disparate nature across countries and continents (Shunli, 2009).

There is an urgent need to create sustainability of the reconstruction and development program. The tourism industry more than any other industry can provide sturdy effective and sustainable legs for the RDP to walk on (briedenhann, 2004).

Improving the scale of tourism came about by several different types of change. The simplest was more visitors attracted to an existing attraction that was being marketed better and benefiting from the general increase of tourism in the area (Gordon clark, 2007).

Consumption of rural energy in developing countries constitutes the majority of their total energy usage at the national level (Zhou, 1996).

Many rural areas in developing countries are also major tourism attractions. Uncontrolled growth of tourism puts additional pressure on precious local resources such as fuel wood a is primary source of fuel energy consumed in the lodging and food businesses located in rural and remote tourism destinations (sanjay Nepal, 2008).

The extensive growth of tourism in the late 1960s stressed a need planning (Saarinen, 2008).

Ecotourism ventures should, in theory, try to empower local communities. This empowerment can occur in a variety of ways, such as actively participating in the ecotourism process, maintaining control over the ecotourism venture and creating an experience where there are culturally appropriate decision-making mechanisms (Zanotti, 2008).

In Spain, rural houses were developed as a strategy for the survival of small family farms and today they play an important role in the social and economic development of rural destinations (Isabel, 2009).

More attention should be given to facilitating coordination and partnership arrangements at the regional subregional and local scales to create new products and infrastructure avoid erosive competition and positive competition (Cawley, 2007).

In the increasingly competitive tourism industry destination, image is considered to be crucial in the decision making process of Tourists. Place promotion is the deliberate use of publicity and specific images of a place to a target audience with the intention of influencing attitudes (Velvet, 2005).

Creating the needed data to properly inform the selection of tourism policies and programs to advance a region's development requires an understanding of the demand for tourism within a region (Mark, 2009).

The most common measure of tourism's socio cultural impact is the ratio of visitors to the local population, a more rigorous indicator of stay-over visitors multiplied by the average length of stay divided by the population times (Mcelroy, 2003)

Sites of greatest interest to marine tourists include places to fish areas for sightseeing and secluded locations for general relaxation (John, 2008).

The basis for stable development of tourism is considering the building blocks of tourist environment of: tourists, destination, and host society (Figure 1).

The interaction can be either dynamic or constructive or destructive. On the one hand, it can help revive the local economy through the contribution in employment and creating income. It can also contribute to strengthening local cultures and conserve the environment or reconstruct the manmade structures. On the other hand, it can make local economies running ahead and lower the life quality and environment status of local societies. Therefore, the ultimate goal of tourism is to set a balance

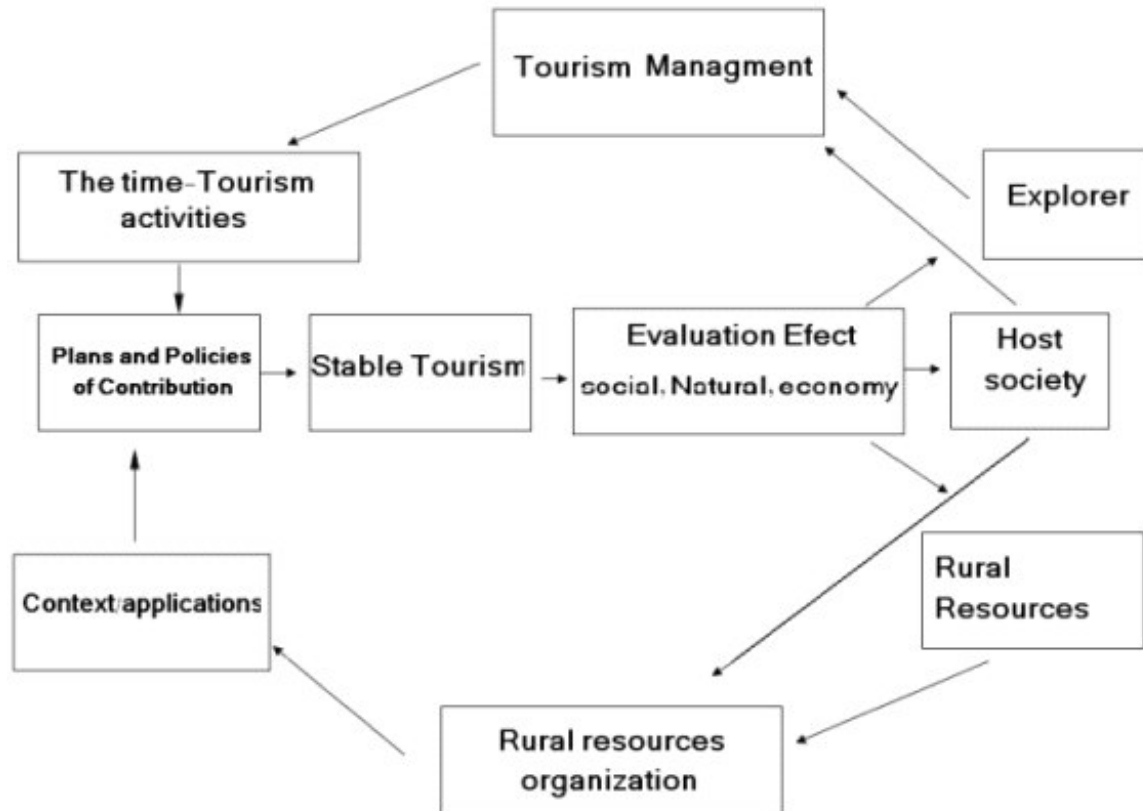


Figure 2. The component of rural stable tourism (Sharpley,2002).

among the three elements as well as long-term conservation of the environment. It seems it can not come true by exercising the following principles such as those offered by tourism and environmental organization.

The real and natural value of the environment is far more than its tourist value. Therefore it must not entail depriving the next generations of the environment through short term misuses. Tourism must be looked upon as a constructive activity, which has a bilateral benefit to both tourists and local's societies.

There must be a link between tourism and environment so that the environment can maintain for a long period of time. Tourists must not be allowed to destroy the environment and its future employment opportunities. The activities and development of tourism are required to respect the scale, nature, and features.

There must be a harmony among the tour, its needs, tourist spot and host society under any circumstance.

In a dynamic society, some changes are inevitable because changes are usually useful. Of course getting adapted to the changes must not take place at the cost of ignoring any of these principles.

The tourist industry, local officials and environmental organizations are all responsible to respect the aforementioned principles and cooperate to capture their long-term objectives.

As far as for overall tourist development is concerned, the rules of stable tourism are logical especially that in many countries villages are not only natural heritage but also an attraction to many of the visitors. Nevertheless, many experts are pessimistic about the concept of stable tourism and doubt whether stable tourism can support the tourist industry (that is stable development for the sake of economical advantages) or the environment (that is lack of development in order to preserve it) since they are all the main objectives of stable development. It must be noted that sustained tourism development is a comprehensive procedure which aims to support the following: Rural environment, rural economy, structure and culture of local rural societies, and paving the ground for experienced chances for visitors and long-term advantage of tourism industry in rural areas (Figure 2).

However, there are still many controversies of whether the concept of sustained rural tourism can be materialized in practice and if so are they applicable to small rural projects? Success of the method depends on many factors such as the contribution of local society in planning, contribution in developing a rural tourism and tourist management.

Stable tourism development which implies the development and maintenance of tourism in an area (association or environment) does not alter the environment, whether

human or physical, in an unlimited period of time.

Positive and negative effects of tourist Industry

Tourism various activities in rural areas can bring with positive and negative effects on cultural or natural environments. The tourism effects can be divided into two main parts of positive and negative:

Tourism positive effects

The positive effects of tourism are production of income, occupation and new economic resource for local people, assist to reduce on social unbalanced powers, providing job opportunities for maintaining regional population and coefficient of high multiplicity, reviving local culture, enhancing of national dignity and self-confidence, preserving natural and cultural resources (Ghaderi, 2004)

The benefits, which are derived from beauty of the land appearance, setting up mental solace and removing fatigue from the machine life, changing the sound pollution and harmful gasses to endurable sounds and useful gasses, managing and controlling water and preventing air and water erosion, reduction of atmospheric temperature and increasing of hidden rains and relative humidity, biological and genetic varieties, stability of the related ecosystems and agriculture through woods and plant coverage, that a human can made are much more than wood production and cutting trees. Tourism industry from economic aspect benefits too much attraction, but it also brings about harmful effects on social, economic and environmental matters. The benefits can be outlined as preserving national resources and natural heritage, making income and occupations due to foreign exchange, making more understanding and consequently communication and negotiation between cultures, neutralizing aliens' negative propaganda about own culture and making use of constructed facilities by local people.

In case the tourist industries are along with preservation of natural coverage, soil and climate, they will be of the most beneficial industries. Estimation of the amount of advantageousness is very difficult, because of mutual effects of tourist with other economic, social and ecological activities (Brown, 1996) Tourism development requires physical resource. One of the considerable items in field of tourism development is establishment and development of airport constructions. Airports are considered as the essential and undeniable parts of an international system so that they can make many job opportunities available for local people. Expansion and development of the airports may bear some advantages for tourists in order to hasten the journey and easy access to choose concerned destinations, as well, though their negative effect on environment should not be

overlooked. In addition, they affect the people living around and near the airports, because, the agricultural fields and landscapes are changed to highways and terminal constructions. Although tourism development is emphasized with preservation of environment by governments at the most parts of the world, but, the effects on the zone people are not decisive, because, the concept of preservation or fine quality of environment has not specified as a culture, considerably; specially in our country. Every one does not know the environment outside his house as the environment he lives in and does not have any sense of responsibility to preserve it. Unfortunately, municipality and local managers pay not enough attention to this important matter. Nevertheless, it was found out that the tourism can play a long-term role to flourish local, regional, national and international economic. These successes often depend on how to maintain the high quality of natural environment and it causes the touring applicants to be fully satisfied.

Tourism negative effects

Local price inflation, migration of work power, destruction of the local work structure, participation of women in part-time and low-income works, seasonal patterns of demands, change of local culture patterns, reduction of life patterns, different types of pollutions and residues made by tourists, destroying available animal shelters by constructing new buildings, change of local culture for conforming to tourist's culture, destruction of the zone environment. Tourist's harms includes: Expenses of bringing instruments and facilities e.g. transportation systems, lack attention to customs and local habits resulting in basically weakening the living method of local people, destruction of natural environment because of construction of the buildings of hotels and airports in natural coverage zones, polluting the natural environment and probably outbreak of epidemic diseases (United Nation, 1979). A vast domain of physical and environmental negative effects would be caused by tourism development that is classified into three main parts including user resources, behavioral considerations and pollution.

The effects of rural tourism

Rural tourism like other types of tourism contains negative and positive points. Our main goal in stable rural tourism is to minimize the negative effects and to strengthen positive effects (Khanian, 2005)

From economic point of view

1. Tourism causes to make various occupations, economic resources and much more tax.

2. Tourism causes to capital injection, especially foreign capitals and foreign exchange to the village economic (generally, it causes to increase income).
3. Growth and preserving industries, handicrafts and souvenir such as rug waving and coarse blanket weaving.
4. Many different parts of society through economic points of view will be benefited from tourism. In a rural tourism project, the works would be undertaken by different parts of the society. Some people can be responsible for tourist guiding through ecotourism routes (Knower), some other people may present their house for rent, some other sell handicrafts and etc. these works bear the most value in rural tourism.
5. Tourism can cause to strengthen and develop those parts of industries which are not related to tourism, directly (it causes to attract other industries).
6. Tourism leads to make job opportunities for those who are not skilled for better occupations or those who are retired (part-time or seasonal occupation).
7. It will reduce the villagers' dependence to agricultural activities and single-aspect economic through long-term (enhancing village economics into different aspects).
8. Tourism industry, at the beginning, in comparison with other industry, costs less.
9. In order to meet tourists needs, villagers can vary their own products, and even their products could be sold more. For example, in Iran's villages, tourists can purchase products such as rice, different fruits from villagers, directly.
10. At last, tourism economic effects can help to set the village economic security so that it leads to preservation of natural qualities of the vicinity of cities by the local people that this is one of the village tourism purposes.

From social point of view

1. With assistant of tourism development and by emphasizing on local culture, we would strengthen the sense of being proud of our possessions and national culture.
2. Rural tourism will cause to introduce the national heritage, culture of art and history of Iran to the other nations.
3. Preserving natural resources and ecology of the region by villagers and local people are the positive effects of rural tourism. When the villagers realize that the tourists might come there in order to see the wild flowers, virgin nature, the culture of local people and to purchase handicrafts produced at the same place, they will try to preserve these values.

From physical and frame point of view

1. By organizing and renovating the artificial and natural places of the village, the quality of landscape of the village will be improved.

2. Through basic investments in roads development, drinking water and health, local people will be benefited from stable development.

From economic point of view

1. Tourists industry is extremely provisional and seasonal.
2. The industry may risk.
3. Tourism industry may be resulted in price increment.

From social point of view

Stranger will visit the region whose cultures and ideologies differ. In this item, ruining the features of which determine village and villager should be severely prevented and noticed. Mountainside villages of which are very fragile through economic, cultural and political aspects should be considered as the importance.

From physical and frame point of view

1. Pressure aggravation on resources and local facilities would cause to be polluted and destructed.
2. Soil erosion, gathering of waste and knocked status of soil.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study makes use of library and field research because tourism is a wide range concept which needs traveling all over the Province in order to better discover instances of culture and tourist spots for the purpose of planning. In addition, the domestic and foreign books, articles and magazines as well as statistics and Internet sites were used to gather information. For the field research, observation, interview, designing and filling out of questionnaires were used for the targets villages and tourism organizations. The questioners were then distributed among the target population and data was gathered. The research method is a goal based procedure to find an answer to a question or a solution to a problem. In this study, we tried to find the answers to our questions using library and field research. Two different questioners were used for data collections which were distributed to the tourists and through rural residents. The data gathered in field research were cross checked with the realities of the place. Also effort was made to directly investigate the facilities.

There was always a limitation in distributing questionnaires within high tourist officials. Many villagers did not ever fill out the questionnaires because of a fear and many offices did not return the papers.

In this a study, we investigated the sources and references on tourism. Also we turned to the relevant organizations to interact with them to get information.

Research population

The research population falls into two categories. The first group is the villagers of Semnan Province who are the residents of Shahrood, Damqan, Semnan, and Garmsar. Some sample villages were chosen out of these towns, which were the most attractive to the visitors, as many as 32. The second group is the tourist

Table 1. Status of residents in Semnan Province.

Cities	Population lost villages	Number of villages (1997)	Number of villages (2007)
Shahrood	70	205	135
Semnan	116	200	84
Damegan	32	170	138
Garmsar	54	145	91
total	272	720	

Table 2. Gender distribution of contribution for questionnaire fill-out.

Sex	Contribution percentage
Female	37
Male	63

Table 3. Education description of the respondents to the questionnaires.

Studies level	Contribution percentage
Under diploma	36
Diploma	18
Above diploma	12
B.S	28
M.S and PH.D	6

organizations all over Semnan Province to which the questionnaires were distributed including: The organization of cultural heritage, artcraft and tourism of Semnan province and cities, Semnan management and planning organization, rural cooperation organization, the rural sewage organization, agricultural organization, the Islamic revolution of housing foundation, administration of culture and Islamic guidance, state government, local government, district office of natural resources organization, the organization of keeping environment life, metrology organization, broadcasting organization, the company of traveling and tourism services, tourism guest-house and rural Islamic councils. In designing a questionnaire, important aspects of research objectives as related to the research hypothesis were taken into account. The questionnaire is of two types: One for the rural residents and the other for the experts and managers of organizations for rural tourist development, which was also used along with the interviews and observations depending on the level of tourism.

Determining the volume of the sample and the sampling procedure

As much as 410 questionnaires were distributed among the villages of four different towns of the province and organizations responsible

for tourism. From each town four villages were chosen. Also some questioners were designed for the organizations such as the organization of culture heritage, artcraft and tourism of province and cities, semnan administration of culture and Islamic guidance, the Islamic revolution of housing foundational, agricultural organization, rural cooperation, organization of keeping environment life, the natural resources organization, metrology organization, broadcasting organization, the company of traveling and tourism services, tourism guest-house, state government, local government, district office and rural Islamic councils which followed a random sampling where all the population numbers have an equal chance to enter into the sample group (Hafez, 2003). The SPSS software also analyzes the data.

Data analysis

To analyze the data we used the statistical procedures of descriptive, inferential, and analytical. After the questionnaires were filled out, we began investigating the research hypotheses, and made use of tables and graphs which finally entered the SPSS software for analysis.

Research findings and data analysis

Semnan Province is located in southern slope of Alborz mountain range and consists of four towns (Shahrood, Semnan, Damegan, and Garmsar and), 12 Region, 28 District, and 448 living villages. In the 1997 census, the province consisted of 720 villages but in 2007, the number dropped to 448. In the period of ten years, 272 villages lost their population who immigrated to larger cities (Tables 1 to 3).

$$E(T) = \frac{N(N+1)}{4}$$

$$V(T) = \frac{N(N+1)(2N+1)}{24}$$

$$Z = T - E(T)$$

$$Z = \frac{T - E(T)}{V(T)}$$

$$Z = \frac{T - E(t)}{\sqrt{V(t)}}$$

With due attention to studied variations that are not quantitative and their distribution is not normal, so parametric methods were not used and among non parametric ways, Wilcoxon method can compare gathered data with supposed mean with due attention to use of five optional spectrum of likert supposed mean

Table 4. Obtained results from wilcoxon test.

	One-sample test					
	Test value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
				Lower	Upper	
The cultural aspect	3.684	409	0.000	0.19024	0.0887	0.2918
Facilities	9.018	409	0.000	0.34591	0.2705	0.4213
Income	8.157	409	0.000	0.32434	0.2462	0.4025
Developing	7.573	409	0.000	0.28259	0.2092	0.3559
Decreasing migrations	7.443	409	0.000	0.28681	0.2111	0.3626
Employment	8.226	409	0.000	0.31459	0.2394	0.3898
Providing information	8.066	409	0.000	0.40000	0.3025	0.4975
Cultural factors	3.425	409	0.001	0.14585	0.0621	0.2296
Natural factors	10.285	409	0.000	0.46585	0.3768	0.5549
Rural infrastructures	9.362	409	0.000	0.43171	0.3411	0.5224

considered (Table 4).

Research hypotheses

The hypotheses related to the villages with tourism potentials

Hypothesis one: Providing information enhances the development of rural tourism. Advertisements, the authorities' attention to the villages, as well as holding meetings and fairs for the rural products all have significant roles in attracting tourists and visitors to these areas. Based on this hypothesis, 15.1% checked the "very much" box, 31% the much, 34.6% average, 17.3% little, and 2% very little (Figure 3)

Hypothesis two: Facilities can enhance the development of rural tourism. The following factors were effective to attract tourists: The present rural facilities such as: Electricity, water, school, stores, mosque, infirmaries, communication centers, internet, banks, needed facilities for tourists, accommodations and guest-house, villas, having quite place, vocational and residential places for organization, private and governmental investment, people income and rural nearness to city center is important in tourism development. Based on this hypothesis, 15.7% checked the "very much" box, 4.29% the much, 36.8% average, 16% little, and 0% very little (Figure 4).

Hypothesis three: Natural factors can help develop rural tourism. Natural factors such as the location of the villages, fountains and mineral warm water, readers and waterfalls, mountainous areas, access to the climate of the villages, snowfall villages, and villages as the second

house for the visitors, and unique landscapes have all been effective in developing rural tourism. Based on this hypothesis, 13.4% chose "very much," 35.4% much, 36.1% average, 14.6% little, and 0.5% very little Figure 5.

Hypothesis four: Rural infrastructure is effective in developing rural tourism. Rural infrastructures include: Transportation roads, organizational and institutional planning, and state attention to investors, easy local access and the development of small rural industry. In this hypothesis, 12.7% chose the very much, 35.8% much, 33.9% average, 17.1% little, and 0.5% very little Figure 6.

Hypothesis five: Cultural factors affect the development of rural tourism. Cultural factors include: Religious places and holy shrines, rural historical and archaeology monuments, traditions, Islamic councils, greeting style of villagers, and special occasions such as mourning, wedding and people's beliefs. It is necessary to point that these traditions are becoming rarer and less important because of the emigration to the cities and because the letters are becoming empty of population. Based on this hypothesis, 15.6% chose very much, 26.6% much, 42.7% average, 14.4% little, and 0.7% very little Figure 7.

The hypotheses related to the organizations responsible for tourism

Hypothesis one: The development of rural tourism results in the increase in the income for villagers. Instances of high rural income include: Narrowing the gap among the families, more public afford, and higher village land price. According to the hypothesis, 17.1% chose very much, 27.3% much, 35.9% average, 18.2% little,

Providing information					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Value	1.00	8	1.8	2.0	2.0
	2.00	71	15.6	17.3	19.3
	3.00	142	31.2	34.6	53.9
	4.00	127	27.9	31.0	84.9
	5.00	62	13.6	15.1	100.0
Total		445	100.0		

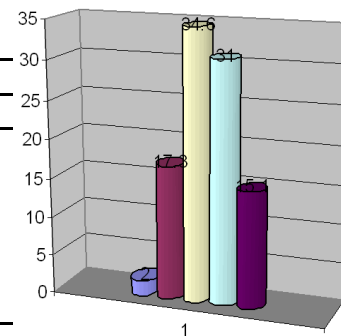


Figure 3. The frequency distribution of hypothesis one operation: Providing information.

Facilities					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Value	1.00	3	0.7	0.7	0.7
	2.00	66	14.5	16.1	16.8
	3.00	151	33.2	36.8	53.7
	4.00	126	27.7	30.7	84.4
	5.00	64	14.1	15.7	100.0
Total		445	100.0		

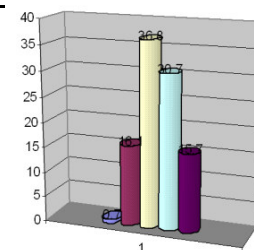


Figure 4. The frequency distribution of hypothesis two operations: Facilities.

Facilities					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Value	1.00	2	0.4	0.5	0.5
	2.00	60	13.2	14.6	15.1
	3.00	148	32.5	36.1	51.2
	4.00	145	31.9	35.4	86.6
	5.00	55	12.1	13.4	100.0
Total		455	100.0		

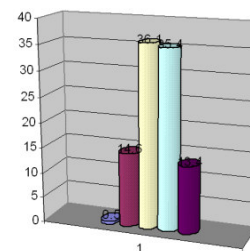


Figure 5. The frequency distribution of hypothesis three operation: Natural factors.

and 1.5% little Figure 8.

Hypothesis two: The development of rural tourism is effective in developing villages. Rural development could come true due to the following factors: Improving rural education, rural security, enhancing linking roads, and building residential places. Based on this hypothesis, 11.7% chose very much, 32% much, 36.1% average, 18.7% little, and 1.5% very little Figure 9.

Hypothesis three: The development of rural tourism is results in a decrease in emigrations. The following factors contributed to a decrease in emigrations: Higher

motivation in staying in the villages, higher motivation of the young people to stay in the villages because of parental help. Based on the hypothesis, 14.2% chose very much, 29% much, 35.6% average, 19.5% little, and 1.7% very little Figure 10.

Hypothesis four: The development of rural tourism is effective in increasing rural employment. Less unemployment, employment of the young people and employment of the women were instances of the increased rural employment. Based on the hypothesis, 12.7% chose very much, 31.7% much, 35.4% average, 18.7% little, and 1.5% very little Figure 11.

Rural infrastructures					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	2	.4	.5	.5
	2.00	70	15.4	17.1	17.6
	3.00	139	30.5	33.9	51.5
	4.00	147	32.3	35.8	87.3
	5.00	52	11.4	12.7	100.0
Total		455	100.0		

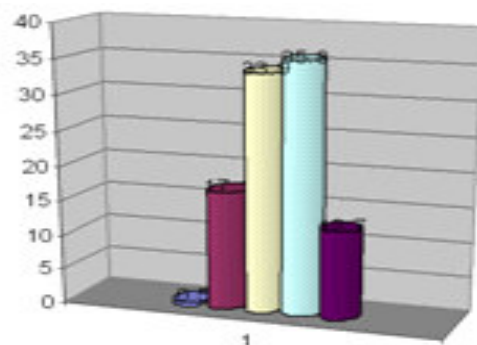


Figure 6. The frequency distribution of hypothesis three operation: Rural infrastructures.

Cultural factors					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Value	1.00	3	0.7	0.7	0.7
	2.00	59	13.0	14.4	15.1
	3.00	175	38.5	42.7	57.8
	4.00	109	24.0	26.6	84.4
	5.00	64	14.1	15.6	100.0
Total		455	100.0		

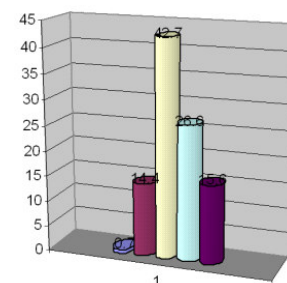


Figure 7. The frequency distribution of hypothesis five operation: Cultural factors.

Cultural factors					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Value	1.00	6	1.3	1.5	1.5
	2.00	75	16.5	18.2	19.8
	3.00	147	32.3	35.9	55.6
	4.00	112	24.6	27.3	82.9
	5.00	70	15.4	17.1	100.0
Total		455	100.0		

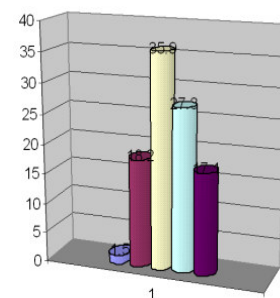


Figure 8. The frequency distribution of hypothesis one operation: income.

Hypothesis five: The development of rural tourism is effective in developing the cultural aspect of the villages. The factor enhancing the cultural aspects of the villages include the following: People contribution, changing perspectives of villages, the increase in the cultural level, public awareness and introducing the rural traditions. Based on the hypothesis, 12.3% chose very much, 25.1% much, 36.3% average, 22.2% little, and 4.1% very little Figure 12.

Suggestions for the development of rural tourism in Semnan Province

1. An increase in the currency and exchange income through the development of rural tourism in the areas with tourism attraction.
2. Inspiring for infrastructural activities for rural development and enhancing transportation networks as well as production and supply of the needed goods for

Cultural factors					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Value	1.00	6	1.3	1.5	1.5
	2.00	77	16.9	18.7	20.2
	3.00	148	32.5	36.1	56.3
	4.00	131	28.8	32.0	88.3
	5.00	48	10.5	11.7	100.0
Total		455	100.0		

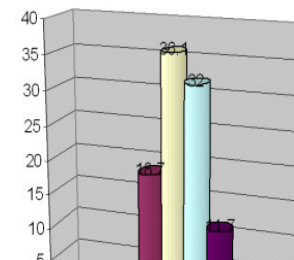


Figure 9. The frequency distribution of hypothesis two operation: developing.

Decreasing emigrations					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Value	1.00	7	1.5	1.7	1.7
	2.00	80	17.6	19.5	21.2
	3.00	146	32.1	35.6	56.8
	4.00	119	26.2	29.0	85.9
	5.00	58	12.7	14.2	100.0
Total		455	100.0		

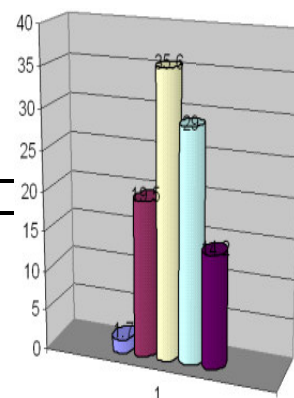


Figure 10. The frequency distribution of hypothesis three operation: decreasing emigrations.

Employment					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Value	1.00	6	1.3	1.5	1.5
	2.00	77	16.9	18.7	20.2
	3.00	145	31.9	35.4	55.6
	4.00	130	28.6	31.7	87.3
	5.00	52	11.4	12.7	100.0
Total		455	100.0		

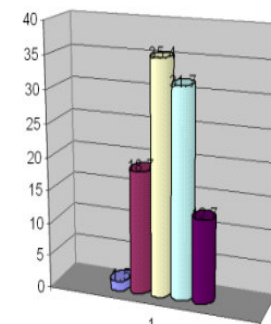


Figure 11. The frequency distribution of hypothesis four operation: employment.

Cultural aspect					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Value	1.00	17	3.7	4.1	4.1
	2.00	91	20.0	22.2	26.3
	3.00	149	32.7	36.3	62.7
	4.00	103	22.6	25.1	87.8
	5.00	50	11.0	12.3	100.0
Total		455	100.0		

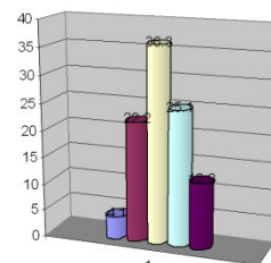


Figure 12. The frequency distribution of hypothesis five operation: the cultural aspect.

the visitors,

3. Development of tourism through the trips within and outside the Province besides visiting different areas,
 4. Establishing tourism complexes in attractive areas of Shahmirzad, Cheshme ali Damqan, Bastam, etc.
 5. Establishing appropriate service places for local visitors in the forest, mountainous and fair weather areas as well as mineral waters and fountains;
 6. Establishing the greatest complex in Semnan Province in the village areas of Shahroud, and Shahmirzad.
 7. Establishing permanent exhibition for the handicrafts in Semnan Province,
 8. Active participation in the local and foreign exhibitions and introducing attractions,
- Semnan Province bank supports for investing in rural tourism,
9. Providing healthy drinkable water for the visitors in the tourist areas of Semnan Province villages,
 10. Creating and spreading fixed and mobile telephone networks in the tourist areas of Semnan Province,
 11. Holding training courses to raise the villagers' public awareness on the advantages of tourism and enhancing the greeting styles of the visitors,
- Modifying hotel fares proportionate to the seasons in the city and a village centers,
12. Introduction of TV programs on the natural and historical attractions of Semnan Province villages,
- Holding seminars and conferences in the villages with tourist spots and introducing the attractions to the people,
13. Placing skillful guides at the entrance of the cities and villages with tourist spots,
 14. Creating camps in the spots such as ski, hydrotherapy, historical and archeology centers and the holy places,
 15. Enhancing transportation in the tourist areas,
 16. Advising the people on the visit to the villages in short term occasions and spending their spare time
 16. Motivating local visits to rural and country areas,
 17. Planning, development, and management of rural tourism based on the principles of stable development throughout Semnan Province,
 18. Providing public facilities such as water, electricity, communication, garbage collection, sitting prayer, holes and public lavatories to support and enhance the principle areas of rural tourism development,
 19. Establishing tourists cottages, arbors and traditional cafes in villages with spots,
 20. Motivating the private sector through decrees or removal of taxes for better investment in villages with spots throughout the province,
 21. Establishing entertainment places for the employees of different organizations,
 22. Enhancing public transportation on public all of these, spring and summer,
 23. Persuading the private sector in managing the areas and designing ecotourism plans,
 24. Running inexpensive tours for the private institutions

- and agencies in collaboration with their gun is Asian for cultural heritage, handicraft, and tourism,
23. Initiating university fields of tourist management, traveler's services and tourism in the bachelors and masters level in semnan and other universities throughout the country,
 24. Broadening linking roads of Semnan Province that the neighboring provinces of Tehran, Qom, Mazandaran, Khorasan, Golestan and Isfahan.
 25. Building hamlets around the intact landscapes and historical places,
 26. Using the experience of other countries or other provinces in attracting visitors,
 27. Providing the ground for rural employment through enhancing tourist attraction spots,
 28. Designing plans for spending spare times on the weekends in rural areas.

Challenges facing rural tourism in Semnan Province

1. Negative propaganda against tourism in Iran,
2. Weakness in research and training in the development of rural tourism in Semnan Province,
3. Not enough national and provincial advertisement for attracting visitors,
4. Not having infrastructures in rural tourism in the province.
5. Lack of cooperation among the organizations for tourism in the province such as: The organizations for cultural heritage, handicrafts and tourism with the Islamic Republic housing foundation, agricultural organization , administration of culture and Islamic guidance of Semnan province ,state government ,governorship, ,rural cooperation
6. Not having trained employees in tourism throughout the province,
7. Not enough financial support for developing and providing equipment for the rural tourist centers,
8. Lack of residential facilities in rural areas,
9. No private sector inclination to invest in tourism section,
10. Disagreements on the laws and regulations for attracting tourists throughout the province,
11. No solid health structures and networks for water, electricity, telephone, and the like throughout the rural spots,
12. Lack of service centers,
13. Cultural clash with the villages with tourist spots,
14. Lack of a system for tourist management and IT in tourism,
15. Not enough public transportation along with inappropriate roads to access the rural centers,
16. No access to needed goods in the villages,
17. Incomplete execution of the leading rural plans,
18. Undesirable physical aspect of most villages,
19. Villages being scattered throughout the province,

20. Lack of attention to the creation of grounds for rural employment and removal of seasonal unemployment of the villagers,
21. Lack of attention to the potential opportunities in the villages and designing plans to take advantage of them,
22. Not enough appropriate structures and facilities throughout the villages,
23. Not enough spare time facilities especially for the youth,
24. Providing drinkable water network for the villagers and rural visitors,

As for the villages adjacent to the cities, people will have a spontaneous trip to the rural areas if there is no special plan to protect these areas, which leads to the destruction of the intact rural environment and endangers the social security through time. The side effect of such an incident is the environmental pollution and hygiene problems. Therefore, the government must have a plan to prevent the destruction of the natural environment.

RESULTS

Having various links with the neighboring provinces of Tehran, Mazandaran, Golestan, Khorasan, and Isfahan, Semnan province has always been important. Because of the many tourist spots throughout the province, more and more visitors come to spend their spare times and occasions every year. Because of having the natural landscapes and historical background, Semnan Province can be turned into an important local and international tourist center. Being on the cross sectional point of several other provinces, proximity to the capital, good roads, convenience, and a variety of spots are among the most important factors in the development of tourism in this province. Special geographical conditions and climate as well as status of topography, geography, and geomorphology signify the unique potentials of Semnan Province in ecotourism. However, tourism and natural tourism specially (ecotourism) have not developed. If the potentials of tourism are rightfully exploited, there would be a possibility to enhance the poor villages which are the traditional protectors of their surroundings, besides having various regional and national advantages. Furthermore, ecotourism can bear positive and negative effects on the nature and the environment, which indicates the necessity for planning and supervising to remove the negative consequences and strengthen the positive effects on the environment.

Nowadays urban and even rural life are affected by industrial revolution and the boosted population gave birth to many problems, so placing a high value on cultural treasures seems to be a must to strengthening human relations and establishing a peaceful life on the earth. The cultural relations among the nations which had taken place through the tourism industry and acquaintance with the cultural heritage can bear undesirable, as

well as peaceful consequences. Therefore, preserving cultural values in any society or country must be a priority when designing national plans. The historical remnants, treasures and documents of high cultural values are supposed to be preserved and fairly protected to be passed on to the future generation.

The rural environments have their own potential natural and human attractions. Organizing such environments not only helps develop tourism in the rural areas but also enhances rural activities of farming, husbandry, and local handicrafts. Because Semnan Province is located on the road to Imam Reza (a holy shrine), it can attract religious Pilgrims as well.

Internal ministry, state government, the organization of cultural heritage, arts-crafts and tourism of Semnan province, administration of culture and Islamic guidance of Semnan province and other relevant organizations can contribute to a better traction of visitors to the Province, which demands principled planning, cooperation, and contribution of local residents and executive institutions in order for the province to play the role of an important tourist spot throughout the country.

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