

The role of religious tourism in urban development consistency in Mashhad

Seyedeh Nasim Safaei

Maziar Institute of Higher Education, Faculty of Economics and Management

Corresponding author: Seyedeh Nasim Safaei

ABSTRACT: Today the tourism industry has a significant place in each country's economy in a way that it is considered the third beneficial industry in the new era after oil and car industry along with being an important activity to make revenue and consistent developing around the world. Meanwhile, urban residences are facing problems such as: immigrating from villages, poverty, low level of employment and productivity in industry and agricultural sections, loss or lack of service and welfare infrastructure, and unemployment and low income, while a remarkable number of urban residence, with respect to that of location and other important elements in attracting tourists especially with regards to religious tourism, have a great potential. This study, concerned with exploring the role of religious tourism in consistent civil development, is carried out in a descriptive-analysis style. The statistical population of this study are Mashhad citizens, 14920 people, from which 374 people were chosen by Cochran formula as the sample. The statistical data of this study is confirmed by a researcher made questionnaire where its narrative has been approved by university teachers and its reliability using Cronbach alpha at 0.87. The process of statistical calculations of this study has been carried out based on regression analysis. For this purpose, the economic, socio-cultural and environmental effectiveness in Mashhad tourism development has been examined. The results have shown that religious tourism affect socio-cultural, environmental and economic development.

Keywords: Religious tourism, Consistent civil development, Tourism effects, Mashhad city.

INTRODUCTION

These days the tourism industry is the symbol of a country's cultural identity and an important source to earn foreign currencies. The expansion of tourism industry in developing countries, concerned with issues like high rate of unemployment, limited source of foreign currencies and single-product economy, is very important and spending leisure time in new ways, consequence and simultaneous phenomenon are inseparable parts of an industrial society and a significant circle in its reproduction. Currently, the tourism industry as a dynamic industry with unique and obvious features, has covered a big portion of economic and productive activities of developed and developing countries (UNWTO, 2015). This industry, involves all phenomenon and relationships resulting from the interactions of tourists, suppliers and sellers of tourism products, governments and hosting societies in the process of attracting and the serving the tourists (Mcintosh, 2014). Tourist industry has also various results and achievements among which the developing and socio-economic functions in a region or country can be pointed out (Holjevac, 2016). The development of this industry in industrial countries, causes variety in incomes and reduces the inconsistency of the economy and the developing countries are considered as an opportunity for exporting, foreign currency producing and creating job opportunity. In addition, the benefits of tourism industry is not only limited to economic revenue, rather it can be evaluated from different points of view such as introducing our culture to other countries. The structural elements of a country's tourism, is on one hand affected from the importance, validity, origin, variety of the roles and the functions of its religious, cultural, recreational, business and all other kinds of attractions, and on the other hand, it is taken from and affected by social, cultural (religious beliefs) and economic features of the local residents and tourists (Hall, 2014). Religious tourism is one of the oldest kinds of all time in the world. Furthermore, the pilgrims and religious places, aside from being holly and unique in that sense, display the manners, beliefs and

people’s thoughts as well (Taghavi, 2007). Nowadays, religious tourism, with its all components and varieties, has been able to fit into the global tourism due to its structural and functional features and has influenced all the world. According to the world travel and tourism organization, religious tourism has covered 26% of the world’s tourism flows (Icep 2017). In terms of specific cultural-religious condition of Iran among other countries, religious tourism can improve significantly in Iran and other centers, monuments and religious variety in different religions in different parts of the country has made Iran a unique place in the world. Iran’s religious places attraction which is combination of religious teaching with thoughts, shows that art and Iranian life is still one of the foreign tourist’s priority of visiting Iran. Therefore, the religious motives of foreign tourists to travel to Iran, and the existence of more than one million Muslims and 320 million Shiites in the world, solves many obstacles and problems arising from the tourism phenomenon definition we have and its negative social and cultural implications, and will pave the development way of religious- cultural tourism industry. Although there are many holy places in Iran (8915), religious tourism still lacks good organization and purposefulness even in Mashhad and Qom. Among this religious places at least 4319 of arts are listed in the National Heritage list and in addition of having religious attraction it has also historical-cultural attraction (Ahmadi 2017). Considering the capabilities of Iran to have tourism attraction and specifically religious attraction in the world and its economic and cultural significance due to the constraints of some types of tourism in this country, the recognition of these capabilities of religious tourism, and its functions and consequences is important for Iranian society. Therefore this research aims to evaluate function and consequences of this phenomenon in Mashhad as one of the cities related to the studies that have been carried out. So the main question of this research is: how religious tourism effects on economic, social, cultural and political field along with sustainable improvement in Mashhad?

Research methodology

This research is applicable and operational in terms of purpose and goal and is survey based in terms of methodology and is descriptive-analytical. The tool used for collecting data are the researcher’s edited questionnaire and documental information. In order to define sample’s amount, 374 people were selected as sample size from tourism experts through a cluster sampling method and questionnaires were selected through the Cochran sampling method. To compute questionnaire reliability in this research that was 0.88, validity survey and Chronbach Alpha method were used before final setting. Data analysis was done with Regression method.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics

Table (1) shows maximum age frequency (44/4%) related to 30 to 40 year olds, and maximum education degree frequency related to BA, about 47% of respondents were men and 53% were women.

Table 1. Frequency of demographic Variables

Variable	Frequency	Percent	variable	Frequency	Percent		
Sex	Male	176	47.1	Level of Education	Elementary	3	0.8
	Female	198	52.9		Cycle	3	0.8
Age	20-30	123	32.9	Diploma	33	6.1	
	30-40	166	44.4	Associate	60	16	
	40-50	78	20.9	B.A	200	53.4	

Inferential statistics:

Table 2. Study of Religious tourism in the Environmental index

Coefficients					
Model	Non-standard Coefficients		Standard Coefficients	t	Significance level
	Std.Error	B	Beta		
Fixed	2.432	0.381		6.83	0.00
Economics	0.283	0.106	0.137	0.008	0.00

Variable. Religious Tourism

Table (2) shows that fixed and variable amounts of both models are meaningful, meaningfulness in both models is more than errors. Beta amount represents the Regression standardized coefficient or the fixed Beta value at 0.137, and shows effect of religious tourism variable on Economic indicator of consistent development in Mehran city. Actually in this theory as the table shows, religious tourism is important and effective factor in consistent Economical development of Mashhad city but this impact is lesser.

Table 3. investigating the impact of Religious Tourism on social Cultural index

Coefficients					
Model	Non-standard Coefficients		Standard Coefficients	t	Significance level
	Std.Error	B	Beta		
Fixed	0.070	-0.250		-3.581	0.00
Economics	0.020	0.921	0.926	47.235	0.00

Variable: Religious Tourism

Table (3) shows that constant amount of socio- cultural variable in both models are meaningful, because both of them have 0.0 amount of meaningfulness level. Beta amount represents Regression standardized coefficient or fixed amount of Beta that equals 0.216 which shows religious tourism variable on environmental index of consistent development of Mehran city that this is also small amount.

Conclusion and Discussion

Today, religious tourism has got important position in world country’s economy, which is the third industry of new millennium after oil and automotive industry and also an important activity for making money and consistent development in the countries. there are urban residences facing different problem and issues like: urban-rural immigration, poverty, low employment and efficiency level in industrial and agricultural sector, lack of welfare and service infrastructures, unemployment and low income, while significant number of urban residences in the country have appropriate background of improving tourism activities based on their location and having important tourists attracting elements specifically religious tourism. This research considers this subject and examines the role of religious tourism in consistent urban development of Mehran city. The existence of mosque in the city as well as being on the route of the holy shrines can increase the number of religious tourists and the prosperity of this industry in the country and a valuable source of employment and income from religious tourism and economic and social development of the region and especially Mashhad. This is only possible with the planning and strong urban and tourism management in the direction of consistent development and can contribute to the religious tourism development. results showed that maximum frequency of questionnaire respondents was related to women, most of the participants had BA degree and their age frequency was between 30 to 40, also economic, cultural-social and environmental indexes were computed in inferential sector by Regresion test and showed that religious tourism effected on all indexes and this impact was more visible in socio-cultural era, in economic and environmental era it had lowest effect. According to the first theory, variety and development in employment era caused more different kinds of jobs creation like: travel companies, increasing hotel accommodation, restaurant increasing and etc., by entrancing tourist’s crowd. This, by itself, increases people income as well as government income. By examining the second theory it can actually be declared that development and increasing of religious tourism in Mehran city leads to urbanization opportunity expansion and unemployment reduction and this factor reduces immigration and economic inequality, increases sense of belonging to the city, improves life satisfaction in the city, increases the sense of security and so on. The third indicator which is effected by religious tourism development introduced by Regresion model, is environmental factors development. Health quality improvement of urban greenbelt development, improving drinking water and surface water collecting and disposal quality, etc., are factors that make the managers and practitioners accustomed to full planning due to the rural tourism development. So different suggestions are brought up:1-prioritizing religious tourism in policies and programs of the tourism agencies 2-providing urban and cross-country travel security for tourism entrance to the Khorasan province 3-providing required credit and facilities to improve necessary capacities and infrastructures along the way of holy shrines 4-setting up websites and weblogs to introduce tourism attractions and improving virtual tourism 5-establishing a service, welfare, catering, sanitation, transportation, commercial and economic facilities to have easiest tourists and pilgrims attraction 6-using potentialities of holy Ramadan to attract tourists 7-political, social, cultural advertising in the field of familiarity with customs, pilgrimage culture and tourists and pilgrims reverence 8-provision of urban and tourism management plans and facilities in Establishing the Bases in Imam Reza’s shrine for constant development of religious tourism 9-making social, mental and cultural security for pilgrims 10-controlling and supervising all rendered services for pilgrims and tourists 11-establishing an independent unit called religious tourism as a trustee of operational and strategic tourism 12-encouraging investors to participate In building infrastructure along with religious attraction.

REFERENCES

- Hall Prentice, Edition. Stephan F. (2014). Witt and Luie Management Handbook. Second.
- Holjevac, A. I. (2016). A Vision of Tourism and the Hotel Industry in the 21st Century. Hospitality Management.
- Icep. (2017). Religious Tourism. Turismo-Mercados Emissores, 30-33.
- Izmailov, D., Duissenbayeva, Sh., Kurmanaliyeva. (2014). Religious tourism as a sociocultural phenomenon of the Present the unique sense today is a universal value tomorrow. This is the way religions are created and values are made. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 958-963.
- Santos Maria da Graca Mougá pocas. (2004). Fatina: ReligiousTourism in a SanctuaryCity. [http://www.bibemp2.us.es/turismo/turismonet1/economia%20del%](http://www.bibemp2.us.es/turismo/turismonet1/economia%20del%20turismo/)
- Shinder, K. (2014). Quest for good governance: Contribution ontribution and potential of religious. Institution on As Stakeholders.
- UNWTO. (2015). Tourism Highlights 2007 Edition. Available l"www.unwto.comdasgupta.