

Analysis of demographic and cultural tourism, religious pilgrimage
(Case Study: Ilam Province)

MALEK MALEKSHAHI¹, HAKIM BAKRIZADE², ALI MOHAMAD NIYAKAN³

¹ Department of Social Science Payam Noor University, Ilam, Iran.
Postal code: 6931135478

² Department of Statistics Payam Noor University, Ilam & PhD student statistic Chamran University, Ahwaz, Iran.

³ Researcher & Master of Cultural, Ilam, Iran

Abstract: Travel and tourism, travel and rotation of the oldest human activities is common. Man in his social life has always tried to know your environment; this recognition has been associated with mobility. All God's creatures in the course of travel from place to place and move towards perfection. Meeting places and lands, travel and migration work better for the environment in order to achieve these goals. Religious tourism is a profitable and efficient in the word of cultural activity that it cannot be ignore, But it should be viewed as an objective phenomenon. Ilam province, with tens of thousands of years of civilization, culture, beautiful piece is a glimpse of Iran all the beauty and wonders of creation. Wonderful climate variability, climate differences, and their descendants and the descendants of Ilam Monument religious, having been in the path of pilgrim to atabat aleeh very large open every day and lovers. Enthusiasts bits (AS) are, A religious tourist hub of the country into the Ilam. This study analyzes the demographic and cultural tourism, religious pilgrimage to pay in Ilam. Using analytical methods and data collected through field studies and surveys, questionnaires (92) Interviews with experts and data from the second category, the situation and condition in the tourism areas of Ilam province is Cranach coefficient for the questionnaire to 0/867 respectively. This study showed that 51/1 percent of the sample agree. The knowledge and understanding of indigenous culture and tourism attractions to attract tourists is the religious the factor with the 4/9810 has the highest average. 49/5 percent of the sample agrees that the lack of transport (train, Plan) that is non-religious tourists. 46/7 percent sample agree that the lack of welfare facilities and accommodation of religion is important in attracting tourists to the agent with the 7935/3 has the lowest average 63/2 percent agree that the sample distribution and the holy places of pilgrimage, religious tourism has been the proliferation.

[MALEK MALEKSHAHI. **Analysis of demographic and cultural tourism, religious pilgrimage** (Case Study: Ilam Province). J Am Sci 2012; 8(6)682-691]. (ISSN: 1545-1003). <http://www.americanscience.org>. 84

Keywords: anthropology, Religious tourism, pilgrim culture, Ilam province

1. Introduction

All God's creatures in their journey from one point to another move towards perfection. Human's body and soul never stop struggling, unless in the dream or death. Humans are all time pursuing their ideals and seriously tried to achieve them. This inherent dynamics of humans is the main cause of their material and spiritual success. Human dynamics is accompanied with mobility and movement. This mobility is done in two dimensions of vertical and horizontal. Horizontal mobility which is physical and the movement of humans with no change in their social and economic position are called tourism. In addition to being one of the original and ancient activities of humans, tourism is the most important factor of development process with a double effect. In addition to cultural aspects, tourism has gained much attention in many countries of the world due to

being a profitable economic and social activity. Even the economic structure of some countries is based on tourism industry. The issue of tourism has not found its real position in Iran as expected. Iran's foreign exchange earnings is very small compared with the leading countries. The mere reliance on revenues from oil is one reason for this approach. However, given the role and importance of tourism and its related activities in cultural, social, and economic development of country, positive cultural consequences, and increased income, it is necessary to develop this industry in country.

Humans have always tried to know their environment which has been associated with mobility and movement. Visiting the regions and territories, travel, and immigration for a better life are approaching these goals. Tourism industry is one of the most lucrative and efficient business activities in the

world that not only should be ignored but also it should be viewed as an objective phenomenon (Kuban, 1976). Accelerated growth of tourism industry has led many experts to call the 20th century as Tourism Century. The actual value of religious tourism in each region depends on the frequency and quality of tourism resources, providing human resources, income generation, and adopting an efficient management for tourism activities (Sofield, T.H.B & LI, F.M.S. (1988)). Religious tourism is one of the most common forms of tourism throughout the world that its history dates back to the past centuries and ages. It generally includes travels and visits that the main purpose of them is a religious experience. Religious attractions, shrines, and sacred places welcome a large number of religious tourists every year. Accommodation and catering facilities for religious tourists such as the hotels and inns may have their own features given the social-cultural context and the attitude of tourists and also the host community. Religious tourism is the only form of tourism which overcomes the climate-originated obstacles. "It seems that the volume of visitation of religious cities and centers doesn't change with the change of seasons and climate variations," says Sing, a theoretician of tourism industry. For this type of tourist, mere destination is not of importance, but his/her experience begins from the time of departure and is included all along the way and the events he/she may encounter. Generally, religious tourism could be considered a type of tourism that its participants have religious motivations (Merely or accompanied with other motivations) and visit sacred places such as shrines, monuments, mosques, and tombs. So, religious tourism, with its important features, is one of the most important branches of tourism that we can take advantage of it through planning and providing the required infrastructures (Meyer, 2004).

1.2. Definitions:

Tourism: Is equivalent to Jahangardi and Gardeshgari in Persian. It has been derived from the word "Tour" meaning navigation and its root is the Greek word of "Tourneys". Tourism includes all activities of a visitor from the time he/she decides to travel to the termination of journey.

Tourist: It is defined as a visitor who stays at least one night in private or public accommodations of the host country. All God's creatures in their journey from one point to another move towards perfection. The holy Quran, which has been revealed to guide humans, emphasizes on journey in many verses and invites the humans to travel around the earth (Philip, G. & Hazlett, S. A. (1996)). Nowadays, the purpose of tourism planning is the necessity of sustainable design and planning in order to avoid the destructive

effects of tourism activities on the environment and religious tourism areas and also a misunderstanding of planning. Tourism with a poor management can lead to a phenomenon called "Destructive Tourism" (Sharply, 1997). Having ten thousand years of civilization history, Ilam Province is a beautiful piece of Iran which has all the beauties and wonders of creation. Amazing climate diversity and changes, the mausoleum of Imam Descendants and religious places, and being located in the path of pilgrims to Karbala which welcomes a large number of enthusiasts and lovers of the holly household (Ahl al-Bayt) every day can make Ilam province the hub of religious tourism. But, lack of knowledge of Ilam Province has caused less attention. This study aims to analyze religious tourism demographically and pilgrimage in Ilam Province. Hence, given the importance and the role of culture and religion in the relationships between communities and in order to attract religious tourists and gain economic interests like cultural capabilities, we plan to exactly know different dimensions and various cultural components of this province.

2.2. The necessity of research:

Tourism has gained a wide scope in modern world which is originated from the development of technological innovations and the extension of capitalism in the current era. Tourism attractions are the national capital of each country in tourism industry which can be the basic parameters of growth and development and also the motivation of tourists to visit a country. Therefore, tourism plays a key role in promotion of cultures, beliefs, and values (World Tourism Organization, 1996).

According to World Tourism Organization statistics, the number of tourists which was 287 million in 1980 will reach one billion and 600 million in 2020. With increased number of tourists in this period, tourism revenue will also increase. Since travelers and tourists are considered an important source of foreign exchange earnings, tourism has a considerable contribution to the gross domestic production. Balance of payments, which represents the international contracts of each country, can provide a source of data about the economic importance of tourism (International Standard Classification of Occupations.1997). Cultural-religious attractions of each touristic region have a crucial role in attracting tourists. Culture is one of the basic mediums for communication between different communities. Perhaps the most common type of relationship between nations is the cultural one which ensures the continuity of bond between nations beyond any economic gains and losses or political and diplomatic considerations. Among various definitions of culture, the following helps us more than others to clarify this

issue. According to this definition, culture is a set of common meanings and knowledge hidden behind the deeds of people of community that social obligation backs it (Vause, J. (2008).

Religious attractions, shrines, sacred places, and the tombs of religious leaders welcome millions of tourists ever year. Religious tourism is one of the most common forms of tourism throughout the world that its history dates back to the past centuries and ages. Historical documents available from the great civilizations between Roodan and Egypt and also the remains of prehistoric time indicate the religious trips of thousands of people in the very past. Religious tourism is the only form of tourism which overcomes the climate-originated obstacles because it seems that the volume of visitation of religious cities and centers doesn't change with the change of seasons and climate variations. The great meeting of millions of the world Muslims in Mecca and Medina is a prominent example of this kind of tourism

Ilam Province is no exception; cultural-religious attractions such as historic monuments, museums, shrines, proximity with Karbala, popular culture and indigenous customs, and most importantly the majority of Shia people of this region are important factors in attracting religious tourists to this province. But this industry has so far failed its role as an effective factor in cultural, social, and economic development and also in introducing Ilam Province as a cultural-religious tourism region. So, in order to enrich the indigenous culture of this province, identify the tourism and pilgrimage capabilities and its influence on other cultures, take a share of national and global culture by promoting the culture of pilgrimage, and determine the role of cultural attractions and pilgrimage places in attracting tourists and consequently the economic profitability, it is necessary to demographically analyze religious tourism and the culture of pilgrimage in Ilam Province.

3.2. Previous research:

Demography is defined as the detailed and comprehensive study of human activities in a restricted society (Vause, J. (2008). Since the issue of religious tourism has been rarely studied in Iran and especially in Ilam Province, we should seek the research and studies in which all scientific principles and rules and demographic evaluation are properly observed and implemented in them. Here are some previous studies and research on tourism and cultural-religious attractions of Ilam Province.

- Bygrom (1983) has mentioned that most tourists tend to visit the places that are easy to reach and have welfare and service complexes.

- Matzarakis (2003) says that tourism industry is closely associated with the introduction of touristic attractions by countries.

4.2. The importance of tourism:

Tourism, as a smoke-free industry, has many capabilities and aficionados in the current era. Significant and dramatic growth of this industry during the past 50 years indicates its remarkable economic and social importance. Increased number of religious tourists can thrive the business and increase the income of institutions and companies working this field. However, given the economic importance and role of religious tourism industry, other dimensions especially the cultural one should not be overlooked. People's tendency to find the easiest and most effective way for Dialogue of Cultures has made the role of tourism vital and let people use the sweet and bitter experiences of ruling during the history and in different civilizations and in addition to developing emotional and human bond with each others, look at other cultures with a broader perspective and make the political relationships between civilizations based on economy and mutual understanding of nations more balanced. It is obvious that proximity and cultural relations of nations play a vital role in their comprehensive development, as they are the basis of peace and friendship and consequently the economic relationships between them (Raoofi, 1388; 12). It is noteworthy to be said that Islam, like other religions, has emphasized on the importance of journey. The holy Quran has shown the importance of journey and tourism clearly and in detail and asks humans to travel around the earth and think about the remaining of the past and get advice of their destiny. Totally, 13 verses of Quran talks about journey and tourism. It has been quoted from the prophet Mohammad (PBUH) that said "travel to stay healthy and crusade in the way of Allah to benefit and gain trophy" (Yadollahi, 1389). "Travel in the earth and see how he makes the first creation, then Allah creates the latter creation; surely Allah has power over all things," says God in verse 20 of Ankaboot Sura. There are many anecdotes about journey and tourism from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and infallible Imams (AS). Even in prayer books, anecdotes, and ethic books there are many remarks about the habits of travel from the moment of departure to the end. In Islamic culture, travel has been considered as traversing the universe and the spirit. Islam has a special look at humans and their needs and respects what really makes the life enjoyable and easy and what affects the body and the soul of humans. Religious tourism is a means which connects people of different religions and

cultures and helps them to have a better understanding of each other despite of political and social tensions. In World Tourism Organization definition, religion is known as the main motivation of travel.

5.2. Types of religious tourism:

Religious tourism can be classified by various dimensions and aspects, each of them can greatly influence the marketing of tourism products.

As far as the duration of occupancy is concerned, religious tourism falls into two main types:

A) Short-term religious tourism: is a journey that is spatially limited and occurs in short intervals. Going to a religious center or attending a religious ceremony, conference, and meeting are the objectives of this journey. This kind of travel is short both in duration and distance and doesn't include overnight accommodation in destination.

B) Long-term religious tourism: visiting the religious centers with local, regional, cross-regional, national, and international range of influence or attending religious ceremonies, conferences, and meetings for a few days or weeks. Important shrines attract one to 10 million pilgrims every year. This number is always fluctuating and increases during the religious ceremonies and special anniversaries or decreases due to political issues, recession, and war (Rinschede, 1992).

6.2. Travel motivations and objectives:

Religious tourism is divided into three general categories in terms of travel motivations and objectives:

1- Travel in order to visit religious centers such as mosques, churches, temples, monasteries, tombs, shrines, and so on. In Islam, this type of tourism falls into two main groups including worship and pilgrimage trips and promotional trips. Worship and pilgrimage trips include pilgrimage of the house of God, sacred places, and tombs; travel to visit relatives, friends, and patients; travel for charity; travel to study the mission of the Imams and prophets; travel to help the poor and orphans, and etc. Promotional trips travel to promote Islam and guide people.

2- Travel in order to attend religious conferences, meetings, and ceremonies.

3- Travel in order to visit historic monuments and the architecture of religious places (Rinschede, 1992).

From the perspective of organization, religious tourism can be divided into the two following categories:

1- Unorganized religious tourism: It is a type of trip that travelers take it alone. This type of trip rarely happens in various religions and doctrines due to their courses.

2- Organized religious tourism: These trips are organized according to the following specific characteristics:

A) Number of participants: As mentioned before, most religious travels take place collectively and it is important to most tourists to travel with people who share their beliefs or with peers. Travel of Muslim pilgrims to Mecca that is done every year in a certain time.

B) Ways and means of transport: Till the middle of the 19th century, pilgrims around the world traveled on foot and sometimes used a combination of walking and riding (with vessel or beasts). On-foot pilgrimage travel is still common in many regions, cultures, and religions.

C) Seasonal patterns: Religious tourism, like other types of tourism, is closely associated with certain seasons. Religious ceremonies on memorial days, climatic positions of religious places, and work calendar of local population play an important role in seasonality of religious tourism. For example, many people go to Mecca to attend Hajj in Zel-Hajjah.

D) Social structure: Social structures such as age, sex, social class, and so on are effective in organizing this type of travels, as there are differences in age and gender of pilgrims from various religions (Rinschede, 1992).

7.2. A glimpse on the history of Ilam Province:

Ilam Province, with a surface of more than 20150 Km², lies at 31°58'N 45°24'E and is located in the west of Iran. This province is neighboring with Khuzestan Province from south, Lorestan Province from east, Kermanshah Province from north, and Iraq from west (Statistics of Ilam Province, No. 2). Ilam has old heritage of civilization and culture and historically has been part of the ancient Elamite territory. In Sassanid period two states were created in this region including Masbzan centered in Sirvan and Mehr Janghzagh centered in Samire. This region was conquered by Arab Muslims in the beginning of Islam. "After the conquest of Dinvar, Abu Musa Ashaari went to Masbzan. Inhabitants didn't fight with him. The people of Shirvan also called for peace with the same provisions of Dinvar Peace and paid tribute and levy. Abu Musa conquered took control of their lands by placing rider batches between them," said Belazari. Ibn Asir has also said, "After Hashem returned to Madain, Saad was informed that Azin, the son of Hormozan, has collected a corps and come to the country. Saad sent the corps of Zazar Ibn Khatab to him and a severe fight happened. Azin was arrested by Zazar and decapitated. Arab corps went towards Sirvan and forcibly conquered Masbzan. People fled to the mountains. Zazar invited them to be compromised and they accepted. Zazar stayed in Masbzan till Saad went to Koofeh, then moved to

Koofeh and appointed the son of Hazil Al-Assadi as his successor in Masbzan." Since then the people of Ilam have accepted Islam and are committed to it and now 99% of them are Shia (Morovati, 1384; 60). When the sovereignty of Islam established, the first Islamic shrines were built on the tomb of Prophet's companions, Shia martyrs, and prominent persons. There are no remnants of tombs of the first to third century (AH) located in Near East, especially in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The first remaining Islamic tomb is the tomb of Ghabh Al-Salibeh in Samarra that its history goes back to the mid-third century. In the time of Buyid Dynasty sovereignty (333 to 477 AH), Shia thoughts expanded. Shia emergence was characterized by building new shrines for Shias. Shias not only have pilgrimed Samarra Crypt, the location of 12th Imam Absence, as a sacred place since 260 (AH) but also constructed sacred buildings in Iran. Also, construction of the holly shrine of Imam Reza (As) was started by Buyids (Morovati, 1384; 63). The tomb of Mahdi, a caliph of Abbasid, is the oldest monument in Ilam Province which has been recorded in historical references. This building was renovated by Al-Mustarshid, another caliph of Abbasid, in 564 (AH). This mausoleum was destroyed by Pahlavi regime in 1340 (According to Iranian calendar). Now, there is a park in that place in Ilam. Mehdi Saleh monument located in Mazhyn Village near Darreh Shahr is another shrine which was built in the 8th century.

7.2. Religious attractions:

Religious tourism, with its important features, is one of the most important branches of tourism that we can take advantage of it through planning and providing the required infrastructures. Attracting religious tourists firstly needs an understanding of the principles of religions and respecting them, and then an effort to provide better services to the pilgrims of these holly places. This has economic, cultural, and promotional reflections nationwide and at the international level can lead to positive results for the host country. There are a lot of mausoleums of Imam descendents and religious places in Ilam Province which welcome a large number of enthusiasts and lovers of the holly household (Ahl al-Bayt) every year. The number of religious tourists visiting Ilam Province can easily increase through planning and providing the required infrastructures near these places.

Religious places of Ilam Province are as follows:

1.7.2. Imamzadeh Ali Saleh:

Shrine of Imamzadeh Ali Saleh is located in Salehabad, Mehran. It is known as "Khas Ali" among the people of Ilam. Ali Saleh was the son of Obaidollah Al-Araj; Obaidollah Al-Araj was the son of Hossein Asghar who was the son of Imam Zeyn

Al-Abedin (AS). According to an inscription on the walls of the old building of Imamzadeh Ali Saleh, this building was renovated by Hossein Dezfooli in 1308 (AH) during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar with the ambition of Gholamreza Khan Valizadeh, the ruler of Lorestan and Poshtkooh. The building constructed at that time had a surface of 240 m² with 2 minarets and a turnip-shaped dome which was considered as the best decoration at that time, but due to neglect and lack of sufficient income tiles and dome were worn. The current building of Imamzadeh Ali Saleh has been built in 1362 (According to Iranian calendar) in an area measuring 1000 m². The dome is about 18 meters high. This monument is respected by all people of Ilam and welcomes the highest number of pilgrims in Ilam Province, as it is in the way of pilgrimage caravans traveling to Karbala.



Fig 1: Shrine of Imamzadeh Ali Saleh located in Salehabad, Mehran

2.7.2. Imamzadeh Mohammad Abed (Pir Mohammad) (AS):

It is 30 kilometers far from Arkvaze Malekshahi in a village named Gonbad. Its old building was built by Gholamreza Amirjang, the ruler of Lorestan and Poshtkooh, in 1304 (AH) and its blue tiles were brought from Isfahan. According to a pedigree in this shrine, Seyed Mohammad Abed is one of the descendents of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (AS) who entered Iran during the caliphate of Al-Mutawakkil and resided in the current region and was buried in the same region (fig 1).

3.7.2. Imamzadeh Seyed Hassan (AS):

Shrine of Imamzadeh Seyed Hassan is located 2 kilometers far from the southeast of border town of Mehran. It is surrounded by farms and plains and there is river known as "Gavi" in its south. Its old building was constructed during the reign of the Qajar. This monument has a dome and two thick but short minarets on the sides of the entrance. The upper part of minarets has been decorated with brick. An inscription in the building of Imamzadeh proves the above claims. Another inscription shows that Imamzadeh Seyed Hassan is one of the descendents of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (AS). Imamzadeh Seyed

Hassan is known as "Romesken" among the people of region (fig 2).



Figure 2: Imamzadeh Seyed Hassan in the city of Mehran

4.7.2. Shrine of Haji Bakhtiar:

This shrine is located in Chavar, a city in Ilam County. It is surrounded by Shahid Rajaei Town from east, Ban Soroor from west, a relatively high cliff and a river from south, and Shireh Zool Mount from north. There is no inscription and pedigree in the building of this shrine. The history of this monument goes back to the reign of Safavid dynasty and has a surface of 80 m². There are two comments about Bakhtiar; some believe that he is the son of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (AS) and the brother of Imam Reza (AS), had lived in Samarra in Iraq for a while, and when he was moving to Khorasan to join Imam Reza (AS) died in the current place and was buried there. Others believe that Bakhtiar had run away to this village due to the ruthless and tyrannical rulers of the time and settled and lived there to the end of his life (The archive of Ilam Cultural Heritage Organization).

5.7.2. Shrine of Seyed Abdollah:

It is 7 kilometers far from the southeast of Iwan and in a place named Sarab. There is a distance of 2 kilometers from this shrine to the main road of Ilam-Kermanshah. There is no inscription and pedigree in this monument. A piece of writing in the building of this shrine shows that Seyed Abdollah is one of the descendents of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (AS). Reportedly, he was from somewhere near Pol-e Dokhtar County and came to this region to promote Islam religion in the late 8th century and the early 9th century and ultimately died there. It has been mentioned in *Simaye Ilam* that Seyed Abdollah Araj is the son of Hossein Asghar who was the son of Imam Zeyn Al-Abedin (AS) and his sobriquet is Abu Ali Darvish Um Khaled the daughter of Hamzeh Mos-ab the son of Zobayr. He was known as Araj because one of his feet was paralyzed.



Figure 3: Shrine of Seyed Abdollah (AS) in Iwan County

6.7.2. Shrine of Haji Hazer:

It is 13 kilometers far from the northwest of Iwan County and is located in the way of Iwan-Islamabad road. This shrine has an old building which was constructed by a person called Noor Mohammad from Khaledi Kalhor Dynasty with the financial help of Hosseingholi Khan Abughadareh, the ruler of Poshtkooh. Reportedly, Haji Hazer was a servant of Imam Reza and the title of "Hazer" was given to him because of his conscientiousness. Some believe that he was dispatched to this area with Seyed Abdollah and died here. Another narration indicates that Haji Hazer is the brother of Imam Reza (AS) and the son of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (AS).

7.7.2. Imamzadeh Abbas:

It is 4 kilometers far from west of Lumar, Shirvan and Chardaval County and is located on a hill which overlooks Shirvan River. It is also 3 kilometers far from the main road. A cemetery related to the Islamic period surrounds the shrine. Some of the tombstones of this cemetery date back over 200 years and have carved designs. There is no inscription and pedigree in the building of this shrine. But there are some proofs that show Imamzadeh Abbas is one of the descendents of Imam Zeyn Al-Abedin (AS). This shrine is greatly respected by the people of Ilam Province and welcomes a large number of pilgrims.

8.7.2. Imamzadeh Pir Hossein:

It is 1 kilometer far from a village named Zangireh-e Olia, Shirvan and Chardaval County. The building of this shrine was constructed with an irregular plan and has a conical dome



Figure 4: Imamzadeh Pir Hossein in Shirvan and Chardaval County.

9.7.2. Imamzadeh Ibrahim ghatal:

It is located in the way of Mehran-Dehloran road after Bishedar Village and near the border of Iran and Iraq. There is no document of the old building of this shrine, but its current building was constructed after Iran-Iraq War. According to the manger of Ilam Endowment directory, this Imamzadeh has a pedigree and he is one of the descendents of Mohammad Hnafieh who is the son of Imam Ali (AS). This shrine welcomes more pilgrims in Nowruz than other times.



Figure 5: Imamzadeh Ibrahim ghatal (AS) in Dehloran

10.7.2. Imamzadeh Seyed Naser al-Din:

It is located on top of a hill in Aliabad-e Bozorg which is 20 kilometers far from the northwest of Zarrinabad, Dehloran County. There is an old cemetery around this shrine. Village residents are the Seyeds who believe that are the descendents of Seyed Naser al-Din. The old building of this shrine was quadrilateral, its entrance was in the north, and had 4 minarets and a mushroom-shaped dome. There is no inscription in this shrine but it has a pedigree which shows that Seyed Naser al-Din or "Seyed Sarveddin" is one of the descendents of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (AS) and was martyred in this region. He had 3 sons named Sadegh, Hadi, and Hami and 3 daughters named Fatemeh, Habibeh, and Roghayeh.

11.7.2. Imamzadeh Seyed Ibrahim:

It is 8 kilometers far from Zarrinabad and located in the southeast of Bardi Village, Dehloran County. There is a great ancient castle called Shakh or Shiagh 5 kilometers far from the east of this shrine with a surface of 500,000 m² (Afshar Sistani, 1372; 237). The building of this shrine is rectangular shaped and has an external octagonal pyramidal dome and an internal semi-spherical dome. There are 9 rooms and 2 tombs inside the building; the tomb of Seyed Ibrahim and the tomb of his sister BiBi Zaynab. The shrine of Pir Mohammad, who is

reported to be the son of Seyed Ibrahim, is located 2 kilometers far from the northwest of this shrine. The aforesaid shrine lacks a historical inscription, but according to a pedigree written in Najaf in 1304 (AH) and ratified by the allamas at the time, Seyed Ibrahim is the son of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (AS).

12.7.2. Imamzadeh Seyed Akbar:

It is located 8 kilometers far from the southeast of Dehloran County. Its old building has been completely destroyed. According to the manger of Ilam Endowment directory, Imamzadeh Seyed Akbar was an old monument which was severely damaged during Iran-Iraq War. After the war ended, a new building was constructed for this Imamzadeh. There is no inscription and pedigree in this shrine. Reportedly, Seyed Akbar is the son of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (AS). He came to Iran with Lady Fatima Masuma (A) in order to meet Imam Reza (AS) and died of disease in Dehloran and was buried there.

13.7.2. Jabir Shrine:

It is approximately 70 kilometers far from Ilam-Darreh Shahr road and located between Mount Melahrite and Mount Chalmi (near Jabir Village). There is a cemetery related to the Islamic period around this shrine. It lacks inscription but has a pedigree. According to the report of Endowment Organization, Jabir is one of the descendents of Jabir Ibn Abdollah Ansari (Izadpanah, 1363; 487). The old building of this shrine, which was resembled the shrines of Seyed Salah al-Din Mohammad in Abdanan and Daniel in Susa, was destroyed in 1370 (According to Iranian calendar) and a new building was constructed in its place



Figure 6: The sacred monument of Jabir in Jabir Village

14.7.2. Imamzadeh Seyed Salah al-Din Mohammad:

It is located in the south of Abdanan, on top of a hill overlooks the ancient castle of Posht ghal-e and near Shoorab River. There is no inscription and pedigree in this monument. Some believe that Seyed Salah al-Din Mohammad is the son of Imam Musa al-Kadhim (AS). "The structure of the raised dome of these monuments is unique in the history of architecture and is considered an innovation in Islamic art and the

remaining samples of them date back the 12th to the 14th (AD)," says Crown. There are the remnants of the old tombs near this shrine and some the tombstones have carved designs.

15.7.2. The research objectives:

The main objective of this study is the demographical analysis of religious tourism and the culture of pilgrimage. The especial objectives of this study are as follows:

- Demographical evaluation of the cultural structure of Ilam Province people including customs, ceremonies, teamwork patterns in life, profession, recreation, proverbs, and sayings.
- Identification of religious trends and beliefs of people, especially about shrines and sacred places and its common aspects and differences compared with other regions of country.
- Identification and description of the major religious monuments in Ilam Province.
- Identification of tourists interests about religious places.

16.7.2. Characteristics of religious trips:

Religious trips have some characteristics that the followings are a few of them:

- 1- Religious tourism has lesser environmental, cultural, and social impacts compared with other types of tourism that is due to the courses of religions the pilgrims come from. In addition, most pilgrims are quiet, peaceful, and law-abiding individuals.
- 2- Seasonality of religious trips: many of these trips are done only in certain seasons.
- 3- Since those who take this kind of trips are more in search of spiritualities, they don't have diversity of demands and usually seek simplicity.
- 4- People from all walks of life can take such trips. In other words, these trips are not restricted to a particular class of society. Religious tourism is the only opportunities to travel for many social classes in many developing countries, in which tourism industry is in its early stages. This situation can be observed more in middle societies that their middle classes are not financially and socially capable of long trips and their free time is usually spent by visiting religious sites and shrines.
- 5- Most religious and pilgrimage travels are done collectively and are organized.
- 6- In terms of religious orders relating to a certain religion, some religious trips have mandatory and emphatic state. So, all individuals who believe in a religion must take that trip at least one time (Exactly like the pilgrimage of the House of God in Islam that is obligatory on all Muslims, if they can afford it).

7- Religious centers and shrines proved an opportunities for people from different cultures and regions to meet each other.

8- Production and selling the old handicrafts of different regions in religious and pilgrimage places.

9- Religious tourism also has political aspects, as many religious places are subsequently considered as national properties and many of them are used for holding national celebrations (Rinschede, 1992).

17.7.2. Research questions:

- Is it possible to attract tourists to religious tourism attractions of Ilam Province through information and advertising?
- Is the knowledge of indigenous people about religious tourism attractions effective in attracting tourists?
- Has the deficiency of vehicles (Train and airplane) prevented the attraction of religious tourists?
- What are the effects of the lack of accommodations and welfare facilities on the attraction of religious tourists to this province?
- Has the dispersion of religious and sacred places prevented the religious tourism to develop?

2. Material and methods

The common methods of demography research were used in order to obtain the required data in this study. Interview, observation, questionnaire, and library documents were applied. Cochran formula was used to determine the volume of sample. The size of sample for experts is 206. According to Cochran formula, the volume of sample was determined more than 92 cases. As experts are in various organizations and institutions, random sampling was used to make the sample uniform and make it easy to access them. Samples were equally selected from each class of organizations or departments. Cranach method was used to evaluate the validity of questionnaires. This method is used for calculating the internal consistency of measures like questionnaire. SPSS software was used to calculate the coefficient of Cranach α which was 0.867 (greater than 0.7) for this questionnaire. This indicates that the questionnaire has high validity. According to the nature of questions and the objectives of research, in addition to descriptive statistics, inferential statistics such as t-test was used for frequency tables, graphs, mean, variance, scope, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum.

3. Results

As far as descriptive statistics is mentioned, the followings were obtained from the analysis 92 of the respondents:

- 51 of them were male (55.4%) and 41 were female (43.5%)
 - 7 (7.6%) of them had a high school Diploma or lower, 15 (16.3%) had Associate's degree, 44 (47.8%) had a Bachelor's degree, and 26 (28.53%) had a Master's degree or higher.
 - Age average, years of service average, and income average were 35 years, 9 years, and 485000 toman per month, respectively.
 Frequency distribution of the respondents view about religious and pilgrimage attractions of interest of tourists in Ilam Province in order of preference are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of the respondents view about religious and pilgrimage attractions of interest of tourists in Ilam Province in order of preference

Third priority		Second priority		First priority		Pilgrimage attractions
Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	
2/2	2	38/0	35	58/7	54	Shrines
8/7	8	52/2	48	40/2	37	Graves of the martyrs
89/1	82	9/8	9	1/1	1	Mosques

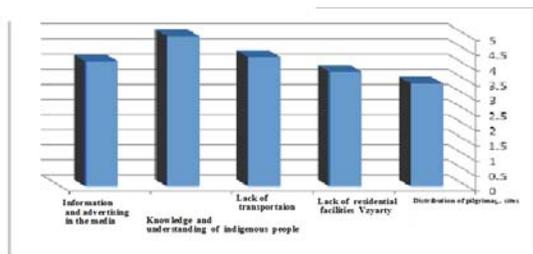


Figure7: Mean distribution of research questions

3. Conclusion:

The results of analyzing the data are as follows:
 - From 91 of the respondents, 55.4% of them were male.
 - From 91 of the respondents, 53.28% of them had a bachelor's degree.
 - Age average, years of service average, and income average were 35 years, 9 years, and 485000 toman per month, respectively.

- Shrines, graves of the martyrs, and mosques were declared the first, second, and third priority of tourists by 58.57%, 52.2%, and 89.1% of the respondents, respectively.
 - 54.6% of the respondents agree that it is possible to attract tourists to religious tourism attractions of Ilam Province through information and advertising.
 - 51.1% of the respondents agree that the knowledge of indigenous people about religious tourism attractions is effective in attracting tourists.
 - 49.5% of the respondents agree that the deficiency of vehicles (Train and airplane) has prevented the attraction of religious tourists.
 - 46.7% of the respondents agree that the lack of accommodations and welfare facilities have a great effect on the attraction of religious tourists to this province.
 - 36.2% of the respondents agree that the dispersion of religious and sacred places has prevented the religious tourism to develop.

The maximum was obtained from the question about the knowledge of local people about religious attractions with a average of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 0.058. The minimum was observed in a question about the dispersion of religious places in Ilam Province with a average of 3.40 and a standard deviation of 0.83.

As Ilam Province has remarkable religious tourism attractions, the income gained from them can change the current appearance of province and draw brighter horizons of the future. Religious attractions of this province can be good destinations for domestic and foreign tourists, especially from the rich Arab countries which mostly travel to this province through Iraq. Having more than 20 sacred places and neighboring with the land of Karbala (Iraq) are good motivations for development and promotion of religious tourism industry in this province. The geographical position has made it as the entrance of Karbala, so officials should take advantage of this situation. Collaboration of various entities including Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization; Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization; and Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance can pave the way for the promotion of religious and pilgrimage travels in Ilam Province. So, the necessity of appropriate advertisement should be taken into account.

4. Recommendations:

- Studying the features of religious tourism of Ilam Province in order to get information about the trend of developments and touristic behaviors such the direction of religious tourists in different regions and distribution of welfare facilities and also
 - Review the obstacles and problems of tourism in this province.

- According to common border with Iraq and the passage of pilgrims traveling to Karbala, establishing welfare services camps in religious places of province can attract more tourists to these centers.
- As Ilam Province was involved during Iran-Iraq War and many people visit the war zones of this province every year, establishing welfare-sanitary infrastructures can attract more tourists and visitors to war zones and graves of the martyrs.
- Constructing new roads and ways also can be effective in this matter.

Acknowledgements:

Authors are grateful for support to carry out this work.

Corresponding Author:

MALEK MALEKSHAHI

STUDENT BLVD, PAYAM NOOR University,
ILAM, IRAN

Postal code: 6931135478

References

1. Conference of Labour Statisticians 1987, Geneva, 1990.
2. Development", culture, Tourism, Development: Crucil Issue for the XXI Century, proceedings of a Rond 1996 Tabel June , paris, UNESCO.
3. kuban,D.,(1978)"conservation of the historical Environment foe Cultural survival",in R.Hold[Ed], concervation as cultural surrihval, I stanbul: The Age khan Award foe Architeture.
4. Meyer. Guenter (2004), "New Research Network for Islamic Tourism New Research Network for Islamic Tourism, Islamic Tourism", Issue 11.
5. Tilman D. Causes, consequences and ethics of biodiversity. *Nature* 2000;405(4):208-11.
6. Philip, G. & Hazlett, S. A. (1996). The measurement of service quality: a new P-C.P. attributes model. *International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management*, 14(3): 260-288.
7. Rinschede,Gisbert,(1992)." Forms of religious tourism and pilgrimage special interest group.
8. Sharpley,Richard, and Sharply sulia(1997)." Rural Tourism: An Introduction", I.T.P, London,pp.
9. Sofield, T.H.B & LI, F.M.S. (1988). Tourism development and cultural, policies of China. *Annals of Tourism Research*,25 (2):362-392.
10. Vause, J. (2008) "China announces emergency Olympics smog plan" *CNN.com*.