An investigation of domestic urban tourism by using statistical models (A case study of Kermanshah City)

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Abstract: Tourism is one of the important industries and growing sector in the national economy of the country. Urban tourism has recently gained attention by the researchers and also urban planners. The present paper aims to investigate urban tourism challenges in Kermanshah city as one of the oldest urban center of Zagros with its unique geographical position in the western border of Iran. The city has a great potential to be developed in tourism industry and plays an economic role in the province of Kermanshah. It seems that despite the high capacity of the city for tourism development, there are many hindrances for the growth of such industry. The methodology of the research is based on descriptive and analytical method by using statistical techniques. The data was collected by conducting a field work through questionnaire completion. The statistical population of the research was domestic tourists of Kermanshah city and the number of the sample size was 322 people. The socio-economic data was analyzed by applying SPSS and then were depicted via Arc GIS. The results revealed that there are some problems for tourism development like lack of proper advertisement and also the weakness of tourism infrastructures. The city has rich tourism socio-cultural elements which could help the development of the city's economy. It is concluded that by developing the urban tourism, the region would bear less negative environment impacts and gains a more diverse economy.

Keywords: urban tourism, Pearson's test, historical sites, tourism capacities, Kermanshah

Introduction

Tourism is the world's largest industry and employer (Gentry, 2007: 477), has long been viewed as a tool for economic development (Walpole, 2000: 559) and is a rapidly changing industry (Blanco& et al, 2008: 1). Cities today are the main engines of economic growth and development as they increasingly concentrate population and, more importantly, employment in virtually all sectors of economic activity (EC, 2006, 2007; OECD, 2006). Tourism is one of the major growing industries of the global economy especially by the acceleration of transport means in the recent decades (Ahas et al, 2008; 469). According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) travel represents 35 per cent of the world's export of services, while in 2006, 846 million international travelers were recorded and international tourism receipts amounted to US$733 billion (UNWTO, 2007). Economists believe that tourism is the third dynamic economic phenomena and growing industry after petroleum and car industries (Madhooshi, 2003:27). Tourism is counted as dynamic, large, diverse and clean industry and one of the growing sectors in the national economy worldwide. So, urban governors are eager to exploit

opportunities and advantages to create relative welfare of their citizens in present and future (Zangiabadi, 2006:133). Today, Tourism as global economy expanding rapidly as it generated 622.7 billion dollar revenues in 2004 compared to 2.1 billion in 1950. Moreover this sector allocated 8.2 percent of the total employment and 10.3 percent of GDP of world (Das, 2009: 470). WTO estimated that the number of tourists was about 898 million people in 2007 which will reach to 106 billion in 2020 (Albalate, 2010: 425). Iran is one of the main ancient civilizations of the world with its diverse and unique historic and cultural attractions from Hakhmanids, Sassanid to Islamic era and also a wide range of natural landscapes which supply endless destination for tourists (Chakrabirty et al, 2007: 305). The country possesses one of the world's oldest continuous major civilization, with historical and urban settlement date back to more than 5000 BCE (Zamani-farahani& et al, 2008: 1233). The country from tourism attractions is one of the ten countries of the world and from archeological point of view is one of the five leading countries with high potential resources for ecotourism development (Tajali, 2006: 4) and is one of the three countries by having a

diverse handicrafts (Zangiabadi, 2006:13). While it attracted only 0.5 percent of the world's tourism revenues and has placed in 90th level to absorb tourists compared to other nations (Tajali, 2006:4). These facts mirror the importance of tourism studies in the country and it is quite necessary that academic researches should pay more attention. Therefore the present research attempted to investigate urban tourism hindrances and prospects in one of the western cities of Iran.

Theoretical background

Tourism and traveling for recreation is one of the big industries and economic sectors in the world and one of the most important resources of foreign exchange and job opportunities (Asadi,& et al 2011: 329/ Asadi, 2011: 1021). Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors around the globe and it already ranks first in socioeconomic importance in many countries and regions (Rico-Amoros, 2008: 1). And is commonly used as a tool to stimulate marginal economies and to promote development through the jobs and incomes that it can foster (Liu and Wall, 2006: 159). Some believe that tourism is promising industry as a multiple dimensional activity which could alleviate the economy of many developing countries (Taghvaei, 2009:33) and guarantee economic growth by vigilant planning. Urban tourism as a branch of tourism geography intends to study the function of tourism on socio-economic and physical changes towards urban development (Movahed, 2007: 35). Kareski believes that urban tourism is originated from Mesopotamia and Sumerian civilization where cities were not only place of living but also were destination of travelers for leisure and excursion (Edwards, 2008: 1032). Urban tourists choose a city to visit for one or multi-purposes reasons such as leisure, trade, visiting friends and other cultural attractions which usually lasts between one day to less than one year. Tourists spend most of their times in urban areas or use urban infrastructures to visit rural places, so today it is difficult to separate urban tourism from rural especially the generative role of tourism in the urban-rural economy. Evident shows that many European countries have recently promoted tourism industries by organized and extensive advertisement to attract visitors for economic revenues (Albalate, 2010:425). In developing world cities as dynamic places have supplied various attractions which range from natural to socio-cultural elements by presenting an economic price for visiting. Cities have always been as main destinations and a main goal for tourists (Seifolddini, 2009: 158). Internal and external tourism are two important components on city's economy that other sectors like mines as source of employment and tax revenues as source of city's income lose their share in economy as whole, while service sector gains more importance. Tourism expands service sector in which clearly touristic urban places have to direct planning towards tourism oriented policies. Experiences show that Iran can exploit tourism opportunities by systematic planning. Urban development plans should consider the impact of tourism on the city physical, socio-economic and environmental characteristics. Urban tourism resources include three following sections:

First; the primary elements which are the main factor of tourist pull such as historic sites and streets, parks and gardens, galleries, cinemas, and etc. Secondary tourism elements are accommodation services, shopping centers.

Third part includes managers, tour guides (Movahed, 2007:43). Cities are destination of tourists and now the majority of historic towns benefit from cultural tourists who are interested to visit historic monuments and attend in cultural events. Also cities are the center of economic, recreational, medical, scientific activities which attract tourists with different purposes (Qaedrhmati, 2004: 34). There are many cities with unique touristic values which have failed to attract tourist due to physical infrastructures in Iran. In general a city with touristic elements has to follow a strategic urban plan to achieve sustainable tourism. The main factors of tourism development plan are shown in figure 1.

Study area

The city of Kermanshah is the political and administrative center of Kermanshah province which is located between 34 ^{o} 19' N and 47° 7' E of Greenwich meridian and 1322m from sea surface. The city has an arid climate with hot and dry summer and cold winter (Consulting Engineer of Land use Plan, 2003:1). The city is sited in a rich historic region where the mankind settled in about ten to twelve thousand years ago. The ancient site of Tagh e Bostan dates back to Sassanid era and is one of the first cores of city formation. The French merchant Tavernier who visited Iran in Safavid era described Kermanshah as a vibrant and developed city (Shaham, 2004:141). Today the city is one of the two megacities of the West and North West of Iran after Tabriz which has the eighth rank in Iran's large urban centers. According to the most recent national census the city had a population of one million in 2006 and also has a concentrated physical structure. The city is determined as the center of tourism for region 3 (zone of Zagros) in the National Tourism Development Plan. Also, the city is introduced as a distinguished city for its provision of regional services of Kermanshah region. The city favors a superior position due to its location as center of Zagros great

region close to western border of Iraq (Consulting   Engineers of Tadbir e Shahr, 2005:652).
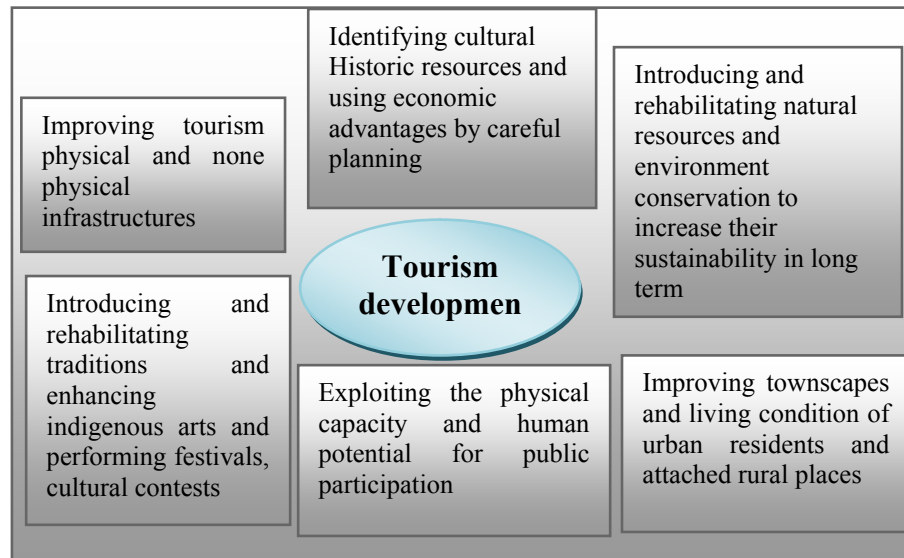

Figure 1: The components of urban tourism development plan
Source: Taghvaei, 2009

The main tourism attractions of Kermanshah city include:

- **Tagh e Bostan:** Belonged to Sassanid era which is consisted from two stone-written of second Ardeshir and two Eywan as small and big.
- **Bazaar:** One of the exclusive architecture of the city which forms the city core.
- **Moaven al molk Tekiyeh:** The building was founded in 1941 in the old part

- **Biglar Baygi Tekiyeh:** Qajar era, Mirror work which is unique in Kermanshah and now is the museum of calligraphy
- **Jami mosque:** Zandiyeh era
- **Emad oal doleh mosque:** Qajar era which one of its main entrance doors was transferred from Najaf Iraq the holy shrine of Imam Ali
- **Holy war Museum:** The first museum of imposed war in the country
- **Handicrafts:** Carpet, glim, Giveh, different types of traditional music instruments
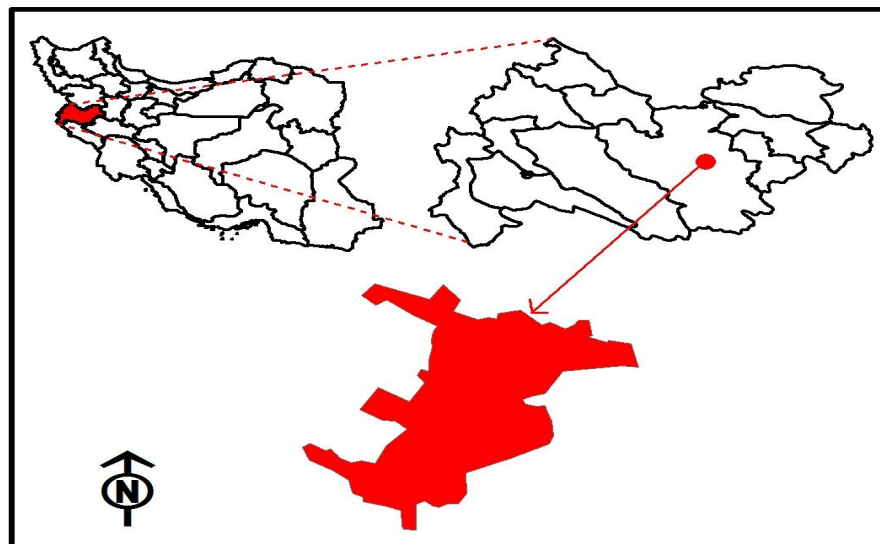

Figure 2: The geographical location of Kermanshah City

Methodology

The research method is based on a mixed descriptive- analytical model. The statistical population was consisted from internal tourists who visited the city in July 2010. The simple random method was used to determining the number of samples which 322 tourists were chosen for interview. Completion of questionnaire has been the main tool of measuring which tourists were asked by using Likert spectrum about different aspects. Two set of research indicators included independent and dependent, were defined. The independent indicators are weakness of infrastructures, weakness of advertisement socio-cultural factors; the dependent indicator is tourism development. To show the validity of measuring, the researchers have consulted

with the local experts of Tourism Organization which was accepted by content and form. Also Cochran Alfa coefficient was used to determine the reliability of questionnaire which has shown 74 percent. Finally different statistical models such as inferential and Pearson coefficient were applied to analyze the data.

Research findings
a: Descriptive results
Socio-economic characteristics of tourists

The gender composition of the tourists showed that male exceeded from the female by 68.4 percent compared to 31.6%. The literacy distribution of tourists illustrated that most of the visitors had a diploma or a BA degree which together made 67 % of all tourists.

Table 1: The level of literacy among the City's tourists

Level of Literacy	Illiterate	Primary	Secondary	Diploma	BA	MA and more	Total
No	8	21	54	127	89	23	322
%	2.5	6.6	16.7	39.4	27.6	7.2	100

The results from income level showed that most of the urban tourists belonged to the middle income group who had earnings of 400 to 600 thousand toman monthly (Table 2).

Table 2: The level of tourist's income of Kermanshah

Income	Less than 200000	200000 - 400000	4000000- 600000	+600000	No answer	Total
No	12	85	187	24	14	322
%	3.7	26.5	58.1	7.4	4.3	100

The most common transport mode of tourists has been private car as it follows the norm of the country. It is evident in table 3 that only 26. 1 has traveled by public means.

Table 3: The main transport means of tourists

Transport Mean	Private car	Tour Agency	Bus	Airline	No Answer	Total
No	197	22	84	12	7	322
%	61.2	6.8	26.1	3.7	2.2	100

The main goal for traveling to city has been visiting the tourism attractions with 66.5 percent and 14.6 came to see their relatives. 6.5 percent for shopping, 5 percent for educational and trade and 7.4 percent for others. Table 4 shows the details.

Table 4: The main goals of travel to Kermanshah

Goal	Visiting Relatives	Recreation and Leisure	Education and Trade	Shopping	Others	Total
No	47	214	16	21	24	322
%	14.6	66.5	5	6.5	7.4	100

Also the results showed the historical complex of Tagh e Bostan was the most visited site of the city as it attracted two third of the visitors (Table 5).

Table 5: the most visited place of Kermanshah city

Place	Tagheh e Bostan	Mosques and Takaya	Bazaar	Mountainous Park	Museum	Others
No	217	14	24	49	5	13
%	67.4	4.3	7.4	15.3	1.5	4.1

Tourism problems from tourist's view

There have been four sets of problems which tourists reported in the questionnaires. Urban traffic congestion was one of the highly cited problems which led to waste of time and annoyance of tourists especially in the central parts of the city. 21.7 percent were unhappy about service prices and 16.3 percent complained about lack of sufficient parking places. Table 6 shows the results in detail.

Table 6: Tourism problems in Kermanshah city

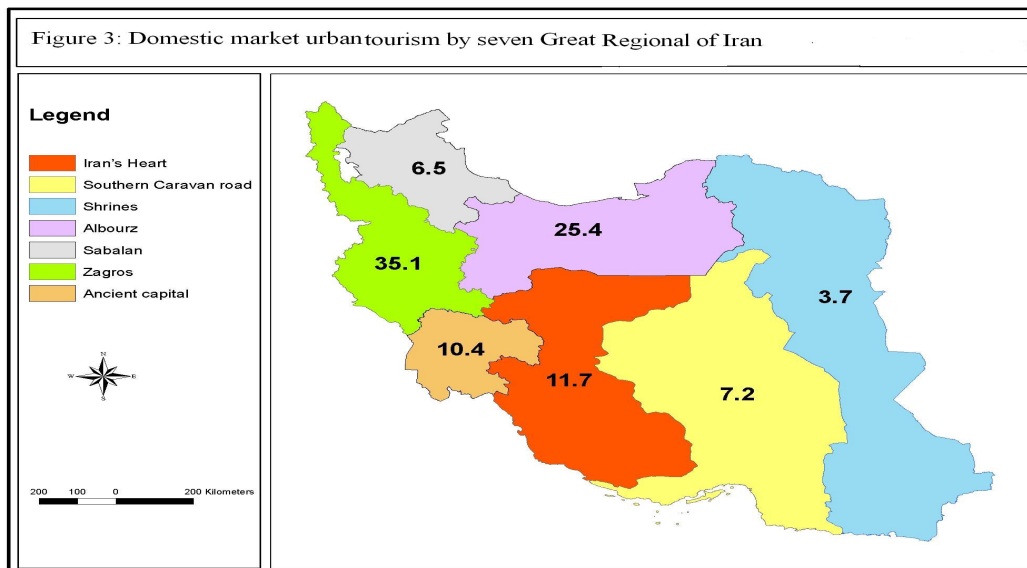| Problems	Lack of Guiders	Sanitation Services	Parking	High Prices	Traffic Congestion	Driving Signs
No	28	45	52	70	111	16
%	8.7	14	16.3	21.7	34.5	4.8

Tourism market regions of Iran

The Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization of Iran have classified the country into seven great tourism regions (Zangiabadi et al, 2006: 142). The internal tourism market of Kermanshah city is considered on the base of such classification. It shows that 35.1 percent of tourists of the city came from Zagros Region (Hamadan, West Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Ilam, Lorestan). Also 25.4 percent visited Kermanshah who travelled from Albourz Region (Tehran, Mazandaran, Golestan, Semnan, Qom, Markazi, Qazvin). Therefore the majority of tourist origin was belonged to two great Regions of Iran. Table 7 shows the details of other regions.

Table 7: Domestic market of urban tourism in Kermanshah by seven Great Regions of Iran

Regions	Southern Caravan Road	Sabalan	Ancient Capital	Iran's Heart	Albourz	Zagros	Shrines
NO	23	21	33	38	82	113	12
%	7.2	6.5	10.4	11.7	25.4	35.1	3.7

Figure 3: Domestic market urban tourism by seven Great Regional of Iran

b. Results from testing the hypotheses

The research started by proposing two hypotheses. The first one concentrated on the assumption that advertisement has no direct influence on tourism development (H0). Or advertisement has direct influence on tourism development (H1). Since the independent and dependent variables of the hypotheses had relative and interval dimensions, the

Pearson correlation is applied to test the degree of significance between the given variables in this research. The level of meaningfulness test obtained sig=0.00 which is lesser than a=0.01, therefore H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected (Table 8). In fact the data analysis revealed that tourism development id depended to advertisement and marking.

Table 8: Pearson's r test for studying weakness of advertisement in Kermanshah

Test	No	Correlation	Significance	Error Limit
Pearson	322	-0.35	0.00	0.01

-Testing second hypothesis

The research has continued by the second hypothesis which stated that weakness of tourism infrastructures and services could not influence tourism development (H0) or the limitation of

tourism services could impact tourism development (H1). The Pearson's r also was used to test this hypothesis which resulted sig=0.00, therefore because it is lesser than a=0.01 this hypothesis is accepted and H0 rejected.

Table 9: Pearson's r test for studying weakness of tourism infrastructure and services in Kermanshah

Test	No	Correlation	Significance	Error Limit
Pearson	322	-0.144	0.00	0.01

-Testing the third hypothesis

It was stated that socio-cultural factors influence the development of tourism in Kermanshah (H0) or the socio-cultural have no impact on tourism development in the city (H1, Pearson test is used to

examine the significance of this hypothesis The obtained sig=0.00 which is lesser than a=0.01, so H1 is accepted and H0 was rejected. Therefore socio-economic factors influence tourism development.

Table 10: Pearson's r test for studying the influence of socio-cultural factors on tourism development and services in Kermanshah

Test	No	Correlation	Significance	Error Limit
Pearson	322	0.32	0.00	0.01

Discussion and Conclusion

Evidences show that urban tourism has gaining attention in the macro economic policies worldwide. Also, such common consideration to tourism industry, involved all parts of economy, society of many developing counties from national to local levels. The present study was undertaken to investigate the potential of urban tourism in development of a city at the regional level. It could be discussed that urban tourism has multi relations with socio-economic conditions of each society. So, on the base of such conception the research conducted a field study in the city of Kermanshah as one of the main poles of the Iranian tourism market. The results indicated that historical elements of the city have been the most visited sites with 67.4 percent and the majority of tourists came from Zagros region due to its vicinity. Traffic congestion was one of the most reported problems by tourists. Also weakness of physical infrastructures and weak advertisement were other problems which tourists complained about

them. Low quality of accommodation facilities brings low-quality tourism. The low quality of accommodation and other facilities is one of the major obstacles to the development of higher quality and sustainable tourism in Kermanshah. So, it seems that the urban authorities have to plan and renovate city transport system along with other measures to mitigate risk of tourist decrease in future. However the majority of the visitors were satisfied about the good humor of host society whom has been described as kind and helpful citizens. Despite the high potential for tourism development in the region, this industry needs the following measures which could help the growth of urban economy of Kermanshah.

- ✓ Promoting the role of regional management of the city
- ✓ Improving physical structures of the city as the main supplier of tourist's accommodation

- ✓ Introducing the city and the province to the neighboring countries with its valuable historical sites by developing its communication facilities as main entrance of the western border
- ✓ Supporting the private sector in tourism industry by governmental incentives
- ✓ Training and increasing the human resources to function more efficiently
- ✓ Preserving the valuable and ancient historical sites of the city
- ✓ Provision of brochures, films and other media activities to introduce the tourism attractions of the province
- ✓ Control and management of all involved offices and agencies to provide better services in accordance to the standards

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