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The effect of Alamut castle tourism on the economic situation and employment of inhabitants in Gazorkhan village of Alamut

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Abstract

The purpose of doing this research is to analyze and evaluate the effect of Alamut castle tourism on economic situation and employment of inhabitants in Gazorkhan village of Alamut. For collection of the field data, the closed 20-question questionnaire tool with standard scale was used. In order to study the effects between the research variables and hypotheses, the Structural Equations Model (SEM) and especially route analysis technique have been used by applying PLS software. Current research has 5 main hypotheses. From 5 hypotheses of the research, one hypothesis namely the residential indexes with regard to this issue that have allocated significant numbers in the range of 1.96 and -1.96 to themselves, has been rejected and the rest of the hypotheses with regard to their significance number were confirmed. According to the research results, it was specified that the region space pattern in the villager tourism frame embraces the historical tourism and ecotourism species and these attractions may be one of the effective and perhaps important factors of tourism aspect in the region. It is necessary that in the first stage, the region to be organized for attracting the regional tourists and in this field, passing the leisure times by citizens in the townships of Qazvin province must be in priority.

Key words: Gazorkhan, Alamut castle, residential index, historical tourism, ecotourism.

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Introduction

The villager tourism development in different places provides the permanent, seasonal and part-time employment fields for the human force with middle expert knowledge and education, and reduces the unemployment rate. In the villager tourism development, in addition to create the direct employment, the field of other related activities like construction works, repairs, automobile rental and peddling are also provided for the native persons of village (Nasiri, 2010: 211).

In Iran, villager development is still facing with numerous problems and challenges, because the past strategies about villager development haven't been successful and they haven't been able to eliminate some problems like poverty, employment, hygiene, food security and environment sustainability, these strategies haven't been also successful in distribution of the benefits obtained from development and they have caused to create numerous problems for villager regions of the country; this problem has caused that in the recent years for another time, villager development to be considered through development and expansion of tourism in the villager regions of the country which have the necessary potentials for expansion of tourism. Creation of the employment, earning the foreign currency income for the country and improvement of the payments level, increase of the tax incomes from the place of economic activities related to the tourism, wealth adjustment, transformation of economic activities and propelling the income from urban regions to the villages and finally prevention from villagers emigration are from the consequences under study in this research which can be achieved through studying the villager economy like production of products, handicrafts and local market. Alamut castle is in the north-western of Qazvin province and near to Gazorkhan village. The fame of this castle is due to Hassan Sabah, propagator of Ismaeelieh religion in Saljoughieyeh era. "Gazorkhan" is one of the most important and nearest villages to the Alamut castle which has been located in Alborz Mountain range in 15 km of Moallem Kalayeh and 110 km of north eastern of Qazvin city. The main problem of the research is also to study the economic and employment effects arising from villager tourism development in this region. The importance of studying the subject in this region can be described for the following reasons:

1. Tourism development in this villager region has an important role in diversifying the economy in villager communities around Alamut castle and underlying the sustainable villager development of region.
2. It is accounted as a device for stimulating the local economy development (through overcoming on underdevelopment ideas and improving the life standards of local people in the region).

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3. It is stimulator or developed process for achieving the development sustainability in this villager region and also sustainability in all sub-indexes of economy, employment and also tourism industry in this region.

Therefore, tourism development in this villager region is necessary from three dimensions:

1. From cultural dimension:

-Cultural exchange and interaction and providing the proper conditions in order to introduce the cultural-social views and values of the region to other regions.

-Expanding and strengthening the cultural relations between the clan inhabited in this region with other clans.

-Regard to the cultural heritage, past history and civilization and introduction of cultural famous persons of the region under study.

-Expanding and strengthening the national unity and eliminating the ethnic and regional stresses and disputes of villager communities around Alamut castle as the result of nearness of inhabitants in this region's villages.

2.From social dimension:

-Creating and expanding employment in the services related to the villager tourism

-Reducing the social abnormalities, ethnic conflicts and regional stresses in the villager communities of the region.

-Creating social and economic balance between different villager regions around Alamut castle.

3.From economic dimension:

-Creating movement in the economic activities of jobs related to the villager tourism section and increasing the income of employed ones in this section.

-In the huge level, earning foreign currency income and increasing the gross national income

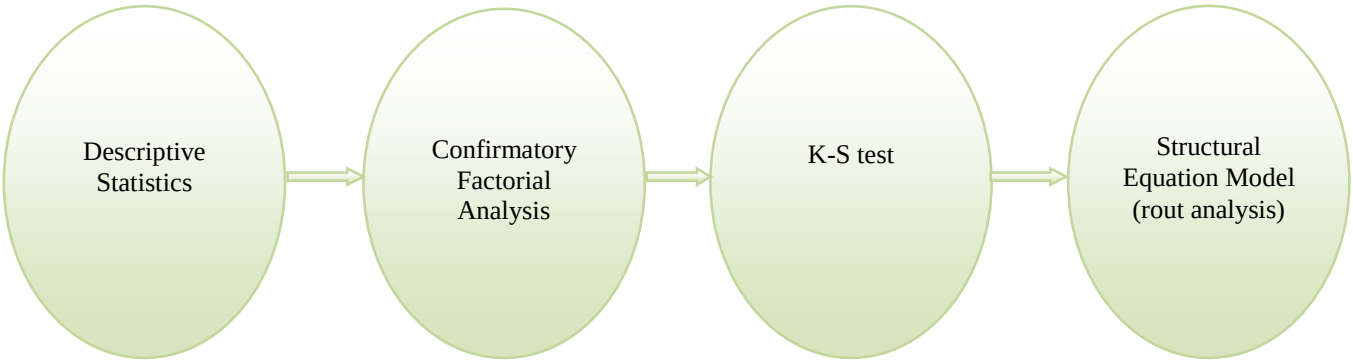
-Developing the region's handicrafts

Methodology

The methodology in the current research will be descriptive and analytic and in order to evaluate the components dimensions and effective factors on villager tourism

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development, at first the data and information were collected through library studies including books, reports, articles, theses and referring to the related organizations. In order to analyze the collected data, at first in the descriptive level by using of statistic indexes, the demographic features of the sample persons in the research including gender, age and education levels are described and summarized. In the analytic statistic of this research, in order to study the normality of the research variables, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test has been used and also in order to test the significance of relations between the questions and variables and fitness of the obtained measurement models and also study the convergent validity, the factorial analysis has been used and finally, in order to study the effects between the research variables and hypotheses, the Structural Equations Model (SEM) and especially route analysis technique have been used by applying PLS software.



Shape (1): The data analysis stages

The theoretical principles

Tourism

Tourism or touring generally is considered as the recreational travel. Although in the recent years, it includes any kind of travelling that due to it, the person goes out from his/her work or life environment. The person who tours is called "tourist or traveler" (Veysi, 2015).

Tourist:

The word of tourist was created since a time that the persons of middle class proceeded to travel. Since a time that people had more affordability and their life became longer, this affair became possible. Most of the tourists more than anything are interested in climate, culture or nature of their destination. The rich persons always have travelled to the far regions, of course not accidently, rather finally for a special purpose: seeing famous

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buildings and artistic works, learning new languages and tasting different foods (Kazemzadeh, 2014).

The tourism development planning

Currently, tourism is an important domain in academic, governmental, industrial literature and public problems. While it is affirmed that tourism is the largest industry of the world (Kishoreh and et al, 2002). Also, due to those methods that cause the tourism sustainability is influenced through environment, the tourism has double importance (Madani, 2013). Due to this same significant importance, diverse strategies in proportion to the time and place have been considered for it. Tourism development strategies can be discussed with regard to the approaches existing in the tourism planning. Studying the tourism planning literature indicates that there are several approaches in this field that in the huge level, have influenced on the compilation of tourism development strategies. These approaches consist of:

- Comprehensive planning approach
- Systemic approach
- Functional systems approach of tourism
- Local community approach
- Continuous and flexible approach
- Sustainable development approach
- Integrated planning approach

Comprehensive planning approach: This approach seeks a comprehensive design to conduct the tourism development. Such an attitude concentrates on general situation and place of tourism and in order to promote the tourism development, considers all tourism components. The main purpose of this approach is to facilitate the concordance among related sections for tourism development (Doosti, 2015).

Systemic approach: This approach presents a vast attitude to the tourism planning and provides a kind of flexibility through formulization of proper and applicable strategies in different levels or elements of tourism.

Gaun (1994) has suggested the tourism system based on the supply and demand parties and reasons that the supply party is dynamic because it is influenced from external multiple factors (Chahabra and Philips, 2009).

Domestic researches

Ahur (2014) has studied the effect of villager tourism on economic development of villager habitations: The results obtained from Chi-square test indicate that the villager tourism

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variable has positive and significant relation with the variables such as income, job creation, tourism amount and infrastructural facilities of Hassanlou village.

Rahnama (2014) has studied about preparation of territory and villager tourism development in Dehbekri region: The results obtained from this study indicate that the villager region of Dehbekri with having the pristine regions with very beautiful and unique nature has the ability to be converted to the important pivot of tourism in the country and for this purpose, the necessity to present, study and execute the short-term and long-term designs and plans for promotion of economy and employment of this region is considered more than before.

Turani (2014) has studied about evaluation of different species capacities of tourism for eliminating the economic challenges of villager regions from villagers' view: Finally, the research results indicate that the tourism species under study for eliminating the economic challenges have high capacities and they can be effective in this field, while there is significant difference between the species capacities under study in this field statistically; therefore, the natural, agricultural and cultural tourisms are placed in order in the first, second and third priorities.

Esmaeeli (2014) has studied about evaluation of the role of villager tourism in the villager life quality with emphasis on handicrafts: The research results indicate that among individual and familial features, some components like age structure, married life, single life, kind and manner of carpet weaving activity, history of habitation in village with governmental support in the frame of giving long-term loan have been from the most important effective factors on expansion of tourism industry in the handicrafts activists level in regional level (Shahriar township) and in the event of comprehensive planning, they will facilitate the qualitative promotion of villagers' life.

Choi (2012) also in an article entitled «The tourism employment quality» believes that the main origin of tourism services jobs includes the food stuffs and drinkables which are presented to the customers in most of institutes. Of course, this issue isn’t only related to the tourism. Basically, despite of different wages, the job satisfaction level is very high in the jobs related to the tourism; and the tourism employment quality is also better than other jobs.

Liper (2009) believes that in many countries, people know the tourism as a very large industry with abundant job opportunities.

Cukier and et al (2002) in a case study entitled «informal employment of tourism: sellers in Bali of Indonesia», by using of qualitative method (interview) have studied the importance of informal employment of tourism in two regions of Bali (Indonesia). The research findings indicate that most of the sellers are single adolescents who are 13 to 19 years old.

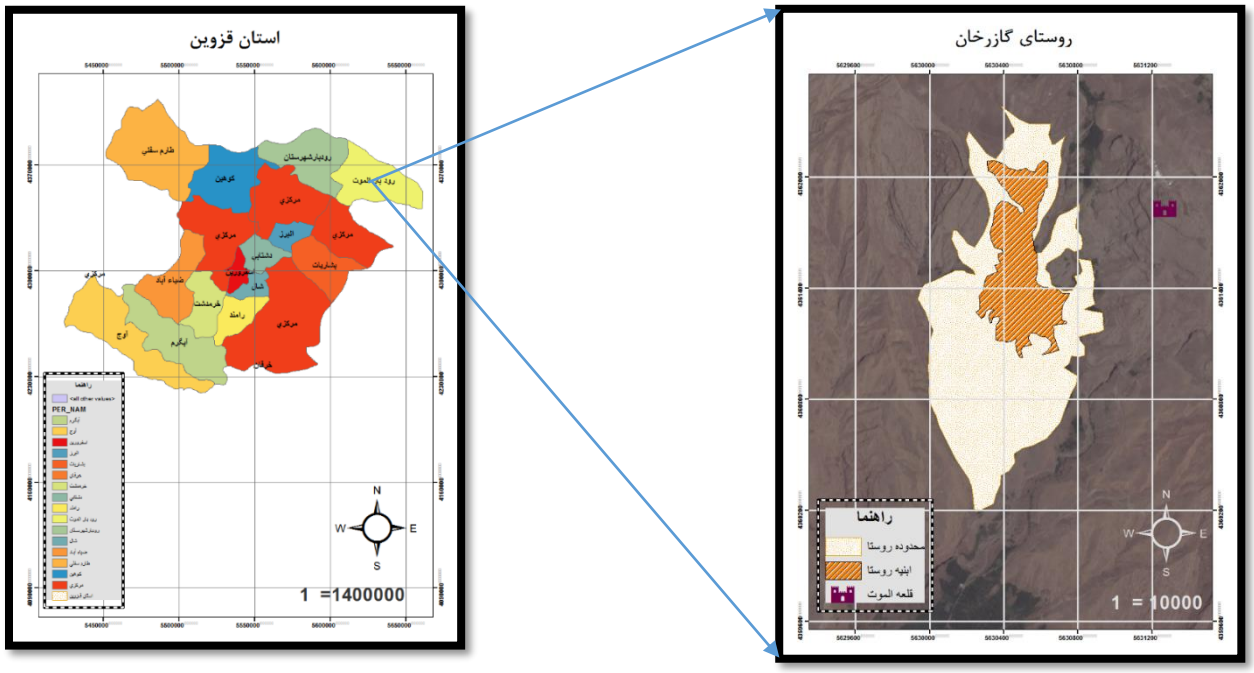
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The research domain features

Gazorkhan village is from the subordinates of Roodbar section of Alamut in Qazvin township with geographical coordinates of 50° and 36´ eastern length and 36° and 26´ of northern width, it has been located in the distance of 16 km of east of Moallem Kalayeh city and 110 km of north eastern of Qazvin city. This village from north eastern, east, north and west is limited in order to the famous rocky mountain of Alamut, Hoodkan mount, Shatan mount and Liz hill (the guide design of Gazorkhan village, Islamic revolution foundation, Qazvin province, 2013).

Qazvin province

Gazorkhan village



(The regions existing in the guide of Qazvin province map are in order from up to down: Abegarm Avaj, Esterorin, Alborz, Bashariat, Kharghan, Khorramdasht, Dashtabi, Ramand, Roodbar Alamut, Roodbar Shahrestan, Shal, Zia abad, Tarem sofla, Koohin, Markazi, Qazvin province)

(The cases existing in the guide of Gazorkhan village map are in order from up to down: Village range, village's buildings, Alamut castle)

Shape No.2: The geographical situation of the region under study (Gazorkhan)- reference: Bing Map, 2015

According to the census results in 2011, the population of Gazorkhan village has included 630 persons and we have witnessed the negative growth rate of population. After revolution and recent period, the unutilized lands located in the north eastern of village which have

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been almost in the north of the main road, have been considered and now, the village growth is also being continued in this same direction (guide design of Gazorkhan village, Islamic revolution foundation, Qazvin 2011). In terms of height, the region has been located in the valley and plain range, and the heights of the region with distance from it are mostly in the north, north western and some in west regions, but Gazorkhan village has been located in the valley range which is relatively even. In terms of geology, it has kinds of soils which usually cover the plains and valleys of the region. Gazorkhan village is a mountainous village with concentrated residential texture and it has been settled in a sharp slope. The slope direction of the village is toward south. Gazorkhan according to the Cupen's climatic classification structure and PRECISE climatic modeling has Mediterranean and semi humid mountainous climate and it has the spring water for agriculture. Maximum temperature recorded in the meteorology station around the region during 30-year period has been 19.4° in January. The mean of annual rain in the region has been more than 300mm and sometimes the maximum rain in the region in north eastern hillside of Alamut has been more than 550mm. The main winds of the region consist of fog and mystery winds. The land surface has been covered with the plants such as walnut, apple, cherry, black cherry, kinds of plum, grape peach, hawthorn, sea buckthorn, hazelnut, plane-tree, willow, poplar, ferula gummosa, Alhoochal,… Some of the specified wildlife species in Alamut region consist of mountainous goat, brown bear, leopard, caracal, wolf, swine, jackal, fox, rabbit,.. From the birds species, predatory birds, partridge, Caspian Snowcock can be mentioned. Some of the reptiles species consist of lizards, snakes, tortoises,.. Some of the amphibious species are frogs and from the fishes species, river whitefish, dace, trout can be mentioned (Jihad Keshavarzi, Qazvin Province, 2011). Currently, the following stratums are observed in the villager community under study:

A) Familial utilizers landowners including: 1-Petty landowners, 2-Revenue farmers.

B)Landless farmers including:

Shopkeepers, brokers, governmental and non-governmental employees, drivers, mechanics, tradesmen (carpenters, blacksmiths,..), traditional and new producers,.. (guide design of Gazorkhan village, Islamic revolution foundation, Qazvin Province, 2011).

Gazorkhan village has electricity, tap water, remote telecommunication, outpatient clinic, police station, mosque, baking bread, religious center (Hosseinieh), urban bus service, butcher's shop, supermarkets and shops, and it doesn’t have urban gas. Gozorkhan village in terms of a series of public facilities (such as sport and recreation spaces) is facing with shortage and most of public infrastructural and administrative facilities in this region in proportion to its population and number of tourists that attracts aren’t to the expected extent. Totally, 185 persons are active in the agriculture and animal husbandry section of

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the village that the agriculture section has allocated 81 percent of economic group to itself, the job of the most of the village's people is farming. The relational ways of region are asphalted road of Qazvin-Alamut, dirt-road of Akbarabad and Bahramabad road that the most main traffic is accomplished from the asphalt road pathway of Qazvin-Alamut. The inhabitants of Gazorkhan village all are Muslims and follow the Asna Ashari Shia Religion (Jihad Keshavarzi, Qazvin Province, 2011).

The tourism attractions of the region

Gazorkhan village from north eastern, north, north western, west and south western is limited in order to the Hassan Sabah castle, Hoodkan mount, Khoshkchal village, Liz valley (Ghari Taleh) and Chapan and it is limited to the Galeh Chali Sar and Garma Galou from south eastern. Gazorkhan village has been located in the down side of famous castle of Alamut, existence of proper pastures, rocky habitats and forest coverage in some points has helped to the presence of diverse wildlife species in this region significantly. Alamut castle is in the north eastern of Gazorkhan village and on top of a stony mount with height of 2100m from the sea surface. This mount has been started from Narmeh Gardan (between Narmehlat and Garmarood) and it has been continued toward west. There is cliff from all four sides around the castle located in this mount and the only way for entering to the castle is at the end of north eastern side that Hoodkan is overlooking on it with a relatively much distance. Alamut road is separated from autobahn a little before Qazvin. From beginning of the road, the vegetation becomes diverse gradually and greens and freshness embrace anywhere. About 30 km distance exists from Avan Lake two-way up to Hassan Sabah castle two-way which is a very beautiful path with many trees. The way for entering to the castle is a long and breathtaking path, the number of stairs is a lot, but probably it becomes a number high than 1000 stairs (Jihad Keshavarzi, Qazvin Province, 2011).



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Shape (3): The narrow and wandering path of Alamut castle- reference: Anobanini website, 2011

From other natural attractions of the village, the trunk of an old plane-tree can be mentioned which is in the main square of the village. In the historical village of Gazorkhan, numerous historical works have remained from the ancients that some of them consist of: Mahmoud shrine tomb at the beginning of southern hillside of village, shrine of eighteen Imams tomb, old mosque of the village, Ghatlgah square in the old texture of village and old cemetery. Also, in this village, the worthy historical buildings which have importance for protecting the old identity of village are a lot. These buildings consist of: Mansouri , Rashid Nayebi , Samiee, Zeinolabedin, Safari houses and Hanifeh Shrine. Among the people of Gazorkhan village, respect and regard to the religious and traditional values have a special place. The landscapes of abundant gardens of cherry, black cherry and kinds of other fruits in spring, autumn, summer seasons, wandering alleys and old houses evoke a beautiful picture in the mind which is an original pattern of the old villager space. The local clothing used by men in Gazorkhan village doesn't have much difference with urban people, but women's clothing especially old ones who are often interested in local cloths includes long skirt, draped lap, a kind of jerkin and headdress. The local foods of Gazorkhan village include Fesenjan, broth, kinds of pottage, kebabs and foods which are made with vegetables. In spring, also using of mountainous vegetables like Valak in the local foods gives agreeable taste and smell to the foods (Jihad Keshavarzi, Qazvin Province, 2011).

The research findings

At first by using of Bartlett test, we are ensured of the sampling sufficiency. As it is seen in the table 1, with regard to this issue that KMO index has allocated a number higher than 0.6 to itself, therefore the number of samples is sufficient for factorial analysis. Also, the significance amount of Bartlett test is smaller than 5 percent which indicates that the factorial analysis is proper to identify the factorial model structure.

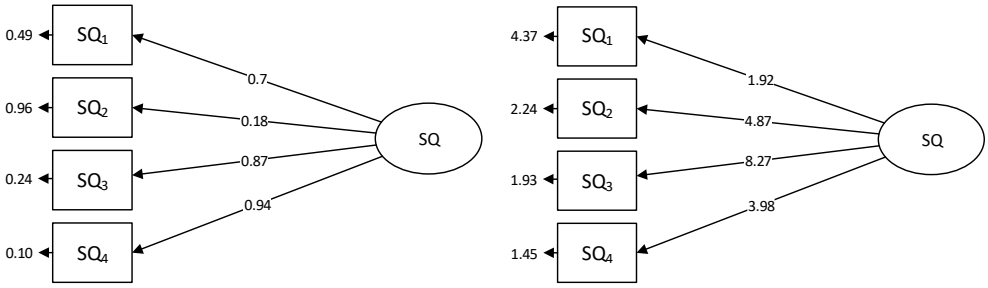
Table (1): Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Bartlett's test

Measuring the sufficiency of sample numbers of Kaiser Meyer		**. 792**
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	62.576
	Freedom degree	66
	Significance number	. 000

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The model related to measure the employment development variable

In the following, the model related to measure the employment development variable has been indicated in two states of standard coefficients and significance numbers.



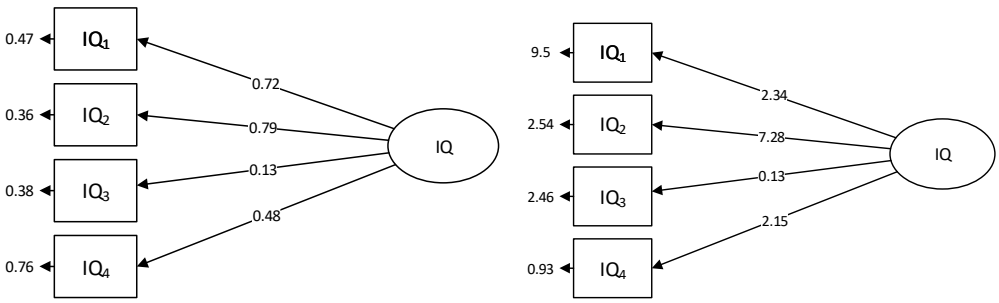
Shape (4): A and B: The model related to measure the employment development variable in the states of standard coefficients and significance numbers

In the shape (4) A, the model related to measure the employment development variable has been brought in the significance numbers state. The criterion in confirming and rejecting question is significance number. The criterion in significance numbers is in this form that if the significance number is larger than 1.96 or smaller than -1.96, that question will be confirmed for evaluation of intended dimension and if the significance number is in the above range, that question will be rejected for evaluation of that dimension. As it is observed in the shape (4) B, question SQ1 doesn't have the necessary validity for evaluation of the transportation variable.

The model related to measure the natural and historical attractions variable

In the shape (5) A and B, the model related to measure the natural and historical attractions variable has been brought in the significance numbers state. With regard to this issue that the question IQ3 has allocated a number out of [-1.96, 1.96] range to itself, consequently it doesn't have the necessary validity and it is eliminated from the model.

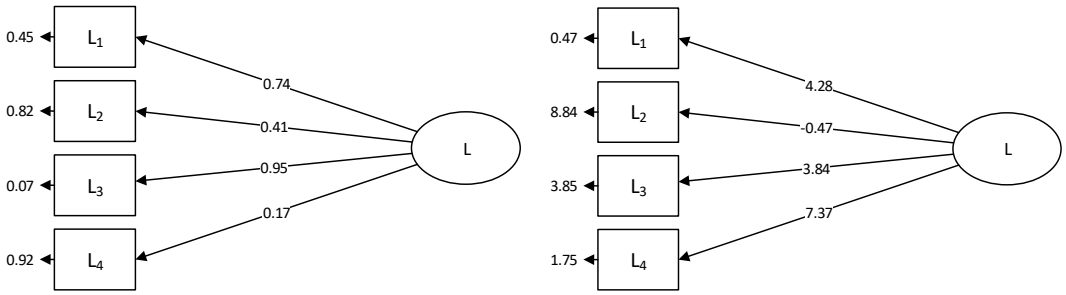
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Shape (5) A and B: The model related to measure the variable of natural and historical attractions in two states of standard coefficients and significance numbers

The model related to measure the variable of handicrafts and tourism products development

In the shape (6) A and B, the model related to measure the customer loyalty variable has been brought in the significance numbers state. With regard to this issue that the significance number of the question L2 has allocated a number out of [-1.96, 1.96] range to itself, consequently it doesn't have the necessary validity and it is eliminated from the model.

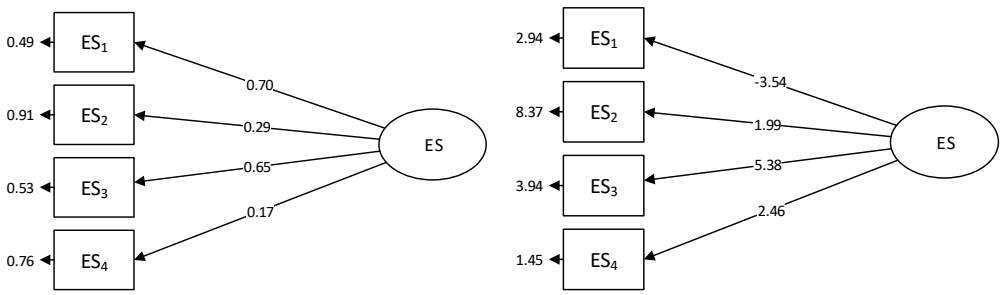


Shape (6): The model related to measure the variable of handicrafts and tourism products development in two states of standard coefficients and significance numbers

The model related to measure the transportation variable

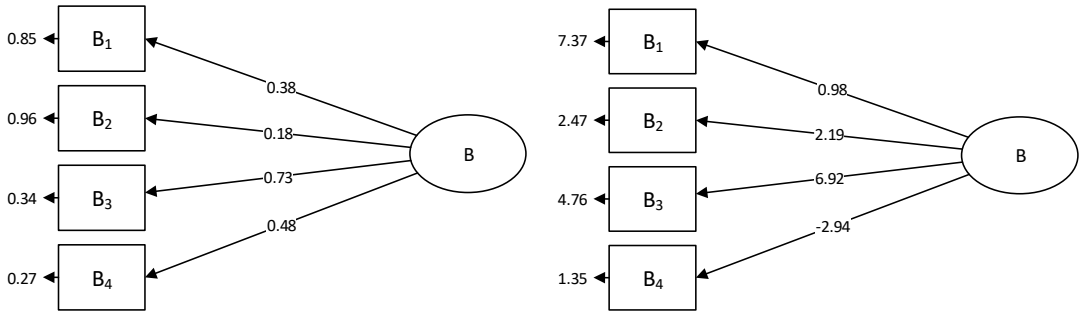
In the shape (7) A and B, the model related to measure the transportation variable has been brought in the significance numbers state. With regard to this issue that all questions have allocated a number out of [-1.96, 1.96] range to themselves, consequently they have the necessary validity and they can be used in the route analysis.

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Shape (7) A and B: The model related to measure the transportation variable in two states of standard coefficients and significance numbers

The model related to measure the reception units variable



Shape (8) A and B: The model related to measure the reception units variable in two states of standard coefficients and significance numbers

In the shape (8) A and B, the model related to measure the reception units variable has been brought in the significance numbers state. With regard to this issue that the significance number of the question B1 has allocated a number out of [-1.96, 1.96] range to itself, consequently it doesn't have the necessary validity and it is eliminated from the model.

The structural equations model

In the previous part in order to analyze the validity, the part of the model related to measure the structural equations was used. But in order to confirm or reject the hypotheses, the structural model part which is known as the route analysis should be used. The structural model indicates the relations existing between the research variables. The main criterion to confirm or reject the research hypotheses is the significance number, if the significance number related to a hypothesis is more than 1.96 or less than -1.96, the intended hypothesis will be confirmed and if the significance number related to a hypothesis is in the above range, that hypothesis will be rejected.

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In the structural equations model, the standard coefficients indicate the amount of independent variable effect on dependent variable. Whatever this number is larger, it will be better because the effect of random factors on the dependent variable will be reduced.

The model fitness tests

The purpose of the model fitness is this issue that a model has compatibility and coincidence with the related data to what extent. In the table (2), the model fitness indexes and acceptability criterion of each index have been mentioned and the statistic of current research model has been compared with them. Of course, this point is necessary to be mentioned that the model fitness indexes are a lot and each one according to the situation is used, but here we have attempted to bring some of the main and applicable indexes. It can be mentioned that the effective parameters on these indexes are different. For example, some of them are sensitive to the sample volume severely. Therefore, about the model proportion, all indexes must be seen and the low amounts of one or several indexes of the model fitness don't mean the lack of proportion of the model.

Table (2): The model fitness indexes

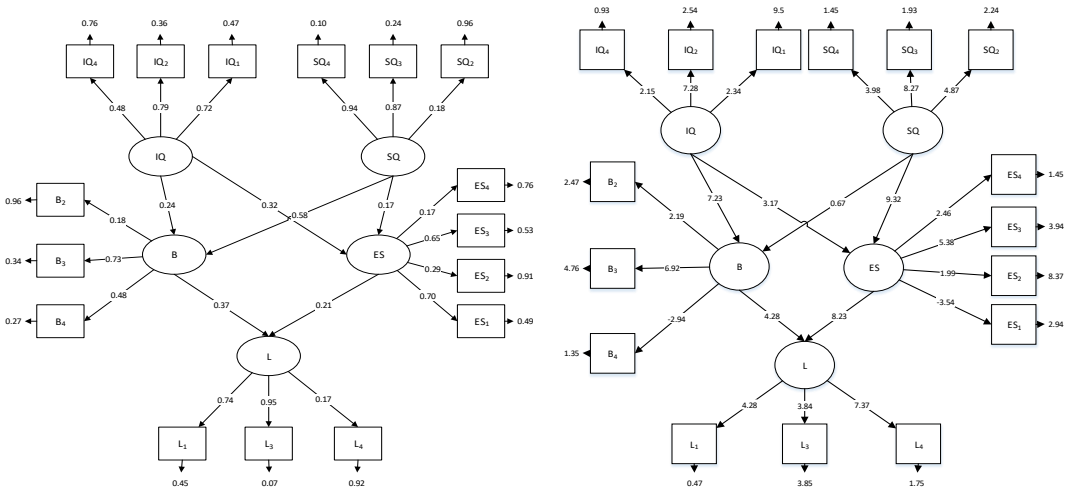
Fitness index	Acceptability criterion	Statistical population
(Chi square) χ^2	$\chi^2/df \leq 3$	1.58
RMSEA[1]	RMSEA ≤ 0.08	0.039
NFI[2]	NF I ≥ 0.80	0.96
NNFI[3]	NNFI ≥ 0.80	0.98
CFI[4]	CFI ≥ 0.90	0.98
IFI[5]	IFI ≥ 0.90	0.98
GFI[6]	GFI ≥ 0.90	0.95
AGFI[7]	AGFI ≥ 0.90	0.93

[1]- Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
[2]- Normed Fit Index
[3]- N on - Normed Fit Index
[4]- Comparative Fit Index
[5]- Incremental Fit Index
[6]- Goodness of Fit Index
[7]- Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index

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The discussion results

Current research has 5 hypotheses which have been obtained as the result of the effect of independent variables on the villager tourism variable. The researcher in order to study the research hypotheses has used of the structural part of the structural equations model called "route analysis". Our criterion to confirm or reject the hypotheses is a significant number. The shapes 9 A and B indicate the relations between the research variables in two states of standard estimation and significance numbers.



Shape 9 A and B: The route analysis of the conceptual model of the research in two states of standard coefficients and significance numbers

As it is also seen in the shape (9), from 5 hypotheses of the research, one hypothesis (residential indexes) with regard to this issue that has allocated the significance number in [-1.96, 1.96] range to itself, has been rejected and the rest of the hypotheses with regard to their significance number were confirmed. Table (3) indicates the results of the research hypotheses.

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Table (3): The research hypotheses results

Hypothesis	Relation	Standard coefficient	Significance coefficient	Result
1	Employment development	0.17	9.32	Confirmed
2	Natural and historical attractions	0.24	7.23	Confirmed
3	Development of handicrafts and tourism products	0.32	3.17	Confirmed
4	Transportation	0.58	0.67	Rejected
5	Reception units	0.21	8.23	Confirmed

Conclusion

According to the research results, it was specified that the region space pattern in the villager tourism frame embraces the historical tourism and ecotourism species and these attractions are as one of the effective and perhaps most important aspect of tourism in the region. Because they have caused to transform the people's activity and life pattern and pass from villager community based on agriculture to the tourism. Also, the urban life with the problems like pollution, traffic, greyness has doubled the need of citizens and people to the villager spaces and nature. Therefore, people choose the villages as a proper tourism destination. Qazvin-Gilan axis passage from beside the village can attract many tourists annually. Also, the existence of arable gardens and lands with special agricultural products of region has created a beautiful landscape which can be found in less places. In conclusion of the tourism market analysis of the region, it can be said that the tourism marketing policy-making of the region should be according to the historical tourism and recreation in the fresh air, nature and ecotourism that its target market in the first stage is in the regional scale and in the second stage, it is in the national scale so that through this way, a proper situation is provided for attraction of tourist in international scale. In the stage of growth to maturity of the tourism sample region, the tourists in regional scale are emphasized; because the tourism flow procedure will be able to be sustainable and constant merely if the tourist-acceptance scale foundation is formed from down to up. In other words, attraction of tourist from inside the province and adjacent provinces is placed in priority so that in the maturity stage of the tourism sample region of Gazorkhan, the tourist is attracted in the national scale and in the event of proper policy-making and marketing, the field of international tourism attraction is also provided; therefore, it is necessary that in the first stage, the region to be organized for attraction of tourists and in this field, passing the

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citizens' leisure times in the townships of Qazvin province must be placed in priority of regard.

Suggestions

-Presenting the strategical document and operational planning for development of tourism space pattern based on the nature under study and explaining the place of Gazorkhan.
-Repairing the space context of villager tourism in Gazorkhan region and adjusting the binary oppositeness of tourism in Alamut region.
-Clustering the ecotourism in Qazvin province with explaining the place of Gazorkhan region in Alamut region.
-Changing the attitude of axial attraction for completing and supplying the tourism product of the tourism sample region of Gazorkhan.
-Estimating the proportionate share of advertising and marketing for supplying the tourism product of Gazorkhan in the regional and national scale.
-Diversifying the tourism facilities, activities and services for satisfying the tourists and increasing the number of tourists.

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