An analysis Seydan ecotourism with emphasis on sustainable development

Jamal Mohammadi[a*], **Dariush Ahmadi**[b] and **Majid godarzi**[b]

[a]*Associate Professor of Geography and city planning, university of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran*
[b]*PhD student of Geography and city planning, university of Isfahan, ,Isfahan, Iran*

A R T I C L E I N F O	A B S T R A C T
	Ecotourism is one of the most popular methods in green economy and it can generate wealth and develop the economy of developing countries. Ecotourism supports environmental conservation, creates economic opportunities by emphasizing on benefits of the local community, and suggests that the involvement of the residents plays important role for the efficient management of tourism. In this paper, we present an empirical study to measure the impact of ecotourism on developing the economy of a historical place located in south west of Iran called Seydan. The proposed study distributes some questionnaires among 400 randomly selected people who participate in our survey. The results confirm that ecotourism can contribute the economy of the region, significantly. We also perform a comprehensive strategic planning to find out more about strength, weakness, treats and opportunities surrounding the region.

1. Introduction

Ecotourism ('eco' as in ecological) is a kind of tourism founded based on a specific interest in the natural history of a particular region. The idea emerged out of the eco-development and sustainable development literature during the years of 1970s and 1980s and has generated a substantial amount of interest and controversy. Interest, since it represents an alluring alternative to the mass tourism paradigm, which has been very transformative to the social and ecological conditions of destinations throughout the world. In addition, it provides some controversial discussion since many feel that it has yet to live up to its position as a more responsible or ethical form of travel. Issues, which limit its ability to impact positive changes in society include links with more consumptive forms of tourism, like fishing and hunting; being subsumed by the much bigger mass tourism industry; the inability of local residence to control the scale and extent of development in their own regions; the profitability motivation; and new plans such as accreditation politicized and institutionalized (Fennell, 2009). Ecotourism supports environmental conservation, creates economic opportunities by emphasizing on benefits of the local community, and suggests that the involvement of the residents plays important

* Corresponding author. Tel: +98-311-7932037-8
E-mail addresses: j.mohammadi@ltr.ui.ac.ir (J. Mohammadi)

role for the efficient management of tourism. Despite the past 30 to 40 years of history, Weaver and Lawton (2007) suggest that ecotourism, as a field of academic inquiry, is still in a state of adolescence since there has been limited attention to critical areas such as the industry, quality control, external environments or institutions even as the components and issues of ecotourism are being extended.

Wu et al. (2010) evaluated the dimensions of urban ecotourism using the fuzzy number construction approach. The technique possesses different advantages, including an ability to cope with ambiguous issues such as comprehensive nature and the need for subjects to respond with a single number. The results of their method disclosed that economic factors played a lesser role than social and environmental factors did. The study also reinforced the relative importance position of community participation while promoting urban ecotourism. They reported data and findings extracted from two ecotourism destinations, one located in urban area and the other located in non-urban area. The findings indicated that "identifying with local culture" maintained the highest weight (7.19%), followed by "inclination of supporting environmental conservation" (7.06%),"satisfying local environment" (6.82%), "the 5 degree of habitat diversity" (6.58%),"inclination of urban ecotourism" (6.50%), and "coverage of the green areas" (6.36%).

Bunruamkaew and Murayam (2011) identified and prioritized the potential ecotourism sites using geographic information system (GIS) and analytical hierarchy process (AHP) in Surat Thani Province, Thailand. The study detected several factors for suitability within land ecosystems including landscape/naturalness, accessibility, wildlife, topography and community characteristics. The evaluation process for ecotourism site considered nine criteria including visibility, reservation/protection, land use/cover, species diversity, elevation, slope, distance from roads, proximity to cultural sites and settlement size. The factors were chosen based on the professional expert's opinions. AHP was efficiently implemented to evaluate the details of the factors and class weights. GIS is another important factor in ecotourism planning and the technique helped us identify ecotourism sites by linking the criteria deemed necessary with the actual resources of the Province.

Tsaur et al. (2006) utilized subjective figures to analyze the relationships between community, resource and tourism in sustainable ecotourism. They used a Taiwanese indigenous ecotourism site as a case study and used Delphi technique to identify evaluation indicators of this tourist destination. They interviewed many local residents, tourists and resource administration to explore each group's perception of relationships with the remaining two groups. Kara et al. (2011) made an assessment on the natural and ecological features of Kocarli Adnan Menderes Urban Forest with regard to the suitability for ecotourism. They suggest that continuity in public transportation will eliminate the problems of access and Kocarli Adnan Menderes Urban Forest is not only a very remarkable ecotourism area for people who live in Kocarli and near villages but also for people living in Aydın and other districts. They suggest that activities in Kocarli Adnan Menderes Urban Forest will help social and cultural improvement of the people and economic development of the region.

Zhang and Lei (2012) explored factors contributing to residents' participation intention in ecotourism management. They proposed a structural relationship between their participation intention, environmental knowledge, attitudes towards ecotourism and the appeal of tourist landscapes. The results indicated that residents' environmental knowledge positively influences attitudes towards ecotourism, which in turn directly and indirectly makes suitable decision to take part in ecotourism through their individual landscape affinity. Lu and Stepchenkova (2012) presented a quantitative technique for assessing ecotourism experiences reported online by U.S. travelers to Costa Rica. They applied the content analysis technique and 26 attributes, which impacted ecotourists' satisfaction with their ecolodge stays were determined and further aggregated into seven different categories including ecolodge settings, room, nature, service, food, location, and value for money. A two-step non-parametric statistical procedure was developed to quantitatively support the classification of attributes into satisfiers, dissatisfiers, criticals, and neutrals, the typology.

Gurung and Seeland (2008) analyzed the current state of tourism in Bhutan and considered the prospects for the development of ecotourism. Empirical studies of tour operators and foreign tourists revealed that visitors interested in the natural beauty of the Himalayan kingdom stayed longer than those who came to experience its culture. By absorbing younger tourists, ecotourism could contribute to the objectives of gross national happiness. Most tourists and tour operators were in favor of ecotourism activities, which might benefit local rural communities. Chaminuka et al. (2012) analyzed the potential for development of ecotourism in rural communities adjacent to Kruger National Park (KNP) in South Africa. They determined preferences of tourists, according to origin and income levels, for ecotourism and their marginal willingness to pay (MWTP) for three ecotourism attributes including village tours, village accommodation and visits to crafts markets. They found out that among international and high-income groups of tourists, tourists were interested in paying much higher fees than proposed by communities.

In this paper, we present a survey on ecotourism in one of the most beautiful regions in Iran called Seydan located in south west part of Iran. The organization of this paper first demonstrates details of our proposed model in section 2. Section 3 explains details of our finding and concluding remarks are given in the last.

2. The proposed model

Seydan is located 65kms from shiraz-Isfahan road and it is only 12km away from the largest work of history in country, Persepolis. This city is the gravity center of three ecotourism and historical places in Iran. Seydan has a very desirable climate and geographical situation. With beautiful and attractive natural perspectives promenades such as Ghasre Ghalat, Bodre garden, Sar Asiyab, Chehel Akhtaran, Derekhtan Chenar (plane trees), Hoze Mahi (fish pond), Hoze Ghom (ghom pond), Emarat Shahrdari (municipality building), etc. are some of ecotourism and attractive places of Seydan. Fig. 1. shows geographical location of the city in the province of Fars.
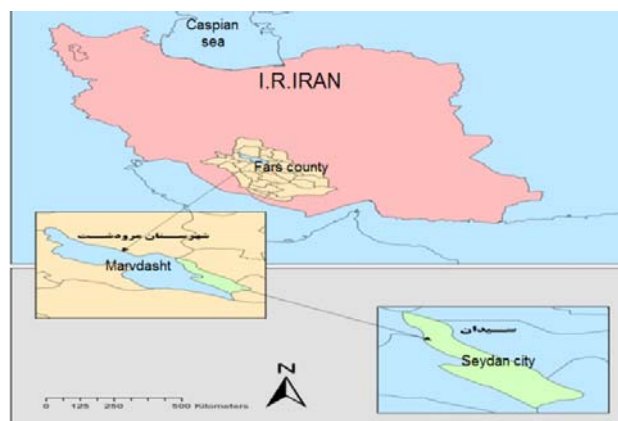

Fig. 1. Geographical location of Seydan

The primary purpose of this research is to investigate the existing potentials of ecotourism and to identify all threats surrounding the region and provide suggestions to remove the issues. It also proposes some guidelines for developing the ecotourism in this industry.

2.1. Method and materials

According to a report published by Seydan municipality there were approximately 100,000 people living in the region during the year of 2010. Using Kokran formula we have determined a sample of 400 people for this survey.

2.2. The main hypothesis

The main hypothesis of this research paper examines whether environment ecotourism capabilities are more than other attractions. Therefore, the null hypothesis is as follow,

H_0: Environment ecotourism capabilities are not attractive compared with other regions.

There are some other sub-hypothesis associated with the proposed study of this paper as follows,

- Lack of knowledge and enough awareness of environment ecotourism attractions, was the reason for lack of regional ecotourism development.
- Empowering Seydan's ecotourism helps in development of the region.

3. The results

In this section, we present some of the detailed results of the questions we asked from our participants. Table 1 shows the summary of Chi-Square test.

Test 1
K square value and first hypothesis free degree:

Test type	Amount	Free degree	Significant level
K square	248.100	3	0
number		400	

As we can observe from the amount of Chi-Square, the null hypothesis is rejected leading us to conclude that environment ecotourism capabilities are meaningfully attractive compared with other regions.

3.2 Testing the second hypothesis

The second hypothesis studies whether lack of knowledge and enough awareness of environment ecotourism attractions, was the reason for lack of regional ecotourism development or not. Table 2 shows details of our survey.

Table 2
The results of Chi-square test for the second hypothesis

Test type	Amount	Free degree	Significant level
K square	120.334	4	0
Number	400	400	400

3.3 Testing the third hypothesis

The third hypothesis investigates whether empowering Seydan's ecotourism could help in development of the region. Table 3 shows details of our survey.

Table 3
Chi-square test for the third hypothesis

Test type	Amount	Free degree	Significant
K square	217.295	2	0
Number	400		

As we can observe from the results of Table 3, the null hypothesis is rejected when level of significance is set to five percent leading us to make a conclusion that empowering ecotourism in Seydan contributes to development of the region, significantly.

3.4 Strategic Planning

In this section we present strategic planning results performed in this survey to find out more about strength, weakness, opportunity and threats (SWOT). Table 4 shows details of our survey.

Table 4
The results of SWOT for Seydan ecotourism

External factors	Internal factors	
	S	W
O	So1= increasing government attraction to planning and investment and tourism organizing So2=increasing private part motivation to investment So3=increasing more motivation for traveling and recreation So4=correct use of being population near these areas So5= using expert and experienced authorities in these areas So6= cooperation with governmental and nongovernmental organs So13=protecting tourism attracts with planning and paying attention to stable development principles So14=roads improvement and putting driving indications sing So15=increasing area security by making tourism police So16=identify ion and utilization of attractions, products and other relative advantages So17=using expert and expire need powers to take people cooperative associations and also educate and promotion of tourism by different meetings with area people	Wo1=protect unique and beautiful rives of under study area Wo2=and optimum use of height and high peaks to tourism Wo3=to protect sport and recreation attractive of these areas to tourism Wo4= use the area talents for investments Wo5= protect traditions and local colt are Wo6=having a deft and serene area Wo7= making shiraz road to the runway to be near shiraz and accessing there easily Wo8= protecting natural, sport, religious, historical and re creational attractive of city Wo9=to realize positive view of officials to employ and increase income wo10=to reinforcement the partnership of people of city's areas about different issues Wo11= advertising to introduce areas tourism attractive Wo12= protecting and making ecotourism areas Wo13= using experts and native people planning for ecotourism attractions Wo14= exchange the method of distribution of facilities, and putting priority of again the allocation of this model of facilities to tourism areas with high and medium capability Wo15=even exchange to type and method of planning and nation support of tourism areas, login profiting of organs, protection rules and provisions to improve and equip the infrastructure, different facilities and facilities of tourism in area Wo16=exchange and improving organs and linked organizations to educate people and tourism to have a favorable and optimum use of attractive
St	St1=decreasing the contamination of water, soil and climate of these areas St2= to permit to foundations wanting to make installations and equipments of ecotourism in area St3= patting attention to each ecotourism area capacity to decrease in its distraction St4=patting city's residential centers St5=encouraging and offering facilities to private part to investment in ecotourism part St6=government attention and investment in ecotourism part St7=patting sport and recreational equipments and foundations St8= improve and expansion forming tourism to a suitable operation of lands copes, forms, and villages gardens to take income and protect of destruction forms and plant cover St9=providing security of tourism areas to protect beginning social violations St10= diversification of facilities, activation, and tourism services to make them satisfied and therefore increasing the number of tourist	Wt1= having and 0 ecotourism view to some of areas to decrease the destruction of environment Wt2= planning for entry permission and pay entry for observing areas with high importance Wt3= patting transportations in Seydan city to transport travelers Wt4= improving infrastructure needed in Sydan city ecotourism areas Wt5=painting transportation to transport travelers in Seydan Wt6= stopping contamination of water resources like springs and rivers Wt7= government to ecotourism in part of tourism ability in making income Wt8= covering the sanitary center sin city Wt9=diversifying the areas attractive to attract more tourisms Wt10= preparing and encourage people to cooperate in improving infrastructures, facilities and different facilities and trade incomes from this way and also use of cooperation of private part in cases where people cannot cooperate or invest Wt11= holding seminars and meeting by relevant parts to improve ecotourism in area Wt12= to edit reform rules and provisions to a better use of attractions and tourism products and protect of destruction and polluting these recourses

4. Conclusion

Nowadays ecotourism industry as the most wide extending industry in the world has a special position and many countries are in a close and compressed competition to attract more people to their own regions. The proposed study of this paper performed an empirical investigation to find out whether it is possible to attract more people in one of regions called Seydan located in south west of Iran. The proposed study distributed some questionnaire among 400 randomly selected residence and tried to find out whether investing more in the region could possibly contribute to ecotourism in the region or not. The results of our survey indicated that government must carefully concentrate on this region and invest more to create better facilities to attract more tourists. We have also performed strategic planning using SWOT to find out more about the treats, strength, weakness and opportunities surrounding the region.

Acknowledgment

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