

Strategic planning for tourism industry using SWOT and QSPM

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ABSTRACT

Tourism plays essential role in today's economy and Iran has good position of tourism sources such as natural, historical, cultural, etc., although, these sources have not been utilized, properly. One of regions which have many potentiality and capabilities for developing Tourism in natural aspect is district and city of Galugah. The purpose of this study is to provide strategic assessment and optimization strategies for development of tourism industry to reach sustainable tourism development in this city. The study uses three techniques namely; Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) to determine necessary guidelines for development of tourism in the city of Galugah, Iran. The study first uses SWOT to categorize different factors and then QSPM is applied to prioritize various factors. The results of this study show that presenting methods in initial process and analyzing assessment matrix of T2 external and internal factors i.e. pollution of environment and river and extinction of plants species by result of pollution and O2 i.e. suitable climate for developing natural Tourism efforts in summer have been recognized as most priority factors among external factors. Intense cold of region in summer (W3) and existence of unique amusement places (S5) such as Amarg were recognized as effective and most priority factors among internal factors on Tourism development of Galugah city.

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1. Introduction

Tourism has its impact on economic, cultural and political issues (Simpson, 2001). Tourism may create job, increase foreign travel demand as well as security in the country and makes it a reliable source of income for local residences (Inskip, 1991). Many countries collect income from tourism than any other industries such as natural resources, etc. Tourism also plays an essential role in encouraging investment in infrastructure, generating revenue for the state and its direct and indirect job involvement across the world (Heath & Wall, 1991). The development of this tourism in industrialized countries may diversify income and reduce the imbalance in the economy (Getz, 1983). In several developing countries, it generates the opportunity for exports, productions and job creation. Moreover, the advantages of tourism

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are not limited to economic interest but it creates an opportunity to introduce the culture of a country to other countries. Tourism characteristics of each location is affected by the importance of validity, nature, role and function of a variety of religious, cultural, recreational, commercial and general attractions of its location (Allen, 1998). Moreover, it has been influenced by the characteristics of the social, cultural (religious belief) and local residents and tourism economy. Galugah is a county in Mazandaran Province in Iran and Galugah is the capital of the county, which is separated from Behshahr County in 2005. At the 2006 census, the county's population was 39,450 people consisted of 10,365 families. Fig. 1 shows some of the remarkable regions of this city.



Fig. 1. The region of Galugah

The region has outstanding natural attractions, which could preserve a good potential for development of tourism industry (Pak & Farajzadeh, 2007; Nouri et al., 2008; Farhoodi et al., 2009).

2. The proposed study

The purpose of this study is to provide strategic assessment and optimization strategies for development of tourism industry to reach sustainable tourism development in city of Qom metropolis. The study uses three techniques namely; Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM), integrated environmental assessment (IEA) and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) for the implementation of the study. The study first uses SWOT to categorize different factors, IEA is applied to determine internal as well as external factors and finally QSPM is applied to prioritize various factors.

2.1. SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis is a structured planning technique applied to make necessary evaluation on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats integrated in a particular problem. A SWOT analysis can be also applied for city development, which involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and detecting the internal and external factors, which are considered as advantage/disadvantage to reach that objective. The following summarizes various perspectives of SWOT,

- Strengths: characteristics of the business, which provide an advantage over others,
- Weaknesses: characteristics that pose the business at a disadvantage compared with others,
- Opportunities: elements the project could exploit to its advantage,
- Threats: elements in the environment, which could generate trouble for the business.

Identification of SWOTs is essential because they can inform later steps in planning to reach the objective (See Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. The structure of SWOT

The analysis consists of two major items of external and internal factors. Table 1 demonstrates the summary of opportunities and threats associated with external factors. Let R_{ij} be the score of factor j in group i , S_i be the Likert scale point given to group i and F_i be the frequency of each group. Therefore, the score given to each factor is measured as follows,

$$R_{ij} = \sum F_i S_i. \quad (1)$$

In addition, we may normalize Eq. (1) as follows,

$$Y_{ij} = \frac{R_{ij}}{\sum R_{ij}}. \quad (2)$$

The proposed study designed a questionnaire in Likert scale and distributed it among some experts and using Eq. (1) and Eq. (2), the study has calculated the weights of internal and external factors.

Table 1

The summary of the weights of external factors

		Score	%	Point	Final
Environmental factors	O1	118	0.039	4	0.156
	O2	128	0.042	4	0.17
	O3	119	0.039	4	0.158
Infrastructures	O4	121	0.04	4	0.16
Socio-cultural	O5	118	0.039	2	0.078
	O6	117	0.039	2	0.078
Economic	O7	116	0.038	2	0.077
	O8	125	0.041	3	0.124
	O9	124	0.041	3	0.123
Institutional management	O10	120	0.04	2	0.08
	O11	117	0.039	3	0.116
	O12	125	0.041	2	0.083
Environmental	T1	97	0.032	3	0.096
	T2	130	0.043	4	0.172
	T3	120	0.04	3	0.119
	T4	99	0.033	3	0.098
	T5	107	0.035	3	0.106
Infrastructure	T6	123	0.041	3	0.122
Socio-cultural	T7	101	0.033	2	0.067
Economic	T8	91	0.03	1	0.03
	T9	84	0.028	1	0.028
	T10	98	0.032	1	0.032
Institutional management	T11	103	0.034	2	0.068
	T12	118	0.039	1	0.039
	T13	120	0.04	3	0.119
	T14	102	0.034	2	0.068
	T15	94	0.031	2	0.062

Table 2

The summary of the weights of external factors

		Score	%	Point	Final
Environment	S1	127	0.041	4	0.162
	S2	118	0.038	4	0.151
	S3	121	0.039	4	0.154
	S4	109	0.035	3	0.104
	S5	130	0.041	4	0.166
	S6	120	0.038	4	0.153
Infrastructure	S7	121	0.039	2	0.077
Socio-cultural	S8	102	0.033	2	0.065
	S9	104	0.033	2	0.066
	S10	112	0.036	2	0.071
Economic	S11	125	0.04	2	0.08
	S12	124	0.04	2	0.079
	S13	106	0.034	2	0.068
Institutional	S14	118	0.038	2	0.075
Environment	W1	120	0.038	3	0.115
	W2	111	0.035	3	0.106
	W3	134	0.043	4	0.171
Infrastructure	W4	121	0.039	3	0.116
	W5	118	0.038	2	0.075
	W6	125	0.04	3	0.12
Socio-cultural	W7	117	0.037	2	0.075
	W8	100	0.032	1	0.032
Institutional management	W9	102	0.033	1	0.033
	W10	112	0.036	2	0.071
	W11	109	0.035	1	0.035
	W12	108	0.034	1	0.034
	W13	121	0.039	2	0.077

Table 3 and Table 4 demonstrate details of external and internal factors.

Table 3

The summary of external factors

Priority	Score	Code	Opportunity and Treats
1	0.172	T2	Environment and water contamination and the loss of plants and animals species because of pollution
2	0.170	O2	Existence of good weather for normal development of tourism activities in summer
3	0.160	O4	Strengthening and development of road infrastructure and traffic
4	0.158	O3	Possible development of tourism activates such as hiking, biking and winter sports
5	0.156	O1	Use of natural resources for tourism development and introduction of an important tourism centers
6	0.124	O8	Commitment for having a production plants for sand can lead the way for the creation of sustainable income
7	0.123	O9	Increase Aboriginal employment with tourists
8	0.122	T6	Road accidents and fatalities to tourists
9	0.119	T3	Increased consumption of fossil fuels due to severe cold region
10	0.119	T13	Existence of illegal hunters and risk of loss of species
11	0.116	O11	Increased support to planning authorities in the city due to its high capacity of Ecotourism
12	0.106	T5	Improper disposal of domestic wastewater production and workshop
13	0.098	T4	Natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, landslides and landslides)
14	0.096	T1	Environmental damage caused by the accumulation and disposal of attractions and improper waste and excessive entry of tourists
15	0.083	O12	Promoting human resources to raise awareness of local residents about tourism issues
16	0.080	O10	Cultivation of medicinal plants through the formation of cooperatives
17	0.078	O5	Taking advantage of the participation and interaction between NGOs and government agencies to protect the environment and improve tourism
18	0.078	O6	Paying more attention to the handy crafts and customs and cultural heritage protection
19	0.077	O7	Creating favorable conditions for economic growth and development of nature-based tourism
20	0.068	T11	Dam under construction, named Golurd, causes a large part of the fertile pastures goes underwater
21	0.068	T14	Building dams and damaging the eco-tourism area
22	0.067	T7	The loss of native culture and effects of tourists' cultures on people
23	0.062	T15	Lack of timely and appropriate assistance to tourists who have been suffering from car accidents and natural disasters
24	0.039	T12	Immigration of local residences to the region due to air pollution from major cities
25	0.032	T10	Reduction in government funding for tourism development
26	0.030	T8	Construction of non-residential private sector
27	0.028	T9	Lack of investment in the public sector according to accommodation and tourism facilities

Table 3
The summary of internal factors

Priority	Score	Code	Opportunity and treats
1	0.171	W3	Severe cooling snowy mountain in winter
2	0.166	S5	Existence of exclusive entertainment places such as Toska Cheshme
3	0.162	S1	Located in nice weather
4	0.154	S3	Existence of certain natural environment (rivers, streams, springs and rare animal species and plant species with therapeutic properties)
5	0.153	S6	Virgin nature and the existence of rare and morphological pictures
6	0.151	S2	Beautiful landscapes and protected areas with diverse wildlife and vegetation
7	0.120	W6	Poor public transport and roads due to the mountainous region
8	0.116	W4	Dangerous mountain roads
9	0.115	W1	Higher elevations with steep slopes
10	0.106	W2	Danger of snow fall
11	0.104	S4	Recreational and sports like mountaineering and cycling
12	0.080	S11	Interest of local residence for fish farm under a completely safe and appropriate environmental conditions
13	0.079	S12	Availability of visiting natural attractions free of charge
13	0.077	S7	Development of infrastructure such as gas, electricity and telecommunication systems
14	0.077	W13	Agricultural land use changes
15	0.075	S14	Approval of the city tourism plan
16	0.075	W5	Deficient and inadequate accommodation facilities
17	0.075	W7	Lack of cultural and health issues by tourists (waste discharge and river level range)
18	0.071	S10	Availability of holy shrine places such as BiBiZeynab
19	0.071	W10	Lack of health centers
20	0.068	S13	Existence of young people as active labor
21	0.066	S9	History and culture of the region, such as poets and writers in this area
22	0.065	S8	Existence of attractions and monuments
23	0.035	W11	Lack of guide for tourists
24	0.034	W12	Bad publicity and lack of proper introduction attraction
25	0.033	W9	The absence of guards in protected areas
26	0.032	W8	Destruction of agricultural lands and waste emissions by tourists

3. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the results gathered from Table 3 and Table 4, we have performed a brain storming discussion among some experts and tried to extract the SWOT matrix. Table 5 shows details of our findings.

Table 5
The summary of SWOT

Review strategy (WO)	Aggressive strategy (SO)
Wo1: Developing appropriate communication network, due to the lack of communication network and the expansion of public transport in the area Wo2: Revision of the publicity and awareness activities in the media and creating websites appropriate to introduce eco-tourism attractions and capabilities, religious and cultural aspects of the city (w4 -w6 -o4) Wo3 : Improvement of tourism products and the joint venture public-private sector (w5 -o1- o5 -o7 -o11) Wo4: Creating training programs (w11 -w12 -o1 -o2 -o7) Wo5: Creating appropriate regulations in order to protect the environment and to revise the regulations of urban land (w8 -w13 -o1- o2 -o11)	So1: Investment and greater emphasis on cultural, religious and historical places of this beautiful place to attract more tourists (s8 -s9 -s10 -o6) So2: Incentives for nature Battalion traveled to the region through the construction of recreational and travel services (s1 -s2 -s3 -s5 -s6-o1 -o2) So3: Proper use of the potentials of eco-tourism attractions and tourism as the main substrate city (s1 -s2 -s3 -s5 -s6 -o1 -o2) So4: Development of tourism resources and the establishment of eco-tourism tours in the city (s2 -s3 -s5 -s6 -o1-o2 -o4) So5: Using the existing potential to develop the sport of mountain climbing and sport tourism (s1 -s2 -s3 -s4- s5 -s6 -o1 -o2 -o3)
Defensive strategy (WT)	Diversified strategy (ST)
Wt1: The negative effects of tourism development and try to minimize these effects (w7-w8 -w13 -t1-t2-t5-t11- t7 -t12 -t14) Wt2: Promoting the health and development of these centers in the city (w7-w10 -t5 -t6-t15) Wt3: Having meetings and seminars by organizations responsible for developing ecotourism facilities and privileges invested in construction of hotels, residential complexes and recreational facilities (s5 -w11-w12- t8-t9-t10) Wt4: Having an appropriate rules and regulations to protect environment (w7 -w8-w13-t1-t2-t5-t11-t14)	-St1 Development of information and education services and tourism information about the destruction of the natural environment (s2 -s3 -s5 -s6-t1 -t2 -t5) St2 Increase funding for the development of specialized tourist attractions (s1- s2 -s3 -s4 -s5 -s6 -t10) St3: Creation of new job opportunities based on natural potentials and rich local culture with the aim of protecting the region's natural and cultural identity (-s9 -s8 s10 -s13- -t1 t2- t14 - t11- t7-t5) St4 : Prevent environmental degradation and the loss of vegetation and animal species (s2 -s3- s5 -s6 -t1 -t2-t5 -t11 -t13 -t14)

Based on the scores given to each action, we summarize our SWOT strategic planning in Table 6. As we can observe from the results of Table 4, the most important factors are concentrated on environmental and natural factors affecting tourism development. In fact, 17 out of 52 factors are associated with this item, which show the relative importance of environmental factors.

Table 6

The summary of different actions and strategies

Priority	Action	Score	Action	Score	Action	Score	Action	Score	Action	Score	Action	Score
First	St3	2.61	So3	2.45	So4	2.24	So5	2.13	St4	2.07	St1	2
Second	So3	1.94	Wt1	1.71	Wo2	1.67	St2	1.62	St3	1.61	Wt4	1.6
Third	Wo1	1.36	Wo5	1.35	Wo3	1.57	Wo4	1.54	Wt3	1.18	Wt2	1.17

The biggest advantages of the city include virgin natural resources and beautiful landscape. Therefore, proper use of the potentials of eco-tourism attractions must be considered, more significantly. The weakness point of the survey is associated with poor management of the city. In our survey, 12 out of 15 threats are associated with external factors and they are mostly related to management of the city. The biggest external factors are environment pollution and lack of attention for taking care of the city.

Results of this research show that presenting methods in initial process and analyzing assessment matrix of T2 external and internal factors i.e. pollution of environment, river and extinction of plants species by result of pollution and O2 i.e. suitable climate for developing natural Tourism efforts in summer have been recognized as the most priority factors among external factors. Intense cold weather in region during the season of summer (W3) and existence of unique amusement places (S5) such as Amarg were recognized as effective and most priority factors among internal factors on Tourism development of Galugah city. Presenting methods of second process showed final score of assessment matrix in internal and external factors in this manner: 2.53-2.63. So, it shows that Tourism position of Galugah city was normal. According to four parts assessment matrix, importance and priority of SO methods was defined towards other methods in this process. Presenting methods of the third process have shown that comparison of total grades for attractiveness of methods and ST3 method i.e. initiating new occupational opportunities on the basis of natural potentials and rich culture of regions inhabitants by protecting region cultural identity and nature have maintained the greatest scores in this process.

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