

## ARTICLE

## DIVERSIFICATION POSSIBILITY OF MASHHAD TOURISM

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### ABSTRACT

Considering increasing growth of urbanization in Iran and physical exponential expansion of cities and deterioration of environmental, social and psychological problems, making a plan for leisure time and developing recreational – tourism spaces of urban and suburban areas become one of the social requirements. Because of Imam Reza Holy shrine, Mashhad hosting different groups of internal and external tourists during the year but up to now, no comprehensive and applicable plan had been proposed for effective presence of tourists and increasing their shelf-life in Mashhad. By improving tourism spaces and diversifying travel packages, job creation become possible in this city and its result will be economical boom. In this regards, present paper investigates tourism diversification of Mashhad and its different aspects as a supplementary package of pilgrimage considering social and economical presence of tourists. For this purpose, questionnaires were filled by 401 samples of foreign and internal tourists during 2 years (2012-2014). current condition were analyzed in a separate Fig. and mean and percentage of centrality indices were achieved by SPSS. Result of shelf-life average in Mashhad is 6 days and travel motivations are pilgrimage, recreation, visiting tourism attractions and average spending per each pilgrim is 15 dollars.

### INTRODUCTION

Social-cultural impacts of tourism mention this issue that tourism and traveling affect people and society system of values, social structures, style quality of host community and tourists life. Although main focus of studies in this field is on tourism destinations and less attention had been paid toward tourist dispatcher areas and tourists themselves [14]. Tourism activity in cities has broad extension. Urban areas often including broad span of historical and cultural attractions, shopping centers and restaurants (Varethi et al,2008, p91). Economical outcomes of tourism causes most tourism countries to consider it as a potential resource of foreign financial sources and knowing it as a way for compensating deficit of payment balance. But despite of international tourism importance, role of internal tourism should not be neglected. In this regard, investigating importance of internal tourism is important in various aspects. Although "tourism extreme poles" causes high density of tourism in some areas and neglecting others in extend field of tourism. However, distribution of internal tourism and its space pattern Finding in Iran show traveling and movement of many people in different areas of country (Maafi and Saghayi, 2010, p269). Providing suiFig. services for tourists and also diversification of these services is the main practice. Tourism arena in cities and metropolises including tourism product which entails set of tourism attractions, transportation availability, equipment and infrastructure facilities, hospitality services and organizational and institutional elements(Maafi & Saghayi,2008,p25). Tourism word was proposed firstly in 1811 in English journal of "sporting magazine". At that time, this word means traveling in order to visiting historical monuments and natural landscapes for pleasure (Salimisoodrajani et al,1390, p180). Today, tourism become one of the trade pillars and many countries in the world become one of the global poles by utilizing natural phenomena, historical monuments, ancient civilization, new technology, tourism towns and recreational equipment (Bakhtiari2015, p94). Although Boreman (1931) defines tourism as "travels which are done for recreation, relaxation, trade or other job activities or participation in special ceremony while tourist absenteeism in his/her permanent residual location during this travel being temporary(Poor-asghar & Veisi,2011, p191).

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

By goal, this research is applicable and in terms of time, it is cross-sectional and by nature and method, it is descriptive-survey. Research variables were recognized by librarian research and literature study. Data were collected and analyzed by questionnaire of cultural heritage, artifacts and tourism organization and by SPSS software. As statistical society of research, tourists were selected in three levels of foreign, internal and provincial which was done during 2012-2014. Sample size were 400. Centrality indices were achieved by analyzing status quo, mean and percentage of centrality indices. Research variables indicated in questionnaire were: gender, age, marital status, education, job status (type and salary), experience of previous travel and so on.

### RESULTS

Regardless of pilgrimage aspect, Mashhad has been developed in another aspects such as trade, scientific spaces, cultural and industrial affaires and now, it is mentioned as one of the cultural, commercial and industrial poles of country (Koosheshtabar, 1387, p21). In logistic plan of tourism of Khorasan-e-Razaviprovince (2011) distribution condition of infrastructures and equipment were investigated. According to that, 114 hotels exist in Khorasan-e-Razavi, 104 of them (91.4%) located in

#### KEY WORDS

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Mashhad. Distribution of existed beds in hotels show that more than of 95% are located in Mashhad. There are 235 apartment hotels in Khorasan-e-Razavi which are all located in Mashhad. Based on these statistics, there are 503 hospitality units from which, 479 units (95%) located in Mashhad. Also, there are 86 units in Mashhad which accept pilgrims and have 999 rooms and all of them owned by governmental organizations which are distributed in Mashhad (Feroozghzade and Razavizade, 2014, p136). Due to the outputs of 400 questionnaires distributed among tourists during different seasons and events, following results are achieved. Researchers focus was making diversification in interview with expand range of tourists (strictly people who were not come from Mashhad and Khorasan-e-Razavi) for more accurate utilization of research results and completing research process in future.

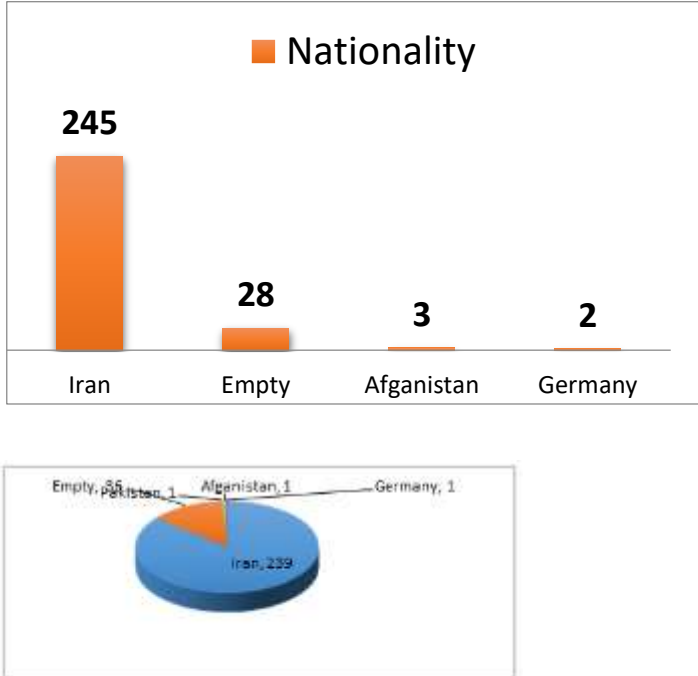


Fig. 1: Tourists nationality.

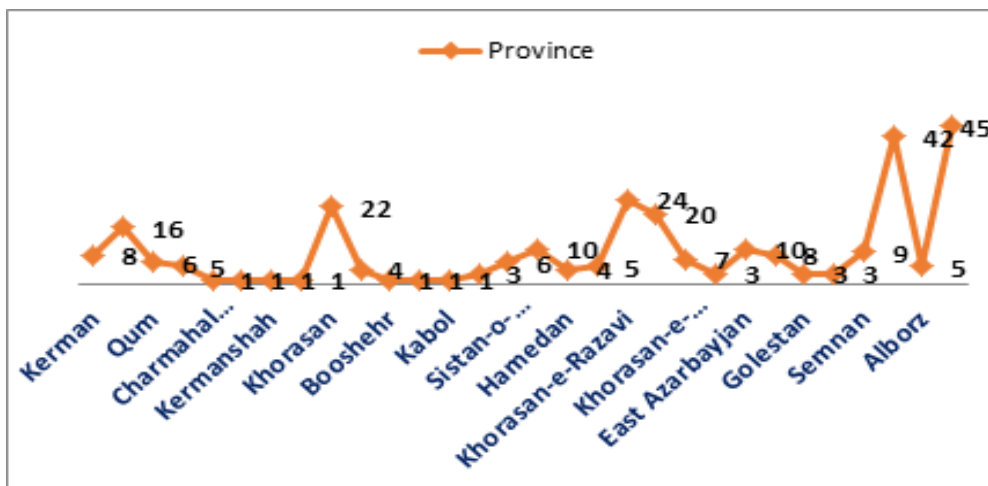


Fig. 2: Provincial distribution of Iran.

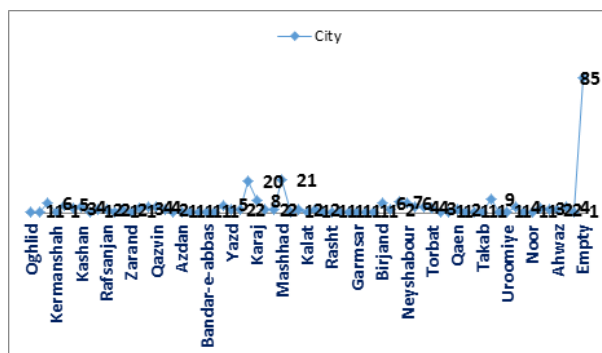


Fig. 3: County distribution of Iran.

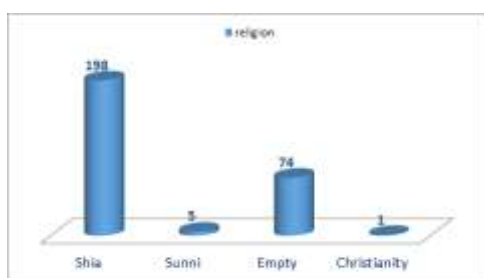


Fig. 4: Tourists' religions.

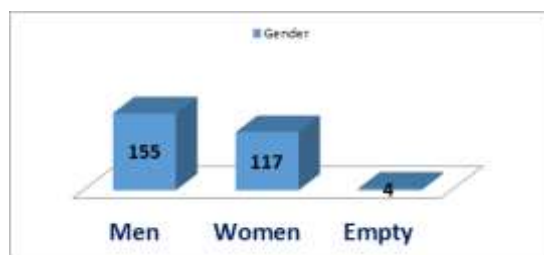


Fig. 5: Tourists' gender.



Fig. 6: Marital status of tourists.

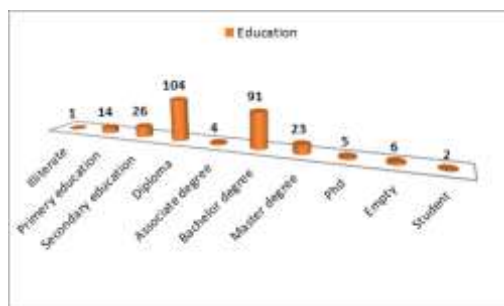


Fig. 7: Tourists' education.

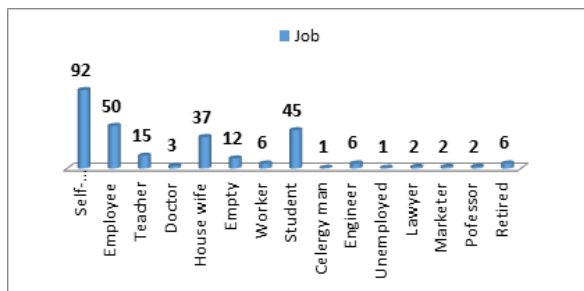


Fig. 8: Job status.

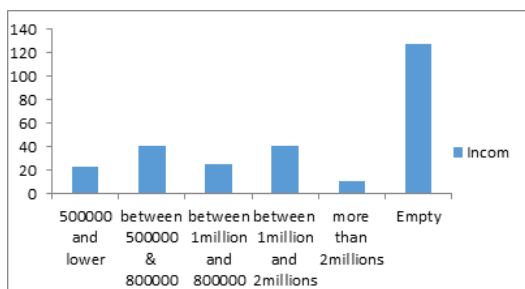


Fig. 9: Tourists' income.

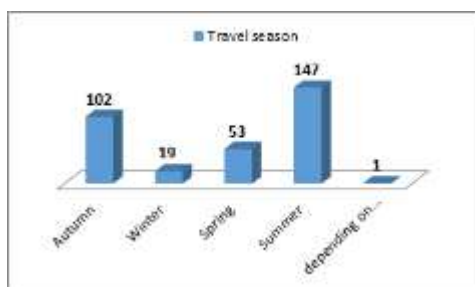


Fig. 10: Travel seasons of tourists.

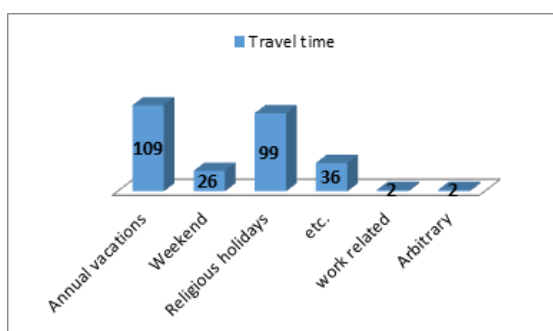


Fig. 11: Travel time of tourists.

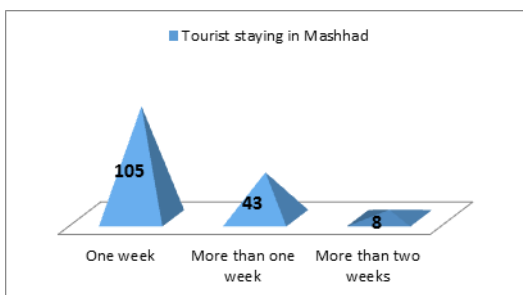


Fig. 12: Tourists staying time in Mashhad.



Fig. 17: Tourists' living places.

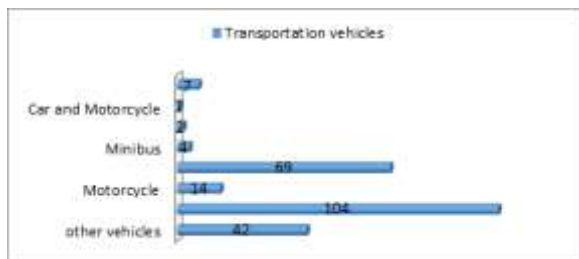


Fig. 18: Tourists' transportation vehicles.

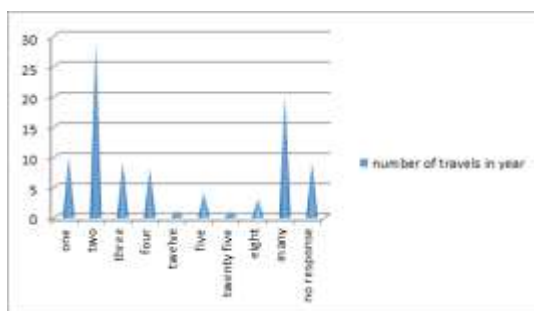


Fig. 19: Number of tourists travel.

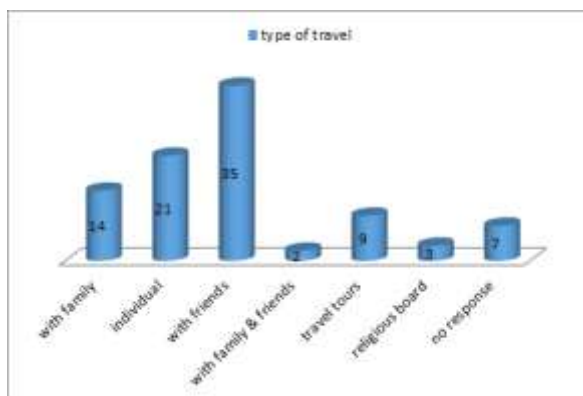


Fig. 20: Type of travel.

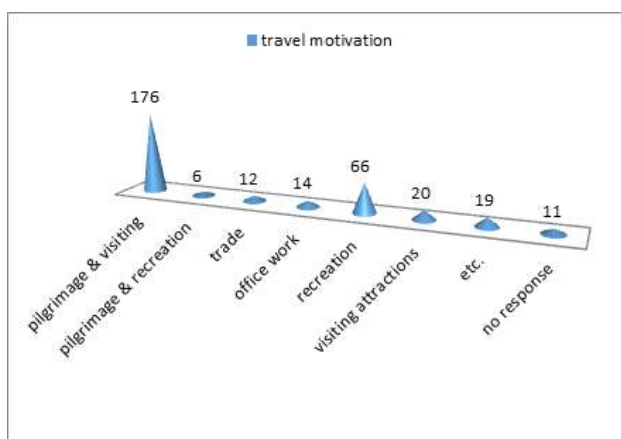


Fig. 21: Travel motivation.

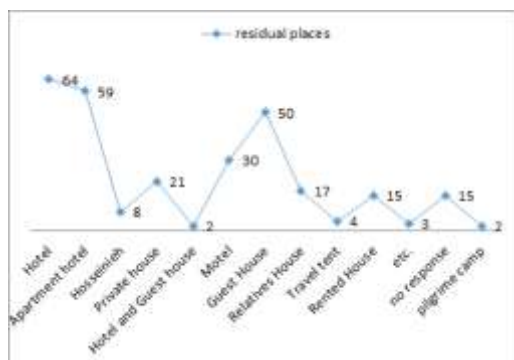


Fig. 22: Tourists' residual places.

## DISCUSSION

### Descriptive findings

1. About type of travel, most of respondents (76.8%) travel to Mashhad with their family and least of them (4%) travel with religious boards.
2. Much of impetus for traveling was pilgrimage with 79.8% and least of impetus was business goals with 3.8%.
3. Most of respondents (54%) choose summer for travel and least of them (12.2%) choose winter.
4. Among tourism attractions, most of tourists (67.8%) choose religious attractions and least of them (3.2%) sportive ones.
5. Due to the how getting familiar with tourism attractions, most of them (51.2%) got familiar through their relatives and least of them (3.5%) through handbooks.

## CONCLUSION

Because 70% of pilgrims and tourists time dedicated to the pilgrimage of Imam Reza Holy shrine, unfortunately for the rest of time, these kind of people who travel with their family do not have special plan. It is clear if complete package being designed, planned and performed for them, they will have memorable and enjoyable travel. Also, by accurate planning, coordination and cooperation of related organizations, in addition to more synergy of resources and lower costs, tourism diversification of Mashhad become possible and will be performed. For purposiveness, concentration and diversity of tourists travel, paying attention to the ecotourism by utilizing current infrastructures in Mashhad and its urban supplementary complex in parks, waterfalls, water parks and other natural areas are proposed for useful filling of tourists leisure times gaps.

### Recommendations

- Distribution and management of pilgrims during the year and peak times.
- Improving pilgrims safety for more satisfaction of them and providing their mental relaxation.
- Decreasing hotels and other residual centers costs (except hot seasons) for more attraction of pilgrims and tourists.
- Organizing non-official centers and places without license.
- Behavioural standardization of hosts (people who provide services for tourists).
- Improving information level of related organizations about foreign languages for increasing communications with foreign tourists.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

None

### FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

None

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