

Tourists' Attitudes Toward Tourism Service Delivery in Kandovan Village, Iran

S. Mehdi Mirdamadi, Leila Gholamzadeh, Shahab Alddin Shokri

Abstract-This paper reviews a kind of service delivery as an important element in developing rural tourism in Knadovan village. The research population was consisted of 424 tourists were selected using Morgan sampling table and were interviewed by haphazard sampling method. Validity of the research instrument was confirmed by the research group and α Chronbach coefficient was applied for the purpose of reliability through which $\alpha=0.78$ was obtained. Results of the study revealed that service delivery at all, had no a passable status from the viewpoint of respondents. In the next stage, any kinds of services were compared and ranked by nonparametric statistical tests of Freidman and Wilcoxon signed ranks.

Keywords: Rural Tourism, Kandovan, Tourism Service, Tourist.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of tourism in a rural area is not simply a matter of matching tourist demands with local product supply but a matter of evaluating local suitability and acceptability (Gopal et al., 2008). Rural tourism is increasingly viewed as a panacea, increasing the economic viability of marginalized areas, stimulating social regeneration and improving the living conditions of rural communities (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004).

In the case of Iran, it is a country with a wealth of social, cultural and natural attractions such as its historical and religious sites and many different land and climate types, from desert to forest and from mountains to coastal areas. The size of the tourism industry in Iran is estimated as having the potential to create jobs for 2.5 million people and to have a 3 percent share in Gross Domestic Production (GDP), which would be highly comparable with other sectors of the economy (Azimi and Hajipour, 2008). However, these strengths have not been properly exploited in a way that leads to the development of the tourism industry and an increase in the number of overseas tourists to Iran. The weaknesses that have been identified such as the lack of a marketing industry, software problems, limitations in appropriate accommodation in most tourist destination, even in large cities, a shortage of tourism services and information centers and unsatisfactory air and road transport networks still need to be addressed (Azimi and Hajipour, 2008). It is indicated that customer satisfaction has been an important topic in tourism service management (Hsi-Jui Wu, 2007). Tourism strategies should therefore focus on minimizing negative impacts as well as exploiting potential benefits. However, any assessment of the key features of successful tourism development and the key characteristics

Manuscript Received on December 2014.

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In its case study this paper considers some important kinds of services in terms of quality and quantity which are delivered from the viewpoint of outside visitors who had visited Kandovan village of Azarbaijan Sharghi, a north province of Iran. Kandovan is an extraordinary ancient village in the province of East Azarbaijan, near the city of Tabriz, Iran. With its at least 800 years existence, this remarkable place is inhabited by 670 people and offers scenic beauty for its travelers. With homes carved inside rocks, some of them 700 years old, the Kandovan village is said to have been partially formed by volcanic remains from a strong Mount Sahand eruptions hundreds of years ago. This is a place where houses are not built on a mountain, but within a mountain. Another interesting aspect is the fact that the rock acts as an energy efficient material, keeping the house cool during summer and warm during winter. This is why most of the inhabitants here do not use heaters or air conditioning systems (Tourism on the Edge, 2012). The main economic activities in the area are farming, husbandry and handicrafts. It is dominated by husbandry (Akbari and Bemanian, 2008)

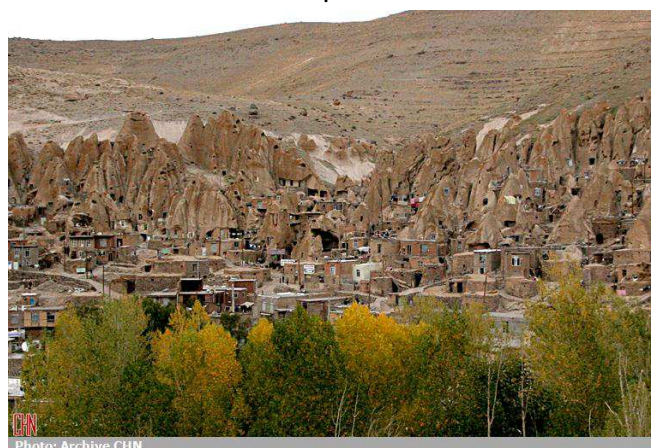
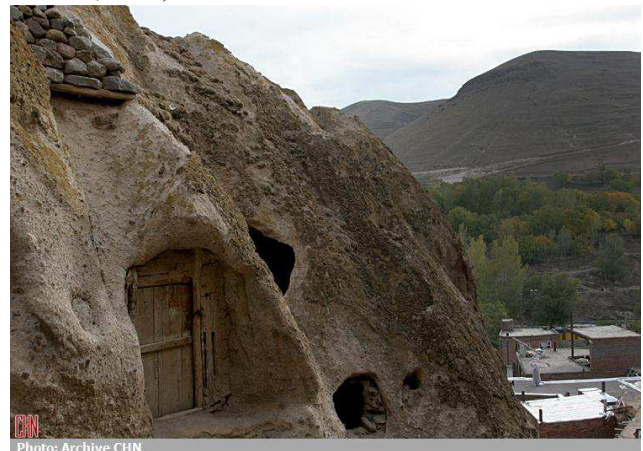


Figure 1- Kandovan Village, Azarbaijan Sharghi, Iran
(www.chn.ir)

The following objectives were formulated to guide the study:

- Identifies the personal features of tourists and their experience about the trip;
- Determines tourists' attitudes toward any kinds of service delivery;
- Ranked tourism services delivered in the research area.

II. Methodology

From the objective point of view this research is an applied and from the research method, it is considered as cause comparative and descriptive research. The study sample is drawn mainly from tourists of Kandovan heritage village, out of which 424 persons were selected using Morgan sampling table and were interviewed by haphazard sampling method. A questionnaire was developed from a review of literature on a Likert type scale ranging from strongly inappropriate to strongly appropriate. To establish the measurement reliability of the research instrument, an internal consistency reliability coefficient was evaluated using a coefficient alpha measure (Cronbach's). In this regards, a prior survey was conducted on 30 tourists of Kandovan village. The alpha coefficient was calculated 0.78 exceeded the recommended minimum of 0.70. In regards to examine the content validity of the instrument, primary items came from literature review and they were discussed with university professors and experts in the rural development division. This research was conducted during 2009 at Kandovan heritage village.

III. Results

The results of descriptive statistics indicated that 51.7 percent of the Kandovan tourists (219 persons) were male and 48.3 percent (205 persons) were female. Nearly 46 percent had received a diploma and high diploma degree with the highest frequency and 40 percent had received at least bachelor degree and over. With respect to their job position 30 percent of the respondents had employed in government sector; nearly 41 percent in private sector and nearly 29 percent were self-employed. A majority of them (97.34 percent) were living in the urban areas. The six statements sought to investigate tourists' experience on information sources, method of travelling, cost and so on. To determine those information sources which were used to visit Kandovan village, tourists were asked. Results showed that family and friends were the main sources of getting information and media had no effecting role in introducing the heritage village. The most popular method of travelling to Kandovan village was by car as a private vehicle. So far, 18 percent of the total respondents had visited the village for the third time followed by nearly 12 percent for the fourth time and 59.20 percent of the total respondents had visited along with the family. The most common travel cost of the trip was meals (59.90 percent), followed by handicrafts purchase (26.88 percent) and transport (10.61 percent). Tourists were asked: "What was your main incentive to visit the Kandovan village?" results showed that the main reason of this trip was seeing natural attractions (43.39 percent) followed by leisure (18.86 percent), monuments (5.18 percent) and the other incentives in combination.

In the next stage, Kandovan 'tourists were asked to evaluate some kinds of tourism services provided by the formal and informal institutions in the region (Table 1).

Table 1: Tourists' attitudes toward the trip from the viewpoint of service delivery, n=424

Statement	Strongly Appropriate		Appropriate		Neutral		Inappropriate		Strongly Inappropriate		No response		Mean	Std ¹
-Introduced Tourism Attractions by Advertising in Kandovan Village	F ²	VP ³	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	2.6	1.1
	23	5.5	10	24.	79	19.	14	33.9	7	16.94	1	2.6	7	7
-Appropriate Guidance from the Official Agents of Tourism Organization in the Area	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	2.8	0.9
	23	6.2	45	12.	15	42.	11	32.2	2	6.28	5	15.	0	5
		8		29	7	89	8	4	3		8	84		
-Availability of Tourism Signage in the Area	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	3.2	0.9
	23	5.7	14	37	12	31.	10	26	0	0	2	6	2	0
		5	8		5	25	4				4			
-Meals for Tourist in Terms of Quality and Quantity	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	2.9	1.0
	35	8.4	81	19.	17	41.	91	22.0	3	8.49	1	2.9	7	4
		9		66	0	26		8	5		2	1		
-Accommodation in Terms of Quality and Quantity	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	F	VP	2.9	0.8
	12	3.0	78	20.	16	41.	13	35.5	0	0	3	9.2	0	2
		9		10	0	23	8	6			6	7		

Strongly Inappropriate:1---Strongly Appropriate: 5

A nonparametric binomial test was used to examine tourists' attitudes toward any kinds of service delivery. In the other words is there any significant difference between the current situation and the targeted situation? In this study based on the Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5, number 3 was considered as the cut point and the target (favorable situation) was considered more than 3. Findings showed that service delivery in all statements had no a passable status at the time of the research and there was a significant difference between the current and target situation (Table 2).

¹ - Standard Deviation

² - Frequency

³ - Valid Percent

Table 2: Binomial test on each statement about service delivery, n=424

Statement	Category	N	Observed Prpo.	Test Prop.	Sig. (2-tailed)
Introduced Tourism Attractions by Advertising in Kandovan Village	Group 1	<= 3	289	0.70	0.0001
	Group 2	> 3	124	0.30	
	Total		413	1.00	
Appropriate Guidance from the Official Agents of Tourism Organization in the Area	Group 1	<= 3	298	0.81	0.0001
	Group 2	> 3	68	0.19	
	Total		366	1.00	
Availability of Tourism Signage in the Area	Group 1	<= 3	229	0.57	0.004
	Group 2	> 3	171	0.43	
	Total		400	1.00	
Meals for Tourist in Terms of Quality and Quantity	Group 1	<= 3	296	0.72	0.0001
	Group 2	> 3	116	0.28	
	Total		412	1.00	
Accommodation in Terms of Quality and Quantity	Group 1	<= 3	298	0.77	0.0001
	Group 2	> 3	90	0.23	
	Total		388	1.00	

Strongly Inappropriate:1----Strongly Appropriate: 5

In the next stage a Friedman Test was used to compare tourists' attitude toward the trip among the five statements. Results showed that there is a significant difference between discussed items from the viewpoint of service delivery.

Table 3: Friedman test

N	366
Chi-Square	440.379
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.0001

After that, a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used to compare two related groups one by one. That comparison refers not only to the difference between related groups but also we can find the severity of that differentiation. As

shown in tables 6-9, there were significant differences between discussed statements based on the tourism service delivery from the viewpoints of tourists. For example in the case of appropriate guidance from the official agents and introduced tourism attractions by advertising (Table 4), there was more satisfaction about introduced tourism attractions by advertising, so that in 56 cases had a higher score than the other item (Table 4, Part 1). In 197 cases, availability of tourism signage in the area had a higher score than the other item (Table 4, Part 2). In 129 cases, meals for tourists in term of quality and quantity had a higher score than the other item (Table 4, Part 3). Finally in 92 cases, accommodation in terms of quality and quantity had a higher score than the other item (Table 4, Part 4).

Table 4: Wilcoxon signed ranks test of the two related statements in each part, n=424

Statement		N	Mean Ranks	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sig.
Part 1: Appropriate Guidance from the Official Agents - Introduced Tourism Attractions by Advertising	Negative Ranks	56 ^a	39.50	2212.00	-	0.00
	Positive Ranks	22 ^b	39.50	869.00		
	Ties	288 ^c				
	Total	366				
Part 2: Availability of Tourism Signage in the Area - Introduced Tourism Attractions by Advertising	Negative Ranks	0 ^a	0.00	0.00	-	0.00
	Positive Ranks	197 ^b	99.00	19503.00		
	Ties	203 ^c				
	Total	400				
Part 3; Meals for Tourist, Quality and Quantity - Introduced Tourism Attractions by Advertising	Negative Ranks	8 ^a	69	552.00	-	0.00
	Positive Ranks	129 ^b	69	8901.00		
	Ties	275 ^c				
	Total	412				
Part 4: Accommodation, Quality and Quantity - Introduced Tourism Attractions by Advertising	Negative Ranks	45 ^a	69	3105.00	-	0.00
	Positive Ranks	92 ^b	69	6348.00		
	Ties	251 ^c				
	Total	388				

Strongly Inappropriate:1----Strongly Appropriate: 5

As can be seen in Table 5, results from the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test showed that in 197 cases, availability of tourism signage in the area had a higher score than the appropriate guidance from the official agents (Table 5, Part 1). In the other words, from the viewpoint of the respondents service delivery via the availability of signage

in the area had a better situation than the guidance from the official agents. As well as in 144 cases, meals for tourist in terms of quality and quantity had a higher score than the other item (Table 5, Part 2). In 70 cases, accommodation in terms of quality and quantity had a higher score than the guidance from the official agents (Table 5, Part 3).

Table 5: Wilcoxon signed ranks test of the two related statements in each part, n=424

		N	Mean Ranks	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sig.
Part 1: Availability of Tourism Signage in the Area - Appropriate Guidance from the Official Agents	Negative Ranks	0 ^a	0.00	0.00	-	0.00
	Positive Ranks	197 ^b	99.00	19503.00	14.0	01
	Ties	169 ^c			36	
	Total	366				
	a. Signage < Guidance					
	b. Signage > Guidance					
	c. Signage = Guidance					
Part 2: Meals for Tourist, Quality and Quantity - Appropriate Guidance from the Official Agents	Negative Ranks	0 ^a	0.00	0.00	-	0.00
	Positive Ranks	144 ^b	72.50	10440.00	12.0	01
	Ties	222 ^c			00	
	Total	366				
	a. Meals < Guidance					
	b. Meals > Guidance					
	c. Meals = Guidance					
Part 3: Accommodation, Quality and Quantity - Appropriate Guidance from the Official Agents	Negative Ranks	11 ^a	41.00	451.00	-	0.00
	Positive Ranks	70 ^b	41.00	2870.00	6.55	01
	Ties	285 ^c			6	
	Total	366				
	a. Accommodation < Guidance					
	b. Accommodation > Guidance					
	c. Accommodation = Guidance					

As shown in Table 6 in 88 cases, availability of tourism signage in the area had a higher score than the meals for tourist in terms of quality and quantity (Table 6, Part 1). As well as in 138 cases, availability of tourism signage in the area had a higher score than the accommodation conditions (Table 6, Part 2).

Table 6: Wilcoxon signed ranks test of the two related statements in each part, n=424

		N	Mean Ranks	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sig.
Part 1: Meals for Tourist, Quality and Quantity - Availability of Tourism Signage in the Area	Negative Ranks	88 ^a	50.50	4444.00	-	0.00
	Positive Ranks	12 ^b	50.50	606.00	7.60	01
	Ties	300 ^c			0	
	Total	400				
	a. Meals < Signage					
	b. Meals > Signage					
	c. Meals = Signage					
Part 2: Accommodation, Quality and Quantity - Availability of Tourism Signage in the Area	Negative Ranks	138 ^a	69.50	9591.00	-	0.00
	Positive Ranks	0 ^b	0.00	0.00	11.7	01
	Ties	250 ^c			47	
	Total	388				
	a. Accommodation < Signage					
	b. Accommodation > Signage					
	c. Accommodation = Signage					

Finally Table 7 showed that in 85 cases, meals for tourist in terms of quality and quantity had a higher score than the accommodation.

Table 7: Wilcoxon signed ranks test of the two related statements in each part, n=424

		N	Mean Ranks	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sig.
Accommodation, Quality and Quantity - Meals for Tourist, Quality and Quantity	Negative Ranks	85 ^a	48.50	4122.50	-	0.00
	Positive Ranks	11 ^b	48.50	533.50	7.55	01
	Ties	292 ^c			3	
	Total	388				
	a. Accommodation < Meals					
	b. Accommodation > Meals					
	c. Accommodation = Meals					

Based on the findings extracted from the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, the following model can be explained:

- 1- Introduced Tourism Attractions by Advertising > Appropriate Guidance from the Official Agents;
- 2- Introduced Tourism Attractions by Advertising < Availability of Tourism Signage in the Area > Appropriate Guidance from the Official Agents;
- 3- Introduced Tourism Attractions by Advertising < Meals for Tourist in terms of Quality and Quantity > Appropriate Guidance from the Official Agents;

- 4- Introduced Tourism Attractions by Advertising < Accommodation in terms of Quality and Quantity > Appropriate Guidance from the Official Agents;
 - 5- Availability of Tourism Signage in the Area > Meals for Tourist in terms of Quality and Quantity;
 - 6- Availability of Tourism Signage in the Area > Accommodation in terms of Quality and Quantity;
 - 7- Meals for Tourist in terms of Quality and Quantity > Accommodation in terms of Quality and Quantity
- And finally,

Availability of Tourism Signage in the Area > Meals for Tourist in terms of Quality and Quantity > Accommodation in terms of Quality and Quantity > Introduced Tourism Attractions by Advertising > Appropriate Guidance from the Official Agents

IV. Discussion

This research examined some kinds of services delivered from the viewpoint of outside visitors who had visited Kandovan village of Azarbaijan Sharghi, a north province of Iran. Results showed that service delivery in all statements has not been suitable at the time of the research. Rakhshanasab and Zarrabi (2010) in a research about the challenge and opportunities of ecotourism development in Iran argued that ecotourism in Iran is restricted by a lack of signage and warning signs in dangerous routes, deficiencies in providing necessary facilities by hotels and accommodation centers, deficiencies in infrastructural services in some ways. The findings in a study done by Taghvai et al. (2013) showed that any deficiency in facility and recreational necessities resulted to dissatisfaction by tourists. Wilson et al. (2001) reported that rural tourism development and entrepreneurship cannot work without the participation and collaboration of businesspersons directly and indirectly involved in tourism. Results of a study showed that careful planning and marketing can lessen the harmful effects of tourism development (Frederick, 1993). Briedenhann and Wickens (2004) proposed that meaningful community participation, together with public sector support, presents opportunities for the development of small-scale indigenous tourism projects in less developed areas. Moharramnejad and Aghakhani (2009) in their assessment about the opportunities and treats in ecotourism industry in Jajroud (a protected natural area is located 30 kilometers from Tehran province), concluded that a shortage of educational programs and tourism signage, lack of accommodation, lack of information about tourism attractions in natural and cultural dimensions were some of the main weaknesses in developing ecotourism industry in this area. Esmaeilpour and Kashanitabar (2011) in their research about the effecting factors on under developing of tourism industry concluded that information and advertising, transport development, coordination between related organizations, providing welfare and necessary facilities such as hotel, restaurant and exhibition will play an important role in developing tourism, in general.

On the basis of the above discussion it is concluded that the weaknesses that have been identified in Kandovan historical village still need to be addressed. Kandovan village has its special potential in the field of historical and

natural tourism and ecotourism. In this line, participatory approaches in planning and developing sustainable tourism need to be addressed. It will be necessary to build and revise the infrastructural elements in order to take advantages of the potentials.

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