



Research on the environmental quality of the western region of the country from an archaeological perspective and its role in the development of rural tourism

Ali Zolfaghari

Department of Architecture, Arak Branch, Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran

Saeid Salehi Marzijani

Department of Architecture, Arak Branch, Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran

Mahmoud Teimouri

Department of Architecture, Arak Branch, Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran

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Abstract: One of the most important destinations that has affected the world's tourism trends over the past decades is rural centers. The growth of short-term trips has transformed these destinations into major tourist centers, and this phenomenon is evident in the decrease in the average length of stay of tourists in many destinations worldwide. Villages are multi-purpose tourist destinations and play a significant role as centers of tourism activity. Archaeology has made significant contributions to the understanding of past cultures and civilizations and has brought fresh perspectives to the social sciences and arts. The methods of conducting archaeological research and the process of reaching desired results are of considerable interest to the general public, especially those who are interested in sensory and tangible exploration; therefore, the best approach to popularize archaeology is to establish its connection with tourism. Tourism shares common fields of knowledge and activities with archaeology and has made significant efforts in the development, preservation, revitalization, and enhancement of structures and monuments resulting from archaeological activities. Now, due to the common issues between archaeology and tourism, they can establish a close relationship in the cultural field. This research aims to focus on ancient and historical works as tourist attractions and as factors generating income and long-term development needs in this sector, which leads to the necessary groundwork for the sustainable development of tourism based on a historical and cultural approach. This analysis is a mixed methodological approach based on observation, interviews, questionnaires, and statistical data.

Keywords: *village, environmental quality, archaeological, tourism development, Hamedan.*

* Corresponding Author

Email Address: salehi.saeid@yahoo.com (Saeid Salehi Marzijani)

Introduction

Quality of life emerged as an important indicator of social welfare in the 1960s and has since been the subject of scientific discussions. Over the course of several decades, different approaches have been developed and various perspectives have been proposed. The main approaches that have consistently received attention classify the quality of life into subjective and objective approaches. Generally, subjective approaches deal with people's perceptions and mindset about their lives, while objective approaches focus on measurable quantitative aspects of the surrounding environment. The quality of life in rural environments is significantly different from the contemporary human living standards, and living conditions in rural environments present challenges. Hence, rural development plans, with a history of more than three decades, aim to design the spatial and physical framework of rural to provide an appropriate platform for the optimal distribution of government and public services and create the necessary conditions for rural population sustainability. One important issue of rural area planning is the improvement of tourism quality. This is because providing a suitable environment is one of the key factors in choosing tourist destinations, which can be measured through specific indicators. In competitive tourism markets, attracting tourists is considered a strategic objective for various destinations. One method of attracting tourists to a destination is to focus on enhancing the environmental quality. Because tourists, due to the nature of tourism, are looking for fun and leisure time with pleasure. Therefore, they primarily seek destinations that offer the highest level of environmental quality. Nowadays, environmental studies investigate archaeological investigations and the interactions between humans and the environment, relying on the theory of (systems and ecological archaeology) (Renfrew and Ban,2011: 141). Environmental archaeology focuses on understanding the relationship between culture and the environment, as well as defining and describing the bio-physical characteristics and processes (Fagan, 5859-584 1382) related to social and economic systems (Butzer, 1980, 419). Although environmental studies are mostly used in macro-level archaeology, they also have their own specific applications at different levels. These studies, alongside field investigations, act as complements and, in some cases, as indicators for controlling variables and significantly contribute to answering questions, evaluating hypotheses, and achieving results (Karimian and Ahmadi,2015). Data collection at the end can be effective in achieving the desired goals.

Importance and necessity of the subject:

Table 1. Shows the necessity and importance of research on the subject, source: the author

the period	code	name
1	Providing better access to rural public spaces reduces disparities in opportunities and promotes equality and social cohesion.	Rural spaces are no longer sufficient to meet rural needs, especially in highly developed countries or attractive natural areas, and is necessary to restore their lost role by organizing, renovating, and creating new infrastructure mechanisms appropriate to their uses in these spaces and to provide appropriate strategies for fulfilling this role in today's society based on priorities, considering resource constraints and costs.
2	In competitive tourism markets, attracting tourists is considered a strategic goal by various destinations.	In densely populated rural areas of the country, the lack of empty spaces, weak and inefficient communication networks, and, most importantly, unplanned development have led to rural spaces expanding without considering location principles and criteria, resulting in a lack of compatibility, adjacency, and desirability.



Background research

Although the components of environmental quality have always played a significant role in the development of tourism in rural areas, research in this regard is still in its early stages. However, it should be noted that in Iran, little attention has been paid quantitatively to the role and importance of environmental quality components in attracting tourists to rural areas. Hamdollah Sajassi Ghidari and Tahereh Sadeghloo, in their article titled "Analysis and Explanation of the Role of Environmental Quality in Attracting Tourists to Villages Tourism Destinations (Case Study: Tourist Villages of Lavasan-e Kuchak District) (Ghidari and Sadeghloo, 2016), investigated the role of environmental quality in 16 tourist destination villages in the Lavasan-e Kuchak District, which serve as recreational areas for Tehran, in competitive tourism markets, attracting tourists by different destinations is considered a strategic goal. One of the methods of attracting tourists to a destination is to focus on improving the quality of the environment. This is because tourists, due to the nature of tourism, seek recreation and leisure. For this purpose, they mainly look for destinations that have the highest level of environmental quality. Reza Sameh and Maliheh Babakhan in their article titled "The Impact of Rural Landscape on Environmental Quality and Rural Tourism Development (Case Study: Barghan village, Savojbolagh City)," show that improving the quality of the rural environment and enhancing the rural landscape play a significant role in rural development and transforming these areas into tourist destinations (Sameh and Babakhan, 2023). Mohammadreza Rezvani and cooperate identify environmental quality factors and explain the contribution of each factor to branding and ultimately marketing and developing tourism in these destinations (Rezvani et al, 2018). Vakil Heydari Sarban, and Soheila Bakhtiar, in article titled "Assessment and Evaluation of the Effects of Tourism on the Improvement of Quality of Life in Rural Areas: Case Study of Tourist Villages in Kermanshah Province", the findings indicate that according to the opinions presented by the local community, tourism has had a positive impact on quality of life in all dimensions, with the greatest impact on the security and material well-being index, and the least impact on the education index (Sarban and Bakhtiar, 2019). Sedaei addressed the evaluation of sustainable development strategies for environmental quality in rural areas. Rural settlement is a special form of human settlement and a prominent economic and social manifestation that has been sustained over centuries. In recent years, attention has been paid to the physical planning of rural settlements and the environmental quality of rural areas in order to achieve the most desirable state of harmony between space and society, and this has been included in the agenda of rural development organizations and institutions. Therefore, all coordinated and systematic activities carried out for the organization and improvement of the physical environment of rural settlements have received the attention of planners Ali Majnuni Totakhaneh in the article modeling the aesthetic values of tourist village landscapes using artificial neural networks, the research findings using artificial neural networks showed that the ability to see the surrounding relief has the highest value, while the ability to see flowing rivers has the lowest value (Majnunu Totakhane et al, 2020). (Sedaei et al. 2017). Bahrami analyzed and evaluated the role of tourism and its effects on the development of rural settlements (case study: Marivan province). Tourism today is considered one of the important sources of production, income, employment, and infrastructure development for achieving sustainable development. Rural tourism is a new trend in tourism. The present study aims to investigate the role of rural tourism in the sustainable development of rural communities in Marivan County, located in Kurdistan province, and is descriptive-analytical in nature (Bahrami, 2016). Sharareh Ataeinia presented an article titled "An Archaeological Study and its Role in Sustainable Development (A Case Study: Kajoor Ancient Region)" in the field of Architecture in the northern part of the province, presented that



due to the large volume of places, sites and cultural works of different periods in this region, it can be said that favorable conditions for the establishment of human societies have ruled this area (Ataenia et al , 2020). This research is based on the description of events and phenomena, the classification of events and phenomena, the identification of permanent relationships between phenomena (scientific laws), and the development of theories that explain the causes of events and phenomena. Bita Sodaei discusses applied archaeology and its role in attracting cultural tourists to Iran, despite the many favorable conditions for attracting cultural tourists, there is no economic capacity for cultural heritage due to the lack of practicality in archaeology, however, establishing a suitable program for tourist presence requires scientific cooperation between disciplines (Sodaei,2017).

Research background table at a glance

Table 2. Research background at a glance, source: author

Row	The title of the research	journal	Year of publication	Writers	Method	Conclusion
1	Analysis and Explanation of the Role of Environmental Quality in Attracting Tourists to Rural Tourist Destinations (Case Study: Small Lavasan Rural Tourism Villages)	Quarterlies	1395	Hamdallah Sajasi Kedari, Tahereh Sadeghlou	Descriptive-analytical	To investigate the role of environmental quality in 16 tourist destination villages of small Lavasan district, which are tourist attractions in Tehran
2	Effect of rural landscape on environmental quality and development of rural tourism (case study: Barghan village, Saujblag city)	Quarterlies	1402	Reza Sameh, Maleeha Babakhani	Quantitative-qualitative	Improving the quality of the rural environment and improving the rural landscape has a significant role in rural development and turning these areas into tourist destinations
3	Analysis of the role of effective factors and indicators of environmental quality in the branding of rural tourism destinations (case study: the ethnic-cultural region of Oramanat- in the provinces of Kurdistan and Kermanshah)	Quarterlies	1396	Mohammadreza Rizvani, Hasan Ali Faraji Sokbar, Alireza Darban, Astana, Seyedhadi Karimi	Qualitative-analytical	Identifying the factors of environmental quality and explaining the contribution of each of them helps a lot in branding and finally marketing and tourism development of these destinations.
4	Measuring and evaluating the effects of tourism on improving the quality of life in rural areas, a case study: target villages for tourism in Kermanshah province.	Quarterlies	1398	Vakil Heydari Sarban, Soheila Bakhtar	Comparative-analytical	According to the theories presented by the local community, tourism has had a positive effect on the quality of life in all dimensions considered, and has had the greatest effect on the security and material well-being index and the least effect on the education index.
5	Modeling the aesthetic values of tourist village landscapes using artificial neural networks	Quarterlies	1399	Ali Totakhana, Hossein Karimzadeh, Hanam Alizadeh Ashrafi	Descriptive-analytical	The findings of the research using the artificial neural network method showed that the visibility of surrounding high peaks has the highest value and the visibility of flowing rivers has the lowest value.
6	Investigating strategies for sustainable development of environmental quality in rural areas	scientific	1396	Sidaei et al	Descriptive-analytical	Considering the structural and functional problems of rural areas, the development of rural settlements in the economic, social and environmental sectors should be based on sustainable development approaches.
7	Analysis and evaluation of the role of tourism and its effects on the development of rural settlements (case study: Marivan city)	scientific	1395	Rahmatullah Bahrani	Descriptive-analytical	The prosperity of Pilehvari bazaar provides a suitable opportunity for tourists to visit the surrounding villages of Marivan.
8	A research on the architecture of the north of the country from an archaeological point of view and its role in sustainable development (case study, the ancient area of Kajur)	scientific	1399	Sharara Atai Nia, Mohammad Mortezaei, Mohammad Kalhor	Descriptive	The existence of numerous historical sites and hills and their spread in all geographical areas of Kajur indicate the existence of an important historical period in this region.
9	Applied archeology and its role in attracting cultural tourists	scientific	1396	Bitasudai	Library	In the country of Iran, despite the very favorable conditions for attracting cultural tourists, due to the lack of practicality of archeology, there is no economic capacity in cultural heritage, but setting up a suitable program for the presence of tourists requires interdisciplinary scientific cooperation.

Research Methodology

The research described here is of a practical purpose, with a focus on descriptive-analytical data collection. The research aims to assess the impact of environmental quality elements in tourist villages. Its output can contribute to the existing knowledge in this field. The results of this research, about the economic aspects and desirable effects of attracting more tourists, can be highly effective in planning and shaping the economic outlook. This research involves both quantitative and qualitative data, utilizing quantitative and qualitative tools and methods for data analysis. The qualitative research method used in this study is content analysis, and interviews have been employed as a qualitative research tool.

Theoretical

The quality of the environment

An appropriate environment is one of the essential indicators and criteria for selecting tourist destinations, which can be measured through tangible indicators. Therefore, an important issue in the planning of rural areas today is the improvement of the quality of the tourism environment, which is a macro scale, this necessitates the development and management of appropriate services, facilities, and infrastructure to meet the needs of tourists. Quality is how something or a phenomenon affects humans emotionally and intellectually. However, the key principle in preserving and enhancing the quality of rural environments to attract tourism is paying attention to the rural aspect and the rural-like nature of tourist environments in villages. In the study of rural landscapes, understanding nature, intrinsic values, and the structure of the landscape plays a determining role. In many cases, where specific climatic and natural geographic conditions prevail, the landscape encompasses the places and the human activities in the man-made environment. This can be observed in most sustainable rural settlements in Iran, such as Abiyaneh, Masouleh, Oramanat, Kharanaq, and Mimen. Even in some cities like Taft and Semnan, this phenomenon can be observed. Therefore, considering the research topic and objective at hand, which is assessing the impact of environmental quality components in tourist villages, sample tourist areas in the west of the country have been selected as a case study to identify unknown and ambiguous aspects in the tourism context. Some of the subsets of rural environmental quality include physical environment quality, identity and landscape quality, visual-aesthetic quality, texture and communication network quality, environmental quality, social environment quality, dynamic environment quality, and quality of tourist attractions.

The Role of Archaeology in Tourism

Archaeology work is a fascinating field for individuals seeking truth and reality. For this reason, most people are interested in witnessing archaeological work up close, this interest has led to the emergence of a new trend called "archaeological tourism," which is a common ground between general archaeology and tourism. Archaeological tourism, also known as archaeological heritage tourism, focuses on the study of cultural aspects, archaeological sites, and related areas such as history, archaeology, people and lifestyles, cultural diversity, art and architecture, social, economic, and political structures, and landscapes, which main aim is to create and increase interest in archaeology, history, and the preservation of historical sites and areas, and aims to satisfy the curiosity and desired fulfillment of individuals who seek depth and understanding and wish to discover and comprehend the mysterious and ambiguous aspects of past civilizations (Afkhani, 2013: 21). Most researchers believe in the mutual influence between archaeology and tourism since they have found through experience that archaeology is a highly effective factor in attracting tourists, and conversely, the tourism industry can contribute to the growth,

development, and enhancement of archaeology's quality, based on these beliefs and experiences, in many countries archaeology and tourism have a close and coherent relationship or relationship. In Iran, for example, the cultural heritage, and tourism organizations have merged, creating a larger organization called the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization (Yavari, 2010: 65-77). The three words of cultural heritage, tourism, and handicrafts are often placed together due to their organizational overlaps, the interaction of the three pillars of cultural heritage as the thematic totality, handicrafts as connecting people with a corner of the cultural heritage category, and finally tourism as a stratum of society, can be an effective step in cultural development and attracting tourists. Today, to develop tourism, organizations related to cultural heritage, handicrafts, and tourism must have a strong relationship and desirable coordination; therefore, it can be said that cultural tourism is the only logical link between the cultural heritage sector and the tourism sector. With the arrival of cultural tourists, a fresh spirit is breathed into archaeological remains and relics, as many cultural tourists seek dimensions beyond aesthetics and strive to intimately understand cultures. With the arrival of cultural tourists, a new spirit is blown into the body of ancient works and remains, many cultural tourists are looking for a dimension beyond aesthetics and want to know cultures closely. Archaeology, with the help of tourism management experts, can provide the economic and cultural foundations to attract this type of tourist. Attention to the community's awareness of cultural heritage has been an important topic that has been extensively addressed in European and American countries since the 1970s, has even led to the emergence of a branch called "Public Archaeology" in disciplines such as archaeology, which aims to involve specialists in the interests of the general public and provide them with simplified specialized knowledge (Renfrew, 2011). Based on such methods, in addition to material exploitation, tourism can contribute to raising awareness in society about cultural heritage. Archaeology can strive to raise public awareness about cultural heritage alongside the discussion of tourism, taking into account the environment of a region—not just the physical environment but also the human environment—and considering cultural values (Afkhami, 2008). In essence, the concept of heritage includes buildings, archaeological sites, natural landscapes, and even living traditions such as Nowruz ceremonies, dances, and mourning rituals, among others (Renfrew, 2011, p. 351). When tourism is connected to cultural heritage, it gives rise to an approach called cultural development. In the discussion of cultural development and tourism, the important thing is that it is not limited to the relationship between people and objects, or various cultures and ancient artifacts, but it extends to a kind of spiritual relationship with culture, which includes knowledge of methods, diagrams, art, and the way of life and human relationships of different communities, as well as people's travel for awareness of what is happening in today's world, plays a very important role and valuable contribution to the expansion of cultural development of different nations (Razavani, 1995:52). Archaeology consists of two elements, history (what happens over time) and culture (material and non-material, tangible and intangible works that have remained and can be transferred from the Stone Age man to the present era), and on that basis, it can (Canorg, 1997). Here, considering the practical concept of archaeology, which deals with the appropriate and proportional use of cultural and archaeological heritage, taking into account the needs of a society in cultural, social, and economic domains (Afkhami, 2007:38), it can be very helpful. The explanation of the relationship between archaeology, humans, and nature has a long history in human history. Anti-oriented and nature-centric approaches have always been discussed as paradigms of this new relationship.



Integration of Archaeology and Nature

The architecture of target villages in the western of the country represents suitable examples of the integration of archaeology with nature, resulting from various factors such as climate, social, economic, cultural, and more, and has been heavily influenced by the surrounding climate and nature. In this study, was investigated the environmental quality in the target villages in Hamedan (Varkaneh, Ghashani, Simin Abroo, Barfajin). Firstly, the concept of rural environmental quality was explored. Then, the archaeological role in the development of rural tourism has been considered in particular the impact of climatic, natural, and ancient characteristics.

Rural Quality of Life

The word quality in Latin (Qual) means something and what, and Quality means how, and QoL, from a lexical perspective, means how to live and includes its differences, which are special and unique for each person, and different from others. (Kordzanganeh, 2006, p. 20).

Table3. Different definitions and concepts of quality of life, source: Ahmadi (2009), and Rezvani et al., (2008)

Researcher	Year	Definition
Szalai	1980	Quality of life means high quality of life characteristics or satisfaction with it. the state of one's existence «comfort and satisfaction with life on the one hand by external realities and factors of one's life, and on the other hand by internal perception and evaluation that one has of his own realities and factors of life and person «is determined.
Liu	1983	A stylish name for the old concept of material and psychological well-being of people in their living environment.
Smith	1983	Social welfare
Schlemmer & Moller	1983	Quality of life means living a good life and feeling satisfied with life. or the actual amount of welfare experienced by individuals and groups under social conditions and the general economy
Andrews	1983	Public welfare
Moller	1983	The level of welfare of individuals and groups under general socioeconomic conditions.

Table 4. the results of some research conducted on the quality of life

Title	Researchers	Purpose	Finds
Promoting the village to the city and its role in improving the quality of life of local residents; Item: Saheb City Village, Saqqez province	Fatimeh ahmadi	The role of transforming the village into a city in improving the quality of life of local residents, using indicators such as the quality of the environment, housing, education, health, participation, work, leisure, individual well-being, income and wealth	<i>The results of this study showed that the promotion of Saheb village to the city has been able to improve the quality of the physical environment, housing situation, individual well-being. Participation, income and wealth of the residents of the city, but it has failed to make improvements in health, education, leisure, information and communication, and work. Therefore, it has concluded that the promotion of Saheb village to the city has been able to create a relative improvement in the quality of life of the inhabitants of this city.</i>
Investigating the relationship between background variables, social capital and satisfaction with quality of life: a case study in the villages of Fars province	Seyyed Masoud Majdi Abdul Ali Lehsaizadeh	Designing a model for evaluating the impact of demographic, social-economic, personality and social capital variables in two cognitive and structural forms on satisfaction with quality of life	<i>The more support and availability of services in a community, the less the difference has been made through the creation of structures that have been created in the past. This part of social capital can be just as effective at how satisfied people are with quality of life. Also, the type of village that expresses the characteristics of the villages in terms of development facilities and monthly income affects the satisfaction of quality of life.</i>
Measuring the quality of the urban environment in new cities, case study: Hashtgerd New City	Jamshid Molodi	Measuring the quality of the urban environment in new cities with the motivation of presenting a model in order to evaluate the quality of the environment and identify the effective components	<i>Using the method of factor analysis and applying a hierarchical experimental model, the researcher came to the conclusion that the level of satisfaction of the residents with the quality of the urban environment of the new city of Hashtgerd is at a low level.</i>
Investigating performance measurement of economic development and quality of life in rural areas of Indiana	Lynn Sharkey	Identifying and evaluating economic development performance in rural Indiana	<i>The researcher has investigated and analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of twelve types of performance in the field of investment in rural transportation and has also studied the quality of life in relation to this issue by using data analysis at the city level.</i>

Findings

Hamedan Province, with an area of 19,493 square kilometers, is bordered by Zanjan and Qazvin provinces to the north, Lorestan province to the south, Markazi province to the east, and Kurdistan and Kermanshah provinces to the west. The province is located between 33 degrees 59 minutes to 35 degrees 48 minutes north latitude and 47 degrees 34 minutes to 49 degrees 36 minutes east longitude from the Greenwich meridian. It includes 9 cities, 25 districts, 27 towns, 73 rural districts, and 1,120 villages (Hamedan Municipality, 2019). The villages of Hamedan have numerous potential and capacity for tourism.

Archaeological climate of Hamadan

Today, archaeologists generally consider the Hegmataneh ancient mound, located in the center of Hamedan city, as the largest ancient mound in Iran. It is believed to contain the remains

of Casse, Medes, and Achaemenid structures, and later constructions. The area of this mound is about 30 hectares, but considering the parts that are not considered part of the ancient mound but have residential buildings on them, it extends to over 40 hectares. Recent archaeological excavations in the Hegmataneh mound have revealed that the location of the mentioned palaces and structures was in the current Hegmataneh mound. One of the remarkable features of the ancient city of Hegmataneh is its organized architecture and layout, which is unprecedented among the discovered ancient artifacts. The discovered works indicate the existence of a well-organized and advanced water supply network in the governmental city of the Medes and Parthians. There were streets with a width of 5.3 meters between the water channels, and the floors of these streets were entirely paved with square and regular bricks.

Geshani village

Table 5. Recognition of Geshani village, (Hadianpour and Dehghan, 2014)

characteristics	Factors	
From Hamedan province, Toisarkan city, Khorramroud district Geshani village located 25 km and Ashtran village located 20 km west of .Tuysarkan city	Location	Geographical
In longitude 48 degrees and 35 minutes and latitude 34 and 41 minutes and at an altitude of 2200 meters above the surface of open waters	Geographical location	
Mediterranean climate It has relatively cold winters and mild summers Average rainfall is 300 to 500 mm The prevailing wind is southwest to northeast Favorable wind from southeast to northwest	Climate	Social and cultural
A Persian with a Lur accent	Language	
Lur	Ethnicity	
Islam	Religion	
Agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, bee breeding, wheat carpet weaving, barley, legumes, walnuts, almonds, apricots, apples, elderberries and medicinal plants such as chicory	Accupation	
In some parts, each house is made up of several families and each part of the house is dedicated to one family, and in some parts, it is a single .family	Way of residence	

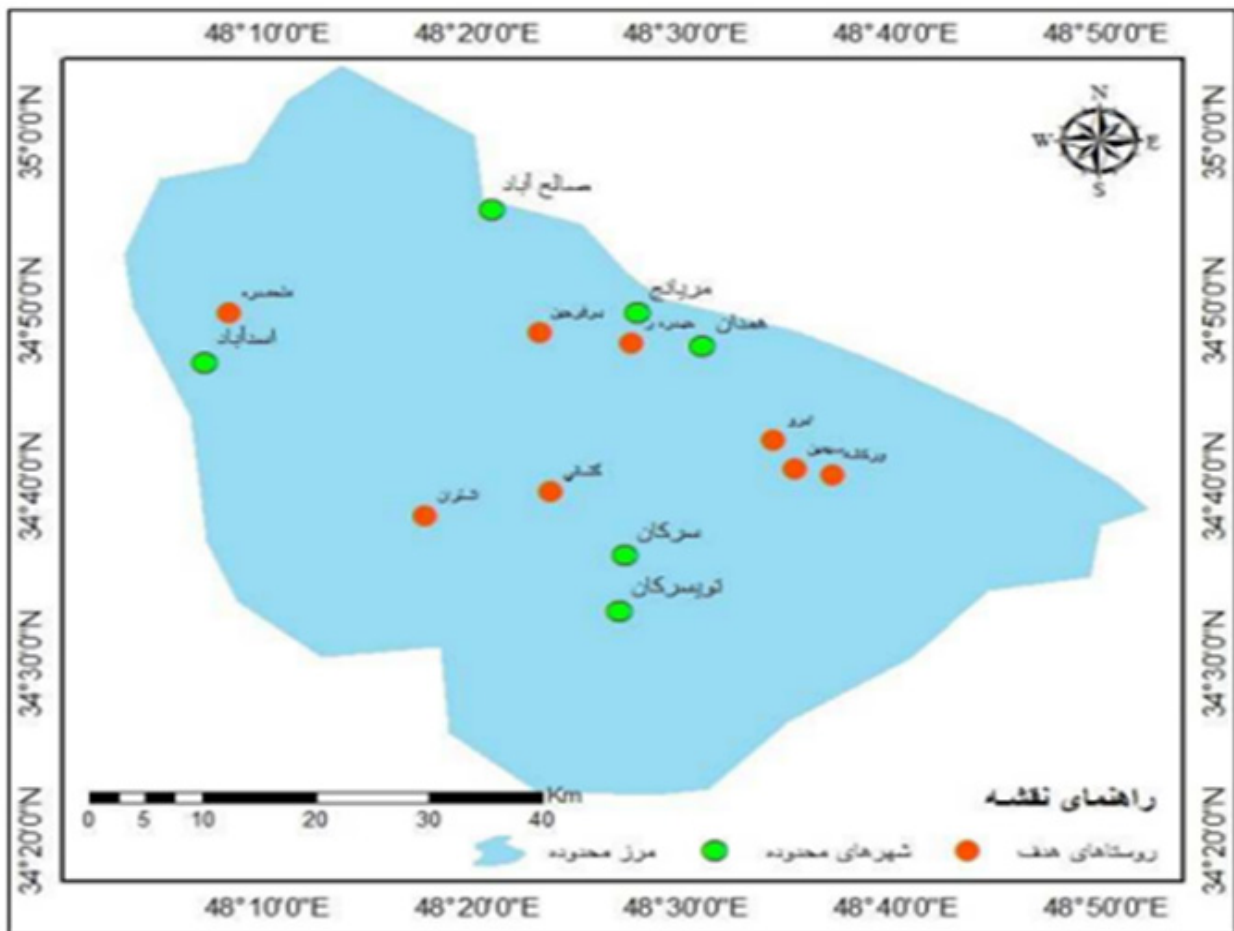
Table 6. swat, source: author's findings 2021

Threat	Opportunity	Weakness	Strengths
Increasing the price of land and its game exchange at the area level	The possibility of creating employment in the fields of accommodation and services for the population living in the area		Existence of empty potentials and susceptibility of the region for area tourism development
The possibility of adverse impact on the texture of villages through the arrival of tourists	Special attention of climbers to reach high summits	Tourist season restrictions	The presence of Imamzadeh Ibrahim shrine and Ashtran fortress in the area
-	The possibility of holding local festivals and exhibitions in the area	Lack of proper guidance and management of tourists by local guides	The existence of beautiful views and proximity to Alvand mountain
-	-	Unsuitability of accommodation and amenities for tourists for long-term stay	The relative proximity of the villages to the cities of Hamadan and Toisarkan
-	-	Lack of proper transportation	The existence of pristine landscapes, healthy climate and rich soil for agriculture
-	-	The existence of conflict and difference between the culture of the visitors and the people of the area	The existence of accommodation and comfort spaces for tourists for long-term stay

Barfajin Village

Barfajin Village, located in Hamedan province, is a popular tourist destination for both travelers and residents throughout most seasons of the year and also attracts visitors during the Nowruz holidays. The region's weather conditions, combined with the historical background of the village, have made the villages more appealing, making it necessary to introduce them to

tourists. What has made the village more charming and beautiful is the presence of tall walnut and mulberry trees that line the entrance road to the village, attracting the attention of travelers and tourists, during the summer season, the branches and leaves of these trees cover the village roads. It is worth mentioning that Imamzadeh Mohsen Shrine in Barfajin village is situated on a high hill at the end of a lush and beautiful valley, which is abundant, prosperous, and filled with walnut and fruit trees. This shrine, located in the village of Farjin, is 16 kilometers away from Hamedan, and due to its location in one of the beautiful and enchanting valleys of Mount Alvand, it is also known as Imamzadeh Mountain (Mohdi et al., 2013). The geographical area of the shrine, with its pleasant climate and magnificent valleys, annually welcomes thousands of pilgrims from Hamedan and other cities, and during the Nowruz holidays, it is also crowded with tourists (Jaafari and Hosseini, 2016).



Picture. 1: Map of the villages around Hamadan (Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation, Civil and Rural Affairs Department)

Simin village

Simin village has a history of 300 years and is located at the foothills, with a cohesive stone structure and stepped architecture, narrow and winding alleys in the central part of the province. Simin has been renovated as the first tourist destination village in Hamadan province in the Fourth Development Plan. Due to the natural and mountainous conditions of the region and its deadlock location, the village has remained untouched and pristine. The people of the village speak the Lori dialect. Ninety percent of the village's income comes from farming. Simin

Mountain Village is located in the Abruhan district, the central part of Hamadan province. This village is situated in a cold and dry valley, 10 kilometers southeast of Hamadan. Its geographical coordinates are 48 degrees and 35 minutes' longitude, 34 degrees and 41 minutes' latitude, and it is located at an altitude of 2260 meters above sea level and is located 4 kilometers from Abruhan village and 16 kilometers from the center of Hamadan city.

Varkaneh Village

Varkaneh is a stone village located in the southern foothills of the central Zagros Mountains, and it is considered one of the most pristine areas due to its mountainous nature and beautiful scenery. Varkaneh stone village is located on the road from Hamadan to Malayer, 20 kilometers southeast of Hamadan city and on the Akbatan Dam road. This beautiful and captivating village is also known as "Cheshme gholghol Village". The history of Varkaneh stone village dates back to 400 years ago during the Safavid era. In the Kurdish dialect, "Vor" means beside and "Kaneh" means spring. Varkaneh means being located next to water and spring. From another perspective, Varkaneh Village has taken its name because there are abundant stone mines around it, and the name Varkaneh refers to the locality near the mine or Verkan. The history of Varkaneh Village dates back to more than 400 years. Varkaneh Village is located in the southern foothills of the central Zagros Mountains and is generally considered a very pristine area due to its mountainous nature and beautiful scenery. In Varkaneh Village in Hamadan, which has gained fame as the gem of rural tourism in this province, the cobblestones that surround all its streets, under the local lights, come to life with a burnt brown color reminiscent of images from the Renaissance era in Europe. The core of this village, which has formed around the village canal, has a relatively long history, and its historical background dates back to the early Safavid period. Varkaneh Village in Hamadan is one of the six tourist villages in Hamadan, which has been registered in the list of national monuments and has been recognized as a special tourist area in the country. Simin Village, according to the locals and the remaining works that indicate ancient knowledge of house construction and cohabitation, is one of the ancient habitats of the area. This village has moved to different locations depending on the circumstances. The first location was at the end of the Kolah Ghazi Valley and close to this summit, and then it has been relocated lower over time. The current location of the village, according to the locals, has a history of over 300 years. Since the ancestors of the residents of these areas were from the Lur tribe and the Aryan people and were skilled horse riders, they have undoubtedly been inhabiting plains and flat areas from the beginning. In the search for the reasons for settlement in the mentioned highlands, these reasons can be counted: religion, war, cold weather, native tribes, etc, the presence of silica mines in the vicinity of the village, which are currently being exploited, may have been a reason for naming the village due to the special appearance it creates in the roads and surrounding slopes.

Table 7. Marriage rate

Percent	Abundance	Mrriage state
26.5	73	Single
73.5	202	Married
100	275	Total



Picture No. 2, Verkaneh village (Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation)

Analysis of findings and descriptive statistics

Picture No. 3, map of Verkaneh village with lands and textures

Table 8. Gender characteristics of the respondents

Statistics	Abundance	Gender
70	190	Male
30	85	Female
100	275	Total

Table 9. Age characteristics of the respondents

Percent	Abundance	Age range - years
8	22	Less than 25
45.3	125	Between 25-35
35	96	Between 35-55
11.7	32	More than 55 years
100	275	Total

Table 10. the amount of respondents' income

Percent	Abundance	The amount of income - million
11.6	32	5-3
21.1	58	6-5
57.8	159	7-6
9.5	26	More than 7
100	275	Total

Table (12) Descriptive characteristics of the respondents

Percentage statistics	Abundance	Type of respondents
11	30	Expert
89	245	Tourist
100	275	Total

Verkaneh village



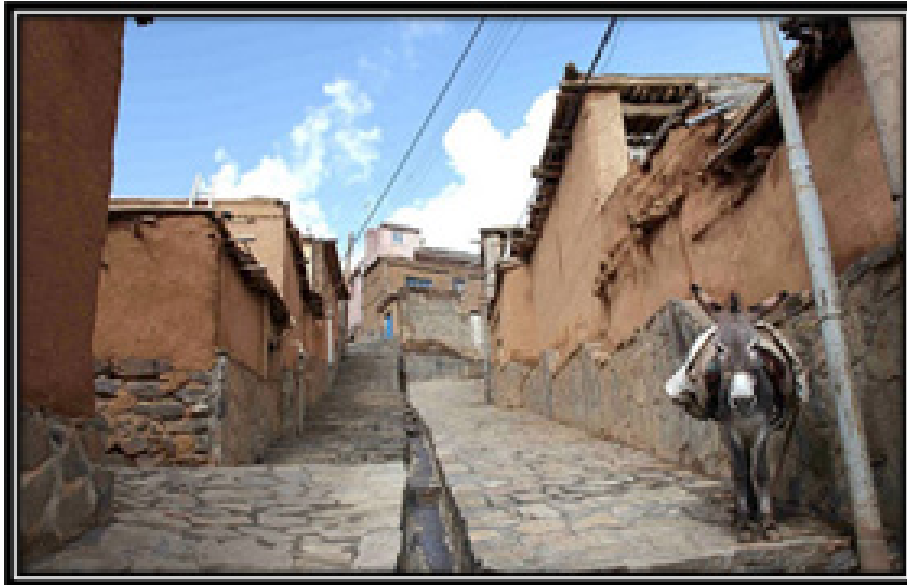
Picture (4) Verkaneh village (Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation)

Picture (5) Verkaneh village (Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation)

Table (13) Gender characteristic of Verkaneh village

Statistics	Abundance	Gender
56.78	43	Male
42.56	32	Female
100	75	Total

Geshani village



Picture (6) Geshani village (Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation, Rural Development Department)

Table (14) Gender characteristic of Geshani village

Statistics	Abundance	Gender
53	29	Male
47	26	Female
100	55	total

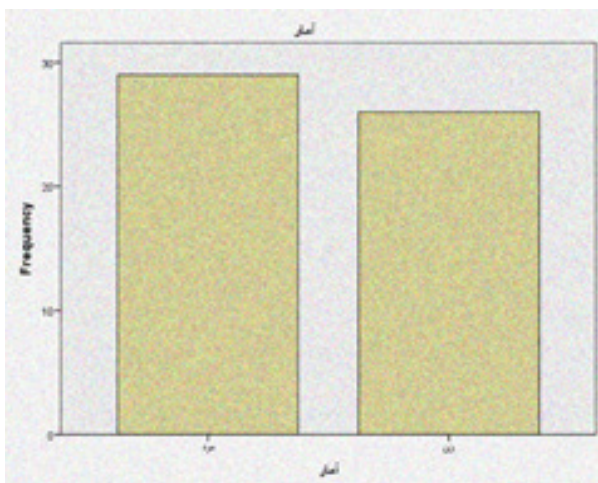


Chart (1) Gender characteristics of Geshani village



Picture (7) (Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation)

Barfajin Village

Barfajin Village, located in Hamadan province, is a popular tourist destination for both travelers and local residents throughout most seasons of the year. It also attracts Norooz holiday travelers and visitors. The region's climate conditions, coupled with the historical significance of the villages in the province, have enhanced the appeal of the villages. It is necessary to introduce them to tourists. What has made the village's landscape more charming and beautiful is the presence of walnut and mulberry trees that line the entrance road to the village, capturing the attention of travelers and tourists and in the summer season, the branches and leaves of these trees cover the village's roads. It should be mentioned that the mausoleum of Imamzadeh Mohsen in Barfajin Village is situated on a high hill at the end of a lush and beautiful valley. The valley is fertile, pleasant, and filled with walnut and fruit trees. The Imamzadeh's structure is located in the village of Farjin, 16 kilometers away from Hamadan, and is famous for being situated in one of the enchanting and scenic valleys of the Alvand Mountain range, known as Imamzadeh Mountain or Mountain Imamzadeh (Mohdi et al., 2013). The geographical area of Imamzadeh, due to its pleasant climate, magnificent valleys, and lush surroundings, welcomes thousands of pilgrims from Hamadan and other cities annually, and it is also crowded with tourists during the Norooz holidays. One unique feature of this village is the presence of the blessed mausoleum of Imamzadeh Mohsen (peace be upon him), known as "Imamzadeh Kuh," who is a descendant of Imam Hasan Mojtaba (a.s) this mausoleum is highly regarded by many travelers and tourists due to its location in a favorable climate and mountainous area. The mausoleum of this respected Imamzadeh is situated on a hill in the northern foothills of the Alvand Mountain range, at the end of the lush and picturesque Barfajin and Farjin valleys; therefore, it has gained fame as "Imamzadeh Kuh". Imamzadeh Kuh Valley, also known as Mawshan River Valley, is one of the valleys of the Alvand Mountain. This valley is located in the northwest of Alvand, approximately 5 kilometers from the city of Hamadan, and its extension is east-west.

Table(15) Gender characteristics of Barfjin village

Statistics	Abundance	Gender
54.18	43	Male
45.36	36	Female
100	79	Total



Picture (8), Barfjin village, (Islamic Revolution Housing Foundation, Civil and Rural Affairs Department)

The results of interviews with people and analysis

After conducting interviews with experts, specialists, tourists, field interviews and recording their answers, the common results were obtained and then stated in the following table.

Sub code	Original code	General components
Traditional architecture Stepped texture Attractive appearance with beautiful gardens	A different and natural architectural building Access to mountains and valleys Native materials Staircase architecture	Characteristics of the rural area
Suitable vegetation Placement in a natural bed Wildlife around the village	Protection of the pristine condition of the village	Village ecosystem
Building housing with people's participation Stone materials	Natural state Eco-friendly materials	The body of the village
Tomb of Imamzadeh Ibrahim A large and old cemetery Nomadic migration landscape Access to the city of Hamadan The existence of historical castles	Historical monuments Religious works Convenient access	Rural infrastructure for tourism
Improper sewage Many mines and traffic of truckers No proper road Lack of inns and tourist houses for visitors	Cultural differences Type of behavior Lack of proper infrastructure	Obstacles to attracting tourists in the village
Destroying different plant and animal species	Environmental problems Increase in waste Loss of plant texture	Changing the ecosystem with the arrival of tourists
Having a porch The darkness of the night and the absence of light Use of native and available materials such as wood trees - stones available	Livelihoods architecture	Native Architecture and Sustainable Tourism Goals and Principles
Cleaning rivers and fields from garbage Restoration of historical and old places Taking care of trees and fields	Effective and positive	The impact of internal monitoring on environmental degradation
Mosques - at the head of the fountain and aqueduct - at the door of the houses of the elders of the village	Business and activity boom	Interactive environment of the village
Communication between people and tourists Manifestations of rural customs Hospitality	Cultural attraction of the village	The social environment of the village
Readability of texture and access route to villages Lack of proper access to the gas station on the way to the village Improper passages and ways	Restriction of routes leading to villages	Communication networks
Existence of cemeteries and tombs - holding religious ceremonies, especially on the Day of Ashura -	Places and events	Religious attractions
Production of household products, including clothing and food	Household products	Handicrafts
Traditional and old houses	Ancient architecture	The age of the buildings
Springs and flowing water in the village - land suitable for growing crops - clean air	Relatively favorable weather	Climate
The surveyed villages have various heights and valleys that are suitable for tourism. For example, Simin Abro village is surrounded by Kūh-e Serkeh Zār from the west, Balag koh from the southeast, Takht-e Rostam Mountain and Sarkhpa Valley from the northwest, Vali Shekar Valley from the south, Jen Valley from the northeast and Yurje chal valley kuh from the north.	Lots of elevation	Topography
The target villages have a lot of vegetation and walnut-apricot trees can be seen.	Rangeland and forest cover	Vegetation

Table (16) The results of interviews with people and analysis

physical-spatial-natural characteristics

After interviewing experts, tourists and village residents, in addition to general questions, there was also an interview about each of the target villages, which was mentioned in the group:

Table (17), Simin Abro village

Traditional and native spatial structure	1
Hierarchy of entering the village is attractive for tourists	2
Organic road network	3
Density of gardens	4
The terraced structure of the village	5
Native materials	6
Having a dam close the area	7
Attractive valleys for climbers	8

Table (18), Barfjin village

The presence of soaring walnut and mulberry trees	1
The tomb of Imamzadeh Mohsen	2
Geographical area of Imamzadeh	3
Appropriate weather	4

Table (19), Geshani village

Villagers' houses in the form of stairs	1
Appropriate weather	2
Concentrated residential context	3
A large and old cemetery	4
Tomb of Imamzadeh Ibrahim	5

Table (20), Verkane village

The presence of an aqueduct and a spring inside the village	1
Mehri Khanum Castle	2
Appropriate weather	3
Simple design of the grave in the village cemetery	4
Nature tourism sites	5
Stone architecture	6

Analysis of quantitative tests

• As a reference of KMO values, Kaiser has considered the following numbers and limits for sampling adequacy conditions in factor analysis.

- 0.00 to 0.49 is unacceptable.
- 0.50 to 0.59 weak.
- 0.60 to 0.69 average.
- 0.70 to 0.79 acceptable.
- 0.80 to 0.89 suitable.
- 0.90 to 1.00 excellent.

Alpha coefficient	Factor loading	Item	Dimensions
.72	.82 .78 .68 .65 .75	Traditional materials Stepped texture Special form and materials Lush texture Texture architecture is similar to classical architecture	Influence of architectural symbols of rural context
.63	.73 .48 .65 .59 .65 .71	Incongruent hotel-motel architecture Use of new materials The existence of traditional houses Use of new materials Supervision The presence of tourists	Texture identity
.56	.75 .59 .32 .42 .51 .63 .68	Village residents' interactions with tourists The capacity to create employment and increase income Increasing the sense of kindness and warmth in interactions between residents and tourists The possibility of changing the texture architecture due to the contact of residents with tourists Feeling of lack of facilities and services	Coexistence of residents and tourists
.77	.68 .82 .76 .78 .77 .73	Lack of tourist accommodation Lack of sewage network Lack of welfare amenities Lack of proper access to the village Lack of travel guides in villages	Barriers to attracting tourists
.67	.78 .67 .64 .59 .72 .76 .54	Traditional village foods The presence of domestic animals in villages Religious attractions of villages The existence of natural landscapes of villages The presence of beautiful valleys in the villages The existence of traditional-rural architecture of villages	Spatial characteristics of the rural

Table (21) Statistical interpretation of quantitative index (source: author)

Significance level	Bart	Condition	Kimo coefficient	Dimension
0.00	539.00	medium	.67	Texture identity
0.00	2113.369	Acceptable	.76	Barriers to attracting tourists

Table (22) Analysis of coefficients

	Mean Rank
Wastewater	1/86
Access	2/01
Guide	1/89
Lack of knowledge	2/09
welfare amenities	1.89
Clash of people	1.83

Test Statisticsa	
N	275
Chi-Square	14.183
df	2
Asymp .Sig.	0.000

Table (24) Obstacles to attracting tourists

	Mean Rank
Readability	2/06
Beauty	2/09
Identity	1/86
Permeability	1/99
Being multifunctional	2/01
How to access	1/84

Test Statisticsa	
N	275
Chi-Square	14.279
df	2
Asymp .Sig.	0.001

Table (23) Environmental quality analysis

Conclusion:

The results indicate that the environmental quality of target villages is one of the potential and promising factors for attracting tourists. This component is important both subjective and objective in terms of the environmental quality of the villages. Based on the conducted interviews, it seems that due to the harsh and rigid architecture in cities and the influence of the environment on human behavior, harmonious architecture with nature in rural areas has softened human behavior; therefore, tourists are more inclined to spend more time in these environments. A significant component in the subjective aspect is the dominance of natural elements over human-made ones. The sense of being in nature is now an important factor in attracting tourists, and these target villages possess this important characteristic. Considering the advantages of tourist presence and the environmental characteristics of villages, one of the concerns of experts and residents of villages has been the cultural impact and environmental issues, including the concerns of respon-

dents. Regarding the infrastructure required for sustainable tourism, the lack of facilities and infrastructure instability are major challenges and obstacles to tourism development, requiring external factors to improve the quality of infrastructure. Therefore, the objective indicators of target villages, which are close to each other, have been evaluated as desirable as a whole, and the environment and rural space are among the most important factors attracting tourists due to the unique architecture of the villages and the pristine and beautiful nature. As for the subjective aspect, the responses from the interviews indicate that it does not necessarily appeal to tourists, and it does not always reflect the spirit and essence of the villagers in the mental aspect of their presence in the rural environment and texture. The study and investigation of the architecture of each area have been carried out for the development and growth of each area, and the target villages, as one of the important historical areas in all eras, are no exception to this rule. Hamedan area, due to its unique geographical location, including cultivable lands, abundant water, and good climate, has always been a human settlement in the central Alborz geographical area throughout history. The arrangement of the desired elements side by side can significantly contribute to the study, perspective, type, and manner of regional and ethnic communications. Field studies in the ranges of environmental quality of the target village indicate that this region has been inhabited since the Copper and Stone Ages. Hamedan area, through the conducted studies, has shown that it cannot be devoid of human settlement and establishment in any period.

Table (25) Components affecting the development of tourism

Beautiful and attractive facades of the buildings - superb vegetation - pavement of the village roads - objectification of traditional cultures through architecture	Aesthetic quality
Inducing a sense of peace, Vitality, lushness, and a sense of security	Semantic quality
Preservation of vegetation - use of environmental materials suitable for degradable and environmentally friendly energy	Environmental quality
Relatively proportionate access to the villages - presence of tourism attraction in the traffic spaces of the village - strengthening of social interactions - pedestrian streets	Functional quality

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