

Strategic Planning for Tourism Development Using S.W.O.T Model Case Study: Borjlou Tourist village in Ardebil

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Abstract: Today, one of the options of developing urbanization and avoiding the pollution of urban environments is to create and develop rural tourism industry that as one of the important and fundamental industries can play an important role in developing villages. Therefore the aim of this study is to investigate the situation of tourism and its role in the development of Borjlou tourist village in Ardabil. The research method is a combinational one (survey-descriptive and analytical). The statistical population of the present research consists of two groups that by using Cochran sampling method, 86 tourists and 34 authorities were selected as sample, that using SWOT analysis, the strategies and procedures for developing tourism in this region were studied. The results of experimental analyses indicate that the studied area has high variability of potentials and tourist attractions. Therefore, revising the existing policies to address the limitations and to use the relative advantages is inevitable.

Keywords: Tourism Industry, Rural Development, Strategies, SWOT Model.

1. Introduction

According to the World Tourism Organization's estimations, the proceeds of tourism and travel with an increasing rate than that of world trade will rise to a level higher than other economical sectors (England Research, 2005: 21). Thus, many countries consider this dynamic industry as the main source of income, employment, the growth of private sector and development of their infrastructures (Parsaeian and A'rabi, 2003: 73). In recent years across Europe to meet the social and economic challenges of marginalization in rural areas or villages that are facing the loss of traditional agricultural activities, tourism has been the focus of attention (Pakzi, 2008: 66), so that rural tourism is considered as an activity, with emphasis on the development of regional and local policies (Oppermann, M., 1996). One of the strategies that have been considered in most countries is the development of tourism in rural areas (Eftekhari and Mahdavi, 2006: 2). Reinforcing rural tourism can have a significant role in satisfying problems that villages are faced by creating employment and income (Hafari, 2009: 8), and can create the enormous jobs or can strengthen the existing businesses, as well as

can provide many opportunities of an excellent growth in a variety of business issues for these regions (Fuller, 1990: 363), to become an instrument to create job and economical development in the region (Slee, 1997: 181). The stable rural tourism can improve the life quality of the host community and provide a worthwhile experience for visitor and maintain the quality of environment that the host and guest communities are dependent to it (Flagestad, 2001: 445), and in a process of globalization, it would go ahead toward a tourist village and would become a free common market that all countries will benefit of it (Holjeva, 2003: 131). On the one hand, the preservation of each of villages in their economic development results in the formation of a treasure for the whole area that promotes cultural and tourism activities (Flagestad, 2001: 34).

Therefore, planning for the development of rural tourism depends on precise studying and domination on conditions of the studied region. It also requires the examination of the competitive capability of different regions in the tourism market from one hand, and the tourism potentials of various regions on the other hand. In fact, tourism like an economic production depends to supply and demand system that makes the

feasibility of tourism production necessary as a fundamental strategy in connection with the evaluation of tourism capabilities in land space, that is, the area of tourism production to respond tourism markets at the regional, national and international scales. Studying the feasibility of rural tourism production in this region includes the total evaluation of capability of rural tourism to respond the tourism demand in tourism markets at the regional and national scales. Accordingly, this paper, with structural view toward tourism, studies the feasibility of the rural tourism in Borjlou region as a case study.

2.Theoretical principles

Tourism encountered difficulty in post-modern challenges in deconstructing its classic aspects, and the ground was paved for formation of the quality tourism trends in the post-industrial economy and its surroundings. This trend provided the ground of cultural interaction between hosts and tourists with reduced environmental mal-impact (Papli Yazdi and Saghaei, 2011: 111). In patterning frame work of tourism space, tourism capabilities are studied at various places that identifying capabilities and tourism market corresponding with them provides the ground for actions by local authorities to make appropriate policies. To evaluate capabilities and tourism feasibility in each region, each of the five elements resulting from tourism including attractions, accessibility, infrastructural facilities, hospitality services and organizational and institutional elements have been studied and used in portraying the overall tourism products of that region (Kadivar and Saghaei, 2007: 113). It is not a long time that the term 'rural tourism' has been propagated in the world, but since it has caused economic growth and has created various activities, employment and has increased the income for villagers, has been emphasized by international community in the regional and local development policies (Motiei Langroodi and Nusrati, 2011: 70). Tourism potentials in rural areas depend to geographical capitals, the quality of natural perspectives and historical and cultural works and relics more than anything else. Rural tourism can be a strategy for multilateral development of the government in the economic, social and

environmental affairs (Mahdavi et al, 2008: 40). Rural tourism certainly plays an essential role in developing and maintaining the level of reserves in rural areas. Given the tourism as a comprehensive and public activity and increasingly emphasis on it in the field of regional and local development activities and considering this subject that a comprehensive and acceptable definition of tourism should exist, the tourism development seems a necessary fact, especially when considering the characteristics of this activity in specific areas clearly distinguishes the rural tourism from other forms of tourism offers. Overall, rural tourism can be defined as following: rural tourism includes any recreative activity and spending leisure with receiving services such as providing food, rest place and local productions by local habitants in a place that is considered as a village according to the country's current law and regulations and in terms of economic and cultural nature (Eftekhari and Ghaderi, 2002: 28).

3.Statement of Problem

The distance between the current situation in attracting foreign tourist in Ardebil province and what is imagined as the optimum situation is too much. There are various factors that are considered as factors creating the gap between the current situation and the optimum situation, that in this research, this subject is studied in terms of barriers existing in tourism industry to provide the fields of improvement and putting them in the situation of competitive advantages by recognizing the existing barriers.

4.Importance and necessity

Tourism industry is one of the high-income and at the same time, safe and clean industries for the economic of each country. Development of this industry indicates the political, economic, social, security, cultural and scientific stability of the world countries. In other words, tourism industry having unique privileges provides several purposes in national atmosphere of a country simultaneously; while each of the other industries lonely provides a part of intended purposes; therefore, considering and pay attention to it is important and has a special position in national and international relations.

Here, Ardebil province, in terms of determinant properties in the field of tourism, can be an optimum pattern for scientific studies and at the same time, be the executive of main tourism projects in order it can pave the ground for attracting foreign tourists, and by recognizing weak and strong points, and threats, it can relatively dominate on future trends.

5.Goals

- The valuation of the consequences of tourism development in Borjlou region.
- The study of the natural abilities of the region in order to achieve development.

6.Background and literature

Julia Sharply in the book of “Rural tourism” in addition to study the areas of rural tourism and factors affecting it, reciting from Watress (1994), knew the villages as places for living and temporary place for escaping from various pressures of urban modern life, and considered the trend of changing village to city as an intervening factor in elimination of the rural characteristics that today we are seeking (Sharply, 2001: 32).

- Beizaie (1997) in a study entitled “tourism weaknesses in Iran” concluded that cultural, social and administrative factors have had a remarkable effect in arrearage of the country’s tourism sector. Beizaie refers to the lack of a positive attitude by managers and planners of tourism sector toward attracting foreign tourists as the key constraint in this field. He also explains how to reform the communicational and institutional structure in the sector for attracting foreign tourists.
- Naseri (1996) in a study under the title of “the barriers influencing on development of Iranian tourism industry and the optimal pattern for attracting foreign tourists” refers to structural and cultural restrictions and emphasizes on applying modern marketing methods in attracting tourists.

7.Research hypotheses

- The first hypothesis: reducing the existing barriers in the interior environment in the tourism industry is effective to attract foreign tourists.
- The second hypothesis: reducing the existing barriers in the near and close environment in the tourism industry is effective to attract foreign tourists.
- The third hypothesis: reducing the existing barriers in the macro and far environment in the tourism industry is effective to attract foreign tourists.

8.Methodology

This study has been done in a combined (survey-descriptive and analytical) method. To analyze data and provide strategies of rural tourism development, SWOT analytical method has been used. Research population consists of two groups that using Cochran sampling method, 86 individuals of tourists and 34 individuals of authorities have been selected as the sample. To analyze the observations and examine the conformity or rejection of research hypotheses, one-variable t-test, Friedman ranking test and Swatter analysis test, SWOT, have been used.

9.Determination of sample size

In this thesis, to determine the sample size, we consider the confidence level for sample size as 0.95 percent (in other words, we tolerate 5% of error). Also, the amount of allowable error in estimating the proportion of a specific attribute is considered equal to 0.1 percent.

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.25)}{(0.1)^2} = 95$$

Often in a survey research, sample size is multiplied by 1.2 (i.e. 20% increases). Hence, with a 20% increase, we will have an increase equal to 19 in our sample size for this study; therefore, the optimal sample size will be equal to 120 subjects. Finally, this paper examines the results of the statistical analysis of collected data. In descriptive analysis of the data, descriptive

statistics and related diagrams have been presented, and in inferential analysis, the appropriate tests to confirm or refute the research hypotheses have been examined. It should be noted that the analyses were performed using SPSS software.

10. Introduction of the studied area

Based on the subject matters mentioned in this article, the goal of rural development is not only the improvement of economic opportunities, but the promotion of social organizing, preserving indigenous (local) heritage, culture and customs, and services and facilities along with the rural environment protection are also considered. Borjlou region is one of the tourist areas which have a lot of strengths and social and cultural potentials that among them the appropriate geographical situation, closeness to crowded centers, cold weather in summer, plant cover, rivers and fountains are the advantages of

this region compared to the other regions and competitive regions. Borjlou tourist region is located in 10 kilometer distance of Nayer city (in Ardebil province) within an area of 110 hectares, and because of having various natural potentials such as mineral hot water, intact nature, surface water fountains, and diversity of climate, is one of the important regions for attracting tourist. It is obvious that one of the important ways to develop tourism industry in this region is to identify more the studied area and precise planning to measure the feasibility of this region in terms of the power of attracting tourist and to create various promenades and infrastructural facilities.

11. Presentation and analysis of results

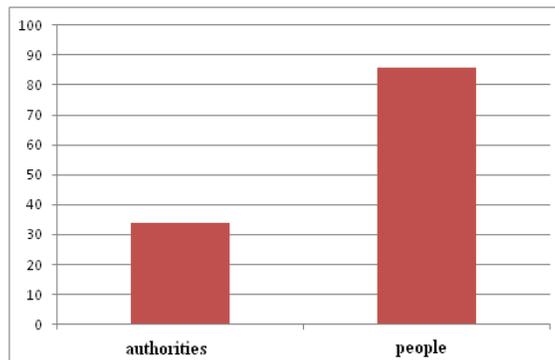
Research population consists of two groups that 86 individuals of tourists and 34 individuals of authorities have been selected as the sample.

Table.1. Distribution of sample group

Group	percentage	Frequency
Authorities	28.3	34
People	71.7	86
Total	100.0	120

Source: The author

Diagram.1. Distribution of sample group



Source: The author

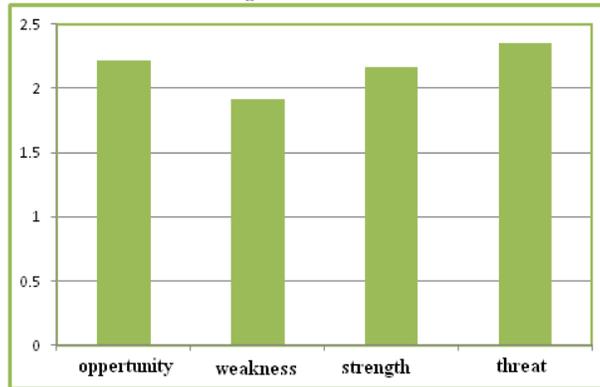
According to information presented in the above table and diagram, people with 71.7% consist the highest percent of the sample group.

Table.2. Description of variables

variable	Frequency	Mean	Standard deviation
Opportunity	120	2.2205	0.29244
Weakness	120	1.9167	0.59615
Strength	120	2.1708	0.40087
Threat	120	2.3569	0.42795

Source: The author

Diagram.2. Variables



Source: The author

12. SWOT analysis

SWOT strategic planning model, in fact, is a method for decision-making and selecting a strategy and order in various affairs, but in scientific discussions, it is one of the decision-making models that have been designed to determine the short-term or long-term strategy and to make the important and key decisions about various problems and issues. This model can be designed for an organization or cooperation or for a certain geographical region or an issue and problem that, in fact, we are typically engaged it, and practically its main task is to determine a strategy to improve efficiency or situation.

This model is composed of two matrices of internal and external factors. Internal factors are related to weaknesses (W) and strengths (S) of a set or a region or subject, and external factors are related to opportunities (O) and threats (T) of a region or system. In this method, these factors are determined through the interview process, and are evaluated through questionnaire, and then the four types of strategy

(offensive, defensive, competitive and conservative) are determined.

The appropriate SWOT analysis is designed in the form of tables and its stages are performed as follows:

- Providing a list of opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses in the form of tables.
- Explaining and interpreting each of opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses.

This model can be an early stage of an analysis with the ultimate goal to present and provide the necessary policies. When SWOT is completely applied, it can offer an appropriate basis for formulation of policies. Analysis of strengths-weaknesses and opportunities-threats gives the formation of primary goals, development strategy and a preliminary ranking of actions that facilitate the achievement to short-term, medium-term and long-term goals. Table 3 schematically illustrates the framework of the SWOT model (Maffi and Saghaei, 2009: 33-34).

Table.3. How to determine the matrix of SWOT strategies

weaknesses W	Strengths S	Matrix SWOT
Strategies of WO	Strategies of SO	Opportunities O
Strategies of WT	Strategies of ST	Threats T

Source: Maffi and Saghaei, 2009:34

In order to provide SWOT strategy, identification of the four factors is considered

necessary and unavoidable to overcome weaknesses and threats, and to improve

strengths and opportunities, that by listing these factors we can evaluate them. For this purpose, by forming SWOT matrix, 4 sets of strategic options are created. In other words, the weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and threats (mentioned in the second row of boxes) in development of the region are linked together in four general conditions of SO, WO, ST and WT,

and a set of possible strategies is selected among them.

According to studies done and examining the situation of surrounding environment of the studied region, a set of existing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats affecting on the region has been studied that is indicated in Table 4.

Table.4. SWOT matrix (main factors influencing rural tourism in the studied region, the matrix of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)

External	Internal
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities (O)</p> <p>Increasing the government attention to planning Incentives for private investment Improving living standards The appropriate imitation of villagers from tourists Improvement and development of roads and transport networks Increasing the recreational opportunities Increasing in construction in the region Increasing the land price Increasing the regional employment Increasing income of household residing in the area Avoiding migration of young people and economic activists to other areas Prosperity and economic development of the region Easy and convenient access to area</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths (S)</p> <p>Vicinity and proximity to population centers, including the city of Ardabil Landscapes and tourist attractions Having a quiet milieu Having a pleasant and convenient environment</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Threats (T)</p> <p>Weakness of tourism management Damage to scenic area Vulnerability of environment through scattering waste and leaking sewage The increase in noise pollution Reduction of social and family integration Increasing anonymous traffic and strangers, and social malformations</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses (W)</p> <p>Weakness of propagation to identify tourist attraction in the region Lack of dwellings or residential areas for tourists The needed immunity of tourists and public immunity The lack of willingness of people in this region to invest</p>

Source: The author

As it has been shown in table 4, in the studied region, 4 internal strengths versus 4 internal weaknesses, and 13 external opportunities versus 6 external threats have been identified and studied. Thus, a total of 17 strengths and opportunities as the advantages, and 10 weaknesses and threats as the limitations and constraints facing the development of tourism in this region can be identified.

Table.5. Matrix of SWOT analysis (ranking of strengths and weaknesses)

	SWOT analysis	Mean	Ranking mean weight	Rank
Strengths	S1= quiet and relax environment	3.7917	2.48	3
	S2= pleasant and convenient environment	3.45	2.03	4
	S3= landscapes and tourist attractions	4.1333	2.88	1
	S4= vicinity to population centers	3.9417	2.61	2
Weaknesses	W1= tendency for tourism investment	3.6833	1.98	4
	W2= regional security needed	4.2917	2.71	2
	W3= lack of accommodations and residential places	3.9833	2.48	3
	W4= poor propagation for identification of attraction	4.375	2.83	1

Source: Author's calculations

According to the above table, SWOT analysis shows that in terms of landscapes and tourist attraction with ranking mean of 2.88 and mean of 4.13, and after that the vicinity and closeness to population center with ranking mean of 2.61

In the view of weaknesses, the component of poor propagation for identification of attraction with ranking mean of 2.83, and mean of 4.38, and after that the component of the regional security needed with ranking mean of 2.71 and

and mean of 3.94 is placed at next stage of importance; in contrast, pleasant and convenient environment with ranking mean of 2.03 and mean of 3.45 is considered as the least important point of the strengths in the studied area.

mean of 4.29 is placed at next stage of importance; in contrast, tendency for tourism investment with ranking mean of 1.98 and mean of 3.68 is considered as the least important point of the weaknesses in the studied area.

Table.6. Matrix of SWOT analysis (ranking of opportunities and threats)

	SWOT analysis	Mean	Ranking mean weight	Rank
Opportunity	O1= increasing the construction	3.1917	4.72	13
	O2= enhancing living standards in the region	3.6833	6.31	12
	O3= preventing migration of young people and economic activists	3.6083	6.35	11
	O4= increasing government attention	3.5583	6.41	10
	O5= doing good imitation by villagers	3.6833	6.5	9
	O6= development of roads and transportation networks	3.725	6.54	8
	O7= increasing the price of land in the area	3.7417	6.71	7
	O8= regional prosperity and progress	3.7167	6.83	6
	O9= increasing recreational opportunities	3.8417	7.24	5
	O10= increasing the income of households living in the region	4.0083	7.76	4
	O11= easy and affordable access	3.9917	7.97	3
	O12= increasing private sector investment	4.1167	8.76	2
	O13= increasing the employment	4.2667	8.9	1
Threat	T1= reducing family and social integrity	3.1917	2.69	6
	T2= creating social aberrations	3.45	3.25	5
	T3= damage to beautiful landscape	3.5583	3.37	4
	T4= sound pollution	3.65	3.43	3
	T5= vulnerability of environment	3.85	3.82	2
	T6= weak management of tourism	4.1583	4.43	1

Source: Author's calculations

According to the above table, SWOT analysis shows that in terms of opportunity, the component of employment with ranking mean of 8.9 and mean of 4.26, and after that the component of the investor of private sector with ranking mean of 8.76 and mean of 4.12 is placed at next stage of importance; in contrast, increasing of construction with ranking mean of 4.72 and mean of 3.19 is considered as the least important point of the opportunity in the studied area. In the view of threat, the component of weakness of tourism management with ranking mean of 4.43, and mean of 4.16 and after that the component of the vulnerability of environment with ranking mean of 3.82 and mean of 3.85 is placed at next stage of importance; in contrast, decreasing of social and family integrity with ranking mean of 2.69 and mean of 3.19 is considered as the least important point of the threats in the studied area.

13. Providing strategies of tourism development

Finally, the SWOT matrix of strategies of development in terms of opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses are presented below based on 4 strategies, i.e. WO, ST, SO and WT.

13.1. Offensive/competitive strategies (SO)

In the offensive/competitive strategies that focus on internal strengths and external opportunities, the following strategies to exploit existing advantages to develop tourism in Borjlou region is presented:

- Supporting the private sector to invest in tourism industry in Borjlou region through banking loan and government subsidy.

- Emphasis on local tourism development due to the relative advantages of this type of tourism development in Borjlou region.
- Increasing the recreational opportunities for attracting tourists in Borjlou tourism region.
- Identification and use of the tourist attractions and other relative tourist advantages of the region to compete with other rival entertainment areas.

13.2. Strategies of variety (ST)

In diversification strategies that focus on the internal strengths and external threats, the following strategies are presented to provide some requirements of Borjlou area in order to meet the threats:

- The development and diversification of the ways of access to major population centers for their convenient access to attractions of this region.
- Diversifying tourism facilities and services in order to meet tourists' satisfaction and increasing the number of tourists through the creation of a pleasant and convenient environment.
- Determining the optimal population density in visiting this area in order to protect and prevent environmental degradation and vulnerability of environment.

13.3. Revising strategies (WO)

In the revising strategies emphasizing on the internal weaknesses, we try to take advantage of external opportunities to address weaknesses facing this tourist region.

- Doing serious actions by the various institutions for revitalization and development of the studied region and in line with the rate of popular participation in the development and equipment of Borjlou region.
- Rational utilizing of institutions, supporting rules and regulations to develop and equip the infrastructures, various tourist facilities and equipments in Borjlou region congruent with revising

the type and way of planning and government support to tourist regions.

13.4. Defensive strategies (WT)

In this strategy, in addition to emphasis on removing the vulnerability of the studied area, the following strategies are provided:

- Teaching the authorities of Borjlou tourist region how to deal with tourists in order to prevent damage and loss of the area attractions.
- Using the private sector participation in areas where people can not participate or invest.
- Increasing suitable residential places for rural tourism accommodation.
- Developing specific rules and regulations for optimal use of attractions and tourism products.

14. Conclusion

According to theoretical resources of the research and field studies, in order to provide strategies of tourism development using SWOT techniques, the tourist capacities and limitations in the studied area were identified and practical responses and strategies for tourism development were presented. By such description, the obtained results can be presented in both qualitative and quantitative aspects:

The qualitative results of each of the identified internal and external factors indicate that:

- The level of vulnerability of the studied area in terms of tourism development is high.
- Based on the level of threats and limitation of opportunities, the needs of this region in terms of being a tourist region are enormous.
- The distribution and allocation of resources in Borjlou region due to the limited opportunities and high weaknesses are necessary.

The study of the quantitative results of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, based on Table 4 shows that:

- Among the strengths in the studied area, the component of landscapes and tourist attractions for tourist is considered as the most important advantage of tourism development that in order to do optimum use of this component, the appropriate designing of each region is emphasized to show that region more beautiful.
- Among the weaknesses, the component of the weak propagation for identifying attractions is a priority that as the factor of limiting the tourism should be removed and improved by local participation and also participation of private and public sectors.
- Among the external opportunities, the component of increasing employment is a priority and the created opportunities for this area can be used to create more employment.
- Among the external threats, the component of weak tourism management is considered as the most important external threat for tourists that to reduce it, the defensive strategies have been proposed.

Overall, according to what was mentioned we can say if the tourism is going to reach sustainability and play a positive role in development of the studied area, the requirements of the determination and development of certain strategies, improvement of local participation, strong and clear rules and regulations, sustainable marketing and planning are realistic.

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