

Tourism Entrepreneurship Challenges and Opportunities in Mazandaran

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ABSTRACT

Tourism industry plays important role in business development in few past year's and tourism, hospitality and leisure industries originally are in the first place based on entrepreneurship. Tourism entrepreneurship is defined as activities related to creating and operating a legal tourist's enterprise.

In this study we focused on the factors that suppress developing tourism entrepreneurship in MAZANDARAN as touristic province of IRAN and to find the opportunities for its improving it.

This research follows a case-study design, with situation analysis, literature and document analysis, survey, etc. also in-depth interviews with 45 specialists.

Finding shows, although MAZANDARAN has fabulous nature but the reason of missing infrastructure, lack or insufficient tourism related rules and policies, imbalanced and duty interference of involved organizations not developed in tourism industry. Another problem such as International concern about Iran's nuclear program, support for terrorism, religious rules that restricted many freedoms for people, economic problems, and international sanction, all of these made tourism industry insufficient.

KEYWORDS: Tourism Entrepreneurship, Challenge, Opportunity.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry has become one of most important economic sections in few past years that plays important role in business development.

According to WTTC Tourism was second industry and allocated more than 3.8 percent of global GDP in 2005 to itself (Rosli & Pazim, 2011).

IRAN cause of natural attractive, varied climates, cultural and historical attractions is one of most touristic countries around the world. In IRAN Document of 20 years vision most goals about tourism is attract 20 Million foreign tourists and attain at least 1.5 percent form world tourist market.

This paper will focus on MAZANDARAN province as one of IRAN tourism pole and seeks to address the following key questions: What are factors that suppress developing tourism entrepreneurship in MAZANDARAN? What opportunities are in MAZANDARAN for developing tourism entrepreneurship?

Qualitative research design approach implemented through in depth interviews, situation analysis, literature and document analysis. The information obtained should provide an insight on this prospering industry will more benefiting from removing obstacle of entrepreneurial activities, proper response to challenges and exploit of opportunities that ultimately enhance provincial economic development. The point of departure for the literature review is entrepreneurship and, moving into the tourism.

Tourism Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship concept had used in 17century for first time and has been evolution that became as subject of many discussions now. Many defines entrepreneurship as starting a new business but many of economist believed this concept is more than.

Schumpeter (1934) said, innovation is special traits of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs do creative destruction. Arthur Cole (1946) Defined Entrepreneurship is a Bridge that makes connection between Society and founded institutes for utilizing economic advantages and satisfaction of economic wishes. Wilken (1980) said entrepreneurship as catalyzer prepares sparkle of economic growth and development. Jeffery Timmons (1990) defined entrepreneurship, creation of valuable sights from nothing. Also According to Drucker (1989) definition, Entrepreneur is person who seeks for change, shows a proper reaction, and uses it as opportunities (Holden, 2009).

Besides, tourism includes all activities and interplay that happens in period of tourist journey. It can contain tour planning, reaching to destination, staying, returning and many activities like that (Mansourifar, 2010). Entrepreneurship and tourism literature both has mainly been informed by business research.

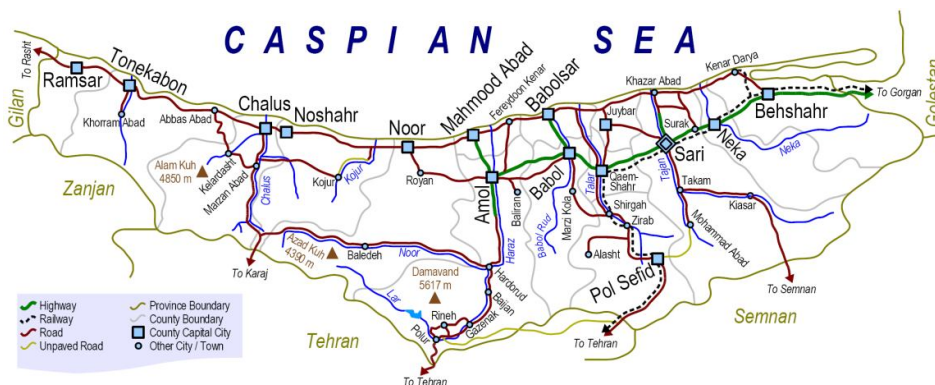
Entrepreneurship and innovation are critical factors in tourism and are both central to the continued success and development of the industry, both globally and regionally (Parra Lopéz, Buhalis&Fyall, 2009).

Finally, Tourism entrepreneurship is controlled by entrepreneurs who wish to extract a certain social lifestyle, and economic incentives play a secondary role (Skocik & Morrison, 2010).

Tourism entrepreneurship is defined as activities related to creating and operating a legal tourist's enterprise. Legal enterprises refer to those businesses that operate on a profitable basis and seek to satisfy the needs of tourists (Saayman & Saayman, 1998).

Tourism, hospitality and leisure industries originally are in the first place based on entrepreneurship (Thomas, 2000; Getz, 2004; Buhalis and Main, 1998; Peters, Frehse and Buhalis, 2009) and Tourism entrepreneurship became one of simple way to provide strategic support for stabilize of Business development especially in rural area in past years (Tetzschner and Herlau, 2003). Tourism strategies are looking for enabling urban, especially rural producers to reduce reliance on agriculture, and engage in new economic opportunities that are competitive in the more globalized markets, which now reach their doorstep (Holland, Burian and Dixey, 2003). This paper was looking for to explore the challenges Tourism Entrepreneurship in MAZANDARAN as Touristic Province of IRAN and addresses existing and lost opportunities.

Background



MAZANDARAN province is a Caspian Province in north of IRAN, Located on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, declared the second modern province after neighboring Gilan. The diverse nature of the province features plains, prairies, forests and rainforest stretching from the sandy beaches of the Caspian Sea to the rugged and snowcapped ALBORZ sierra, including Mount Damavand, one of the highest peaks and volcano's in Asia, which at the narrowest point (Nowshahr County) narrows to 5 miles. According to the MAZANDARAN 2011 Tourism guide, the Beauty of MAZANDARAN and its attractions are cause of visit of more than 10 million inner and about 10,000 foreign tourists from MAZANDARAN every year.

However, far too little attention has been paid to entrepreneurship tourism in MAZANDARAN and most studies in this field have only focused on tourism condition and policy. From this sight many researches considered structural factors main cause of tourism industry no development in MAZANDARAN. Moreover they found lack of attention to guide tours or other staffs skills that involved with tourism industry that is made big challenges in this industry (Mansourifar, 2010). Surprisingly, according to MAZANDARAN Tourism Guide Book in 2001 even there was no educated guide tour until end of 2000 in MAZANDARAN.

METHODOLOGY

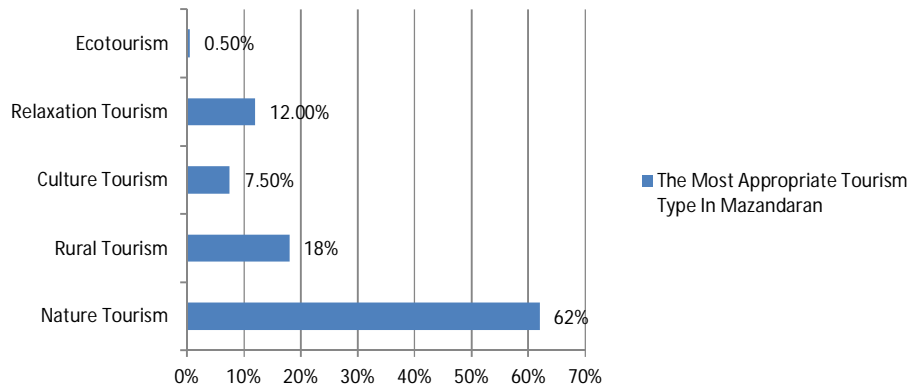
The aims of this study were detect the factors that suppress developing tourism entrepreneurship in MAZANDARAN Province and to find the opportunities for improving it.

According to the aims the tasks were to gathering information about tourism entrepreneurship in MAZANDARAN province, to study about factors suppresses the increasing tourism entrepreneurship activity in MAZANDARAN province, to estimate undertaken activities and to recommend general and effective plan for developing tourism entrepreneurship in MAZANDARAN province. This research follows a case-study design, with Situation analysis, literature and document analysis, survey, etc. also in-depth interviews with 45 specialists (tourism entrepreneurs, tourism Developers, local residents, lecturers in tourism, tourist guides).

DISCUSSION

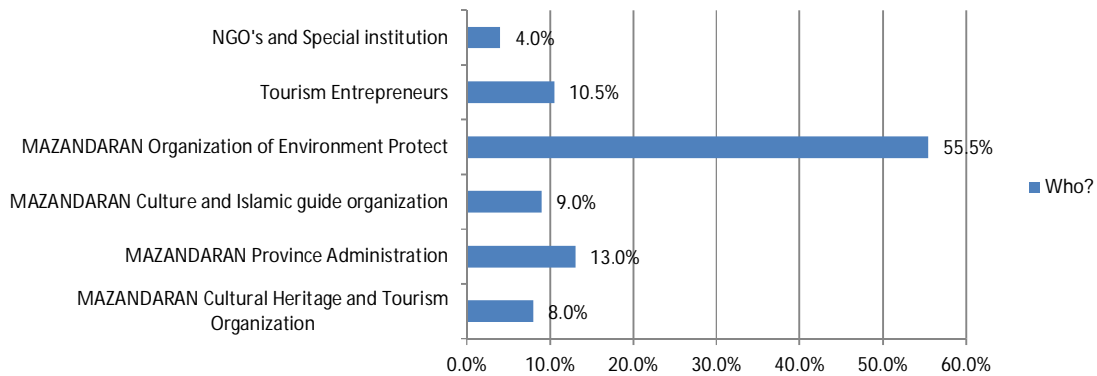
The most appropriate tourism type in MAZANDARAN according to the interviewee (62%) was Nature Tourism and the most second rank was Rural Tourism (Shows below).

The Most Appropriate Tourism Type in Mazandaran



According to the interviewee, there are many missing infrastructure in MAZANDARAN that suppress tourism industry.

Who should Contrive and promote tourism Development?



Roads and Signs, Public Transport, Information Station, Airport, Internet (Especially Wireless) was high score and ranking. MAZANDARAN is connected to the capital of Iran, Tehran, through three transit roads. DASHT-E NAZ Airport, serving the capital Sari, NOSHahr Airport, and RAMSAR Airport are the domestic airports that connect the province to the other parts of the country. But there is no international flight except to Saudi Arabia destination that is only for Hajj.

Missing Some Infrastructure

Rank	Missing Infrastructure	Score
1	Roads/Signs	4.92
2	Public Transport	4.81
3	Information Station	4.63
4	Airport	4.57
5	Internet (Especially Wireless)	4.54
6	Medical institutions	3.96
7	Residential places/ Hotels	3.89
8	Restaurants/Fast foods/Social facilities	3.75
9	Tourism Agencies	3.72
10	Urban and Environs Services	3.33
11	Hygiene System	3.30
12	Police Station	3.29
13	Shops/Marts/Malls	3.11
14	Culture and Atmosphere	2.93
15	Tourism acceptance	2.08

All of Interviewee believed that Cultural, Heritage and tourism organization should be first source of financing for development of Tourism infrastructure. Many of them also said this organization doesn't do his duty properly.

The Plan of Safe Sea implemented by this organization for Tourist every year but it's very terrible. One of interviewee said "when you walk in beach especially in The Plan of Safe Sea Area you should take your nose cause of garbage smell". Another one said "There are many people but there is nobody to do something and improve condition". Surprisingly interviewee didn't account Tourism Entrepreneurs as main source of financing, but all of them believed entrepreneurs can be.

Sources of financing for development and Support of Tourism infrastructure

Rank	Sources of financing
1	Cultural, Heritage and tourism organization
2	Province Administration
3	Culture and Islamic guide organization
4	Organization of Environment Protect
5	Create new fund for MAZANDARAN Tourism
6	Money from different Fund
7	Project Money
8	Introduce new Tax
9	Tourism Entrepreneurs
10	Tourists

Although the peoples of MAZANDARAN are largely secular, and consequently women have had greater social freedom and independence and MAZANDARAN's People accept other people easier than another IRANIAN's Races but All of Interviewee said Tourism related rules and Policies in IRAN and MAZANDARAN is main factor of suppressing tourism industry development. IRAN is religious country and restricted many freedoms for its people and Tourist that many of these freedoms are desired by tourism industry.

For foreigner, International concern about Iran's nuclear development and support for terrorism remains high and became of daily news subject. Also Reinstallation of Ahmadinejad as president after a June 2009 election that sparked widespread political protests has led a violent crackdown against opposition forces. One of most important factors that interviewee said was about economic problems and very serve business condition. Government is recent years has greatly expanded its spending and reduced subsidies, particularly for food and energy, and replaced them with cash payments to low-income Iranians. Then Rising inflation, corruption, costly subsidies, and an increasingly bloated and inefficient public sector, high Unemployment are cause of many problems for entrepreneurs specially in tourism industry.

Factors suppressing Tourism development in MAZANDARAN

Rank	Factors suppressing Tourism development	Score
1	Tourism related rules and Policies	4.97
2	Lack of Infrastructure development	4.89
3	Barriers cause of International Sanction	4.36
4	Financial resource	4.00
5	Imbalanced and duty Interfere of involved organization	3.75
6	Insufficient Tourism Marketing	3.58
7	Entrepreneurial inertness	3.43
8	Cultural Barriers	2.83

Conclusion

The most appropriate Tourism types in MAZANDARAN according to the interviewee are Nature Tourism and, Rural Tourism but there are many missing infrastructure such as Roads and Signs, Public Transport, Airport, Internet Service in MAZANDARAN that suppress tourism industry. There are three transit roads and three domestic airports but there is no international flight for tourists.

Cultural, Heritage and Tourism organization is first source of financing for Tourism infrastructure but doesn't do his duty properly. Also Imbalanced and duty Interfere of involved organization such as Province Administration, Culture and Islamic guide organization and Organization of Environment Protect is high. Surprisingly interviewee didn't account Tourism Entrepreneurs as main source of financing, but all of them believed entrepreneurs can be.

The most for suppressing factor for foreigner tourist is daily news that reflects International concern about Iran's nuclear development and support for terrorism. Then all of Interviewee said Tourism related rules and Policies in IRAN and MAZANDARAN is main factor of suppressing tourism industry development. IRAN is religious country and restricted many freedoms for its people and Tourists that many of these freedoms are desired by tourism industry.

For Tourism Entrepreneurs economic problems and very serve business condition was important. International sanction, government expanding with increasing expenditure, reduced subsidies for food and energy and replacing with cash payments to low-income Iranians, Rising inflation, corruption and an increasingly bloated and inefficient public sector, high Unemployment all of all are cause of many problems for entrepreneurs especially in tourism industry.

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