

The Relation between Demographic Characteristics of the Passengers and Non-Business and Non-Family Trips to Mashhad in Iran

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ABSTRACT

Tourism industry is one of the industries which affects different societies culturally, socially and by religion. Understanding the demography of the tourists regarding the purposes of the trip and the effect of different variables in the environment can lead to the better management of the journey. Therefore the aim of this study is to understand and investigate the purposes of the trip to Mashhad in order to make use of them in infer structures, strategic planning to provide better services for tourists and pilgrims in Mashhad. Based on the statistic results on 100 passengers who entered Mashhad without business purposes and with the help of interviews and questionnaires_likert type_ the preferences and purposes were listed as tables with respect to demographic characteristics of interviewees. The results show that the purposes of trip to Mashhad are pilgrimage, recreation and shopping. The strength and weakness of each of them has a significant relation with age, gender and marital status of the passengers.

KEYWORDS: Pilgrimage, Tourism, demographic characteristics, Mashhad, Iran.

1. INTRODUCTION

The shrine of Imam Rezaⁱ (AS) in Mashhad, has affected the kind of travel and tourism in the city making it the center of religious tourism. Therefore, traveling to Mashhad is often seen as a religious travel and its tourist is known as a pilgrim. Almost all travelers go to the shrine of “Imam Reza” during their stay in Mashhad for the pilgrimage[1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6] ...) However, it doesn't necessarily mean that all travelers to Mashhad are primarily motivated for pilgrimage.

Several studies have been conducted based on the data collected from various surveys in the field of religious tourism in Mashhad. But not enough attention has been paid to motivations for travelling to Mashhad.

Given the increasing development and growth of the city of Mashhad, increased amount of facilities relative to other cities, long-term planning for the development of tourism, constructions and massive commercial and recreational projects in the city, have brought new motives such as shopping and recreation to the travelling to Mashhad. Paying special attention to the infrastructure required in other areas of tourism is necessary in order to provide appropriate services and optimized transport, accommodation and information, and etc.

Annual reception of travelers and pilgrims in Mashhad makes necessary exact studies on the needs of travelers and pilgrims who regularly and consistently visit this city. Creating the required infrastructure for development projects and metropolitan constructions and locating urban architecture projects need to acquire this knowledge and awareness. Using statistics and surveys to date in order to achieve this data is a priority in the areas of macro management.

The overall aim of this study was to investigate the motivations and preferences of pilgrims in traveling to Mashhad for master planning in tourism, urban architecture and urban designing in the metropolis of Mashhad.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach of this research is quantitative research and addresses the subject of study using analysis of statistical data.

The technique used in this study for collecting data and information is questionnaire. The questionnaire contains “open” and “closed questions” and is composed of two parts: underlying or status questions and the questions related to evaluation of variables set by using Likert- Scale. At the end of the questionnaire also an open question has been designed for the overall suggestion of the answerer. After preparing the questionnaire, and before applying it, each question and the whole questionnaire were evaluated.

In the pre-test, in a pilot study, 30 questionnaires were distributed and then collected among the pilgrims for determining the validity and reliability of the questionnaires and by analyzing the items used (Item Analysis) the most appropriate items were used in the final form of the questionnaire. In order to assess the validity of the

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research questionnaire, face validity was used. After the preparation and before the final implementation, the questionnaire was presented to a number of researchers as referee and the questions approved of or proposed by them were created. Also, for assessing reliability, Cronbach's alpha method (internal correlation of questions) was used. The reliability was acceptable (α : 86%). For information and data analysis SPSS software was used.

3. Tourism

The word "Tourism" was first used in 1811 in the sport magazine of *Sporting*. At that time, this term is meant the traveling aimed to visit historical monuments and natural landscapes for enjoyment. [7]

In 1993, based on the definition of tourism given by United Nations Statistics Commission, tourism is: "the activities of the people who travel to places outside of the places they live or work in order to have fun and relax and do other affairs, travel, and hence not staying more than one consecutive year".

It includes a wide variety of travels from luxury and expensive tours to inexpensive trips. Tourism happens in all sectors of society in every economic situation.[8]

The high level of quality of tourism does not mean costly tourism, however, it refers to that part of the attraction, facilities, and services which may prove worth the cost invested in it and creates valuable advantages, supports tourism and attracts tourists and causes a boom in rental residence.

4. Motivations of Traveling

In general, experts have widely addressed tourism motivations and many different categories have been considered for them. Historically, tourism in its primary forms, often results from two general motives: religion and health. Religious Motivation: the researchers have drawn attention to a wide variety of tourist motivations and so far many sub-divisions have been considered for it. In the past, tourism was mainly motivated by two things: religion and health. Religious motivations: the cause of tourism is religious; the tours the believers took to religious places such as Compostella Del Santiago, Canterbury, Rome, and Mecca. According to recent literature, tourism is a modern form of non-religious pilgrimage.[9]

Medical and Health Motivations: Many inns and resorts in Great Britain and Europe were created since the seventeenth century around coastal or island mineral springs where were people went to maintain their health and used their facilities. In the nineteenth century, tourism has been generally considered as benefits of natural medicine.

What is clear is that religious and medical factors fail in defining the limitless variety of modern tourism. Tourists to mineral waters do not go there for health any more, however, they are looking for an opportunity to satisfy their social needs, to establish personal and emotional relationships, marriage and fun; this is while they might be enjoying good health. In the past forty years, many other incentives have been proposed for tourism, besides religion and health by tourism planners and academic experts.

An ancient approach to tourist motivation belongs to [10]. His divided motives into three kinds as follows: relaxation, entertainment and recreation, personal development.

Another case was added to this list by Comic[11], namely escape from the status quo and overcoming the monotony.

Macintosh[12] also introduces four basic motives owing to Maslow: physical motivations: health, reducing stress.

Cultural motivations: art, religion, lifestyle...

Individual motivations: meeting friends and relatives ...

Prestige motivations: respect, personal development; for example: business conference.

Hudman and Hawkins (1989: 32) have identified ten main motivations: 1. Health 2. Passion and curiosity 3. Physical exercise (activity and sports participation) 4. Sports (watching sports) 5. Recreation 6. Meeting friends and relatives 7. Business & Professional Activities 8. Ties and kinship ties 9. self-actualization 10. Religion.[13]

Schmollhas classified these motives into five groups: educational-cultural, rest and relaxation, adventure and recreation, health-refuel (recreation), ethnic-family, and social-competitive.[14]

Other incentives of traveling include weather, health, sports, economics (searching for a life with lower cost), adventure (places, people, and new experiences), consistency, participation in history (temples and remnants of the old/new monuments), and sociological motivations.

Weaver and Oppermann believe that all travel purposes are not suitable for explaining the motivations for tourism. Because they believe that every passenger is not necessarily a tourist. According to the World Tourism Organization, the goals and motivations of tourism suitable for tourists are divided into three major categories: entertainment, meeting friends and relatives, and business.[15]

Apart from these three main categories, there are more minor divisions which represent motivations of some tourists. Sports, religion, health, and education are some other motivation. Motivators are the factors that encourage people to spend their leisure time in certain ways. At the time of developing a master urban plan, development, research, and construction plans, the authorities and designers have to pay attention to these various incentives and consider them when planning. Religious Tourism alone cannot fill all the time of a

tourism trip in the 21st century. In a 12-day vacation, the tourist cannot or wish not to spend his time for religious pilgrimage, however, he may prefer to experience a combination of religious, historical, recreational and other types of tourism on a trip(Ghasemi,2012:74)[6]. Social structure: social structure including age, sex, social status and etc. influence organizing religious trips and generally, differences are seen in age and gender of pilgrims of different religions.][15]

4-1. Demographic characteristics

Special characteristics of individuals during life cause differences in their demands and needs. These characteristics include age, educational level, employment status, sex, marital status, etc. In this study, the relationship among three factors of gender, age and marital status and their impact upon the motivations of traveling to Mashhad are addressed. The instruments of this research include questionnaire and interview.

5. Data Collection

75 questionnaires were filled by pilgrims in the passenger terminals, the neighborhoods surrounding holy shrine where maximum number of pilgrims are settled, and a number of guesthouses and hotels. For participation of various classes in this stage, statistical samples were selected from hotels with different ratings. In addition, for not being limited to a particular class, a number of questionnaires were collected from the airport, railway, and bus terminal.

31 interviews were made with taxi drivers, reception attendants in residential areas, and pilgrims who were not able or willing to fill the questionnaire for various reasons. Among the 75 participants in the survey through questionnaire, 41% male and 34% female and of the 25 people interviewed, 12 women and 19 men attended.

The final form of the questionnaire (the desires and motivations of travelers and pilgrims in non-working and nonfamily trip to Mashhad) consisted of 20 questions about the priorities of passengers at various places in the city.

The results of the statics extracted from the questionnaires and interviews are classified into 3 age groups: 20 to 30 years, 30 to 40 years, and 40 to 50 years.

The participants were asked to answer the questions such as: how many times have you visited shopping centers, how many time have you visited holy shrine, how many have you visited recreation centers and theme parks, how many times they visited historical and cultural sites, have you gone to the shrine to say prayers, how have entertainment centers, shopping malls, and etc. affected the motivation for their trip to Mashhad, how much the pilgrimage to the Shrine has motivated them for the trip, if you had more time to stay in one place which place would you choose to spend the time and etc.

The data collected was written down and coded. After extracting the numbers and statistics, the data were used in the form of graphs.

6. DISCUSSION

In the initial surveys (Pilot), the main motivations of the passengers were categorized in four general sections: pilgrimage, recreation (parks, aquatic complex, restaurants, countryside, historic sites and recreation, etc.), shopping (malls and shopping complexes), and other factors (health, research, sport, and etc.).

After collecting the data, the results were analyzed based on the demographic characteristics of travelers; terms of age, sex, and marital status.

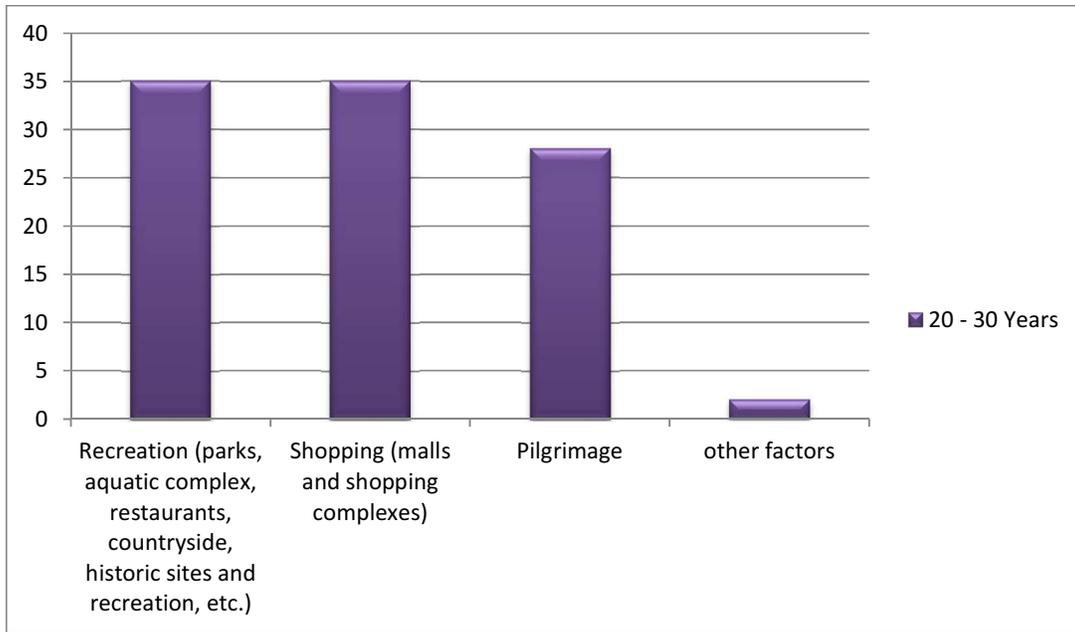


Figure 1: motives and the factors of traveling to the city of Mashhad, 20 -30 year-old age category, authors

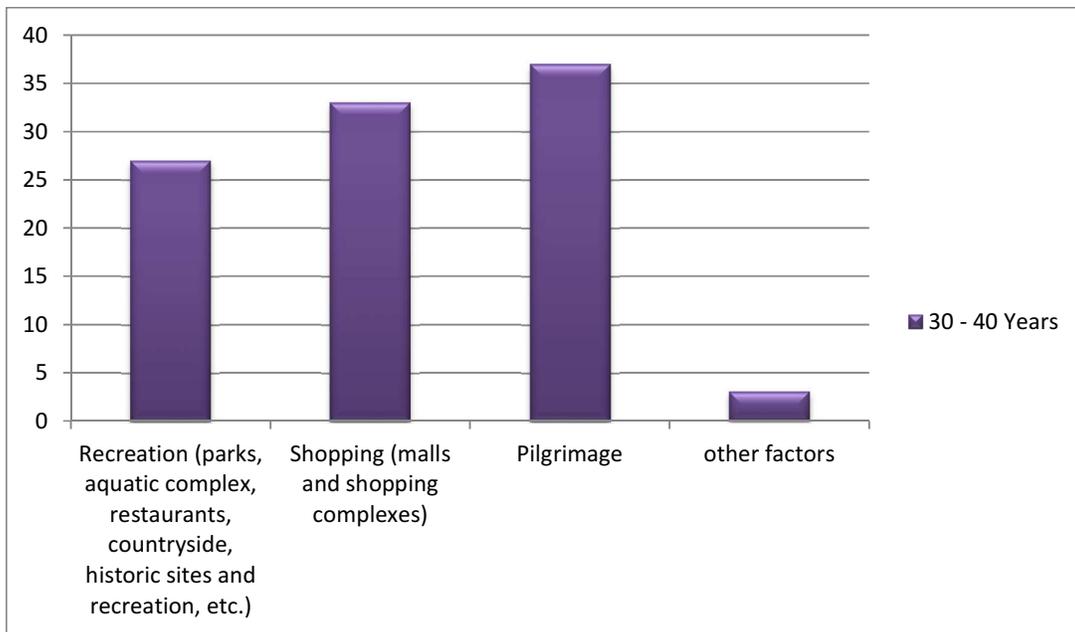


Figure 2: motives and the factors of traveling to the city of Mashhad, 30 -40 year-old age category, authors

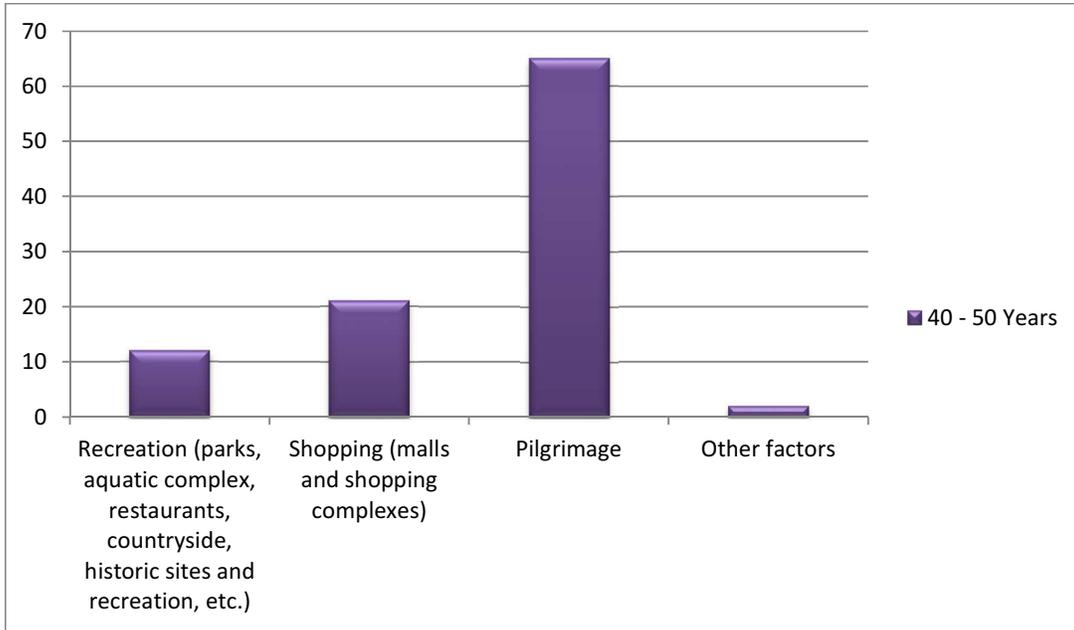


Figure 3: motives and the factors of traveling to the city of Mashhad, 40 -50 year-old age category, authors

In the first age category, recreation (shopping and sightseeing) has a significant figure as the most important motivation for travel and the main reason for accommodation in Mashhad. It is in a close competition with the main motivation being. In the second age category also, two leisure motivations have a significant place. In the third age category 40-50, pilgrimage was introduced as the main factor.

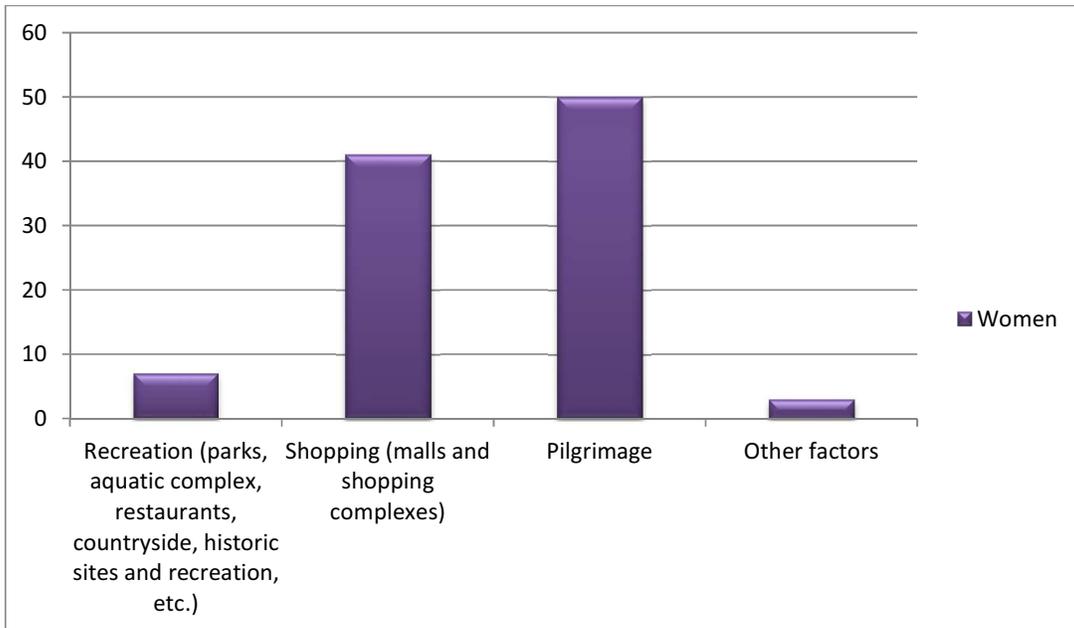


Figure 4: motives and the factors of traveling to the city of Mashhad, based on gender, women, authors

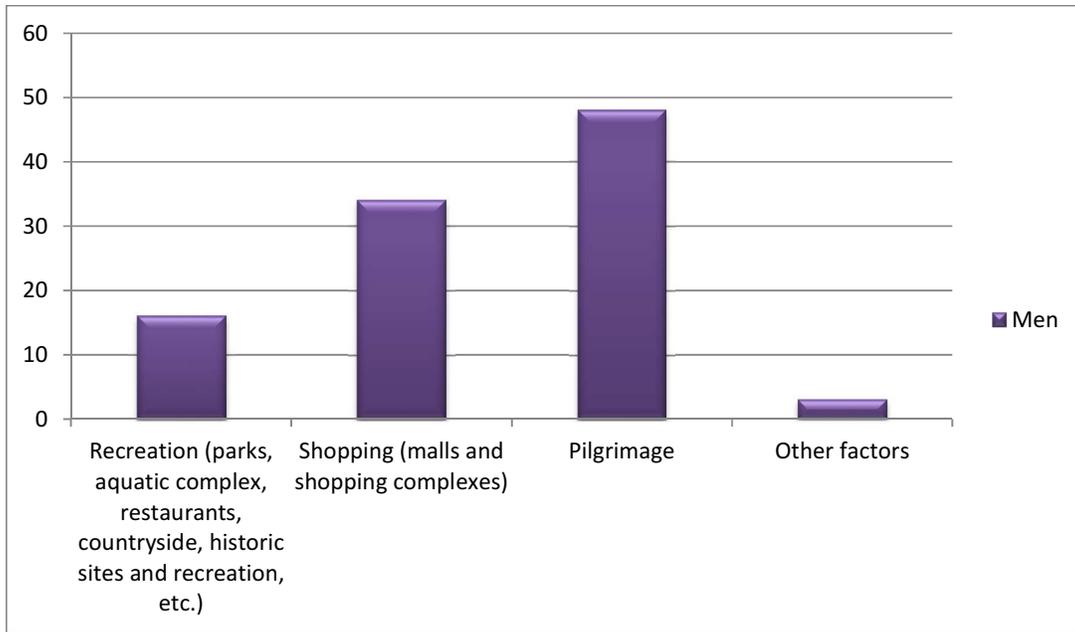


Figure 5: motives and the factors of traveling to the city of Mashhad, based on gender, men, authors

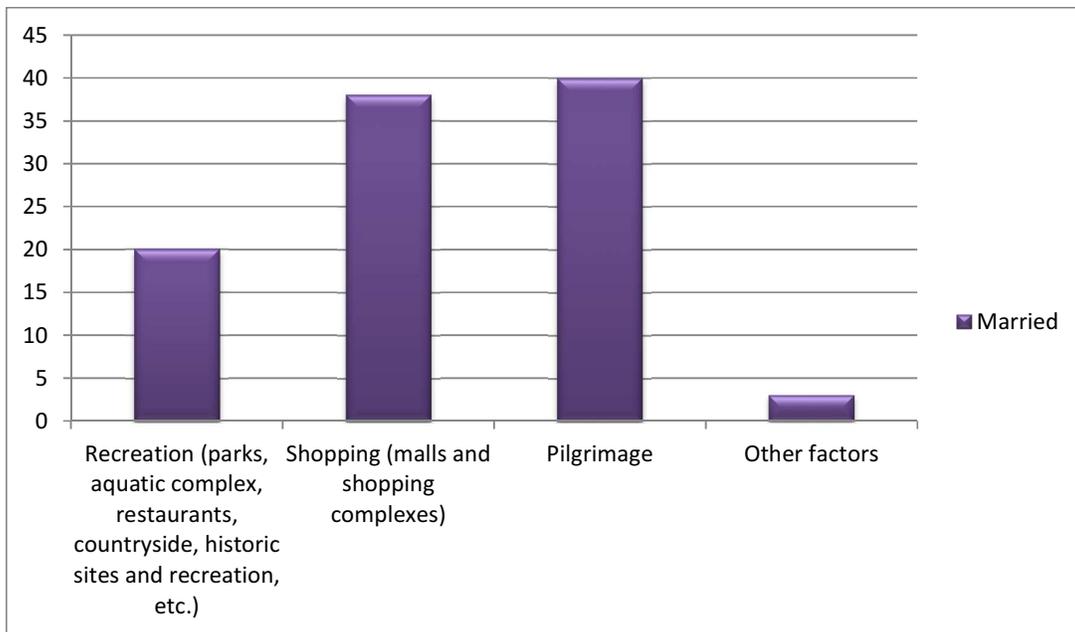


Figure 6: motives and the factors of traveling to the city of Mashhad, based on marital status, married, authors

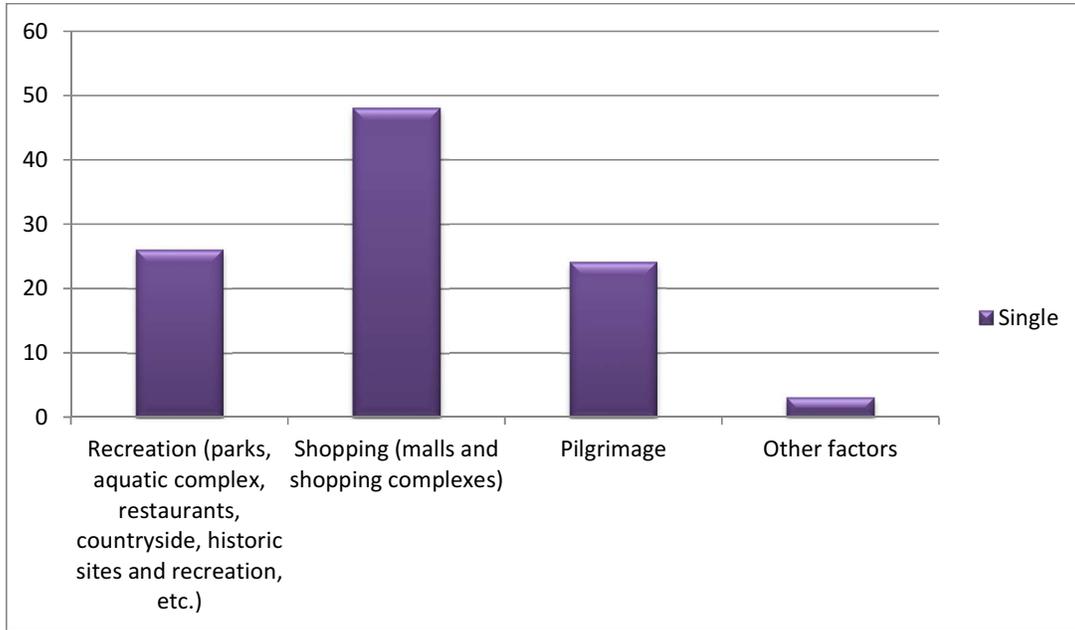


Figure 7: motives and the factors of traveling to the city of Mashhad, based on marital status, single, authors

7. The Factors Affecting the Motivations for Traveling among Passengers

Given the results of the survey of the statistical sample studied, three main motivations for traveling to Mashhad were identified. Pilgrimage, shopping, and recreation were respectively the main motivations for traveling to Mashhad.

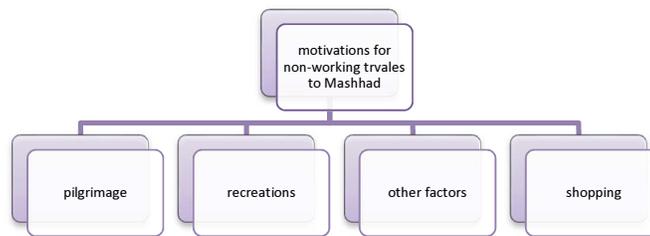


Figure 8: the model of motivations for non-working and non-family travel to the city of Mashhad, authors

According to the global surveys of the level of religiosity and the increased number of religious travels, the rate of non-religious motivations among travelers to Mashhad have their own reasons and causes.

The authors believe that devoting special budget to religious travels and pilgrimage in some families, families' approval of pilgrimage journey for the young people, increased level of facilities and its variety in the city of Mashhad, successful macro-investment in the tourism sector in the city of Mashhad and the countryside, increased number and quality of shopping centers and commercial complexes in Mashhad, etc. can be some of the reasons for the increase in these motives.

Also factors such as the following have been effective in the increased non-religious motives of travel to this city: elevated level of the economic status of families compared to the price of the services provided, awareness and understanding of how to travel, facilitating the possibility of housing, improvement and stability of economic level of families, improving and providing information and people's awareness as to how to have access and use facilities, quantitative increase in services in the fields linked to tourism, decreased cost of services, facilitating transfers due to the wide span of the communications networks, the younger generation's desire to experience new spaces and facilities.

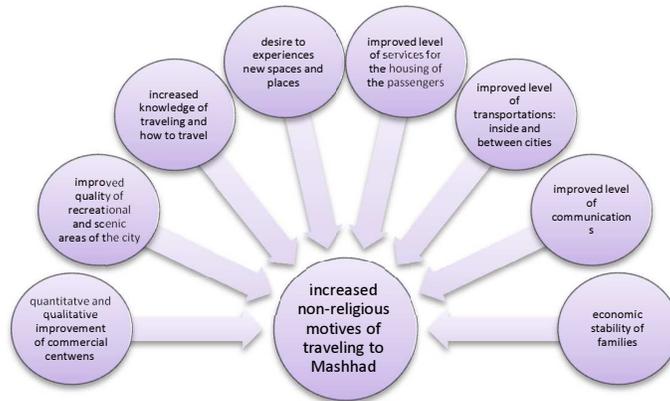


Chart 9: factors promoting non-religious motivations of traveling to Mashhad, authors.

Despite the increase in other travel motives, pilgrimage continues to be the first motive of traveling to the city of Mashhad.

In the statistical sample of passengers studied in Mashhad, pilgrimage was the most important motivation with shopping and recreation being the next ones in traveling to the city of Mashhad.

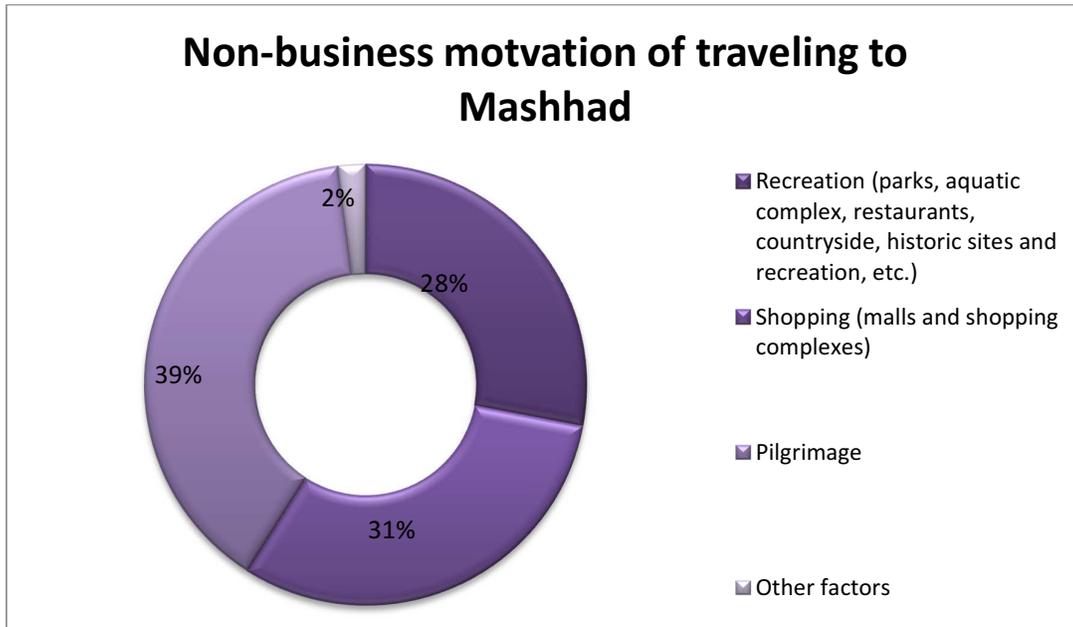


Chart 10: the overall graph of the percentage of non-business and non-family motivations of traveling to Mashhad, authors.

7. Conclusion

What was intended in this research, in the first part, was arriving at the main motives of traveling in non-business and non-family travels to the city of Mashhad, with the most important motivation being pilgrimage, and next shopping and visiting shopping centers and commercial complexes. And the third most important motive included visiting scenic, historical, and recreational centers, theme parks, and water complexes.

In the second part, the extent of the impact of demographic characteristics in the formation and prioritization of these reasons and motives was examined and the impact of gender, age, and marital status upon them was investigated.

What is studied as the motivation of traveling to a place has a direct correlation with demographic characteristics of persons, tastes and needs, demands and of course the facilities of the society under study.

According to the studies, age, sex and marital status have significant impact on the type and amount of motivation of traveling to Mashhad. Higher ages show positive correlation with pilgrimage and negative correlation with shopping and entertainment.

In the statistical sample, gender was ineffective in the case of pilgrimage. Shopping motivation was lower in men compared to women. Married situation shows positive correlation with increased religious motivation and negative correlation with decreased shopping motivation.

In macro planning, it is essential to pay attention to the needs of all strata of people, and their specific needs. Given the desires and motives of the passengers and their wide variety ranging from pilgrimage to entertainment, in addition to the infrastructure required for facilitating religious tourism in the city of Mashhad, it is necessary to pay attention to the importance of recreational tourism services in the entire city. It appears that the infrastructure of urban architecture and urbanism be shaped, coordinated and synchronized with the needs and motivations of tourists.

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¹⁴**Alībn Mūsā al-Rīdā** (commonly known as Ali al-Ridha, Ali Reza, or Ali Rizā) (c. 29 December 765 – 23 August 818) was the seventh descendant of the Islamic prophet Muhammad and the eighth of the Twelve Imams, according to the Twelver Shia sect of Islam as well as an Imam of knowledge according to the Zaydi (Fiver) Shia school and Sufis. His given name was 'Alībn Mūsāibn Ja'far.