

# Rural Tourism Market Analysis and Classification of Rasht City Enjoying the EP Model

Roghayye Kalbasi Masoule<sup>1\*</sup>, Roshan Babae Hemmati<sup>2</sup> and Esmail Malek Akhlagh<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Graduate Student(M.A) of Kooshyar Higher Education Institute

<sup>2</sup> Faculty member at the University of Guilan

<sup>3</sup> Faculty member at the University of Guilan

## ABSTRACT

Categorizing touristic regions is a criterion for determining the centrality, required infrastructures and for adjusting the inequality among regions. However, a lack of scientific and systematic categorization for determining the location-spatial standing of attractive rural tourism centers followed by improper distribution of facilities and equipment are some of the fundamental and obvious shortcomings that exist in the development studies and plans of Iran's tourism industry, especially in Rasht township. This township enjoys potential capacities for the development of tourism which due to various reasons such as lack of comprehensive studies have not been exploited as expected. Using the EP model, the present research has tried to study the potentials of surrounding attractions, welfare facilities, cultural services, availability and local communities in rural regions and districts located at the research area based on the standing and performance of each. The research method was descriptive-analytical that was applied using the document-field method in 4 rural areas which included Dahaneh Sarshijan, Hajibekandeh, Emamzadeh Hashem and Saravan with the purpose of categorizing and determining the level of rural spaces in terms of developing the tourism industry and achieving research goals. For descriptive statistics, general specifications of the studied villages were collected using questionnaires and after being explained, they were comparatively studied in respective tables. Also, through using this model, the studied villages were categorized and based on the findings, Saravan stood first, Emamzadeh Hashem and Hajibekandeh took the 2<sup>nd</sup> place and Dahaneh Sarshijan village took the third place in the country's rural tourism market.

## KEYWORD

Tourism , Rural Tourism, EP Model, Rasht Township.

## INTRODUCTION

Journey in different lands have always been part of human life needs and one way of spending leisure time. Today, the tourism industry in the world economy has a very important place so that in 83 percent of countries in the world, tourism industry is one of the five sources of income and its benefits can be noted job creation, exchange technology, regional stability, contribute to world peace, helping to invest in cultural heritage, improving the environment, helping to improve wildlife habitat, development of rural areas that have tourism attractions and prevent the immigration and etc.

Meanwhile, rural tourism as one of the tributaries of the tourism industry, social and recreational activities in the second half of the eighteenth century in England and Europe arose; although rural areas before it was used for recreational activities. Trip on natural resources that are often associated with hunting, by historical kings and rulers of Iran have a long history; or in other words, however, before it the rural areas were used for recreational activities but participation in recreational activities is limited to the Premier and high-income segments of society [1]. Village because of its rural nature appropriate to the cultural and socio-economic structure and in particular geographical environments and tourism natural landscapes and attractions with special internal and physical organization in the field of type or material and spiritual lifestyle has been [10]. On the other hand, villages of tourism from two aspects are important: First, as a attractiveness and global extensive activity and the second, the emphasis on the development of

Rural tourism and protecting the heritage and cultural traditions with an emphasis on local and regional strategy. Therefore, rural tourism which some people consider it as a part of the tourism market and some others a policy for rural development. However, rural tourism in Iran particularly in Guilan Province to the centrality of Rasht city has been faced with constraints which resulting from the lack of pathology market and the lack of appropriate ranking based

\*Corresponding Author: Roghayye Kalbasi Masoule  
E-mail r: Fatane\_kalbasi@yahoo.com  
Telephone Number r: +989113329921  
Fax. Number: 0098 13 33430003

on the critical factors in rural tourism. This problem led the researcher to investigate the matter. And seek strategic ways to develop and improve the situation of rural tourism in the city of Rasht.

#### DEFINING THE PROBLEM AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Tourism development in the area may pursue different goals. However, one of the main reasons for the creation of employment and income, and this subject especially in areas that are facing the problem of unemployment and low incomes, are more important. Due to population growth and unemployment resulting from the application of new technologies in agricultural activities, Guilan villages require of new economic activities to decrease this problem and its consequences that tourism development can be one of the most important options in this regard.

However, tourism is processed on a geographical space in the process of implementation of the attractions, settlements and facilities needed to be done. The shape itself is a process of accepting tourists that on one hand, the understanding of tourism and on the other hand, understanding and measuring the depth in surrounding space, is located. Furthermore, the lack of the scientific and systematic classification in determining the site- spatial position of the attractive centers of the rural tourism and followed by the disproportionate distribution of infrastructure, tourism services and facilities and equipment including basic and obvious shortcomings in studies and plans for tourism development in the country, provinces, cities and villages are considered [7]. With this interpretation, Rasht city and its villages is the potential for tourism development that for various reasons including lack of engagement in research and implementation, has not been well exploited. While determine the poles and top centers and their ranking in tourism development in order to better service, social and economic justice in the region is essential and one way to rank the areas of tourism, it can be evaluation of the urban services and facilities, such as hotels and resorts, access networks and transportation, communication facilities, cultural and artistic attractions and supply of touristic services in all fields [6].

Therefore, in line with the policy of tourism development in the country, in this research we will discuss of whether with science on the problem and mentioned insufficiencies with systematic and comprehensive approach, and also by identification and assessment of potential and existing environmental problems in rural areas of the central part of Rasht city and the use of scientific methods, including the EP and with tourism information of these villages (Dahane Sarshijan, Haji Bekande, Imam Zade Hashem and Saravan) can be graded them and areas for improving the quality and quantity of environment and rural production area related to tourism provided or not; and the appropriate strategies for planning and then development and activation of tourism in the villages are there?

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

-Classification and ranking the cities of Guilan province with an emphasis on rural tourism how is?

- To what extent between the number of tourists and the potentials of villages of Rasht city are there relation?
- Which of the four villages of Rasht city able to attract more tourists?
- To what extent between the number of infrastructure related to tourism and satisfaction tourists are there relation?
- Are there relationship between the classification villages and rural tourism development in Rasht?
- Does the touristic villages classification cause to develop tourism in Rasht?
- What are the activation strategies of tourism in these villages?

#### CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION OF VARIABLES

Classification : tourism areas classification is criterion for determining the centrality and also determine the required infrastructure and then the inequalities in the area to be moderated [2].

Tourism : Tourism can be define as processes, activities and results obtained from the relationships and interactions among tourists, suppliers of services and tourism products, governments and host communities and surrounding environment and attract guests (tourists) and entertain them [13].

Rural tourism : Rural tourism refers to all activities and services provided by farmers, people and governments for recreation, leisure and attracting tourists and also the activities that are carried by tourists in rural areas, it is said; it can also include agricultural tourism, farm tourism, natural tourism and cultural tourism [4].

Rasht city : Rasht is one of the metropolises of Iran and center of Guilan province in northern Iran and Rasht city center. The metropolis is also the largest and most populous city of north of Iran in between the three provinces in bordering the Caspian Sea (Mazandaran, Guilan and Golestan).

#### TYPES OF MARKETS

In the literature on market segmentation, markets are generally divide two types of markets for consumer goods and industrial goods market. Consumer goods, goods that are purchased directly by the final consumer; but in contrast the industrial goods are products that are directly or indirectly used in the production of other goods and services. Similarly, the market for services can be divided. What in the literature of market share can be found is that much difference between the market for goods and services not found in division; Books of market management experts like Cutler, Armstrong and Cortez is evidence for this claim; this means that there is a heavy emphasis on service and product differences when selling or developing the marketing mix, in order to explain the various markets division, in particular difference between the market service customers and the market customers products have not mentioned. The reason is that although the quality of the marketing, presentation, promotion and sale of services in

contrast products is very different; but these differences are related to the nature of products and services not customers. As an example, although the marketing of products such as stationery and serve as teaching is different with each other for the pricing, quality, promotion and distribution but both are the same customers and the same criteria used to divide them, although the importance of these criteria are not the same [9].

### CLASSIFICATION

Classification is criterion for determining the centrality and also determine the required infrastructure and then the inequalities in the area to be moderated [6].

Classification of rural areas due to the tourism including placement of rural areas in terms of centrality of tourism attractions (natural-human); in which the need to create infrastructure and provide services and facilities in each of the areas revealed. In addition, the spatial position and function of each of the points as tourism hub and the center of tourism is determined and considering the regions, investment and service provision be done [11].

In the present study we have tried to level the tourism market based on the criteria and how market segmentation (market planning), the following describes the market segmentation, criteria and segmentation procedures will be discussed.

### MARKET SEGMENTATION AND ITS RECOGNITION

Commercial division or trade segmentation, was first described by Smith in 1956. Wide business strategy, which little chance of success in the competition has known. The purpose of this trade, segmentation the different markets and diversifying into more homogeneous and smaller businesses where customers share their similar goods.

This allows retailers to identify different groups of customers and their needs are properly met. In general, the existence of market segmentation techniques and trade has two important attitudes:

- The first approach is called top view and perspective. The views and attitudes, market has divided according speculative, intellectual factors and prior knowledge that are connected to the customers, services and their products (such as demographic characteristics, amount of purchase and geographical areas).
- second approach is called Post-hoc segmentation is different with the first Attitude. This attitude, market analyze and divide according to trade information. This approach has many techniques, including classification, the split tree(CART), self-organizing maps(SOM) and evolutionary multifunctional charts (MOEA).

It should be noted picking and choosing segmentation variables is the most important step in the creation of segmentation models. Many researchers, these variables are taken from different viewpoints and have incorporated them

such as demographic, geographic factors, purchase behavior and customer value.

These variables have two groups:

- 1- General variable : That focuses on neighborhood characteristics such as lifestyle, geographic and demographic items to individual clients.
- 2- Special Variable of Products: That related to customer preferences and their respond to products that include customer demand, intentions and purchasing behaviors [14].

Cutler also said: Market segmentation involves activities designed to classify clients into groups and sections so that customers within each group are the relative homogeneity in their buying needs. In fact, segmenting of the market into distinct subsets of customers are formed which each subset may select as part of the target with a distinct marketing mix for achieving to it.

In another definition of segmenting is that, segmentation includes the development and search of marketing plans which is directed towards certain groups of people and the organization can potentially serve to them. This part may be different with each other in terms of demographic characteristics, buying behavior and purchase decision processes [2].

Market segmentation and diversification are the two complementary concepts. Without having market consists of different people with backgrounds, countries of origin, interests, needs, desires and differ perceptions, there is little reason for market dividing. Diversity in the world market, market dividing has become an attractive strategy, valid and potentially very profitable. Necessary conditions for a successful market dividing in each market are: Large population with enough money to buy the (welfare) , and enough variety to allow a substantial portion of the market dividing on the basis of demographic variables, psychological or other strategic variables provide.

Market dividing can be described as the process segmenting the market into distinct subsets of consumers with similar needs or characteristics and selecting one or more segments in order to targeting with a marketing mix.

If all consumers were identical - If all of them were the identical needs, wants, desires, background, education and experience - mass marketing (non-distinction), would be a logical strategy. The main advantage of mass marketing, it costs less.

Market dividing strategy, manufacturers are able to abstain from engaging in direct competition in the market provide through the distinction based on style, packaging, promotional charm, distribution practices, and superior service.

Market dividing is the first step of three-stage strategy of marketing. After dividing the market into homogeneous clusters, marketer must choose one or more segments in order to targeting. For this purpose, marketer decide about marketing mix - ie, product, price, channels of distribution, or promotional attraction for each market segment. The third step of the process, product localization, so that the



consumers in each target market segment to be perceive, so that meet their needs better than the competitors [8].

### RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In this section discussed about the research background on the various categories of tourism markets, including rural, urban, sports and etc..

Sharifinia (2011) in an article entitled "Evaluation of the level of rural tourism and its role in regional development" – case study : Historical attractions of Sistan . He was conceptual analysis issues related to rural tourism and its role in the regional development. He also introduced, evaluated and graded the historical attractions of Sistan. He used descriptive - survey method in his study, and in the field method used the observation and imaging method. And then using EP models the five components of the nearby attractions, accommodations, cultural services, access and local communities considered for evaluating and categorizing historical attractions of Sistan. Finally, the results of his study indicated that Shahr-e Soukhte are located by a factor of 75/1 in the first, Dahane Gholaman, Zahedan Kohne and village of New Castle by a factor of 1.2 in the second level and Mount Khaje with 57/0 coefficient in the third level and Asiab Badi Mochi, and also Hozdar zone with zero coefficient at the lowest rank and level.

The records are as follows: Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (2008) was developed rural and tribal tourism Guidebook. The purpose of publishing this book has been introducing attractions, historical and geographical location, weather, customs, crafts, language, introducing local foods and souvenirs in each village. Islamic Housing Foundation by performing rural master plans have been significant share in introducing target villages; municipalities organization and Dhyaries of Interior Ministry also has published Monthly Dhyaries in the field.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In fact, the implementation method of research is the set of processes which they will help you determine the same information on where, how and with what tools be collected. In general, research methods in behavioural science can be divided by considering two criteria: 1- the purpose of the research 2- Data collection. And then The research is described based on the mentioned criteria.

In segmentation based on the target, scientific research is divided into 3 groups: fundamental, applied, research and development. Considering that the purpose of this research analyze rural tourism market of Rasht city and the level, cab be stated that this research is applied in terms of the target. Because, the purpose of applied research is the development of practical knowledge in a particular field and in other words, this type of research is directed toward the practical application of knowledge [5].

In segmentation based method of data collection (research plan), scientific research according how to obtain the required data can divide two groups : descriptive research (non-pilot) and pilot research. The present study is descriptive(non-pilot) based on the method of data collection; Because, by definition, descriptive study

included a set of methods that aim to characterize the conditions and phenomena of the research

### STATISTICAL POPULATION OF RESEARCH

Statistical society consists of all the elements and people in a specific geographic scale are shared with one or more adjectives. According to this definition, the statistical society must be covered all the studied units in terms of time and place. And units that have not common traits, can prevent them[3].

the scope of study is rural tourism of Rasht city. So all the villages of Rasht city and their dehyars constitute the statistical population of research.

### THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Rasht City is located between the orbits 37 degrees, 01 minutes to 37 degrees, 27 minutes north latitude and between the meridian of 49 degrees, 28 minutes and 49 degrees, 50 minutes east longitude and with the extent of 603/1251 square kilometers covers about 9 percent of the province. Alborz mountain range in the northern part of the city is located, in terms of Quad approximately from the north to the Caspian Sea and Anzali port, from the south to the city of Roudbar and Fouman, from the East to the city of Astaneh Ashrafieh and from the West to the city of Fouman is limited. Rasht city is located in the center of Guilan Province. An area of the city is equivalent to 1427 square kilometers [1].

### STATISTICAL SAMPLE OF RESEARCH

Sampling is one of the important processes of the scientific research which allows researchers to spend less resources to achieve desired results and save in time, cost and workforce. In fact the purpose of sampling is the process of selecting the sufficient number of members of the statistical society; So that with studying sample, characteristics or features, it can be generalized to the statistical society [2]. statistical Sample of research is the target village that by tourism, handicraft, cultural heritage organization is determined and to complete the questionnaire and receive information from Dehyars of village such as Haji Bekande, Dahane Sarshijan, Imam Zade Hashem and Saravan were considered as members of samples.

### METHODS OF DATA AND INFORMATION COLLECTION

Researchers to collect data and information required are forced to use methods can use in their scientific research. The present study is no exception to the rule and in order to access data and information about the theoretical knowledge and principles from the various methods has used which will be mentioned later.

#### Library method

In this study, like most scientific research in order to understand and background of subject and examine the evolution of research on the subject over time has been used from the library method. In this study based on the library method has been used from books (related to the theoretical concepts and industry), domestic and foreign articles

relating to tourism industry, market segmentation and market segmentation of tourism and sites related to the introduction of towns and villages.

### Field method

to methods refers that investigator is forced to go outside environment to collect information and by referring to people or the environment to collect the required information. One of the most common methods of collecting field data, especially in the descriptive research is the questionnaire approach that data collection in the large-scale makes possible. In this study tried to by the design of the questionnaire and the questions surrounding villages and their general characteristics from features and positive and negative potentials of the desired and target villages of search, and finally with the completion of the questions by Dehyars can obtain the necessary information. Because the questionnaire information is essential for data analysis.

### STATISTICAL METHODS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

In this research has been used comparative analysis method for the adaptive comparison of general characteristics extracted from the questionnaire of research. So after clearing the features of each of the target villages, in tabular format, the comparison between them is discussed to be determined that what characteristics have each village relative to each other. After performing the adaptive comparison, villages should be graded. Thus, the EP model with five factors to evaluate and categorize historical and natural attractions of Rasht city has been applied including Surrounding attractions, welfare facilities, cultural services, access and local communities.

$$E_P = \frac{\sum P}{\sum N}$$

$E_P$  = Tourism potential

P = Total of the positive scor

N= Total of the negative score

Work be performed in this method that at first attractions is listed in the respective table and then in each of the component score of attractions is placed. Total Points is calculated using the above formula; finally rank of each attraction will be determined.

### RESULTS

After extracting the data from the villages, and adaptive comparison of general specifications of villages with each other was used EP model for achieving to the research goal that is tourism market classification. So after determining classification factors including attractions, welfare facilities, cultural services, the availability of other sectors and local communities and benefiting from the EP model, was performed classification and the table below was prepared as an output.

Table(1) Matrix of points and the potential for Rural Tourism of Rasht

Table: Matrix of points and the potential for rural tourism of Rasht city													
Component	Surrounding attractions			Welfare Facilities			Cultural services			availability	Local communities	Total Points	
Name of Village	Green spaces	Green and open spaces	Health facilities	Recreational equipment	Residence	Traditional coffeehouses	Preparing regions and Video	Cultural Expert	Brochure of attraction	Asphalted road	Proximity to the village and etc	positive	negative
Imam Zade Hashim	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	9	2
Haji Bekande	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	9	2
Dahane Sarshijan	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	7	4
Saravan	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	1
Total positive score	4	4	4	4	3	4	1	2	2	4	4		
negative	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	2	2	0	0	36	9

Based on the information of above table it can be stated that the village of Saravan on these factors, with a total score of 11 is enjoyed of the suitable and desirable potential compared to other villages studied and in the second level are placed two village of Haji Bekande and Imam Zade Hashem with a total score of 4.5 and finally village of Dahane Sarshijan stands with a score of 1/57 in the third level.

The EP is calculated based on the proposed relationship as follows:

$$EP \text{ villages of Imam Zade Hashem } \frac{\sum P}{\sum N} = \frac{9}{2} = 4.5$$

Therefore level of rural tourism market in Rasht city can be brought into the picture in Figure 1.1.

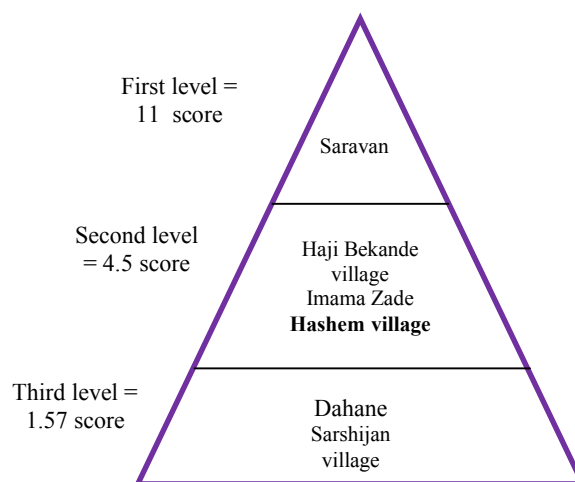


Figure1. The levels of rural tourism of target villages of Rasht city

This part of the research consists of two parts: 1- The results of the adaptive comparison of public profile of target villages 2- Results related to the target villages level using the EP model. In the following, investigating the results have discussed.

### THE RESULTS OBTAINED FROM THE APPLICATION OF THE EP MODEL FOR THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE TARGET VILLAGES :

After performing the adaptive comparison, villages was graded. Thus, the EP model with five factors to evaluate and categorize historical and natural attractions of Rasht city had been applied including Surrounding attractions, welfare facilities, cultural services, access and local communities.

Quantitative analysis of data from scientific research is an approach the accuracy of the results of the studies were considered.

The statistical methods are the most common ways that researchers utilize them in analyzing quantitative data. The present study is no exception and has benefited from statistical methods.

In the following for classification of rural tourism market of the Rasht city was used EP model and through the information and analyze the data and calculate the positive and negative

Potential, eventually EP rating was assigned to each of the villages in which the results are as follows: Saravan village was put at the first level with 11 positive points and a negative point and 11 equal EP; Haji Bekande and Imam Zade Hashem villages were divided at the second level with 9 positive points and 2 negative points and 4.5 equal EP, and Dahane Sarshijan village was put at the third level with 7 positive points and 4 negative point and 1.57 equal EP

### SUGGESTIONS

1. Holding seminars and meetings entitled " investment development in rural tourism industry " by the City Council of Rasht with other relevant authorities and entrepreneurs, invite domestic and foreign investors and providing facilities and special privileges of investment<sup>1</sup> in construction of hotels, residential complexes, recreational facilities such as amusement and forestall parks, creating sport ground, museums of natural history and rural landscapes and etc.
2. For avoiding interference of the executive functions of the rural tourism industry, formed a coordination committee that coordinate the various agencies decisions and act as a communication bridge between these organizations; of course, the committee can provide the field of private sector activity by reflecting the problems of the sector to the public sector.
3. coordinating between relevant various agencies and departments, in order to integrate rural tourism function by holding the meetings and implementing

coordinator managerial measures with the participation of governmental agencies, NGOs, people and entrepreneurs.

4. Codification of the master plan of rural tourism development in cooperation with experts and researchers (Study of the Tourism Master Plan).
5. With regard to the role of infrastructure in rural tourism development must be strengthened communication and information systems, and amenities and services be expanded. Road construction and communication path for the development of the area and subsequently tourism development be considered. In addition to, it is desirable to equip rural tourism routes with traffic signs, rules and regulations in these places and also can provide manuals for tourists and their training.
6. Encourage and stimulate local people to participate in order to develop infrastructure, tourism facilities and equipment such as delegating the office of tourism facilities to the village's people.
7. Forming a committee of experts in the field of tourism as an advisory committee to develop rural tourism.
8. Providing security tourism places these villages and other villages of the city to help avoid social violations and other infractions (Ensuring security and establishing a quiet area to achieve a sustainable rural tourism).

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<sup>2</sup> Advantages such as long-term loans with low interest; donating reward to the private sector; assignment of the inexpensive materials for the private sector to create tourism centers; decreasing the Legal and administrative problems; performing common loans to private sector.

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