

Impact of Historical-Cultural Tourism on Sustaining Community Tourism: The Case of Kerman, Iran

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Abstract

Sustainable development has been recently one of the essential subjects in tourism debates. In order to have sustainable tourism in a destination, both visitors and local community must understand and follow the rules of sustainability while different types of tourism in the destination should be considered as well. This study investigates on historical-cultural tourism in Kerman city in Iran to find out how this type of tourism has affected the city's sustainability with regard to sustainability indicators. A model has been used based on the work of Choi and Sirakaya (2006) who investigated on sustainability indicators for community tourism. Economical, social, cultural and environmental dimensions have been used as the criteria for measuring sustainability. Delphi technique was used as the method of this study for structuring a group communication process. After four rounds of discussion with the study panel, the most affected indicators of each dimension were addressed by them. Results showed that historical-cultural tourism in Kerman have influenced employment, income, nature of demand, host and tourist attitude toward tourism development, community health, cultural site management and education, loss of renewable and non-renewable resources, and health of human population.

Keywords: historical-cultural tourism, sustainability, indicators, community tourism, Kerman

1. Introduction

1.1 Sustainable Development in Tourism Context

Sustainable development has been recently one of the essential subjects in tourism debates. The World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) declared the most frequent definition of sustainable development as "a development in which present generations find ways to satisfy their needs without compromising the chances of future generations to satisfy their needs" (WCED, 1987).

Sustainable development is essentially based on the principles such as environmental, cultural, social, and economical. Environmental sustainability means that development is compatible with retaining biological diversities and environmental resources. Cultural and social stability means that development leads people to improve the control above their lives. In this case, development is not in conflict with cultural values and it strengthens the community's identity. Employment, health, and education are the most important social issues while cultural diversities and values are considered the significant cultural issues. Cultural sustainability is sometime argued as a part of social dimension and at the same time it can be disputed as a different subject. Finally, Economic sustainability means that economic development is done with high efficiency in a way that resources are controlled and can be preserved for the future generation. Income and poverty are the main issues in this area.

Sustainable development in tourism context refers to the tourism that is long-termed, integrated, participatory, and environmentally, socially, culturally and economically compatible (Kerimoglu & Ciraci, 2008). Naseer (2003) noted that sustainable tourism is embedded in the context of sustainable development, signifying that tourism must be economically viable, environmentally sensitive, and culturally appropriate if it aims at contributing to sustainable development. It is gained when the prolonged development in an area (society or environment) is achieved in an indefinite period and it does not lead to the risk for the environment it has developed in. Sustainable tourism definitely plays a significant role in creating jobs, increasing income, or bringing together the different ethnics.

In the context of community, the aim of sustainable development should be improving the residents' quality of life by enhancing the benefits of local economic situation, protecting the natural and built environment, and providing a high quality experience for tourists (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Stabler, 1997; Hall & Lew, 1998). According to Godde (1999), global attention has been given to tourism initiatives that combine features of community development, revenue reinvestment, cultural heritage and conservation. Therefore, this study is investigating on historical sites and cultural heritage as the components which help a community to sustain its tourism in the context of community based tourism. Historical monuments are considered as a part of cultural heritage. The commodification of cultural heritage resources brings about questions regarding the limits to their sustainability and thus to the sustainable development of these areas (Al-Hagla, 2010). Therefore, it is important to focus on the links between historical-cultural tourism and sustainable development in heritage sites. One of the perspectives about the relationship between sustainable development and historical-cultural tourism relies on a 'three pillars' model (Keiner, 2005; UNIDO, 2005) by exploring on the role of built heritage in three dimensions of sustainability including economic, environmental, and social sustainability (Tweed & Sutherland, 2007). So in any sustainable development framework, the conservation of built heritage is considered vital (Doratli, Hoskara & Fasli, 2004) because of its role in marking the cultural and historic identity of an area. In addition to the three dimensions noted above, political and technological dimensions have been discussed in the works of some scholars (Hall, 1994; Hwansuk & Sirakaya, 2006; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006) but these two are not investigated in this study. Manning (1999) noted that WTO aimed at identifying a small set of indicators for each sustainability dimension which can be probably used in almost any situation as well as enhancing them with supplementary indicators found to be useful in particular ecosystem or types of destinations. Many scholars tried to set indicators for sustainable development and its dimensions. Amongst them, Choi and Sirakaya (2006) explored on finding the most important sustainability indicators for community tourism from a wide range of perspective. Therefore, the indicators found in their study have been used as the basis of the present study. The case selected for this study is Kerman city in Iran. The following section is assigned to a brief introduction of Kerman in its historical and cultural context.

1.2 Kerman and Its Historical-Cultural Tourism

Kerman is located on a high margin of Lut Desert in the east south of Iran in a distance about 1,000 km from Tehran, the capital city of Iran. It should be notified that Kerman is both the name of a city and a province in the mentioned area where Kerman city is the capital of Kerman province. For the purpose of this study, Kerman city has been investigated. There are many historical attractions in Kerman such as Ganj Ali Khan Complex, Kerman Bazaar, Vakil Caravanserai, Shazdeh (Prince) Garden, Shah Nematollah Vali's shrine, Jame Mosque, Pamenar Mosque, Kerman Church, Vakil Bath now served as Traditional Tea House and Restaurant, etc. Kerman is one of the main tourism destinations in Iran which hosts a large number of domestic and international tourists every year. Figure 1 shows the location of Kerman city in Iran.



Figure 1. Location of Kerman in Iran

Besides its historical sites, Kerman has a rich culture which rooted in its traditions, customs, and religion. For example, there are almost 2000 Zoroastrian living in Kerman. Zoroaster is a monotheistic pre-Islamic religion of ancient Persia founded by the prophet Zoroaster (Zarathustra) in the 6th century BC. They have many festivals such as "Jashne Sade" and "Jashne Mehregan" which are still celebrated in Kerman. Sadeh is a mid-winter festival before Iranian New Year since ancient times. It is also called "The Festival of Fire". Mehregan festival is

celebrated in honor of Mithra, the divinity of covenant and interpersonal relationships such as love, friendship, and affection. Many tourists come to Kerman each year to see these festivals which represent traditions and culture of ancient Persia. Kerman has also handicrafts traditional embroidery known as patteh, jajeems, rugs, Kilims, satchels, and other hand woven items which are considered as a part of cultural products of this city. Amongst them, patteh has the best outlet for cultural products in Kerman.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite the outstanding historical and religious sites, handicrafts, and rich culture, Kerman failed to maintain and promote its history and culture as much as it is expected. As mentioned by tourism experts, it might be due to the lack of proper cultural milieu, weakness in educational and functional body of tourism industry, and unprovision of required tourism infrastructures which resulted in insustainability of tourism in this city (Jamejamonline, 2012). Being endowed by various historical, cultural, and natural attractions, Kerman has good opportunities to achieve sustainability while developing tourism. Considerable number of historical-cultural attractions and the growth of historical-cultural tourists in Kerman necessitate their impact and contribution in sustainable development of the city.

1.4 Objective of the Study

Endowed by all the mentioned cultural and historical resources, Kerman has the potential to become a sustainable city in terms of tourism. Therefore, this paper is designed by a commitment to sustainable tourism based on the work of Choi and Sirakaya (2006) who investigated on sustainability indicators for managing community tourism. Their study is an admirable work in terms of finding the most important indicators for six dimensions of sustainability (economic, social, cultural, environmental, technological, and political). For this purpose, they provided a set of 125 indicators: social (28), ecological or environmental (25), economic (24), cultural dimensions (13), political dimension (32), and technological dimension (3) for sustainable tourism. Since economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions have been regarded as the key dimensions of sustainability for tourism (Godde, 1999; Kerimoglu & Ciraci, 2008), this study aimed at exploring on these four dimensions and not on the last two indicators (political and technological). Therefore, a number of 90 indicators have been applied in the case of Kerman in order to find out the most important sustainability indicators for community tourism in this city. Each of the indicators for sustainable development has its own key themes and elements which can be discussed in details. For this study the dimensions were intended to be explored according to top five indicators of each dimension and the additional information given by the study panel.

2. Method

This study employs a Delphi technique in order to develop the objective of the research. The Delphi technique is considered as a widely used and accepted method for collecting and bringing together the data from a group of experts while it is designed as a group communication process which aims at reaching to a convergence of opinion on a specific real-world issue (Hsu & Sandford, 2007). The panel group who participated in this research was selected from the tourism authorities in Kerman and the scholars who had previously investigated on sustainable tourism in Kerman as a case study. Therefore, a group of 25 experts (fifteen tourism authorities and ten scholars) were selected as panel members based on their skill, knowledge, and experience in the subject area with the aim of developing the study. In the first round the panel was asked to select the indicators they considered affected by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman from the checklist (the model proposed by Choi and Sirakaya, 2006). According to Hsu and Sandford (2007), in the first round of the Delphi process format, using a structured questionnaire which is based upon an extensive review of the literature is both an acceptable and a common modification. After the first round, the nominated indicators were extracted from the list and the experts who were on agreement for the new list were asked to participate for the next round. Therefore, the number of experts decreased to 15. They were provided by the questionnaire to share their experiments for the study. In the third round, the panelists were provided by the revised questionnaire and were asked to revise or clarify their judgements. Finally, in the fourth round the panelists were given the last chance to revise their ideas about the items. A blank space was provided next to each question in order to help the study panel to discuss about the issues if it was required. The Delphi study data was entered and analyzed using SPSS software. The items of each category has been rated by panel members from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Quantitative analysis included the calculation of mean scores. The cutoff point for this study was 3.50.

3. Results

Ninety indicators for four dimensions of sustainability in tourism (economic, social, cultural, and environmental) proposed by Choi and Sirakaya (2006) were explored in Kerman's sustainable development in terms of historical-cultural tourism's impact. The remained items are shown in Tables 2-5 along with their mean scores

and highlighting the top five indicators of each dimension. Indicators were selected using the cutoff point 3.5 which means an indicator score of 3.5 or higher is on the agreement rating (“strongly disagree” anchored at 1 to “strongly agree” anchored at 5). An indicator scoring 3.5 or higher is midpoint between agreement 4 and neutral 3, neither agree nor disagree.

Among the 24 indicators for the economic dimension, 16 items have been rated above the cutoff point by the experts. The panelists agreed that the top priority in economic indicators for sustainable community tourism (based on historical monuments) were “Employment growth in tourism ($x = 4.40$), “Rate change of purchase of local products/value and variety” ($x = 4.50$), “Tourism as percentage of local economy” ($x = 4.40$), “Percent of repeat visitors” ($x = 4.50$), and “Seasonality of tourism” ($x = 4.60$). The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of the study for indicators of the economic dimension

Key themes	Indicators	Mean
Employment	Employment growth in tourism	4.40
	Unemployment rate	3.80
	Employment growth general	4.10
	Percent of income leakage from the community	3.50
Income distribution/capital leakage and linkage	Employment and income multipliers on tourism expenditures	4.30
	Rate change of purchase of local products/value and variety	4.50
	Import contents	3.50
	Tourism as percentage of local economy	4.40
Capital formation in the community/ investment	Availability of local credit to local business	4.00
	External ownership of business in general	3.80
	Percent of profit/revenue reinvestment in reserved natural and cultural area management and protection	4.30
Nature of demand	Percent of repeat visitors	4.50
	Seasonality of tourism/tourist visitation	4.60
Economic well-being	Comparative ratio of wages in tourism sector to local average wage	3.60
	Local community economic stability	3.60
Local government income	Hotel/motel tax	4.20

Note: Mean: each itemized indicator of each category has been rated by panel members from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Cutoff point: 3.5.

Experts were provided by 28 questions regarding the indicators for social dimension. The revised questionnaire included 12 items revealing the social impacts of historical-cultural tourism in Kerman. The panelists emphasized on “satisfaction and attitude of hosts and guests”. This includes “Host community attitude toward tourism development” ($x = 4.70$), “Continuance of traditional activities by local residents” ($x = 4.80$), “Resident involvement in tourism industry” ($x = 4.80$), and “Tourist satisfaction/attitude toward tourism development” (4.70). “Public awareness toward value of tourism” ($x = 4.70$) is also one of the important indicators affected by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman. Table 2 shows the results for the social dimension.

Table 2. Results of the study for indicators of the social dimension

Key themes	Indicators	Mean
Host community/residents and stakeholders	Host community satisfaction toward tourism development	4.00
	Host community attitude toward tourism development	4.70
	Continuance of traditional activities by local residents	4.80
	Resident involvement in tourism industry	4.80
Tourist satisfaction	Tourist satisfaction/attitude toward tourism development	4.70
Community resource	Degradation/erosion of natural and cultural resource	4.30
	Shift in social structure (e.g. power shift and its socio-economic implications)	3.50
Distribution of resources/power	Percent of managerial employment from local residents	3.80
	Litter/pollution (air, water, etc.)	4.40
	Overcrowding	4.60
Community health and safety	Congestion (road)	4.50
	Public awareness toward value of tourism	4.70

Amongst the 13 cultural indicators for sustainable tourism, the panel members agreed on 8 indicators. The top five cultural indicators found to be important and mostly affected by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman are “Commodification” ($x = 4.70$), “Number of officially designated sites and its management” ($x = 4.80$), “Shift in level of pride in local cultural heritage” ($x = 4.80$), “Type and amount of training given to tourism employees (guide)” ($x = 4.50$), and “Type of information given to visitors before and during site visits” ($x = 4.50$). Results about cultural dimension are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the study for indicators of the cultural dimension

Key themes	Indicators	Mean
Building/architecture	Comparability of new construction with local vernacular	3.50
	Cultural sites maintenance level	3.80
Cultural (site) management	Commodification	4.70
	Number of officially designated sites and its management	4.80
Socio-cultural fabric	Retention of local customs and language	4.00
	Shift in level of pride in local cultural heritage	4.80
Cultural education	Type and amount of training given to tourism employees (guide)	4.50
	Type of information given to visitors before and during site visits (e.g. tourist in-flight video or public awareness print)	4.50

Finally, the environmental dimension was explored with 25 indicators and experts were asked to reveal the most significant indicators which were touched by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman. Results showed that the study panel emphasized on the indicators such as “Air quality index” ($x = 4.50$), “Amount of erosion on natural sites” ($x = 4.70$), “Per capita discharge of waste water” ($x = 4.50$), “Group size in sites” ($x = 4.70$), and “Level of losing vegetation” ($x = 4.20$). Table 4 shows the affected indicators of environmental dimension by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman.

Table 4. Results of the study for indicators of the ecological dimension

Key themes	Indicators	Mean
Loss of renewable resources	Air quality index	4.50
	Amount of erosion on the natural sites	4.70
	Number of good air quality days	3.50
	Frequency of environmental accidents related to tourism	3.50
Rate of ecosystem destruction/degradation	Level of protection (IUCN classification e.g. parks, beaches, species, fragile ecosystem)	3.80
	Per capita water/energy consumption data	4.00
	Percent under protection designation or environmentally managed	3.80
Assessment of environmental impacts of tourism activity	Continues use of environmental impact assessment	3.50
	Availability, size, and condition of urban forest	3.50
Reuse/recycling rates	Timber growth/removal	3.70
	Renewable resources used	3.70
	Recycling rate	3.90
	Formal control required over development of sites and use densities	3.50
Health of human population (residents/visitors)	Use intensity	3.70
	Per capita discharge of waste water	4.50
	Group size in sites (carrying capacity)	4.70
	Per capita discharge of solid waste	4.00
Loss of non-renewable resources	Level of losing vegetation	4.20
	Site attractivity	3.60

4. Discussion

4.1 Economical Impacts

Results of the study revealed that historical-cultural tourism is very momentous in increasing income of the local people in Kerman. The study panel supported it by referring to handicrafts as one of the most important sources of income. These handicrafts are typically represented to tourists in historical sites. For example, statistics

showed that Kerman province sold 400.660.000 Rial (equal to 40000 US\$) of different handicrafts products during Iranian New Year holiday 2011. As mentioned by the study panel, a large proportion of this income belongs to Kerman city (the capital of Kerman province). Therefore, not only the rate of purchase of local products has been affected by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman, but also percentage of local economy has been influenced by this type of tourism. The study panel also pointed out to two museums “Ganj Ali Khan (Zarabkhaneh) Mint House” and “Ganj Ali Khan Bath” which were visited by many historical tourists and brought a large amount of money to Kerman. Furthermore, local government income has been affected from the amount of hotel and motel tax which were filled almost by historical-cultural tourists, as mentioned by the panel.

Furthermore, seasonality of tourism has been influenced by historical-cultural tourism and at the same time it affected the distribution of income in the community. For example, the first month of spring which encounters Iranian New Year is the high season in this city and both handicrafts and museum tickets are more sold in these periods compared to other seasons. Additionally, many tourists come to visit Kerman in summer because it is school holiday in Iran and furthermore, the climate is suitable for travelling to this city compared to other seasons. Since most of the visitors tended to accommodate in the areas near to historical sites, the percent of income in these locations were more under the influence of historical-cultural tourism. It involves the income from hotels, transportation, food and beverage, and retail shopping. The experts also endorsed that historical-cultural tourism affected the percent of repeat visitors in Kerman because based on their previous studies many visitors were eager to visit Kerman for the second time and believed that Kerman was the right destination for them as a historical place. Therefore, the nature of demand has been identified as an important factor affected by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman city based on the items of seasonality and repeat visitor.

In term of employment growth in tourism, the study panel believed that growth of historical-cultural tourism has increased the job opportunities in tourism industry of Kerman. This has been achieved by the impacts on different levels of employment. For example, increasing the number of accommodations to fulfill the needs of historical-cultural tourists in Kerman resulted in the growth of job opportunities in hotels. Additionally, high demands for handicrafts and cultural products of Kerman (e.g. Patteh, Kilim, Maaraq, painting on pottery, and knife making) presuppose the high quantity of production. Therefore, from the moment of decision making to create them until the products are made, distributed, and sold out, tourism staffs are performing. It means that when the demand increases, the supply should not remain unchanged and more products should be sent to marketplace and consequently more labor force should be employed. Furthermore, maintenance and protection of historical sites, training of tourism employees, and providing tourist information about history and culture of Kerman all improved the employment rate in tourism industry of this city. It was also agreed by the study panel that percent of employment in general was also affected by historical-cultural tourism in the city. They claimed that the job opportunities which were increased by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman include building, yard, and equipment maintenance, retail shopping, custodial and janitorial positions.

4.2 Social Impacts

According to the study panel, both locals and tourists were eagerly in agreement in term of attitude toward tourism development (based on historical-cultural attractions) but it does not support their concurrence in actions done to develop tourism in this city. The best example for this issue is Ganj Ali Khan Square which is located in the heart of Kerman and surrounded by Ganj Ali Khan Bath, Caravanserai, mosque, Coppersmiths Bazar, Zarabkhane, and Goldsmiths Bazar. Cultural Heritage and Tourism Department of Kerman started a plan to renovate this area and sent loaders to site for excavation. Even though the act was done by the aim of conservation of this historical site, positive attitude and achievement had not been reached for a long time. Local people, especially retailers in the intended site were worried about the surrounding area to be damaged. So despite of their positive attitude toward development, they were by some means unsatisfied with the arrangement of maintenance act. According to the results obtained from the study panel, historical-cultural tourism enhanced the host community (residents and stakeholders) involvement in tourism industry which shows their positive attitude toward tourism development. It has been mentioned that residents in historical areas showed tendency toward different tourism affairs such as guiding the visitors, promoting local products, and even providing homestay for them in high seasons when tourists could not access accommodation. In terms of continuing the traditional activities, the study panel gave an example by the festival of traditional foods or music, Shahnameh reciting ceremony, and displaying the different tribes' life style which is often held in collaboration with cultural heritage and tourism organization of Kerman province in the museums or historical sites of the city. Since the majority of Kerman's visitors are historical-cultural tourists, many of cultural products and traditional activities are represented to visitors in historical areas. Local people are more encouraged to sell their products when they are meeting large number of visitors and they become more inspired to continue their traditional activities. One

of the most important products of Kerman is Patteh which is a traditional needlework on woolen textile. This product is only made in Kerman and almost every domestic and international tourist buy at least one when they visit Kerman. Recently, the low qualified Patteh made by Afghans in Kerman affected selling of this product. Panel believed that if this problem is not going to be solved, it will lead to the loss of Patteh's value as a unique product. Despite the mentioned issue and low payment to the women who weave Patteh, production of this artifact is still proceeding and involves local residents' activity in tourism industry. The study panel believed that presence of historical-cultural tourism and their eagerness toward buying local products is one of the important reasons for host community to continue cultural and traditional activities in Kerman. Furthermore, when they receive visitors' positive attitude either in terms of historical monuments or cultural products, they can touch the real value of tourism. This awareness could be seen from different points of view; i.e., confidence about their cultural identity, increase in their income, or development of the urban area.

The study panel also pointed out to community health and safety as an approximately affected factor by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman. The influenced indicators of this category were "Overcrowding", "Congestion", and "Public awareness toward value of tourism". The issue of overcrowding has been a major problem in Kerman with loads of tourists in summer and especially in Iranian New Year (the first two weeks of spring) and caused problems for residents' transportation. Besides, many domestic visitors travel by their own cars and it cause congestion which is annoying for the residents in that particular period of year.

Even though the crime rate and incidents of vandalism were not affected by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman, the study panel emphasized on these two items as very essential indicators. Although the social insecurity for the inhabitants was reported in the historical texture of Kerman, this issue has not been correlated with historical-cultural tourism but the historical and old texture itself led to lack of security in these areas. The study panel mentioned that many of old habitants of these areas have moved to other places and some of the historical areas are threatening because of being uninhabited. Residents claimed that some of historical sites in Kerman like Ghale-Dokhtar and Ghale-Ardeshir have become a place for addicts and Afghans who live illegally in Kerman. As mentioned by the study panel, it needs an intersectoral planning by municipality, police office, and the department of culture and heritage in Kerman to solve this problem.

Among eight important factors of social dimension mentioned by Choi and Sirakaya (2006), the study panel believed that "Social cohesion", "Community resource", "Distribution of resource", and "Quality of life in general" were slightly affected or non-affected by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman. Finally, "Sex tourism" was entirely removed from the list because it is strongly forbidden in Iran due to the rules of Islam.

4.3 Cultural Impacts

Amongst the cultural indicators, the study panel claimed that cultural management, education, and socio-cultural fabric of the city have been influenced by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman while building and architecture have not been cited as affected by this type of tourism in Kerman. Even though cultural management was enhanced in terms of commodification and number of designated sites, the experts were unsatisfied with the level of management and also maintenance of historical sites in Kerman as an essential part of tourism in historical cities. They believed that despite of many historical-cultural tourists visiting Kerman, these sites are not managed appropriately in order to help sustainability of the city. For example, the panel referred to the serious problem in the historical texture of the city with the groundwater coming up. As mentioned by them, this issue is threatening these sites. The only effort done was digging wells around Jame Mosque in order to discharge groundwater in this site but yet it needs more consideration in terms of controlling and stopping this critical situation. Besides, such attempts have not been done for other sites or it has done partially. Therefore, the study panel was worried about the risk of being destructed by humanity. For instance, excavation project in Ganj Ali Khan Square has been started by the aim of conservation of this site (Figure 5) but it completely affected the physical appearance of the site and many critics condemned this action as they believed that it was not an appropriate accomplishment.

The experts also emphasized on the investment for the revival of historical texture of Kerman in local and international level. They suggested that department of housing and urban development can pay for buying the lands in historical areas and assigning them to applicants who aim or concern about historical sites. Furthermore, encouraging foreign and local investment in cultural management and protection of historical areas are of great importance. The experts claimed that a plan called "Borje Hezar" was introduced to be established in Kerman by the aim of maintaining historical sites but it stopped working due to economical problems and disagreement with heritage rules in the area. Later on, Al-Taher, a company from Oman, undertook to follow the same plan and it was agreed by the authorities in Kerman. Even though the contract was drawn up, yet the company could not

fulfill the needs of conservation in these areas. It seems that lack of intersectoral linkage in tourism and municipality is the most important reason which postpones this plan. Consequently, the study panel put their emphasis on commodification and number of official designated sites as high affected indicators by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman in terms of cultural site management. Commodification in historical-cultural context is the process by which cultural and historical themes and demonstrations come to be evaluated mainly with regard to their exchange value. Tourist destinations must have a particular set of features which are distinctive and set them apart from other destinations. In fact, this is where local communities choose how they can represent themselves to the world. In case of Kerman, the experts indicated that history and culture of the community have been commodified through its museums, historical sites, and handicrafts. Study showed that tourists are primarily going to Kerman for its culture and historical sites. Therefore, historical-cultural tourists make up Kerman's tourist base and since local attitude remained positive toward tourism, community of Kerman is in the stage of commodification. Most of the museums of Kerman are located in historical texture of the city or they essentially are historical buildings (e.g. Shah Nematollah Museum). Besides, the past history and culture of Kerman is represented to visitors in these museums; for example, maquettes of old houses, samples of traditional clothes, and models of people in the style of performing traditional costumes.

In contrast to the level of maintenance in historical sites which was not affected by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman, promotion for these sites was under the influence of this type of tourism. The study panel believed that presence of historical-cultural tourists in this city encouraged the tourism authorities to provide more information about historical sites to visitors in Kerman before and during site visits. For example, an international monthly magazine for travel and tourism is being prepared specialized for historical-cultural attractions in Kerman. In this magazine information about historical sites, cultural traditions, cultural souvenirs, etc are provided in Persian and English language for visitors. Besides, brochures and maps are provided for visitors in order to give more accurate information to historical tourists, especially in high seasons. Department of Culture and Heritage in Kerman raises some tents in the city entrance gates each year and distribute the brochures of historical sites and cultural ceremonies among visitors. Number of the employees who are trained and prepared to guide tourists in this division has increased within the last few years due to the large amount of historical-cultural tourists came to this city. As mentioned by the study panel, boost of historical-cultural tourism in Kerman generally enhanced the type and amount of training given to tourism employees. For example, Department of Culture and Heritage of Kerman established a tourism training centre by the aim of education of tourism management, hoteling, renovation of historical sites, and local handicrafts.

4.4 Environmental Impacts

The study panel indicated that historical-cultural tourists in Kerman caused air pollution and ecosystem destruction in high seasons which are summer and Iranian New Year. Transportation by air, road, and rail has been increasing by the rising number of visitors and their mobility in these two occasions and consequently CO₂ emissions affect the air pollution in the city. However, they declared that in other seasons this negative impact is minimized. The issue of erosion in natural sites and the impact of historical-cultural tourism on these areas in Kerman have been illustrated by Pardisan Ghaem Jungle Park which is located near two historical sites of Kerman; Takhte Darya Gholi Beyg and Gonbade Jabalie. The study panel indicated that historical tourists who come to visit these old monuments can enjoy this park as a recreational area at the same time. This eventuated in negative environmental impact like losing the vegetation by walkers and increasing the garbage in the park. The same issue happened in Shazdeh (Prince) Garden which is surrounded by desert land and is benefiting from a good natural situation. Built in 1890s, Shazdeh Garden comprises of an entrance structure and a gate at the lower end and a two-floor residential building at the upper end. The distance between these two structures is decorated with water fountains flowing from the natural incline of the land. It is a kind of built environment in the heart of nature with the contrast mixed scenery of green vegetation, water fountains, and desert. As noted by the study panel, visitors who come to visit this historical site have either contaminated the green scenery of the garden or increased erosion on the desert when they walk round the garden.

As discussed above, overcrowding by historical-cultural tourists is an issue in high seasons of Kerman. Increase in number of historical tourists caused the general overuse of water resources for hotels, swimming pools, and personal use of water by visitors. The study panel claimed that this resulted in more water consumption and greater volume of waste water. Furthermore, the historical tourists and their activities in natural sites caused waste disposal in rivers and scenic areas. Above all these indicators for health of human population, carrying capacity has been considered the most affected indicator by historical-cultural tourism in Kerman. The study panel emphasized heavily on the impact of this type of tourism on group size of tourists in the sites by claiming that the areas around historical sites accepted more visitors. It can be evaluated from different points of view; e.g.

quality of visitors' experience, economic factors, and community factors. But due to study limitation by the model of Choi and Sirakaya (2006), carrying capacity was explored in terms of environmental factors. The study panel believed that air and water quality, noise level, amount of litter, and number of historical buildings at risk were among the environmental factors influenced by overcrowding of historical-cultural tourists in certain spaces in Kerman. They pointed out to Pardisan Ghaem Jungle Park and Kerman National park which are at the risk of littering and losing vegetation by the large amount of historical tourists doing leisure activities there. The issue of carrying capacity was especially emphasized in high seasons of Kerman when the sites are under double pressure. It has been mentioned that huge number of historical-cultural visitors who try to cram themselves into limited spaces either in historical sites or recreational areas added to the negative environmental impacts. Overcapacity has also been mentioned as a barrier to full visit of historical and natural sites in Kerman. Additionally, visitors who could not enter the intended historical areas because of the congestion were observed to lounge in the nearby areas to spend their time until they can make the visitation. Therefore, the study panel believed that stakeholders should agree a vision for historical sites and the environment affected by that in order to maintain site attractiveness.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate on how historical-cultural tourism affected sustainability indicators in Kerman city, Iran. The results of this study revealed that historical-cultural tourism as the most important type of tourism in Kerman can play a significant role in sustaining the community tourism in terms of environmental, cultural, social, and economical dimensions. Since these features are acting as the building blocks of sustainable community development, it was important to understand whether they were affected by tourism in Kerman or not. Results signified that historical-cultural tourism in Kerman affected employment, income, and nature of demand for economic dimension, host and tourist attitude toward tourism development and community health for social dimension, cultural site management, cultural education, and socio-cultural fabric for cultural dimension, and finally, loss of renewable and non-renewable resources and health of human population for environmental dimension. Therefore, due to the high impact of historical monuments and cultural attractions on tourism industry of Kerman and their power in creating sustainable community development in the city, tourism planners and policy makers should understand the potential for damages and threats posed to these areas and apply the proper strategies in order to reach to an optimal level of development for Kerman city.

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