Strategies For Development Of Iran Urban Tourism

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Abstract: Tourism industry of any country consists of different forms of tourism for which matching and adaptation of strategies with the nature of destination is necessary, because provided policies and strategies for development of any form of tourism in any country are different and even opposite sometimes. Urban tourism as the most important form of tourism is not an exception and preparing strategies for its development will not be possible without considering its specific and extraordinary environment. The object of preparing and writing this article is to formulate suitable strategies for Iran urban tourism in a three phase framework consisting of input, matching and decision levels. Provided instruments and techniques in this framework are suitable for different levels of strategic planning (e.g. local, urban, regional, and so on). Also this research is applied in target and the subjects are all technical managers of tourism agencies in the country and data is gathered by designing and administration of questionnaire. Surveys show that urban tourism is one of the most powerful forms of tourism in this country and can be the first choice for domestic and foreign tourists. Results show that for development of this industry, hold and maintain strategies are the first priority; in addition, considering lots of strengths of the industry, market penetration and development of products are also suggested among other aggressive strategies. Determining and prioritization of Iran urban tourism strategies are some practical results of this article.

Key words: Urban Tourism, Strategic Planning, TOPSIS, Forms of tourism, Hold and maintain strategies, Iran Urban Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays tourism or the act of traveling with the aim of recreation is one of the big industries and economic sectors in the world and one of the employment sectors in most of the countries and the most important sources of foreign exchange. On the other hand, most of the governments consider tourism as a guideline for development of the country, because of the multiplier effect of tourism income, in which foreign exchange provided by tourists will commence expending for local products and services. Tourism industry as one of the important and global pillars of the economy becomes more important day by day. So, most of the governments consider it as a suitable way to alleviate today's economic crisis. Iran, as one of the developing countries, has a big share of tourism industry and has the potential to become a top destination. Development and enhancing tourism without guiding framework and pre-determined strategies for achieving development goals and in ad hoc manner is impossible (Hall, 1998). Around the world, tourism has been hailed as a panacea: a way to fund conservation and research, protect fragile and pristine ecosystems, benefit rural communities, promote development in poor countries, enhance ecological and cultural sensitivity, instill environmental awareness and a social consciousness in the travel industry, and satisfy and educate the discriminating tourist (Farnell, 2002).

Adopting strategic planning to tourism development is necessary, because most of the times after observation of tourism development and emersion of undesired social and environmental effects, it takes a long time to alleviate the effects or control the process of development. There are several examples of tourism destinations affected by negative and undesired effects of tourism development. Negative effects are usually because of the lack or inappropriateness of tourism development plans. So preparing tourism planning is necessary to compensate negative effects of tourism in destinations (Simpson, 2001).

Strategic planning refers to the process of creating long-term conformity between managerial targets and changing market opportunities. All practices and operations related to tourism must be done on the basis of strategic plan. Strategic planning of tourism industry makes the governments able to recognize strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and apply these findings for improving and enhancing the benefits of tourism industry. Strategic planning based on the business or environment of tourism, has an important role in developing tourism industry, which is one of the most important catalyzers of economic development of countries and results in the long-term conformity between business goals and opportunities and sustainable market opportunities. So governments can gain competitive advantage by preparing strategies which are applicable in market.

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Urban tourism emerges as a result of intensive development of tourism infrastructure and product that allows a process of urbanization in the place originally known as a peripheral area. This form of tourism development comes with specific plans from government at all levels, and an economy that is fully generated by tourism activities (Azizi, 2011).

Jansen-Verbeke (1988) defines the city tourism product as historic buildings, urban landscapes, museums and art galleries, theatres, sport, and events. The author classifies the elements of city tourism into primary, secondary, and additional elements. The primary elements are the core characteristics, attractions, activities, and facilities of the city that would exist whether or not tourists visited (Jansen-Verbeke, 1988).

In relation to urban tourism Ashworth (1992) emphasized two interrelated sets of factors: the setting and the activities that occur there (Ashworth, 1992 a). Blank (1994), Pearce (1995) and others stressed that urban areas are distinctive and complex places. Four commonly accepted qualities of cities are: high physical densities of structures, people, and functions; social and cultural heterogeneity; an economic multifunctionalism; and a physical centrality within regional and interurban networks.

Butler (2003) states that urban tourism encompasses a variety of elements including:
- Sports and entertainment (arenas)
- Conferences (convention facilities)
- Green tourism (open spaces,nature)
- Heritage (museums, buildings)
- Culture (theatres, galleries)
- Shopping (malls, markets, shops

European Commission (2000) defines urban tourism as consisting of specialactivities including:
- Leisure tourism linked to the particular features of urban areas;
- Business tourism linked to the economic, social and cultural vitality of towns and cities;
- Conference tourismlinked to the facilities available in and the image of towns and cities.

Xiao (2007) in a thesis titles as Urban Tourism: Global-LocalRelationshipinDalian, China concluded that if tourism development receives due consideration in the early stages of development in a city, it can be used as a part of and to complement other components in the overall development strategy for the city. Planning for tourism occurs in a number of forms (development, infrastructure, promotion and marketing) and structures (different government organizations) and at a variety of scales (international, national, regional, local and sectoral). The tourism industry in China has believed that without governmental involvement in tourism planning, development of the industry will lack cohesion and direction and short-term initiatives might well jeopardize long-term potential. To better catch up with global trends, many cities in China are trying to involve more stakeholders in, and in decisions about, their urban development.

Avgoustis (2006) in a thesis titled as a Practical Approach to City Tourism Sustainability mentions that Successful implementation of city tourism sustainable development model could provide an array of extra benefits to city destinations, such as: Greater understanding of the dynamics of a city tourism market and city tourists, The ability to test new ideas before the implementation phase,The ability to target niche city tourism markets, Cost effective alternative to mass tourism media advertising, Development of new distribution channels, and The ability to plan for year-round city tourism, thereby eliminating seasonality

Iran has a large resource base of cultural, natural and historical sites and so has high potential for attracting any type of tourists (IRCICA. 1999). Iran includes lots of attractions with natural or historical importance, so unsuitable and incorrect policies and strategies can result in deterioration of the attractions and places and even declining of tourism which has potential to create job opportunities for 2/5 million persons and 3% of GDP. Although planning for tourism development in Iran has started from 1858, but because of prioritization of other plans and existence of oil and other resources this industry has been neglected and the need for formulating strategies has been never felt (Iran Tourism Development Corporation, 2006).

In today's complicated world, defining the geographical area and the forms of tourists for whom the tourism policy will be prepared is of considerable importance. There are different types of tourism destinations in Iran and each different form of tourists needs different policies and strategies. That's why adaption of the presented policies according to the nature of the destination is a crucial matter.
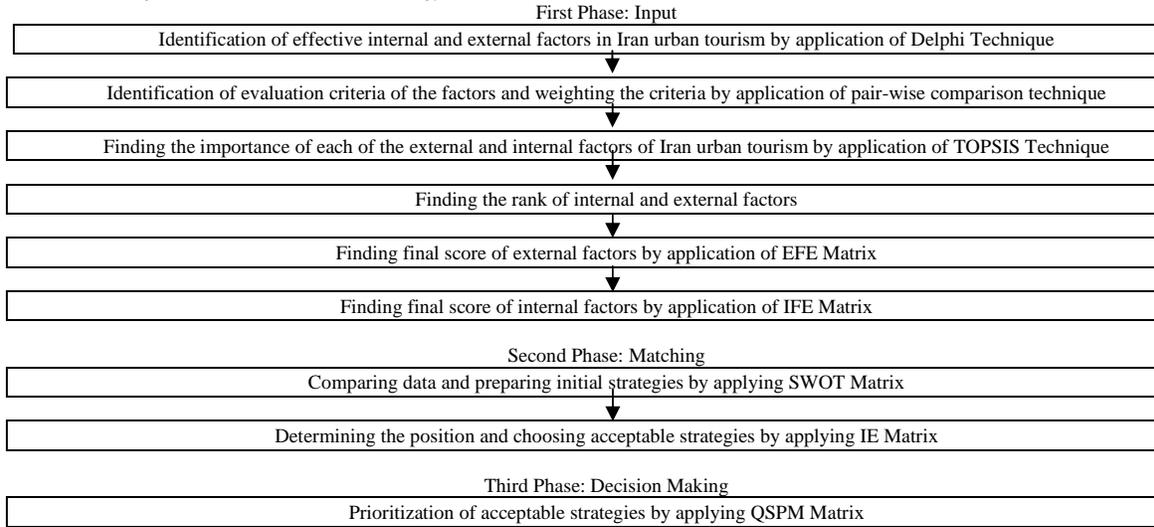
MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is of descriptive research type. It is considered as applied type in terms of objective. The present study is of survey research type in terms of collection of information and data has been made through studying books and documents. For obtaining necessary information at this study, required data have been collected through library-based studies, questionnaire and obtaining data from resources and documents (for provision of study theoretical fundamentals).

Research Model:

Basic methods of preparing urban tourism strategies can be included in a three phase framework including input, adaptation and decision making (Table 1). The first phase of preparing strategies includes recognizing effective internal and external factors on urban tourism by applying pair-wise technique.

Before applying EFE and IFE matrix to find the final score of Iran urban tourism industry, we calculate the degree of importance of each factor by applying TOPSIS technique and the degree of reaction (rank) of urban tourism to the factors by administration of questionnaire. In the first phase (input), basic information for preparation of strategies is determined. In the second (matching) stage, different forms of possible strategies are considered and for doing this balance is made among external and internal factors. Techniques applied in the second phase include strengths- weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) matrix and internal and external matrix (IE).

Table 1: Strategic Framework to Formulate Strategy.

First Phase: Input
Identification of effective internal and external factors in Iran urban tourism by application of Delphi Technique
Identification of evaluation criteria of the factors and weighting the criteria by application of pair-wise comparison technique
Finding the importance of each of the external and internal factors of Iran urban tourism by application of TOPSIS Technique
Finding the rank of internal and external factors
Finding final score of external factors by application of EFE Matrix
Finding final score of internal factors by application of IFE Matrix

Second Phase: Matching
Comparing data and preparing initial strategies by applying SWOT Matrix
Determining the position and choosing acceptable strategies by applying IE Matrix

Third Phase: Decision Making
Prioritization of acceptable strategies by applying QSPM Matrix

Subject, Sample and Sampling Method:

All technical managers of tourism companies are subject of the preset study. In this study sample volume is calculated by application of Morgan table and equals 1000 persons according to reports presented in Euromonitor(2009) report about real number of active traveling agencies. The number of sample of this study amounts to 278 persons. The reason for choosing them is that they have enough experience in related matters and are well acquainted with different forms of tourism and internal environment (strengths and weaknesses) and external environment(opportunities and threats) of tourism industry of Iran. Random classified sampling method was used and one technical manager is selected from each company.

Validity and Reliability, Measuring Tools:

At the present study, library based study was applied for preparation of theoretical basis and recording of previous studies and questionnaire is used for determining the affective factors and degree of reaction of tourism industry to these factors.

Provided initial questionnaire was given to university professors and experts in charge, with the aim of presenting their views on validity of questionnaire and whether questions posed at the questionnaire are appropriate or not.

Then, viewpoints of lecturers and officials in charge were considered at questionnaire and consequently, necessary changes were made at questions.

Cronbach's Alpha Test (Bland *et al.*, 1997) was used for testing reliability of questionnaire of study. For this reason, 76 study questionnaires were distributed among subject (individuals set for this study). Then each answer was studied individually and response rate of each question was calculated. First, the rate of acquired responses was over 90% of the sample. Second, there was no question to which most of the 16 person group didn't answer or gave an unexpected response. In the same direction, Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test was made through the application of SPSS software package. Generally, test reliability rate was obtained 784% at large.

Method of Analysis:
Delphi:

Delphi method starts with identification of the problem and selected experts (Delphi panel) based on their experiment related to the defined problem. A questionnaire is designed and distributed to the Delphi panel. Then data is collected and analyzed to reach consensus in responses. If the respondents have reached consensus a report is developed based on responses, if not, a new questionnaire is developed based on the results of the previous round and again distributed to the panel. This process is repeated until consensus is reached and based on which a final report is developed (Pill, 1971).

Weighting the Criteria

The basic procedure to carry out the pair-wise comparison consists of Prioritization of criteria by pair-wise comparison (weighing). Rating the relative priority of the criteria is done by assigning a weight between 1 (equal importance) and 9 (extreme importance) to the more important criterion, whereas the value reciprocal to that is assigned to the other criterion in the pair. The weightings are then assigned a number and averaged in order to obtain an average weight for each criterion (Saaty, 1990).

Topsis:

For ranking and selecting the most appropriate suppliers TOPSIS method is more appropriate due to the following reasons: In this technique, due to permission of desirability exchange between the attributes, it is possible to improve a supplier performance through its comparative advantage in some areas, despite its poor performance in other cases. In TOPSIS decision making technique, interaction effect of attributes is considered.

This technique also considers Conflict and compatibility between attributes (Triantaphyllou, 2000; Ho *et al*., 2010., Shih *et al*., 2007., Iranzadeh *et al*., 2010). TOPSIS decision making technique is less sensitive compared to weighting technique. Considering the subjects covered in this study, compensating models and its constructive subgroup, TOPSIS technique, is used for evaluating and ranking the suppliers (ManikraoAthawale *et al*., 2010).

EFE and IFE Matrixes:

External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Matrix summarizes economic, social, cultural, demographic, environmental, political, governmental, legal, technological, and competitive information (David, 2006, 2007, 2009). Internal Factor Evaluation Matrix (IFE) summarizes the major strengths and weaknesses in the functional areas of a business. Ratings and Weighted Scores are two important variables in IFE and EFE matrixes. Industries rate each internal and external factor 1-to-4 in EFE and IFE Tables to indicate how effectively the industry's current strategies respond to the factor. Industries assign a weight from 0.0 to 1.0 to each internal and external factor in EFE and IFE Tables. Weights indicate the relative importance of that factor to being successful in the industry.

Swot:

Surveying internal and external environment is an important part of the strategic planning. Internal factors can be classified as strengths (S) or weaknesses (W), and external factors can be classified as opportunities (O) or threats (T). Such analysis of the strategic environment is referred to as SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis provides information that is helpful in matching the firm's resources and capabilities to the competitive environment. It is instrumental in strategy formulation and selection.

Strength:

An internal competence, valuable resource or attribute that an organization can use to exploit opportunities in the external environment.

Weakness:

An internal lack of a competence, resource or attribute that an organization requires to perform in the external environment

Opportunity:

An external possibility that an organization can pursue or exploit to gain benefit

Threat:

An external factor that has the potential to reduce an organization's performance (Bradford *et al*., 2006).
- SO strategies: pursue opportunities that are a good fit to the company's strengths.
- WO strategies: overcome weaknesses to pursue opportunities.

- ST strategies: identify the ways that the firm can use its strengths to reduce its vulnerability to external threats.
- WT strategies: establish a defensive plan to prevent the firm's weaknesses from making it highly susceptible to external threats (Weihrich, 1982).

Internal-External (IE) Matrix:

Internal-External (IE) Matrix positions an industry's various divisions in a nine cell display through plotting them in a schematic diagram. The size of each circle represents the percentage sales contribution of each division, and pie slices reveal the percentage profit contribution of each division in IE Matrix (Triantaphyllou, 2000).

IE Matrix is based on two key dimensions: IFE total weighted scores on the x-axis and EFE total weighted scores on the y axis. On the x-axis of the IE Matrix, an IFE total weighted score of 1.0 to 1.99 represents a weak internal position; a score of 2.0 to 2.99 is considered average; and a score of 3.0 to 4.0 is strong. Similarly, on the y-axis, an EFE total weighted score of 1.0 to 1.99 is considered low; a score of 2.0 to 2.99 is medium; and a score of 3.0 to 4.0 is high.

The IE Matrix can be divided into three major regions that have different strategy implications. First region gives the prescription of *grow and build* for divisions that fall into cells I, II, or IV. Intensive (market penetration, market development, and product development) or integrative (backward integration, forward integration, and horizontal integration) strategies can be most appropriate for these divisions. Second region gives the prescription of *hold and maintain* for divisions that fall into cells III, V, or VII. Market penetration and product development are two commonly employed strategies for these forms of divisions. Third region gives the prescription of *harvest or divest* for divisions that fall into cells VI, VIII, or IX. Liquidation, retrenchment and divestiture are appropriate strategies for these divisions. Successful organizations are able to achieve a portfolio of businesses positioned in or around cell I in the IE Matrix (Jobber, 2004).

Reorganization of Internal and External Factors in Iran Urban Tourism:

In the first phase internal and external factors of Iran urban tourism were recognized by surveying literature review and research backgrounds. Then all the internal and external factors were analyzed carefully and most repeated and frequented factors in different researches were extracted. After administering 3 round of Delphi method, we acquired expert's attitudes and recognized strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats affecting Iran urban tourism industry. (Table 2).

Table 2: Opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses in Iran urban tourism.

Opportunities	Threats	Strengths	weaknesses
8	6	8	12

Reorganization and Weighting of Evaluative Criteria:

Referring to literature review and research background, some criteria which are affecting Iran urban tourism are recognized and then by administration of questionnaire, aspects and ideas of tourism and geography experts are acquired. Then weight of each criterion is calculated on the basis of pair-wise comparison (Table 3).

Table 3: Weights of criteria.

Criteria	Weight
Number of Tourists	0.354
Length of Stay	0.303
Second Visit	0.116
Encouraging the Others	0.227

Finding The Importance of Each Factor in Urban Tourism:

In this phase degree of importance of each factor in urban tourism is calculated on the basis of number of tourists, length of stay, second visit and encouraging others. Weights are given by technical managers of tourism companies in Iran. Degrees are assigned a number between 0 (not important) & 1(most important). Then by application of TOPSIS technique and considering the weight of each of the determined criteria degree of importance of each factor is calculated.

Finding Final Scores of External Factors (EFE):

In order to calculate the final score of external factors, we put the opportunities and threat factors for urban tourism in EFE matrix. Then degrees of importance of each of the factors which was previously calculated via TOPSIS technique were added and each of the degrees of importance was divided to total degree and the result is entered in the column of coefficients of EFE. This helps us to gain the total coefficient equal to one. In the next step we found the ranks of each external factor. The degree of importance (weight) of each factor was

multiplied in its rank to find the total score of each factor. After that, the scores of all factors in the matrix were added to find the total final score of external factors.

Table 4: Table of final score of external factors in urban tourism.

External Factors		Degree of importance	rank	Final score
opportunities	1. Ever developing demand for urban tourism in the world.	0.0717	2.37	0.1699
	2. Existence of a considerable number of potential tourists like Iranian settled in western countries, neighbor and Islamic countries which have historical, religious and cultural relations with Iran.	0.0763	3.24	0.2472
	3. Originality, distinction and authenticity of urban attractions of this country as a special destination for some of the urban tourists.	0.0464	2.13	0.0988
	4. Existence of demand by domestic urban tourists (domestic potential tourists) and increase of free time.	0.0932	3.66	0.3411
	5. Geographical position of this country (Closeness to tourist generating countries).	0.0671	2.41	0.1617
	6. Accessibility by ship, airplane, train and car.	0.0588	2.63	0.1564
	7. High level of technological development in the world, which can support tourism industry.	0.0956	3.51	0.3356
	8. Existence of the supplementary attractions, beside urban tourism attractions.	0.0920	2.47	0.2272
threats	1. Presentation of an unsuitable image of Iran in International societies (negative advertisement and political and economic prohibitions) to international tourists.	0.0955	1.66	0.1936
	2. Tensions, restlessness and insecurity in Middle East and especially in neighbor countries like Afghanistan and Iraq, which causes international tourists to be decreased.	0.0387	1.92	0.0906
	3. Increase and intensification of competing in international markets and existence of capable competitors with high capacity to attract urban tourists (e.g. turkey) and the threat imposed by potential rivals, like newly independent republics.	0.0962	1.29	0.1241
	4. World economic recession which causes the number of travels to be decreased.	0.0088	1.79	0.0158
	5. Most of tourist cities are earthquake-prone and are not being equipped against earthquake.	0.0909	1.43	0.1300
	6. Not choosing Iran by urban tourists from western and developed countries.	0.0690	1.35	0.0932
total		1		2.3834

Analysis of The Results of The Table of External Factors of Urban Tourism:

Surveying the results of the matrix of the external factors of Iran urban tourism shows that this industry is facing 8 opportunities and 6 threats among the opportunities factor number 7 (High level of technological development in the world) with degree of importance equal to 0.0956 and factor number 4 (Existence of demand by domestic urban tourists) with degree of importance equal to 0.0932 and then factor number 8 (Existence of the supplementary attractions, beside urban tourism attractions) with degree of importance equal to 0.0920 are the most important opportunities of Iran urban tourism.

The acquired ranks indicate relatively suitable reaction of Iran urban tourism industry to the factor number 4 ranked 3.66 and then factor number 7 ranked 3.51. In addition the rank of factor number 1(2.37) shows unsuitable utilization of this factor and indicated that Iran urban tourism industry has not gained a suitable position in global tourism.

I must state that the most important threat of Iran urban tourism is factor number 3 (Increase and intensification of competing in international markets) with degree of importance equal to 0.0962 and factor number 1 (Presentation of an unsuitable image of Iran in International societies) with degree of importance equal to 0.0955. Also factor number 5 (Most of tourist cities are earthquake-prone) with degree of importance equal to 0.0909 are important threats in this industry.

Study of the ranks shows that this industry has shown average reaction just to factor number 2 (Tensions, restlessness and insecurity in Middle East) and other ranks indicate general weakness of this industry in front of effective external factors.

At last it can be concluded that this industry (by gaining total final score equal to 2.3834) needs a serious attention to make use of the opportunities and overcome the external threats and does not enjoy a suitable situation at the moment.

Calculating Final Score of Internal Factors (IFE Matrix):

To calculate final score of internal factors, the factors which caused strength and weakness were put in internal factors matrix. Then the degree of importance of each factor which was previously calculated by

applying TOPSIS technique were added and then each of the degrees was divided to it and the result was entered in the column of coefficients of IFE matrix. This helps us to gain the total coefficient equal to one. In the next step the rank of each of the internal factors was calculated. Then the degree of importance (weight) of each factor was multiplied in its rank to find the total score of each factor. After that, the scores of all factors in the matrix were added to find the total final score of external factors.

Table 5: Table of final score of internal factors in urban tourism.

Internal Factors		Degree of importance	rank	Final score
Strengths	1. Location of the most of UNESCO WHS in the vicinity of tourist cities.	0.0657	2.78	0.1826
	2. Traditional environment and frequent old and historical contexts like shrines, temples, bazaars, cemeteries and mosques inside tourist cities.	0.0534	2.83	0.1511
	3. Lack of seasonality in urban tourism.	0.0636	2.75	0.1749
	4. High access to modern technologies such as internet, express post, mobile phones and guiding software in the areas which have potential to develop urban tourism.	0.0425	3.59	0.1526
	5. Possibility of holding fairs, exhibitions and important international conventions in tourist cities.	0.0531	2.67	0.1418
	6. Old history of Iranian gardens and architecture of urban spaces.	0.0323	2.33	0.0753
	7. Variety of Iranian cuisine and possibility of providing them in tourist cities.	0.0415	2.55	0.1058
	8. Public and specialized museums located in tourist .	0.0485	2.87	0.1392
Weaknesses	1. Lack of comprehensive plans and strategies to develop urban tourism and existence of public and legal restrictions; over incumbent of the government in the field of tourism.	0.0652	1.44	0.0939
	2. Unsuitable urban and suburban transportation systems.	0.0560	1.39	0.0778
	3. Unsuitable hospitality and accommodation centers to provide good services to urban tourists.	0.0641	1.44	0.0923
	4. Inexpert, weak and inefficient human resource and lack of suitable educational system, especially in the field of urban tourism.	0.0497	1.53	0.0760
	5. Weak promotion and marketing efforts to introduce urban attractions to tourists.	0.0413	1.45	0.0599
	6. Providing unsuitable health services in tourist cities.	0.0478	1.86	0.0889
	7. Unsuitable organizing and weakness of urban management.	0.0639	1.48	0.0946
	8. Uncleanness and lack of beauty in most of urban spaces and air pollution in tourist cities.	0.0636	1.22	0.0776
	9. Limited activity of travel agencies in the field of urban tourism.	0.0387	1.68	0.0650
	10. Weakness of social security, especially in some tourist cities.	0.0428	1.95	0.0835
	11. High rate of inflation and unsuitable domestic economy which makes the development of urban tourism difficult and increases the expense of traveling to Iran.	0.0235	1.96	0.0461
	12. Cultural and communicative barriers, among inhabitants of the cities which have tourist attractions and foreign tourists and also negative attitude of government authorities, policy makers and local communities to development of tourism.	0.0429	1.58	0.0678
total		1		2. 0467

Analysis of The Results of The Table of The Internal Factors of Urban Tourism Matrix:

Matrix of Iran urban tourism industry shows that this industry is facing 8 strengths and 12 weaknesses. Among the strengths, factor number 1 (location of the most of UNESCO WHS in the vicinity of tourist cities) with degree of importance equal to 0.0657 and factor number 3 (lack of seasonality in urban tourism) with degree of importance equal to 0.0636 are the most important factors.

By gaining a rank equal to 3.59 for factor number 4 (high access to modern technologies such as internet, express post, mobile phones and guiding software) has been able to show relatively suitable reaction to this factor, but in other cases this industry has not made a suitable use of the strengths.

Among many weaknesses of urban tourism industry factor number 3 (unsuitable hospitality and accommodation centers) with degree of importance equal to 0.0641 and factor number 7 (unsuitable organizing and weakness of urban management) with degree of importance equal to 0.0639 and then factor number 8 (uncleanness and lack of beauty in most of urban spaces and air pollution in tourist cities) with degree of importance equal to 0.0636 have relatively high importance compared to other factors.

All the acquired ranks for the weaknesses of Iran urban tourism shows that this industry has shown a suitable reaction just to factor number 11 (high rate of inflation and unsuitable domestic economy) ranked 1.96 and in other cases it has weak reaction.

In general gaining a final total score equal to (2.0467) indicates not taking advantage of internal strengths by Iran urban tourism industry and also lack of efficiency in decreasing negative effects of internal weaknesses.

Comparing Data and Preparing Initial Strategies by Applying SWOT Matrix:
In the matrix of preparing strategies, evaluation stage includes all instruments which are dependent on all acquired data from previous stages (evaluation of internal and external factors) and it compares external opportunities and threats with internal strengths and weaknesses. For this, internal and external factors in SWOT matrix are compared to prepare possible strategies.

In the next step recognized opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses of urban tourism industry of Iran were put in columns of the matrix. Then internal strengths and external opportunities, internal weaknesses and external threats are compared and the results are entered in the places related to SO (strengths-opportunities), WO (weaknesses-opportunities), ST (strengths-threats) and WT (weaknesses-threats) strategies.

SO Strategies:
1. Focus on the domestic urban tourism, strengthening and developing it.
2. Penetrating in Potential markets, such as Iranians settling in Western and Muslim countries, which have historical, religious and cultural relations with Iran, through development and marketing efforts.
3. Developing new geographical markets and especially attracting urban tourists from tourist generating markets, such as America and Europe.
4. Developing tourism products with emphasis on urban attractions by enhancing services and providing quality products.
5. Focusing on target markets, which rivals have a small share of it.

ST Strategies:
1. Diversifying cultural products (providing varied products in a package to urban tourists).
2. Providing distinguished and special products for urban tourists, so that these kinds of products cannot be provided in rival countries especially Turkey and countries of Central Asia.
3. Providing other tourism products such as leisure tourism, spa tourism, ecotourismand so on for urban tourists.
4. Renovating and developing tourism cities like Tabriz, Isfahan, Tabriz, Mashhad and etc.
5. Renovating and developing urban tourism corridors, such as Silk Road.

WO Strategies:
1. Reinforcing domestic urban tourism by preparing legislatures and supporting plans and improving the security of urban tourists.
2. Balanced or sustainable development of Iran urban tourism, through registration of cultural relics in UNESCO WHS list, reinforcing and conserving ethnic and cultural variety and richness, art and handicraft and restoration valuable monuments located in tourist cities.
3. Decreasing expenses and providing cheap tour packages for tourist generating regions.
4. Attracting urban tourists all year round and holding festivals and artistic and cultural ceremonies in the parts of the country.
5. Importing and adaptation of new global technologies to provide support for Iran urban tourism.
6. Participate in the management of urban tourism service units, such as accommodation centers, restaurants, special urban tourism tours and services related to transportation and transfer them to foreign companies or private sector.
7. Inclusion of other tourism products in urban tourism packages and establishing complementary attractions beside urban attractions.
8. Reforming the plans and preparing comprehensive strategies to develop urban tourism in Iran.
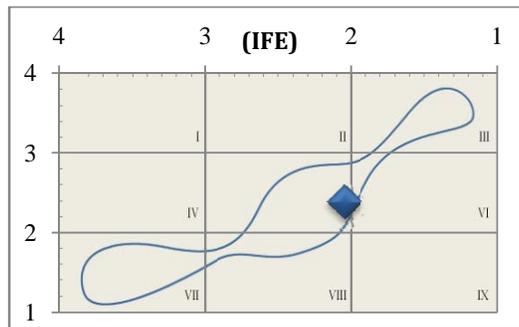
WT Strategies:
1. Improving the image of Iran in the world, through suitable diplomacy, advertisement, establishing tourism developing offices in Iran embassies located in different countries.
2. Invest to improve the quality of infrastructures, such as road transport systems, hospitality and accommodation centers, medical and health services, increasing access to new technologies, such as Internet, telephone, post, guiding software and so on in urban tourism regions.
3. Marketing and introducing cultural tourism attractions of Iran.
4. Reinforcing local societies, through education and management of urban tourism attractions and suitable interaction with tourists, so that besides providing maximum profit for local communities, it will result in the least negative effects on the environment, customs and urban culture.
5. Participating with neighbor countries such as Turkey and countries of Central Asia in order to arrange joint urban tourism packages.
6. Investing in urban tourism areas through devoting public funds, encouraging the local community to participate; and demanding loans from international financial institutions.

7. Encouraging volunteer associations, domestic and foreign related organizations, local communities and so on to recognize, protect, conserve, reinforce, develop and exploit urban attractions.

9. Participating with leading countries in the field of urban tourism to perform grand projects through arranging midterm and long-term treaties and attract foreign investors to provide financial support for these projects.

Determining The Position and Selecting Acceptable Strategies by Applying IE Matrix:

After preparing initial strategies by comparing internal and external factors in the matrix of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) acceptable strategies were selected among them. The process of selecting acceptable strategies of Iran urban tourism industry is as follows:

Preparing internal and external matrix (IE) includes two main dimensions. Final scores of matrix of evaluation of internal factors are shown on X axis and sum of final scores of matrix of evaluation of external factors of Iran urban tourism industry is shown on Y axis. The incidence point of sum of scores of internal and external factors of Iran urban tourism on X and Y determines the status of Iran urban tourism industry in internal and external matrix.

Fig. 1: Internal and External Matrix of Iran urban tourism (IE).

Choosing Acceptable Strategies:

Acceptable strategies of Iran urban tourism industry with attention to its place in cell 5 of internal and external matrix (IE) are known as hold and maintain (conservation) strategies. Surveys show that Iran urban tourism industry faces lots of internal weaknesses and has not shown a suitable reaction in eliminating or removing the negative effects of them, so at present hold and maintain and also defensive (WT) strategies are suggested.

Discussion and Conclusion:

Surveying the results obtained by different models in this article and literature review shows that Iran urban tourism industry has a very small share in global tourism industry. Little distance and access from tourist generating countries, existence of varied tourism attraction and also existence of a considerable number of potential tourists are important opportunities for this industry. Lack of seasonality in urban tourism, suitable access to new technologies in tourist cities, traditional and historical environment besides old bazaars which attracts the visitors are other potentials and strengths of the industry.

At last we can conclude that existence of some problems and organizational barriers like lack of comprehensive strategy and coherent planning, inefficient urban transportation system, weak accommodation and hospitality centers, weak urban management, employing inexpert human resource in administration of cities and providing services to tourists, communicative barriers between urban tourists and local communities in big cities and more important lack of serious attention to urban beautification and cleanness of public spaces, heavy traffic and air pollution has put the Iran urban tourism industry in an unsuitable position. Also existence of competent competitors like Turkey and countries located in Central Asia and earthquake-prone big cities can be important potential threat for this industry.

What is evident is that decreasing the size of the government in management of the city and its attractions and preparing a comprehensive and operational plan for balanced or sustainable development of tourist cities are the initial steps for improving the status of urban tourism industry in Iran.

Investment in infrastructures and improving the quality of the provided products, revitalization and development of tourist cities and attracting tourists in all times of the year by holding festivals and artistic and cultural ceremonies and public instructions to teach the way of contact with urban tourists, providing varied products on the basis of tourist's wishes and tastes and finally Reforming the plans and preparing comprehensive strategies are effective strategies to develop urban tourism in Iran.

Table 6: Final strategies for Iranurbantourism.

No	Final Strategies in urban tourism	Total attractiveness Score
1	Balanced or sustainable development of Iran urban tourism, through registration of cultural relics in UNESCO WHS list, reinforcing and conserving ethnic and cultural variety and richness, art and handicraft and restoration valuable monuments located in tourist cities	3.55
2	Attracting urban tourists all year round and holding festivals and artistic and cultural ceremonies in the parts of the country.	3.43
3	Renovating and developing tourism cities like Tabriz, Isfahan, Tabriz, Mashhad and etc.	3.26
4	Invest to improve the quality of infrastructures, such as road transport systems, hospitality and accommodation centers, medical and health services, increasing access to new technologies, such as Internet, telephone, post, guiding software and so on in urban tourism regions.	3.12
5	Reinforcing local societies, through education and management of urban tourism attractions and suitable interaction with tourists, so that besides providing maximum profit for local communities, it will result in the least negative effects on the environment, customs and urban culture.	2.89
6	Inclusion of other tourism products in urban tourism packages and establishing complementary attractions beside urban attractions.	2.75
7	Reforming the plans and preparing comprehensive strategies to develop urban tourism in Iran.	2.73

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