

Analyzing and investigating the factors affecting how to attract more tourists to the city of Khorasan Razavi Province using a multi-criteria decision-making approach

Siddiqa Khurshid¹ , Mahdi Jahani^{2*} , Mohammad Barzgar³ 

1. Associate Professor of Systems Management, Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, University of Qom

2. Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Management, Shahrood University of Technology, Shahrood, Iran.

3. Department of Industrial Engineering and Management, Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Management, Shahrood University of Technology, Shahrood, Iran.

Received Date: 24 August 2025 Accepted Date: 29 December 2025

Abstract

Background and Objective: The tourism industry, as one of the largest and most important industries in the world and as a key component in the economic and social development of various regions, requires careful attention to the factors affecting it. This research has contributed to an in-depth understanding of the factors that influence tourists' decision-making to choose a destination and can be used as a roadmap for the sustainable development of the tourism industry in countries, especially developing regions. Finally, the findings provide suggestions for improving tourist attraction and developing tourism products.

Methodology: The present study evaluates and ranks the most important factors affecting tourist attraction in four cities of Khorasan Razavi Province. Given the importance of tourism in economic development and job creation, identifying and analyzing the factors affecting tourist attraction is a basic necessity. The aim of this research is to evaluate and rank the factors of tourism attraction in the cities of Neyshabur, Quchan, Sabzevar and Chenaran.

Findings and Results: In this research, the method of collecting information and data is carried out in two ways, in the first method, the information necessary for implementing the research is collected and evaluated through a questionnaire, and the second method includes library studies. Then, the main criteria are weighted using the fuzzy Soara method and the final ranking is done with the Koprass method. In this research, the cities of Neyshabur, Quchan, Chenaran and Sabzevar were examined and ranked based on natural, religious, historical, cultural, facilities and services factors. The results of the research show that the presented hybrid model has high accuracy and also Neyshabur city has the six criteria mentioned in the first rank in terms of examination. Finally, based on the research results, suggestions have been made to improve the tourism situation.

Keywords: Ranking – Khorasan Razavi Province – Tourism Attraction Factors – Multi-Criteria Decision Making Techniques.

* Corresponding Author Email: jhanymhdy70@gmail.com

Cite this article: Khurshid, S, Jahani, M and Barzgar, M. (2026). Analyzing and investigating the factors affecting how to attract more tourists to the city of Khorasan Razavi Province using a multi-criteria decision-making approach. *Journal of Sustainable Urban & Regional Development Studies (JSURDS)*, 7(3), 387-406.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

Tourism, as a historical phenomenon, has long attracted the attention of human societies and has always been evolving and developing in response to diverse social and economic needs. In recent years, with the increase in living standards and changing tastes of people, tourism has become one of the most important and productive recreational activities. These professional and social changes have made tourism an essential component of people's lifestyle. Globally, various countries have realized the importance of this industry and have considered it as an effective tool for creating job opportunities, especially for young people. Unemployment is one of the major economic challenges that many countries are struggling with. In this context, tourism has been proposed as an effective solution to reduce unemployment rates and create employment in different regions. By developing tourism infrastructure, countries can use their human resources in this industry and contribute to their economic growth by attracting domestic and foreign tourists. In addition, tourism plays a very important economic role. In some small and developing countries, income from the tourism industry is considered one of the largest sources of export income. In these countries, tourism can account for more than a quarter of the GDP and contribute to the stability and economic growth of the country. This dependence on tourism leads countries to create a sustainable tourism infrastructure and attract foreign investments. Ultimately, the close relationship between tourism and the social and economic conditions of a country indicates that by investing in this industry, positive and sustainable results in economic and social development can be achieved. Iran country has a huge potential to become one of the main tourism hubs in the region and the world due to its unique diversity of natural attractions (from the shores of the Caspian Sea to the central deserts, and from towering mountains to dense forests), rich cultural heritage spanning thousands of years (including historical monuments, ancient sites, and ancient customs), and unique religious attractions (especially sacred sites). By reviewing the existing literature, it can be concluded that numerous studies have been conducted in the field of tourism evaluation, attraction, and retention. However, no study has been conducted using the fuzzy set method and the Koprass technique in the tourism industry so far. The fuzzy set method is known as a collective decision-making method (especially in fundamental and critical decisions), while the Koprass technique is a method for ranking criteria that requires fewer operations and provides more accuracy than other methods. Therefore, in this study, the two fuzzy set and Koprass techniques have been used to evaluate and rank effective criteria in attracting tourists.

Methodology

This In this study, the research method is applied. In the theoretical part, library studies and questionnaires were used to collect relevant information and examine existing definitions and concepts. This questionnaire was first prepared and distributed through interviews with experts and experts in the field of tourism, and the results of past studies and research in this field were also used. The research process was carried out as follows: First, the main criteria are weighted through the fuzzy Soara method, then the final ranking is done using the Koprass method. Finally, based on the results obtained, practical suggestions will be presented to improve the tourism situation of the province. Multi-criteria decision-making techniques can be used in different

functions depending on the type of data used. Multi-criteria decision-making techniques are also methods used to extract uncertainties in the evaluation process. To enhance the accuracy of results and reduce ambiguity within the questionnaire text, fuzzy numbers have been employed, and the SWARA method has been adapted to a fuzzy environment. It is worth noting that the use of fuzzy logic and fuzzy numbers is a common practice in multi-criteria decision-making methods, serving to eliminate ambiguities in respondents' statements and improve the precision of criteria.

Results and Findings

For this purpose, using the opinions of experts and experts in the field of tourism in the province is an effective tool in identifying factors affecting the attraction and retention of tourists. This study has identified six main criteria that specifically affect the attraction of tourists. These criteria include natural, religious, historical, cultural, social factors, and facilities and services. Since each of these factors directly and indirectly affects the attraction of tourists, their in-depth and comprehensive study can greatly contribute to the sustainable development of the tourism industry in the province. Proper management and quality improvement of these attractions, as well as effective advertising and providing up-to-date information about them, can help improve the experience of tourists and increase their willingness to visit again. Given the importance of human connections in attracting tourists, developing and promoting a culture of hospitality among the residents of the region is of particular importance. Finally, tourism-related facilities and services, including transportation infrastructure, hotels, restaurants, and entertainment centers, should be seriously considered as other effective factors. Providing these facilities will add to the attractiveness of the region and create a more desirable experience for tourists. Overall, the present study shows that optimal exploitation of the tourism potential of Khorasan Razavi Province requires attention to a set of different factors. This requires coordination and cooperation between government and private institutions, careful planning, and allocation of necessary resources for infrastructure development and improvement of service quality. Considering the existing attractions and potential of the province, implementing effective policies and programs can lead to the growth and prosperity of the tourism industry and ultimately sustainable economic development in this region.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that the expectations and perceptions of respondents regarding these factors are at a similar level. In particular, Neyshabur, as the most important holder of attractions and facilities, has taken first place in this ranking. This indicates that tourists have a correct understanding of the tourism capacities of Neyshabur. After Neyshabur, Sabzevar is in second place, which is also consistent with the initial expectations of the respondents. This result shows that residents and tourists have equally identified the unique capacities of Sabzevar and have understood its importance in attracting tourists. Subsequently, Quchan and Chenaran counties were ranked lower, which is consistent with the general perception of the respondents. . Finally, the results of this study show that paying attention to the factors affecting tourist attraction and accurately identifying their perceptions and expectations of the attractions of each county can help design optimal strategies for sustainable tourism development. This process can

act as a catalyst for achieving sustainable economic growth and play a significant role in creating jobs and improving the quality of life in these regions.

Declarations

Funding

There is no funding support for this study.

Authors' Contribution

Authors contributed equally to the conceptualization and writing of the article. All of the authors approved the content of the manuscript and agreed on all aspects of the work declaration of competing interest none.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to all the scientific consultants of this paper.

References

- Abedini, M, Ranjbar, S, and Bahrami, S. (2025). 11. Investigation and prioritization of tourist attractions using the TOPSIS-F model. Case study: Bostan Abad County, East Azerbaijan Province. Quarterly Journal of Sustainable Urban and Regional Development Studies, 6(3), 139-153. rnal Hompage <https://www.srds.ir/> https://doi.org/_216865.html?lang=fa. [In Persian].
- Alexander Preko Corresponding Author; Theophilus Francis Gyepi-Garbrah,. (2023). Understanding sense of safety and trustworthiness of tourism information among migrant visitors . International Hospitality Review (2023) 37 (1): 143–160 . <https://doi.org/10.1108/IHR-04-2021-0029>.
- Amir Zaib Abbasi,. Khalil Hussain, Tooba Kaleem, S. Mostafa Rasoolimanesh, Tareq Rasul&Ding Hooi Ting,. (2023). Tourism promotion through vlog advertising and customer engagement behaviours of generation Z . <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2022.2144156>.
- Bahadur, Hamid Reza, and Malekizadeh, Vahid, and Mansouri, Hossein, (2024). Presenting a tourist travel pattern in the economic crisis of the tourism industry, case study: Hormozgan province. <https://doi.org/10.30473/grup.2024.69562.2807>. [In Persian].
- Barati, Maeda, and Hekmat, Marzieh, Torabi Farsani, Neda, (2014). Developing strategies to attract tourists in the Museum of Decorative Arts of Iran, Isfahan. [Doi.org/10.22108/ue.2025.141408.1304](https://doi.org/10.22108/ue.2025.141408.1304). [In Persian].
- Behnam Morshedi, Hassan and Ahmadi, Dariush and Faraji Sabokbar, Hassanali and Rezvani, Mohammad Reza, 2016, Spatial zoning of tourism centers to determine optimal areas for tourism services in Fars Province, <https://doi.org/civilica.com/doc/1910158>. [In Persian].
- D,p,.co.k .,DJ O,t.,(2022) Survivalist Nor Korea's Selective Tourism Development: Kim Jong Un's Leadership Legitimacy. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132112205>.

- Damiasih, D. (2025). Innovative Marketing Strategies for Sustainable Tourism Development: A Literature Review. *Golden Ratio of Marketing and Applied Psychology of Business*, 5(1), 246–257. <https://doi.org/10.52970/grmapb.v5i1.875>
- Girard, P. (2024). Effect of Experiential Marketing on Customer Engagement and Loyalty in the Tourism Sector in France . *International Journal of Strategic Marketing Practice*, 6(1), 35 – 46. <https://doi.org/10.47604/ijssmp.2456>.
- Highlights (2012). unwto (World Tourism Organization 1. Data as collected by UNWTO. August 2012 Madrid, Spain. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2012.667217>.
- Jalalian, Seyed Eshaq, and Beiki, Parisa (2020). Analysis of the factors affecting the development of cultural tourism in the Shiraz metropolis. *Journal of Urban Tourism*, , 34(3), . [https://doi.org/2023.351748.1088.53-3JUT10.22059\[In Persian\].](https://doi.org/2023.351748.1088.53-3JUT10.22059[In Persian].).
- Keshavarz, Mahnaz (2019). Identifying the factors affecting the development of sustainable urban tourism using the interpretive structural modeling method (ISM), case study: Khorramabad city. *Urban Tourism*, 1(1), .121-18. <https://doi.org/10.22059/jut.2019.246390.414>. [In Persian].
- Kizito. U, Ehigiamusoe., The nexus between tourism, financial development, and economic growth: Evidence from African countries.(2021). <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8268.12579>.
- Lu, H-Ch., Fang, Sh. H., & Tseng, V. S. (2016). Integrating tourist packages and tourist attractions for personalized trip planning based on travel constraints. *GeoInformatica*,95(7),478429..<https://doi.orgwww.researchgate.net/publication/304815753>.
- Marvati-Shariabadi, Ali, and Asadian-Ardakani, Faezeh (2013). Presenting a health tourism development model for a combined approach of fuzzy TOPSIS and interpretive structural modeling in Yazd province. *Health Management*, 2013(22), 1-22. <http://doi.org/jha.iuums.ac.ir/article-1-1458-fa.html>.
- Mozaffari, Zahra, and Ghasemi, Maryam, and Bozar Jamhari, and Kharazmi, Omid Ali, (2025). Feasibility assessment of tourism attractions in rural areas of Neyshabur city. <https://doi.org/10.30473/psp.2023.61089.2527>. [In Persian].
- S,j, S,and V, K, Davud. (2025). 13. Investigation of factors affecting the role of historical monuments in urban tourism with a futures research approach. *Quarterly Journal of Sustainable Urban and Regional Development Studies*, 6(1), 21-235. https://www.srds.ir/https://doi.org/_212164.html?lang=fa. [In Persian].
- Salahi Kojur, Azim, Varadzavi, Seyed Mohammad Hossein, and Amirnejad, Saeed, and Mohammadi, Nasrollah, and Vataghi Pourian, Mohammad Javad, (2019).Analysis of the factors affecting smart tourism in the sports industry based on the meta-synthesis technique. *Journal of Tourism Development Planning*. <https://doi.org/10.22080/jtpd.2020.17753.3180>. [In Persian].
- Sargazi, Saeed, and Hassanvand, Dariush, and Asayesh, Hamid, (2025). Developing a strategic plan for the development of the rural tourism industry in the economic conditions of Iran. <https://doi.org/20.1001.1.25381490.1401.6.3.3.4>. [In Persian].
- Shamai, Ali and Fasihi, Habibollah and Delfan Nasab, Mahsa, 2013, Identifying the driving factors in the recreation and development of tourism in Tajrish neighborhood, <https://doi.org/civilica.com/doc/1459808>. [In Persian].
- Turner, L. 2016. Influence of terrorism risk on foreign tourismdecisions. *Annals of Tourism Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2016.1141225>.

- Urs, Wagenseil, Melanie, Wyss, Lukas, Huck, (2022). The Case of Sustainable Tourism Development in Alpine Destinations: Importance, Implementation, and the Role of the Local DMO. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2022.2107561>.
- Vazin, Narges and Yazdanpanah, Hojjatollah and Saeedi, Malihe, 2013, Analysis of factors affecting the success of eco-lodge business (Case study: southeastern counties of Isfahan province), <https://civilica.com/doc/1784827>. [In Persian].
- WTO. 2015. Year book of tourism statistics. Madrid. World Tourism Organization. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econmod.2022.105892>.
- Y. Shirmohammadi, M. Ashrafi Soltan Ahmadi, (2025). Modeling and Analysis of Strategic Entrepreneurship Factors With a Cultural Approach in the Rural Tourism Industry (Case Study: West Azerbaijan Tourist Villages) <https://doi.org/10.22133/ijtcs.2025.458966.1170>
- Zhizhang Zhao, (2016). Tourism Development and Marketing Strategies in Emerging Markets, DOI: [10.23977/tmte.2023.060704](https://doi.org/10.23977/tmte.2023.060704) ISSN 2616-2199 Vol. 6 Num. 7.