

Research Paper

Evaluation and Prioritize of Marketing Mix Components Influence the Development of Rural Tourism (Case Study: Villages of Foman County)

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ABSTRACT

Today, tourism is an important source of income particularly for rural areas and local communities. Because of the immense benefits of tourism for rural development, special measures must be taken to attract tourists. In this regard, the marketing mix including 7 factors of planning and management, evidence and physical facilities, advertising, public and staff, price and the product were evaluated in the villages of Foman County. With regard to the tourism capacities of villages in the area such as its several tourism attractions and proximity to densely populated urban centers, there is a great opportunity for tourism development. This is a cross-sectional descriptive study with survey research methods. To collect data, we used a 46-item self-designed questionnaire based on the comments of 40 experts of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Guilan Province. The obtained data were analyzed using SPSS through performing binomial, correlation, and Friedman tests. The results indicate that the most unfavorable situation indicators are advertising and then public and staff while their high concern in the study area is rural tourism marketing.

Key words:

Rural tourism, Marketing mix, Foman County villages

Extended Abstract**1. Introduction**

Tourism is known as one of the important sources of foreign exchange earnings for both the developed and developing countries. In this regard, a large part of the current projects and investments are allocated to this sector in the world. With the growth and development of this industry, the issues of trade and competition will appear, too.

The tourism marketing is also of great importance to tourism development. Today, tourism is particularly im-

portant in rural areas and communities as a source of income and welfare. Now tourism has a well-recognized status in the economy and plays an active and effective role in the promotion of economic, social and cultural sectors, especially in developing countries. With regard to the huge benefits of tourism for rural development, special measures must be taken to attract tourists. Considering that the criteria to attract tourists has many dimensions, determining the priorities for planning is a must. The main purpose of marketing in tourism is to attract more tourists to see the country, region or specific areas. In this regard, the concept of the marketing mix is one of the key concepts in marketing theory.

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Rural tourism in Foman County despite its highly valued tourist attractions, has not been successful. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the necessary criteria to attract tourism, assess and prioritize rural areas in terms of these criteria and finally recommend a scientific approach to plan for increasing tourist attractions in the villages. Foman County in Guilan Province has many natural and historical tourist attractions. However, improper planning have damaged the plausibility of these attractions. Therefore, it is possible to turn these areas into tourists attraction areas.

2. Methodology

This study method is descriptive-analytic. The relevant data were obtained by two methods: library and field research. In the first method, the study data were gathered from the library research and literature. Field survey data were collected using a questionnaire containing 46 questions. The statistical population were all employees of Guilan Tourism Department, Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism. Of them, 40 people were selected by random sampling. The obtained data were analyzed by SPSS performing binomial, correlation and Friedman tests.

3. Results

According to binomial test, measures and ideas of reducing the cost of travel and accommodation for tourists from departure to destination, control and fixing the rate of goods and services related to tourism in the province, flexible pricing policy, such as the provision of services and lower prices in the off-season tourism, expansion of facilities such as directional/information signs, production of cultural and artistic works by tourism authority and promoting them, construction of welcome tourist offices to create memorable moments for tourists, integrating applications in sceneries, monuments and places, repair of damaged tourist sites, participation of local people in tourism activities with emphasis on tourism training mechanism, opening anthropology and written documents museums, erecting suitable artificial tourist attractions with regional conditions and interests of tourists, continuous monitoring and evaluation of employees to improve the quality of services to tourists, are heterogeneous and differ in terms of their suitability. Then, Friedman test was used to prioritize rural tourism marketing mix components.

The results showed a significant difference between the components in terms of their influences on the development of rural tourism. Correlation test results of the rural tourism marketing show that all these components are

highly and directly correlated with each other and changes in any of them, will change other components as well.

4. Discussion

One of the main factors in the development of tourism, besides having tourist attractions, is to plan to allure tourists and better introduce the facilities to the global tourism markets. Based on the results, the items related to advertising component have an inappropriate status in the study area. Advertising in the tourism industry is economical and cheap; it is also a fundamental investment to promote organizational and national goals and if properly implemented, it can bring valuable gains in various aspects of the tourism industry. In this regard, the goal of advertising is to increase marketing, and any inactivity and inappropriate utilization of this tool leads not only to failure, but also the backwardness of the tourism marketing competition.

5. Conclusion

Due to their potential of rural areas, results show that tourism development such as employment and income, diversify the economy, social participation and utilization of local resources to benefit. Including his two test results have shown that in most indicators is adverse. Given the high correlation with each other as well as the suitability of the status of each of their components improve other components as well. So should pay more attention to some of the more important components such as advertising and educating the public and employees is conducted.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.