

## **Assessing the Quality of Tourists' Experiences and Socioeconomic and Perceptual Acceptance Capacity in Mashhad City from the Viewpoint of Host Society with an Emphasis on Multi-Criteria Decision Making Methods (MCDM), Case Study: Mashhad metropolis**

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**K E Y W O R D S:** Tourism, touristic destinations, touristic attractions, assessment of quality of experiences of tourists, Mashhad metropolis.

**Abstract:** In the present age, tourism is one of the greatest and most various activities and one of the main sources of national economy in developed countries and a few developing countries. Constant tourism development is of great importance for tourism planning because such development has a great effect on fortifying economic foundations of societies. Great emphasis has been attached to the role of tourism as a fresh source for job creation, earning money, collecting more taxes, attracting exchange and fortifying social substructures, which cause growth and development of other industries in various transactions. Moreover, tourism development is associated with activities and attractions in a natural environment, cultural heritage and cultural pattern accordingly. If sources are faded and perished, tourism areas shall not be able to attract tourists anymore and tourism in the region will decay. The goal of this paper is to evaluate and to assess touristic attractions in Mashhad City. Herein this research, twelve criteria, resulted from Delphi Group Questionnaire, have been specified and evaluated. Respective methods used herein this research consisting of Delphi technique for designating criteria, TOPSIS in order to specify priority and grading touristic attractions and entropy for weighing the said criteria. Corresponding results obtained from such study have revealed that conforming to surveys and analyses conducted, attractive tourism zones of Mashhad City for tourists are religious attractions, museums, shopping centers, holy shrines and cemeteries, monuments, caravansaries, historical inscriptions, historical schools and historical relics, buildings, castles and dams.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the recent decades, growth and development of tourism industry and adopting the same as one of the major economic activities by developed and developing countries and competition of major tourism destinations for attracting tourists have caused planners attach great attention to two significant categories in order to raise of incomes earned through tourism activities: First, raising tourists' satisfaction and promoting pleasure and quality of tourism experience and second, preserving the advantages of host societies respectively (Alegre et al, 2013). Extension of communication and travel as well as soar of tourism industry together with entrance of the said industry across cities has influenced urban space. Since states, local governments and planners all over the world have become aware about tourism potentials as a means of economic development and local economy in particular and further mention tourism as a major factor in reproduction of urban spaces, urban development and subsequently regional and local development (Lee, & Brahmasrene, 2013. Presently, urban tourism has turned to a significant activity, which forms workflows, social measures and a number of spatial changes in the European countries accordingly (Brouder, & Eriksson, 2013).

The growth of short term trips has changed these destinations into one of the main tourism centers. This has appeared in most of the world's destinations in terms of reduced average trip period of tourists (Holzner, 2011). It can be explained to

some extent by the changed lifestyle within the recent years. Time has changed to the most valuable issued in man's life. Nowadays, in spite of occupational insecurity, people work harder in comparison with the past. Thus, people are seeking for tourism destinations, which they may access more easily and quickly (Li, & Song, 2013). These conditions have really been useful for near and accessible destinations and caused urban tourism development.

### ***Tourism Destinations***

Destinations may be regarded as places for concentration of facilities and services, designed for realization of needs of tourists. Nonetheless, tourism destinations are defined as geographical regions where activities of tourists and relevant effects may be concentrated (Larson et al, 2013). In fact, destinations consist of all tourism aspects namely demand, transportation, offer and marketing. Destinations may be regarded as one of the most significant tourism components since respective destinations and imagination of the said destinations attract tourists and they are regarded as motivation for visitation (Beirman, 2003).

Although destinations don't present a specific part of tourism industry, they are places where where activity of different parts of the said industry is concentrated in a region. Tourism destinations are exterior aspect of international tourism industry, which benefit from its positive economic and social effects while these places shall not benefit from negative effects of environmental-social and cultural effects of the said industry. Moreover, destinations and resulted mental image of the said destinations mostly attract tourists at the first stage (Zhang et al, 2011). General view is a mental and overall image comprising major and minor characteristic of a place, nature of the said place and people's opinion about such places. If general view of a place is positive, people do visit the said place. Otherwise, they refrain from going to and visiting the said places either (Shih, 2006). Such general as described above is developed during several years. General view is the product of history, effective cultural factors, myths and epics. Furthermore, position of a destination is affected by attitudes and national and international political trends (Chen et al, 2010).

### ***Management of tourism destinations***

Management of tourism destination is a complicated concept of which the most important reasons are outlined as follows:

Although destinations differ from each other, there is a mutual correlation among such destinations at geographical levels. It means a small tourism destination is a part of an area, country and international region.

Management and marketing of most destinations are done by public sector by spending limited budgets. They can't compete with power of tour administrators, chain hotels and foreign airlines.

Tourism destination is an individual and integrated product. Instead, it is a combined collection of separate products and each is seeking for generation of its specific product.

Tourism destination management relates to a different range of beneficiary groups, each is seeking for its own interests. These groups consist of local dwellers, local tourism trade, representatives of foreign companies and selected representatives and tourists (Curtin, 2013; Lee, & Tussyadiah, 2012; Tsartas et al, 2001).

### ***Research Method***

Research method is of descriptive type and analysis and collection of research data is gathered through domestic tourists, who have visited Mashhad City and a sample consisting of 400 persons was chosen for sampling. Items were analyzed using SPSS software. Delphi Group has been used for choosing quality items and criteria and as well as assessment. Delphi method is regarded as a modern approach in related researches to planning. Since there is no final method for designating and choosing research criteria and due to lack of a statistical base for concluding, one stage-methodology can be presented for conduction of this research.

First of all, we classified the experts into two groups, namely university authorities and Tourism experts into 23 persons. Identification of experts: In parallel with the instructions of (Delbecq et al, 1975), in this research a multi-step approach was used to identify the experts;

First step: Preparation of a worksheet from candidates of knowledge sources

Second step: Filling up the worksheet with the names

Third step: First round of contacts, determining other experts as candidates

Fourth step: Ranking the experts based on the characteristics

Fifth step: Inviting the experts to research

In this study, Delphi research procedure, weighing type was used to execute the questionnaires. This procedure includes three general steps, namely 1. Brainstorm for determination of important criteria and sub-criteria; 2. Restricting the main list to the most important cases; and 3. Weighing the list of important criteria and sub-criteria (Hasson and Keeney, 2011, Miller et al, 2010; Burns, 1987).

Indexes serve as criteria by which we can measure the quality and quantity of a subject. Here, we deal with indexes, criteria, sub-criteria and options used in this paper that were obtained from Delphi group which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria for Evaluating the Quality of Tourists' Experiences from the Viewpoint of Delphi Group

Criteria	Code
Satisfaction with travelling to this city	C1
Environmental situation in the city	C2
Suitable condition of accommodation services and facilities and entertainment in the city	C3
Satisfaction with service supply by the authorities	C4
Condition of city services and facilities for tourists and tourism development	C5
Quality of entertainment unit	C6
Condition of tourists' security	C7
Urban management performance in this city in parallel with the demands of tourists	C8
Adaptation between your general perception from this city for the first time and the existing conditions	C9
Social environment of the city for spending leisure times	C10
Life and culture of people of the city	C11
Health and cleanliness in the city	C12

**Topsis**

This study uses the TOPSIS method. A positive ideal solution maximizes the benefit criteria or attributes and minimizes the cost criteria or attributes, whereas a negative ideal solution maximizes the cost criteria or attributes and minimizes the benefit criteria or attributes. The TOPSIS method is expressed in a succession of 6 steps as follows (Şimşek & Şimşek , 2013; Choudhary, & Shankar, 2012; Jia et al, 2012; Zhang et al, 2011 Hwang, CL, Yoon, K. 1981):

Step 1: Construct normalized decision matrix. This step transforms various attribute dimensions into non-dimensional attributes, which allows comparisons across criteria. The normalized value rij is calculated as

$$r_{ij} = \frac{x_{ij}}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^m X_{ij}^2}}, \quad i = 1, \dots, m; \quad j = 1, \dots, n.$$

Step 2: Construct the weighted normalized decision matrix. Assume we have a set of weights for each criteria wj for j = 1, ... n and  $\sum_{j=1}^n w_j = 1$ . Multiply each column of the normalized decision matrix by its associated weight. An element of the new matrix is:

$$v_{ij} = w_j r_{ij}, \quad i = 1, \dots, m; \quad j = 1, \dots, n.$$

Step 3: Determine the ideal and negative ideal solutions. Positive ideal solution.

$$A^+ = \{v_1^+, \dots, v_n^+\}, \text{ where}$$

$$v_j^+ = \{\max(v_{ij}) \text{ if } j \in J; \min(v_{ij}) \text{ if } j \in J\}, \quad j = 1, \dots, n.$$

Negative ideal solution.

$$A^- = \{v_1^-, \dots, v_n^-\}, \text{ where}$$

$$v_j^- = \{\min(v_{ij}) \text{ if } j \in J; \max(v_{ij}) \text{ if } j \in J\}, \quad j = 1, \dots, n.$$

Step 4: Calculate the separation measures for each alternative. The separation from the positive ideal alternative is:

$$S_i^+ = \{\sum_{j=1}^n (v_{ij} - v_j^+)^2\}^{1/2}, \quad i= 1, \dots, m.$$

Similarly, the separation from the negative ideal alternative is:

$$S_i^- = \{\sum_{j=1}^n (v_{ij} - v_j^-)^2\}^{1/2}, \quad i= 1, \dots, m.$$

Step 5: Calculate the relative closeness to the ideal solution

$$C_i = S_i^- / (S_i^+ + S_i^-), \quad i= 1, \dots, m. \quad C_i \in \{0, 1\}$$

where Ci denotes the final performance score in TOPSIS method.

Step 6: Rank the preference order. Rank the alternatives using Ci index value in decreasing order. An alternative with largest index value (Ci) has shortest distance from positive ideal solution and farthest distance from negative ideal solution.

**Results**

This study is aimed at assessing the quality of tourism experience in the city of Mashhad as one of the approaches in the field of tourism acceptance capacity. Study process is in parallel with the study of tourism condition in Mashhad from the viewpoints of tourists. A series of items were designed to assess experience quality of tourists by traveling to Mashhad. As it was said, these items were identified by Delphi Group. For this study, attractions were classified in some levels including caravansaries (D1), historical schools (D2), religious attractions (D3), historical sections (D4), tombs and monuments (D5), museums (D6), buildings and castles (D7), historical inscription (D8), constructions and houses (D9).

In this part of research, model procedure is explained in order to show how TOPSIS model is used and how the evaluation and prioritization stages of items are conducted.

Table 2. Raw items used in the research and score of each attraction

A	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12
D1	310.00	289.25	368.50	247.75	407.75	163.00	463.00	604.00	341.00	420.50	632.00	612.25
D2	440.75	461.00	181.25	501.50	245.25	366.00	521.00	120.25	257.25	554.75	406.75	330.75
D3	430.50	306.25	285.75	57.75	106.00	153.75	605.75	358.75	608.50	210.25	341.00	420.50
D4	325.00	439.75	104.50	669.25	571.75	419.75	634.50	430.25	349.75	430.50	257.25	554.75
D5	324.50	245.25	366.00	430.50	402.00	344.25	391.25	578.78	605.75	358.75	608.50	210.25
D6	604.25	106.00	153.75	328.50	278.50	228.75	310.00	406.75	368.50	247.75	103.75	324.50
D7	423.75	571.75	419.75	634.50	578.78	652.75	440.75	341.00	181.25	501.50	139.50	604.25
D8	554.75	402.00	344.25	278.50	228.75	239.50	278.50	628.25	436.50	644.00	349.25	178.50
D9	239.50	278.50	228.75	422.50	612.50	347.75	578.78	120.25	257.25	554.75	430.50	306.25

The studied indexes were standardized after completion in terms of matrix 12 x 9 (Aij) and through relation  $r_{ij} = \frac{a_{ij}}{\sum_{k=1}^m a_{kj}^2}$  and formed matrix (R). Table 3 shows this matrix.

Table 3. De-scaled table of items (Matrix R)

R	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12
D1	0.2454	0.2618	0.4211	0.1891	0.3258	0.1530	0.3186	0.4607	0.2815	0.3068	0.5239	0.4827
D2	0.3488	0.4172	0.2071	0.3828	0.1960	0.3435	0.3586	0.0917	0.2124	0.4048	0.3372	0.2607
D3	0.3407	0.2772	0.3265	0.0441	0.0847	0.1443	0.4169	0.2736	0.5023	0.1534	0.2827	0.3315
D4	0.2572	0.3980	0.1194	0.5109	0.4569	0.3939	0.4367	0.3282	0.2887	0.3141	0.2133	0.4373
D5	0.2568	0.2220	0.4182	0.3286	0.3212	0.3230	0.2693	0.4414	0.5001	0.2618	0.5044	0.1657
D6	0.4782	0.0959	0.1757	0.2508	0.2225	0.2147	0.2133	0.3102	0.3042	0.1808	0.0860	0.2558
D7	0.3354	0.5175	0.4796	0.4844	0.4625	0.6125	0.3033	0.2601	0.1496	0.3659	0.1156	0.4764
D8	0.4391	0.3638	0.3934	0.2126	0.1828	0.2248	0.1917	0.4792	0.3603	0.4699	0.2895	0.1407
D9	0.1896	0.2521	0.2614	0.3225	0.4894	0.3263	0.3983	0.0917	0.2124	0.4048	0.3569	0.2414

In this stage, the criteria (w) were weighed after normalizing decision making matrix. For this purpose, there are several compilation methods which are used proportional to the needs. In this study, entropy method is used (table 5). This index can be used for information analysis and organization degree of a system. Entropy indicates the level of existing unreliability for the expected information content of a message. In other words, entropy in the theory of information is considered as a criterion for indicating the unreliability stated by a discrete probable distribution. This unreliability is described as follows.

$$E = -k \sum_{i=1}^n [p_i \times \ln p_i]$$

K is a positive constant figure and is determined when we have:

$E_0 \leq E \leq 1$  from p4 probability distribution is calculated based on statistical mechanism. Decision making matrix is among multi-criteria models and consists of information for which entropy can be used as a criterion to evaluate that. Information content of this matrix is first calculated in terms of  $p_{ij}$  as follows.

$$p_{ij} = \frac{r_{ij}}{\sum r_{ij}} \quad \forall i, j$$

And for Ejs in lieu of each criterion we will have:

$$E_j = -k \sum_{i=1}^n [p_{ij} \times \ln p_{ij}]; \quad \forall j$$

$$k = \frac{1}{\ln(m)}$$

As it is, it keeps the amount of E<sub>j</sub> between zero and one.

Then, unreliability or deviation degree (d<sub>j</sub>) is calculated from information which indicates how much useful information is made available to decision maker by Jth criterion for decision making. The closer the measured amounts of a criterion, it indicates that the competitor options are not so much different according to that. Therefore, the role of that index in decision making should be decreased to the same extent. Therefore:

$$d_j = 1 - E_j; \quad \forall j$$

And finally, for the weights (w<sub>j</sub>) of the existing criteria we will have:

$$w_j = \frac{d_j}{\sum_{j=1}^n d_j}; \quad \forall j$$

In the next step, matrix (V) is formed. In fact, the product of standard amounts of each item in the weights is related to the same index which is seen in table 4.

Table 4. Weighing table of items (Matix V)

V	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12
D	0.0147	0.0104	0.0294	0.0170	0.0260	0.0214	0.0191	0.0368	0.0197	0.0245	0.0523	0.0627
1	2	7	8	2	7	1	2	5	1	5	9	5
D	0.0209	0.0166	0.0145	0.0344	0.0156	0.0480	0.0215	0.0073	0.0148	0.0323	0.0337	0.0339
2	3	9	0	6	8	8	1	4	7	8	2	0
D	0.0204	0.0110	0.0228	0.0039	0.0067	0.0202	0.0250	0.0218	0.0351	0.0122	0.0282	0.0430
3	4	9	6	7	8	0	1	9	6	7	7	9
D	0.0154	0.0159	0.0083	0.0459	0.0365	0.0551	0.0262	0.0262	0.0202	0.0251	0.0213	0.0568
4	3	2	6	8	5	5	0	5	1	3	3	5
D	0.0154	0.0088	0.0292	0.0295	0.0257	0.0452	0.0161	0.0353	0.0350	0.0209	0.0504	0.0215
5	1	8	8	8	0	3	6	2	0	4	4	5
D	0.0286	0.0038	0.0123	0.0225	0.0178	0.0300	0.0128	0.0248	0.0212	0.0144	0.0086	0.0332
6	9	4	0	7	0	5	0	2	9	6	0	6
D	0.0201	0.0207	0.0335	0.0435	0.0370	0.0857	0.0182	0.0208	0.0104	0.0292	0.0115	0.0619
7	2	0	8	9	0	6	0	1	7	7	6	3
D	0.0263	0.0145	0.0275	0.0191	0.0146	0.0314	0.0115	0.0383	0.0252	0.0375	0.0289	0.0182
8	4	5	4	3	2	7	0	3	2	9	5	9
D	0.0113	0.0100	0.0183	0.0290	0.0391	0.0456	0.0239	0.0073	0.0148	0.0323	0.0356	0.0313
9	7	8	0	3	5	9	0	4	7	8	9	9

The weights obtained for each criterion are presented in table 5:

Table 5. Weights of the criteria obtained in entropy

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12
W	0.06	0.04	0.07	0.09	0.08	0.14	0.06	0.08	0.07	0.08	0.1	0.13

Now, by using the ideal index and minimum from matrix (V) we will have:

$$A^+ = \{(\max V_{ij} | j \in J), (\min V_{ij} | j \in J') | i=1, 2, \dots, m\} = \{V_1^*, V_2^*, \dots, V_j^*, \dots, V_n^*\}$$

Table 6. Positive ideals of indexes (A<sup>+</sup>)

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12
+	0.0286	0.0207	0.0335	0.0459	0.0391	0.0857	0.0262	0.0383	0.1000	0.0375	0.0523	0.0627
A	9	0	8	8	5	6	0	3	0	9	9	5

**Negative Ideal Option**

Table 7. Negative ideals of indexes (A<sup>-</sup>)

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12
A	0.0113	0.0038	0.0083	0.0039	0.0067	0.0202	0.0115	0.0073	0.0104	0.0122	0.0086	0.0182
-	7	4	6	7	8	0	0	4	7	7	0	9

Now we can make a distance for ideal option  $S_i^+$  and minimum option  $S_i^-$  through sub-criterion relations.

$$S_i^+ = \text{Distance of } i\text{th option from positive ideal } S_i^+ = \sqrt{\sum_{j=1}^n (V_{ij} - V_j^+)^2}, \rightarrow I=1,2,\dots,m$$

Table 8. Specification of distance from maximums

	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9
$S_i^+$	0.1097	0.1099	0.1010	0.1194	0.0925	0.0972	0.1115	0.1069	0.1094

After calculation of the distance criterion compared to positive and negative ideals, in this stage the relative closeness of  $S_i$  to ideal solution is calculated. This relative closeness is defined as follows:

$$CL_{i^*} = \frac{S_i^-}{(S_i^- + S_i^+)} \quad ; \rightarrow 0 \leq CL_{i^*} \leq 1 \quad ; \rightarrow I=1,2,\dots,m$$

Table 9. Calculation of relative closeness to ideal solution

	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9
$S_i^-$	0.0641	0.0597	0.1017	0.0395	0.0738	0.0814	0.0486	0.0603	0.0788

In the final stage of TOPSIS technique, we ranked the options based on  $RC_{i^*}$  descending order.

Table 10. Attraction Ranking

	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9
RC	0.6481	0.6024	1.1087	0.3705	0.8709	0.9192	0.4848	0.6246	0.7991
Rank	5	7	1	9	3	2	8	6	4

Tourists' community was studied in order to examine the quality of tourism experience quality in Mashhad city. The results of the findings indicated that attraction influence area of tourism in Mashhad was national and that people generally travelled to Mashhad from all parts of the country. The results obtained from the analysis of studied indexes for evaluation tourism quality experience indicate that the most important factors for attraction of tourists to Mashhad include religious attractions, museums, tombs and monuments, buildings, etc. The results also indicate that tourists were generally satisfied with their visits to that city and that satisfaction was due to tourism attractions of that city.

Considering the analysis of findings and the concept of lifecycle of tourism and adaptation of Mashhad condition in this better form, it can be found that the process of destination tourism in Mashhad is somehow incomplete. This is because the condition of Mashhad in relation to infrastructures and accommodation and entertainment facilities is in the third stage of cycle, i.e., the development stage of product and this requires the change of destination to a tourism product. Volume of the incoming tourists is in the maturity stage and the city has approached the thresholds of its capacity and the negative effects of tourism in this destination are emerging in different economic, social and environmental dimensions.

**Assessing the Capacity of Socioeconomic and Perceptual Acceptance in Mashhad from the Viewpoint of Host Community**

Field surveys including deep interviews and completion of questionnaires are required to assess the situation of Mashhad tourism acceptance capacity from the viewpoint of host community. To achieve this goal, 20 questionnaires were completed by authorities and 100 questionnaires were completed by people within the tourism area of Mashhad city the results of which are described below. Social effects are classified in two groups, namely positive and negative effects in order to examine the effects of tourism on the host community.

The result of examination of positive effects of tourism on socioeconomic indexes from the viewpoint of host community indicates that neither of the positive socio-cultural effects is confirmed by the host community and the respondents in both groups with an average of less than 3 evaluated these effects to be not more than average. The point which shall be mentioned is the difference between the views of dwellers and those of authorities.

Generally, these positive effects are confirmed by the authorities much more than people of Mashhad. The positive effects of tourism on social indexes include promotion of level of life standards, improvement of accesses, increased level of people's knowledge and awareness, keeping the local identity alive, formation of the valuable experience of meeting with

other people and establishment of better entertainment facilities which were generally not confirmed by the host community (Table 11).

On the other hand, negative effects of tourism were generally confirmed by the host community. People of Mashhad believe that tourism has caused negative effects in tourism field of Mashhad. Most of the negative socio-cultural effects of tourism including increased population, socio-cultural problems, cultural changes, increased demand for services and infrastructures are confirmed by the host community with an average more than 3. Other items have received an average more than 2 (table 12).

Table 11. Assessment of positive effects of tourism on socio-cultural indexes from the viewpoint of host community

		Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Sum	Average
Promotion of standard level of life	local community	4.50	14.60	46.70	27.10	7.10	100.00	2.45
	City managers	13.80	36.90	39.80	7.30	2.20	100.00	
Improved accesses, street and public services	local community	8.7	24.3	47.1	11.2	8.7	100.00	2.61
	City managers	13.50	18.50	50.70	7.90	9.40	100.00	
Establishment and development of better recreational facilities for the local community	local community	6.70	9.80	34.30	30.40	18.80	100.00	2.24
	City managers	13.50	42.80	31.40	3.80	8.50	100.00	
Increased level of knowledge and awareness of people	local community	9.40	20.50	51.00	16.20	2.90	100.00	2.75
	City managers	7.30	42.60	40.30	7.80	2.00	100.00	
Keeping alive the local culture and maintaining the cultural identity of the area	local community	19.30	51.60	23.10	3.70	2.30	100.00	2.84
	City managers	8.60	18.60	35.40	24.60	12.80	100.00	
Formation of valuable experience of meeting other people	local community	13.50	30.50	41.30	8.30	6.40	100.00	2.79
	City managers	4.60	33.70	40.80	16.10	4.80	100.00	

Table 12. Assessing the negative effects of tourism on the socio-cultural indexes from the viewpoint of host community

		Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Sum	Average
Increased crowding	local community	15.60	46.50	30.70	6.40	0.80	100.00	3.13
	City managers	0.50	19.20	37.20	40.30	2.80	100.00	
Reduced quality of the life of local communities	local community	9.20	36.20	42.10	12.30	0.20	100.00	2.19
	City managers	3.50	19.20	36.70	29.40	11.20	100.00	
Inconvenience for local community because of the tourists	local community	0.10	34.60	49.10	13.30	2.90	100.00	2.77
	City managers	17.20	43.50	27.30	8.20	3.80	100.00	
Excessive use of recreational attractions and resources by the tourists	local community	12.30	30.40	42.60	13.40	1.30	100.00	3.16
	City managers	4.60	15.20	21.60	48.30	10.30	100.00	
Reduced coherence of families	local community	10.30	42.60	30.50	11.20	5.40	100.00	2.64
	City managers	15.20	34.10	39.20	10.80	0.70	100.00	
Increased demand for services and infrastructures	local community	3.60	19.70	40.60	34.80	1.30	100.00	3.24
	City managers	1.90	26.50	30.70	32.30	8.60	100.00	
Cultural problems for the local people	local community	10.30	27.30	44.60	15.70	2.10	100.00	3.09
	City managers	6.40	19.30	33.40	27.30	13.60	100.00	

**Conclusion**

Mashhad is considered as the center of religious tourism in Iran. It is a desirable case for tourism studies due to its multi-functional role and especially its tourism. Hundred thousands of people visit that city per year. The quality of tourism experience of Mashhad city from the viewpoints of tourists, or in other words, with a demand-oriented approach was assessed through preparation of a questionnaire and its completion by the tourists.

Results obtained from TOPSIS model, 12 indexes, namely satisfaction with the visit to this city, environmental situation in the city, suitable condition of accommodation and entertainment facilities and services in the city, satisfaction with

the services of authorities, condition of facilities and services of the city for the tourists and tourism development, quality of entertainment units, security condition of tourists, urban management performance in the city in parallel with demands of tourists, adaptation between your general perception from the city for the first time and the existing conditions, social environment of the city for spending leisure times, life and culture of the people of the city and health and cleanliness condition in Mashhad, religious attractions were received the top priority for visiting.

The reason is the Shrine of the eighth Shiites' Imam, Imam Reza, as well as the shrines and historical mosques. Museums, tombs and monuments, buildings, caravansaries, historical inscriptions and schools, buildings and castles and historical sections were placed in the next ranks. Tourism destinations of Mashhad city are in the stage that their destructive environmental and socioeconomic effects are gradually perceived by the tourists. It can be generally said that negative and undesirable effects of tourism in different environmental, social and economic aspects were confirmed by the host community and tourists.

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