



Complying management strategies in tourism lands

(Case study: Abbas Abad National park, Behshahr)

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Abstract

Today, tourism is one of the world's main source of income. Appropriate strategies should be used to improve this industry. In this study, strategy management was examined for considering the Abbas Abad forest park which is one of the most important areas of tourism in Iran. This area due to natural values have the opportunities for tourism industry and need for appropriate strategies to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the region so as to improve the tourism offering programs. In order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of this strategy with a number of informed experts and specialists of relevant government departments were interviewed. Using SWOT to cross these factors together and appropriate strategies was determined to manage the complex. Sum score of internal factors evaluation matrix (IFE) were 0.154 and of external factors evaluation matrix (EFE) were -0.041 based on calculation with Arabic method from which a competitive strategy (ST) is obtained for Abbas Abad national park based SWOT diagram. Five strategies including ST1 (calculating the carrying capacity), ST2 (holding training courses to improve the environmental culture of visitors), ST3 (conducting programs for empowering local communities towards participation of individuals in region management), ST4 (protecting and repairing historical monuments of the region), and ST5 (increasing facilities and services fitting the region to increase visitors' welfare in different days of the year), and they are fed into quantitative strategic planning matrix (QSPM). ST1 gained the highest score based on calculations and it was recommended that strategy ST1 is considered the main strategy for the region and ST5 which is in the second place is entered the management plan of the region if everything is progressing well.. It is recommended that carrying capacity of the region should be calculated in future works and public potentials in the region should be identified and local and native people should be used for managing the region by presenting train courses about natural and historical characteristics of the region and strengthening rural cooperative.

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Introduction

People are turned to tourism after post-WWII changes such as urbanization, environmental pollution and demanding leisure time which bring a special peace for people (Noori, 2013). Tourism development as a set of economic activities has significant effect on strengthening economic bases of communities and the role of tourism as a new source of job creation, revenue, receiving more tax, currency absorption and strengthening social foundations leading to progress and development of other industries is emphasized in many studies. Today, tourism industry has turned to one of the most lucrative industries at the beginning of the twentieth century (Ebrahimzadeh and Aghasizadeh, 2011). The concept of sustainable tourism development includes economic, social and cultural development without endangering the environment which can create a similar or greater development. Sustainable development is a process which improves a development not causing destruction (Najdeska, 2012). Due to the many advantages that the diversity of climate, natural attractions, history and civilization, and religious monuments, architecture, handicrafts, cultural and geographical Iran has the frequency capabilities to become the world's tourism hub. However, Iran's share of the world tourism industry considered low. To achieve tourism development factors, such as the fine structure of the organization, planning and human resource training, tourism and investment laws and regulations are needed. To create sustainable development in the tourism industry we need strong and consistent management and coordination between the public sector and the private sector is also very important (Madhoshi and Naserpour, 1382). According to World Tourism Organization in the new millennium it has become the largest source of global revenue (Tohid, 2011; Liu *et al*, 2011; WTTO, 2011). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council in 2011, 9/01 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), 8/8% of employment, 5/4 percent of the capital and 8/5 percent of total world exports of activities related to tourism (WTTC, 2011).

Siran has numerous capabilities for turning to a global tourism center considering abundant positive points of weather variation, natural attractions, ancient history and civilization, religious and ancient, architectural places, handicrafts, cultural and geographical crafts. However, Iran has very insignificant revenue from global tourism industry since tourism development needs factors such as suitable organizational structure, planning and training workforce, tourism regulations, and fundraising. Powerful and coherent management and cooperation between government and private sectors is important for sustainable and suitable development in tourism industry (Madhooshi and Naserpour, 2003). According to statistics and values published by World Organization, tourism has turned to the greatest global revenue source in the new millennium (Tohid, 2011; Liu *et al*, 2011; WTTO, 2011). Based on statistics of World Travel and Tourism Council in 2011, 9.01% of total gross domestic production (GDP), 8.8% of employment, 4.5% of investment, and 5.8% of total global export stem from activities related to tourism (WTTC, 2011). Therefore, tourism planning, conducting and development as one of the most important revenue raising sources and job creation which has important social, cultural and environmental effect is considered a requirement but conducting this process is possible through scientific recognition of capabilities and bottlenecks in every region of the country. In an era when managers are facing new challenges such as destructive changes, transient opportunities, uncertainty and irregularity, having a strategic procedure can help them focus on distant outlooks, identify opportunities and competitive advantages and consolidate parts of scientific community activities towards clarifying collective goals (Muharramnezhad, 2006:343).

Strategy is an attitude and viewpoint towards opportunities and the way of fulfilling goals. Therefore, having a strategic thought precedes planning in structured models. In other words, employing strategic management process and tools in strategic thought bed and context leads to creating effective strategies (Androodi, 2006:410).

Abbas Abad Forest Park considered one of the most pristine areas in the field of tourism. The complex is among the most beautiful cultural and natural landscape of the country that has a lot of tourism potential. Due to having a high potential in the tourism industry, it has not been paying much attention to this area. In this study, we are looking for strategies to improve the tourism industry in this area and providing solutions. In this project, we use SWOT method to manage Abbas Aba national park, Behshahr, strategically which is a concise and useful analytic method and it analyzes strong and weak points, opportunities and threats more systematically and we suggest a strategy fitting the situation. Quantitative strategic planning matrix (QSPM) is another method and technique for assessing different choices of strategy and specifying relative attraction of strategies used in decision making stage (Diestefano, 2005; Chardonnet *et al*, 2010). Many researches related to strategic management and planning especially environmental management and planning are used in this method; it is found that which selected strategic choices are possible and in fact these strategies are prioritized (Hunger and Villan, 2007:350).

Research goals

Identifying strong and weak points (internal factors) and opportunities and threats (external factors) in historical and touristic complex of Abbas Abad, Behshahr.

1. Determining suitable strategies for managing historical and touristic complex of Abbas Abad, Behshahr, using the opinion of experts who are aware of the region condition.
2. Prioritizing the recommended strategies and finding more practical strategy with higher priority from experts' viewpoints.

Research background

SWOT model is the most effective model among strategy preparation models for preparing tourism industry strategy.

SWOT analysis is based on this logic that effective strategy maximizes strengths and opportunities while minimized weak points and threats (Hong and Chan, 2010). If this simple hypothesis is conducted properly, it will affect the selection and design of the strategy significantly (Piers and Robinson, 2009:387). This technique was first presented by Humphry Albert for a research project in Stanford University using information obtained from 500 companies in 1960s (Saaty, 1987). SWOT matrix has been considered as an effective tool in the process of strategic planning for managing environment (Nikolaou *et al*, 2010; Diamantopoulou and Voudouris, 2008). This method presents a systematic analysis for identifying internal and external factors and choosing a strategy which creates best fitting between them (Harrison and John, 2007). This method which is commonly used in strategic planning specifies and investigates all factors affecting operation area (Shrestha *et al*, 2004). The key point is that systematic SWOT analysis affects all aspects of an institution's situation. Consequently, it presents a dynamic and effective framework for strategy selection (Taleai *et al*, 2009). Many studies have been performed inside and outside the country up to now using this model. Some studies in Iran include strategic planning of Qom's tourism development (Ebrahimzadeh *et al*, 2011), using MS-SWOT model in tourism development of Mashhad metropolitan (Mafi and Saghae, 2009), analyzing factors affecting the development of tourism in coastal region of Chabahar using strategic SWOT model (Aghajani, 2014; Safania and Gholami, 2013; Seyed *et al*, 2013) in which this method is used and for example, Samadzadeh, Bigdeli and Fathi (2010) used SWOT in Hashtjin and concluded that this region has good potential for developing tourism and improves economic status of the region (Raufirad, 2015). Mehdi Rastghalam *et al* (2009) investigated SWOT analysis strategies using questionnaire and Likert range in a paper titled as "studying advantages and limitations of developing tourism centers using SWOT analysis (case study: tourism centers of Shaher-e-Kord province)".

According to this research, the factor of creating tourist attracting centers in the region is considered as the most important threat for developing tourism centers (Hashemi and Mahmudfar, 2013). In another study, strategic planning of tourism development based on SWOT analysis is performed in which tourism planning strategies are prioritized using analysis of internal and external factors, conservative strategy (WO) as main priority and invasive strategy (SO) as the second priority (Meshkini *et al.*, 2012). An example of foreign work is Wehrich who is the professor of San Francisco University (Zhang, 2012).

Sabramoniam (2010) who used SWOT model to analyze tourism in Oman and also Tanako (2009) who used integrated SWOT-AHP model to plan tourism marketing in Sri Lanka strategically can be mentioned.

Theoretical foundations

Tourism or travel is generally considered as recreational journeys. However, it covers all kind of journeys by which a person comes out of his/her workplace or home (Shiee and Kabiri, 2009). One of the factors which affect attracting tourists is suitable foundation in tourism destinations as they are created to fulfill the requirements of tourists and they can use these facilities; therefore, investing in these foundations and using potential capabilities of regions for tourism development is very critical (Mafi and Javanbakht, 2011:241).

SWOT technique or matrix which sometimes is called TOWS is a tool for recognizing threats and opportunities exist in an environment outside a system and identifying weak and strong points inside it in order to measure the situation and prepare strategies for guiding and controlling the system. This method (SWOT) is the direct result of a model provided by commercial faculty of Harvard University. In fact, this method is the best strategy for organizations and a valuable tool for strategic analysis (Moradi Masihi, 2002:40). SWOT model presents a systematic analysis for identifying these factors and selecting a strategy which creates the best compliance between them.

From the viewpoint of this model, a suitable strategy maximizes strong points and opportunities and minimizes weak points and threats. To do this, strong and weak points and opportunities and threats are connected in four general modes of ST, WO, SO, and WT and strategy choices are selected from this set (Harrison and Karoon, 2003:192).

Methodology

Study area

Abbas Abad National Park is one of the most beautiful cultural and natural landscapes of the country located nine kilometer from the southeast of Behshahr in Mazandaran Province. Park's lake is extended 10 ha with a building within it which is a landscape from Safavid Era. This building is made of brick and stone and goes under water when lake is filled with water. Two brick watchtowers and other buildings are remained in the park which all of them belong to Safavid Era and open to the public.

This park has always been visited by many travelers around the province and country (Amirnezhad and Rafiee, 2009). Abbas Abad historical complex is one of the most beautiful and the best historical buildings of Shah Abbas I era which has been ignored up to recent years due to being far from residential area and its location inside the forest and more importantly as this building and its characteristics are not mentioned in any resources of this period. In addition, major parts of the building is destroyed due to high humidity and other reasons as no maintenance and repair has been performed on it and only two towers and waterway and the building in the middle of water are remained which are one of the most beautiful and important aspects of Iranian dam building engineering of this period. In recent years, there have been illegal excavations leading to the further destruction (Azarnia, 2007; Siveri, 1993).

Research questions

Considering the general discussions of project progress, the discussion can be continued by following questions:

What are the main competitors of the region?
 What are weak and strong points?
 What strategies are defined for that?
 How does this region progress along its goals?
 How successful is the region along its progress path?
 What are the long-term goals?

Research method

The present study is performed through descriptive-analytic method. It should be noted that information collection is through documentary and library method and based on information presented by experts of the province. First, stages of SWOT including strong (S) and weak (W) points, opportunities (O) and threats (T) are performed. Therefore, this method is a concise and useful analytic method which analyzes each factor of strong and weak points and opportunities and threats and reflects the strategy compatible with success. All internal and external factors are not highlighted and important and therefore it is necessary to analyze all of these factors and find less important ones and prioritize. IFE and EFE matrixes are used to evaluate internal and external strategic factors. Intuitive judgments of experts are considered to provide internal and external strategic factor matrixes.

In addition to strategies specified by prioritizing, there is another analytic method which determines relative attractiveness of strategies.

This method is called quantitative strategic planning matrix and comprehensive framework of strategy preparation is considered as an analytic framework at the third stage. Various strategies considered as the best strategies can be determined objectively using this method (Aarabi, 2010; David, 2000; Muharramnezhad, 2006). In order to provide quantitative strategic planning matrix, first and second analysis of comprehensive framework of strategy preparation (comparison of internal and external organizational factors) are used. And also, good intuitive judgment should be used when quantitative strategic planning matrix is employed (Aarabi, 2010; David, 2000; Muharramnezhad, 2006).

Research findings

Matrix evaluating internal and external factors was prepared considering intuitive judgments and experts' opinions. Internal factors cover 11 strong and 8 weak points according to Table 1.

Table 1. Internal factors matrix (IFE) in Abbas Abad National Park.

Row	Strong points	Significance factor					Numeric expression	Adjustment coefficient	Rank (1 and 2)	Score	Priority
		Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high					
1	Capability of the area for investment towards optimized usage of natural resources and introducing it as an important tourism center in the province	5	4	0	1	0	7.6	0.055	1	0.055	3
2	High economic capabilities and abilities (water, agriculture, sailing, recreational facilities, resorts, etc.)	5	4	1	0	0	7.8	0.056	1	0.056	2

Row		Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Numeric expression	Adjustment coefficient	Rank (1 and 2)	Score	Priority	
3	Historical building complex from Shah Abbas Safavi era in the region	4	5	0	1	0	7.4	0.053	2	0.106	1	
4	Necessary social security in the region	1	2	7	0	0	5.8	0.042	1	0.042	7	
5	Beautiful and unique landscapes in the region and its uniqueness as an attraction in the country	4	4	2	0	0	7.4	0.053	1	0.053	4	
6	Mountains covered with forests and the possibility of walking in the forest	4	3	2	1	0	7	0.050	1	0.050	1	
7	Closeness to the city and easy access for tourists	4	4	2	0	0	7.4	0.053	1	0.053	4	
8	Abundant number of springs in the region	2	5	3	0	0	6.8	0.049	1	0.049	3	
9	Sport and recreational attraction (sailing, biking, walking, fishing, etc)	5	3	2	0	0	7.6	0.055	1	0.055	3	
10	Peaceful environment for the relaxation of citizens and tourists	4	2	4	0	0	7	0.050	1	0.050	5	
11	Authorities' belief in job creation by developing tourism industry as one of the active and lucrative industries	3	1	1	2	3	4.8	0.034	1	0.034	4	
	Sum of strong points						76.6	0.551	-	0.603	-	
	Weak points	Significance factor										
		Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Numeric expression	Adjustment coefficient	Rank (1 and 2)	Score	Priority	
		1	3	5	7	9						
1	Lack of necessary government investment	5	3	1	0	1	7.2	0.052	-1	0.052	7	
2	Lack of correct planning for utilizing the present capabilities and abilities	4	5	1	0	0	7.6	0.055	-1	0.055	5	
3	Lack of specialist and educated forces in different sectors of the region	6	3	1	0	0	8	0.057	-1	0.057	4	
4	High number of tourists in the region which causes pollution in the region	5	3	1	1	0	7.4	0.053	-	0.053	6	
5	Low level work of the organizations and offices related to the region	4	5	1	0	0	7.6	0.055	-1	0.055	5	

6	Mess produced by the tourists in the region	6	4	0	0	0	8.2	0.059	-1	0.059	2
7	Inadequate welfare and residential facilities and lack of residential facilities for the night	6	3	1	0	0	8	0.059	-1	0.058	3
8	Lack of training the local people about ways of utilizing the capabilities of the region	7	3	0	0	0	8.4	0.060	-1	0.060	1
Sum of weak points							62.4	1	0.449	-	--
Sum of internal factors							139	1	0.154	-0.449	--

Among identified strong points, a case mentioned as "historical buildings from Shah Abbas Safavi in the region" is considered the most important one. Among weak point, a case mentioned as "lack of training local people in how to utilize the capabilities of the region" is the most important one. Identified external factors cover 7 opportunity and 9 threats according to Table

2. Among identified opportunities, a case mentioned as "being located along the road of travelers to Holy Mashhad" was the most important one based on calculated score. Among threats, a case mentioned as "heavy population density in the region leads to different pollutions (audio and environmental)" is considered the most important one.

Table 2. External factors matrix (EFE) in Abbas Abad National Park, Behshahr.

Row	Opportunities	Significance factor					Numeric expression	Adjustment coefficient	Rank (1 and 2)	Score	Priority
		Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high					
1	Increasing attention of the government to fundraising in tourism section	1 4	3 3	5 3	7 0	9 0	7.2	0.03	1	0.03	4
2	Increasing investment of private sector in the region	5	4	1	0	0	7.8	0.04	1	0.04	3
3	Improvement of people's economic status compared with the previous decade	2	4	3	0	1	6.2	0.03	2	0.06	2
4	Increasing the motivation of tourists for re-travelling to the region due to its attractions	6	2	1	0	1	7.4	0.03	1	0.06	4
5	Lack of natural resource and landscapes, especial cultural and historical attractions in the rival regions	2	3	2	3	0	5.8	0.03	1	0.03	5
6	Being located in the way of travelers to Holy Mashhad	5	5	0	0	0	8	0.074	1	0.074	1
7	Increasing attention of related authorities for attracting tourists and visitors	6	2	1	1	0	7.6	0.03	1	0.03	4
Sum of opportunities							50	0.03	-	0.03	28

Row	Threats	Significance factor					Numeric expression	Adjustment coefficient	Rank (1 and 2)	Score	Priority
		1 Very low	3 Low	5 Medium	7 High	9 Very high					
1	Heavy population density in the region leads to different pollutions (audio and environmental)	4	3	2	1	0	7	0.065	-1	-0.065	1
2	Lack of following sanitary issues and tourists pollute the region	7	3	0	0	0	8.4	0.04	-1	-0.04	3
3	Region is affected by the culture and behavior of tourists	2	3	5	0	0	6.4	0.03	-1	-0.03	4
4	Inadequate knowledge and understanding about environmental issues among different classes of the society	3	7	0	0	0	4.6	0.03	-1	-0.03	4
5	Intense cold during four months of the year and improper seasonal distribution of tourists	1	2	6	0	1	5.4	0.03	-1	-0.03	5
6	Increasing facilities and services in rival recreational regions (coastal regions especially at the west of the province) compared to this region	2	3	4	1	0	6.2	0.02	-1	-0.02	4
7	Pollution	4	5	0	1	0	7.4	0.03	-1	-0.03	4
8	Lack of authorities' attention to maintaining and repairing Abbas Abad historical places as one of the most important factors attracting tourists	7	3	0	0	0	8.4	0.03	-2	-0.03	2
Sum of threats							106.8	0.04		-0.08	
Sum of external factors							106.8	0.551		-0.041	

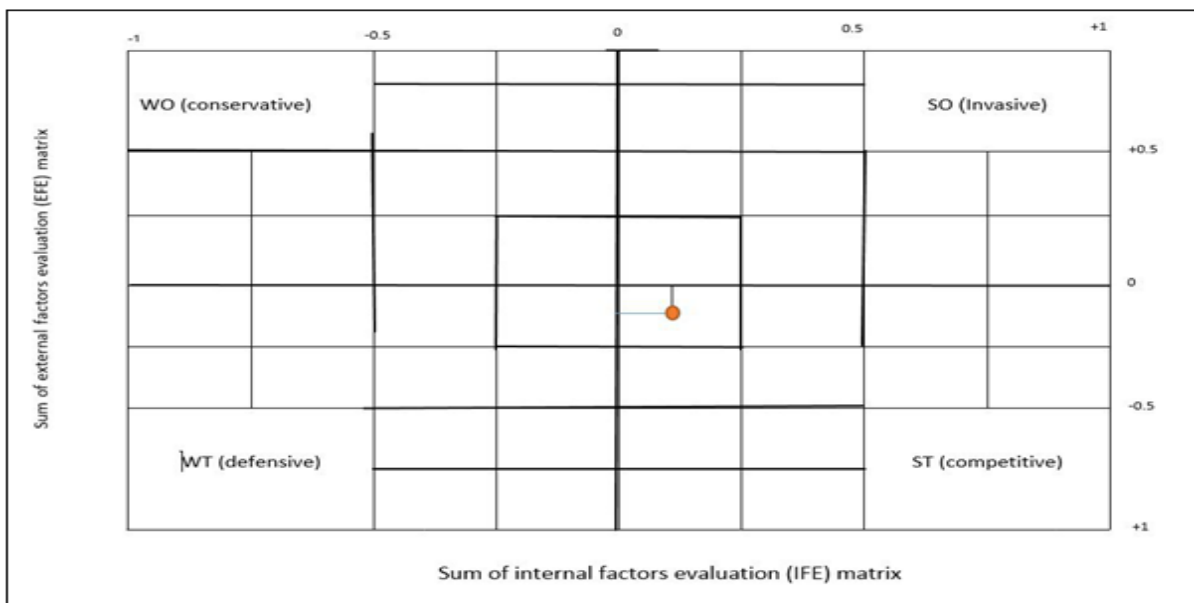


Table 3. Internal and external (IE) factors matrix.

Preparing internal-external factors matrix

After conducting the research, results obtained from both internal and external matrixes can be observed in Table 3. Therefore, final score of internal factors evaluation (IFE) matrix are put on the horizontal axis and final score of external factors evaluation (EFE) matrixes inserted on the vertical axis and the strategic situation of Abbas Abad National Park is determined

from tourism region management viewpoint. According to the diagram, this situation is located on competitive mode (ST). Based on these results, the region is in a situation where the possibility of utilizing internal strong points and countering external threats exists in order to achieve long-term goals.

Table 4. Competitive strategies of Abbas Abad National Park management.

<p>Internal factors evaluation (IEE) matrix</p> <p>External factors evaluation (EFE) matrix</p>	<p>Strength (S)</p> <p>S1: capability of the region for investment towards optimized utilization of natural resources and introducing it as an important tourism center in the province</p> <p>S2: High economic capabilities and abilities (water, agriculture, sailing, recreational facilities, resorts, etc.)</p> <p>S3: Historical building complex from Shah Abbas Safavi era in the region</p> <p>S4: Necessary social security in the region</p> <p>S5: Beautiful and unique landscapes in the region and its uniqueness as an attraction in the country</p> <p>S6: Mountains covered with forests and the possibility of walking in the forest</p> <p>S7: Closeness to the city and easy access for tourists</p> <p>S8: Abundant springs in the region</p> <p>S9: Sport and recreational attraction (sailing, biking, walking, fishing, etc.)</p> <p>S10: Peaceful environment for the relaxation of citizens and tourists</p> <p>S11: Authorities' belief in job creation by developing tourism industry as one of the active and lucrative industries</p>
<p>Threat (T)</p> <p>T1: Heavy population density in the region leads to different pollutions (audio and environmental)</p> <p>T2: Lack of following sanitary issues and tourists pollute the region</p> <p>T3: Region is affected by the culture and behavior of tourists</p> <p>T4: Inadequate knowledge and understanding about environmental issues among different classes of the society</p> <p>T5: Intense cold during four months of the year and improper seasonal distribution of tourists</p> <p>T6: Increasing facilities and services in rival recreational regions (coastal regions especially at the west of the province) compared to this region</p> <p>T7: Pollution</p> <p>T8: Lack of authorities' attention to maintaining and repairing Abbas Abad historical places as one of the most important factors attracting tourists</p>	<p>ST strategy</p> <p>S1S3S4S5S6S7S8S9S10T1T5 : calculation the carrying capacity of the region considering high potential of the region for tourism and organizing tourists</p> <p>S1S3S7S10S8S4T1T2T3T4: holding training courses to improve the environmental culture of visitors (by various methods such as festivals, training tours, cultural-sport programs)</p> <p>S1S2S11T5: conducting programs for empowering local communities towards participation of individuals in region management</p> <p>S1S3S11T8T4T5: protecting and repairing historical monuments of the region and increasing the notices given to the visitors about those places</p> <p>S1S3S9S5S8S4T1T2T5T6T8: increasing facilities and services fitting the region to increase visitors' welfare in different days of the year</p>

Preparing SWOT matrix

Preparing strategic management plan of Abbas Abad National Park was performed in competitive mode and by considering total strong points and identified threats and important strong points and threats.

Strategies of other modes (invasive, conservative and defensive) are avoided regarding the situation of strategic plan.

According to the results, 5 following strategies were prepared for achieving long-term goals regarding the mission of Abbas Abad National Park management plan to reach the determined prospect (Table 3):

ST-1: calculation the carrying capacity of the region considering high potential of the region for tourism and organizing tourists.

ST-2: holding training courses to improve the environmental culture of visitors (by various methods such as festivals, training tours, cultural-sport programs).

ST-3: conducting programs for empowering local communities towards participation of individuals in region management.

ST-4: protecting and repairing historical monuments of the region and increasing the notices given to the visitors about those places.

ST-5: increasing facilities and services fitting the region to increase visitors' welfare in different days of the year.

Preparing quantitative strategic planning matrix (QSPM)

It is necessary to prioritize identified strategies in the study area regarding the sum of internal and external factors after identifying management strategies of Abbas Abad National Park. Sum of each factor and then sum of factors' scores were determined for each strategy using quantitative strategic planning matrix (QSPM) for each mentioned strategy after determining attraction score and applying significance coefficient based on Table 4. Findings showed that 2 following strategies have higher priority for administration:

ST-1: calculation the carrying capacity of the region considering high potential of the region for tourism and organizing tourists.

ST-5: increasing facilities and services fitting the region to increase visitors' welfare in different days of the year

Discussion

Today, we need a strategic view of tourism industry and long-term planning to utilize its significant and long-term profit and take advantages of regions without destructing them. The present study intends to identify internal (strong and weak point) and external (opportunities and threats) factors and prepare a strategy for tourism industry development in this complex according to this base and towards making the ground for fulfilling the strategy of developing environment-friendly tourism in historical complex of Abbas Abad National Park complex, Behshahr. Historical complex of Abbas Abad National Park is one of the most highlighted tourism areas in the province and the country which hosts many tourists from all over the country. Managing this complex has been become complicated due to ecologic characteristics along with historical and cultural properties of the region and also a large number of tourists; therefore, it needs a comprehensive and strategic management in which different issues such as maintaining and repairing historical places within it, creating a suitable ground and foundation for tourists, training local people towards participating in management and protecting the region and educating and informing tourists towards increasing their understanding of natural and historical characteristics of the region are considered which consequently lead to correct utilization of the region. Strong and weak points, opportunities and threats of this complex are listed using internal and external factors evaluation matrix and each one of these factors are given a weight. Then, suitable strategic management strategies for the regions are determined in four groups of WT, WO, ST, and SO strategies using SWOT matrix and the intersection of strong points with opportunities and the intersection of weak points with opportunities and threats. At the next stage, internal and external competitive touristic position (IE) of the region was determined using factors evaluation matrix; the output of this matrix is strategies of ST group (using strong points and avoiding threats) for the management of the region.

Finally, 5 strategies were obtained for managing this region and their competitive positions were determined using internal and external factors matrix

which shows the situation of the region regarding optimized utilization of strong points and scientific and logical threat encounter.

Table 5. Quantitative strategic planning matrix of strategies for Abbas Abad National Park, Behshahr.

Effective factors	Significance coefficient	Identified strategies									
		ST-1		ST-2		ST-3		ST-4		ST-5	
		Attraction score	Sum of score	Attraction score	Sum of score	Attraction score	Sum of score	Attraction score	Sum of score	Attraction score	Sum of score
S1 capability of the region for investment towards optimized utilization of natural resources and introducing it as an important tourism center in the province	0.055	3	0.165	2	0.11	1	0.055	4	0.022	2	0.11
S2 High economic capabilities and abilities (water, agriculture, sailing, recreational facilities, resorts, etc.)	0.056	2	0.112	3	0.168	1	0.056	2	0.112	2	0.112
S3 Historical building complex from Shah Abbas Safavi era in the region	0.053	3	0.159	3	0.159	2	0.106	4	0.212	3	0.159
S4 Necessary social security in the region	0.042	2	0.084	1	0.042	3	0.126	3	0.126	3	0.126
S5 Beautiful and unique landscapes in the region and its uniqueness as an attraction in the country	0.053	2	0.106	1	0.053	3	0.159	2	0.106	3	0.159
S6 Mountains covered with forests and the possibility of walking in the forest	0.05	3	0.15	2	0.1	3	0.15	1	0.05	3	0.15
S7 Closeness to the city and easy access for tourists	0.053	3	0.159	3	0.159	4	0.212	2	0.106	3	0.159
S8 Abundant springs in the region	0.049	4	0.196	3	0.138	3	0.138	3	0.138	2	0.098
S9 Sport and recreational attraction (sailing, biking, walking, fishing, etc.)	0.055	4	0.22	2	0.11	4	0.22	4	0.22	2	0.11
S10 Peaceful environment for the relaxation of citizens and tourists	0.05	3	0.15	2	0.1	3	0.15	3	0.15	1	0.05

S1	Authorities' belief in job																			
1	creation by developing tourism industry as one of the active and lucrative industries	0.034		2	0.068		3	0.102		2	0.068		2	0.068		1	0.034			
W	Lack of necessary government investment	0.052		2	0.104		4	0.208		3	0.152		1	0.052		2	0.104			
W	Lack of correct planning for utilizing the present capabilities and abilities	0.055		2	0.11		2	0.11		2	0.11		2	0.11		3	0.165			
W	Lack of specialist and educated forces in different sectors of the region	0.057		1	0.057		1	0.057		2	0.114		2	0.114		1	0.057			
W	High number of tourists in the region which causes pollution in the region	0.053		2	0.106		2	0.106		3	0.159		2	0.106		4	0.212			
W	Low level work of the organizations and offices related to the region	0.055		3	0.165		2	0.11		3	0.165		2	0.11		3	0.165			
W	Mess produced by the tourists in the region	0.059		3	0.177		3	0.177		3	0.177		2	0.118		2	0.118			
W	Inadequate welfare and residential facilities and lack of residential facilities for the night	0.058		2	0.116		3	0.174		2	0.116		1	0.058		3	0.174			
W	Lack of training the local people about ways of utilizing the capabilities of the region	0.06		1	0.06		3	0.18		3	0.18		1	0.06		3	0.18			
O1	Increasing attention of the government to fundraising in tourism section	0.03		2	0.06		3	0.09		2	0.06		2	0.06		2	0.06			
O2	Increasing investment of private sector in the region	0.04		3	0.12		2	0.08		3	0.12		2	0.08		2	0.08			
O3	Improvement of people's economic status compared with the previous decade	0.03		3	0.09		2	0.06		4	0.12		2	0.06		1	0.03			
O4	Increasing the motivation of tourists for re-travelling to the region due to its attractions	0.03		2	0.06		1	0.03		2	0.06		2	0.06		2	0.06			
O5	Lack of natural resource and landscapes, especial cultural and historical attractions in the rival regions	0.02		1	0.02		1	0.02		1	0.02		3	0.06		1	0.02			
O6	Being located in the way of travelers to Holy Mashhad	0.074		2	0.184		2	0.184		2	0.184		4	0.296		3	0.222			

O7	Increasing attention of related authorities for attracting tourists and visitors	0.03		3	0.09	2	0.06	3	0.09	1	0.03	4	0.12
T1	Heavy population density in the region leads to different pollutions (audio and environmental)	0.065		3	0.195	3	0.195	3	0.195	2	0.13	2	0.13
T2	Lack of following sanitary issues and tourists pollute the region	0.04		2	0.08	3	0.12	2	0.08	2	0.08	3	0.12
T3	Region is affected by the culture and behavior of tourists	0.03		3	0.09	3	0.09	1	0.03	3	0.09	3	0.09
T4	Inadequate knowledge and understanding about environmental issues among different classes of the society	0.03		1	0.03	2	0.06	4	0.12	3	0.09	2	0.06
T5	Intense cold during four months of the year and improper seasonal distribution of tourists	0.02		3	0.06	1	0.02	4	0.08	2	0.04	3	0.06
T6	Increasing facilities and services in rival recreational regions (coastal regions especially at the west of the province) compared to this region	0.03		2	0.06	2	0.06	4	0.12	1	0.03	2	0.06
T7	Pollution	0.0	3	2	0.0	6	0.12	3	0.0	6	0.0	6	0.0
T8	Lack of authorities' attention to maintaining and repairing Abbas Abad historical places as one of the most important factors attracting tourists	0.04		2	0.08	2	0.08	2	0.08	2	0.08	2	0.08
Sum of total strategy score					3.7	43	3.6	32	4.0	32	3.4	82	3.6

Then, these strategies were prioritized using QSPM method from which strategies of "calculating carrying capacity of the region considering high potential of the region for tourism and organizing tourists", "increasing facilities and services compatible with the region towards increasing tourists' welfare in different days of the year" had more priority. It is recommended that carrying capacity of the region should be calculated in future works and public potentials in the region should be identified and local and native people should be used for managing the region by presenting train courses about natural and

historical characteristics of the region and strengthening rural cooperative.

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