

**To Evaluate the Effects of Sport Tourism on Rural Life Quality
from the Viewpoint of Local Society (Case Study: Aasara District,
Nesa Rural District)**

Bahram Imani*

*Assistant Professor of Geography and Rural Planning, Department of
Geography, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, University of Mohaghegh
Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran*

Mehdi Hajiloo

*Ph.D. student in Geography and Rural Planning, Department of Human
Geography, Faculty of Geography, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran*

Ali Naseri manesh

Non-Academic Member, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran

Abstract

This research was conducted to evaluate the effects of sport tourism on the quality of rural life; research method was descriptive-analysis and data collection was done through questionnaires. Population was all local people living in the villages of the district under study. This research studied the effect of sport tourism on different dimensions of life quality based on economic, social, cultural and environmental indicators. For hypotheses testing t-test and ANOVA was done through SPSS and the plan was provided using GIS software. Findings of this research indicated that the villages under study had different mean values with regard to the impacts of their sport tourism on the indicators of life quality. Moreover, the findings showed that sport tourism had a significant impact on the quality of economic, environmental and sociocultural indicators but it had no significant impact on infrastructure's.

Keywords: *sport tourism, life quality, local society, Nesa rural district*

**Corresponding author: Bahram_imani60@yahoo.com*

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Introduction

Due to its positive social, cultural and economic impacts, tourism is turning into number one industry in the world and many countries are trying to enjoy from its benefits through providing suitable infrastructures; in order to benefit from the relative advantages of this industry we need to have suitable infrastructures to meet the needs of tourists and provide them with desirable facilities (Andam et al, 20014: 32). The role of tourism as a source of creating employment, generating income, collecting higher tax, earning foreign currency and improving social infrastructures is proved by different researches, and such role is accepted and followed by many countries, especially by developing countries (Kuo et al, 2006: 139).

Sport tourism is a kind of tourism that has attracted lots of tourists and has had direct and indirect impacts on areas with sport tourism potentials; now, sport tourism as a multidimensional phenomenon, is in an enviable position for human societies more than ever (Esfahani, 2009: 18). This phenomenon could have positive impacts on different economic, social, and even political dimensions of human societies (Higam and Hinch, 2006; Emery, 2010: 158). Developing a series of activities suitable for the required region that ensure permanent presence of tourists is a key factor for developing sport tourism (O'Brien and Chalip, 2008: 320). Since sport tourism is not just sport events it should be considered not only as a short sport event but also as an ambassador for culture and civilization of countries as well as an important factor for travelling (Nogawa, 2006: 46). Skiing is one of the events of sport tourism with massive fans; it is a kind of dynamic sport activity that has been successful in attracting tourists. Since Iran is a country with extensive mountainous areas such as Alborz and Zagros mountain ranges on the one hand, and is a country with cold weather patterns on the other hand, it is of high potential in attracting ski-tourists (Rezvani et al, 2013: 28).

The Dizin ski complex is the first ski and winter sport resort in Iran which has been officially recognized and granted the title by the international ski federation for its capability in administrating official and international competitions; moreover, due to suitable geographical conditions such as high altitude, hillside slopes and direction, track length, sunshine angle, snow depth and permanency as well as existence of the required facilities it has always attracted skiers and other groups of foreign and local tourists. Since there are some villages (such as Velayatroud, Nesa, Hasanakdar, Malekfaliz) on the way to this resort with the maximum distance of 20 kilometers from the resort area which can affect these rural areas significantly. Through this research it is tried to study the impacts of sport tourism on the life quality of host communities and to explore those dimensions of life quality that are affected positively or negatively through such tourism; hence, the aim of this research is to optimize the positive impacts of sport tourism on sustainability of the villages in the area under study and minimize its negative impacts.

Theoretical principles

Sport tourism

As an effective activity on communities, tourism has attracted the attention of many policy makers and planners; it is a widespread activity with important economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts. In many countries that expand tourism industry we can observe a dramatic improvement in their economy. Expanding activities related to tourism especially for developing countries, is of utmost importance for relieving such problems as having high rate of unemployment, and limitations of currency resources etc. (Ebrahimzadeh and Yari 2011). Tourism includes different kinds such as recreational, medical, religious, commercial, congressional, electronic, ecotourism and sport tourism. Sport tourism is a new branch of ecotourism, which has attracted a lot of attention from the people around the world. It is referred to different passive and active sport activities such as skiing, swimming, mountain climbing etc. using natural attraction (Ramezani and Foroughi, 2009: 87). In fact the relationship between tourism and sport has created a new form of tourism with a new and comprehensive structure for people to spend and enjoy their leisure time (Chalip et al, 2006: 23).

Sport tourism defined with different terms and scholars have different views about it; Gibson has a well-known definition, he defined sport tourism as travel based on leisure time in which people leave their place of living temporarily to participate in or watch sport activities; he believes that sport tourism includes three general behaviors: watching (sport event tourism), participation (active sport tourism) visiting or valuing well-known sport attractions (sport memory tourism) (Adabi and Firouzjah, 2006: 19). Moreover, sport tourists are people who stay at least 24 hours in the place of event and their major goal is to participate in sport events and its other secondary attractions (Hinch, 2005: 246-260). Sport tourism makes it possible for people to be away from stressful routines and do activities to enjoy themselves and feel delighted; such activities include sport and practice (Lee and Kuo, 2000: 87).

Life quality

Life quality is a concept that has recently attracted a great deal of attention due to its importance in psychic health. The low levels of life quality in rural areas and migration from villages to big cities have caused different economic, social and environmental issues for both cities and villages (Khorasani et al 2014: 66). Life quality is in fact a multidimensional concept which is used to show the degree of people's satisfaction from their life and is a scale to define satisfaction or dissatisfaction of people and groups from different life dimensions and depends on some factors such as employment, income, access to public services such as education, health, security etc. (Azadi et al, 2013: 32). Today there are two distinct kinds of indicators for measuring life quality: subjective and objective procedure indicators (Ahmadi, 2009: 40 -41). New studies for measuring life quality have emphasized two kinds of indicators objective (quantitative) and subjective (qualitative); hence, for evaluating life quality there are different methods such as descriptive and inferential analyses as well as non-statistical analysis (Barimani and Balouchi 2013: 587). Subjective life quality is referred to achieving independence in increasing subjective welfare such as delight and satisfaction, and developing socially acceptable personality and life ideology to participate more in social activities (Ghaffari and Omid, 2009: 13). Objective dimension of life quality is described as life and job

environment of individuals and groups such as health care and leisure facilities, and houses etc. For having high objective life quality we need to satisfy basic needs and social requirements of individuals that require having access to financial resources in turn (Ghaffari and Omidi, 2009: 13). Hence, one can argue that life quality contains both objective (quantitative) aspects of life such as having access to facilities and opportunities and subjective (qualitative) aspects of life such as social relationships, life satisfaction, and social participation and solidarity.

Review of literature

In a research titled “the impacts of ski resorts on local communities”, Teodor (2007) argued that ski resorts caused positive population changes in the studied areas because of migration from other areas to the areas around the ski resort due to the suitable conditions to provide services for tourists; but it had negative impacts on the main activities of the people such as livestock farming etc. in a way that in some parts only 14 percent of the people preserve their initial jobs and 41 percent of the people who quit their jobs have engaged in jobs related to tourism. The results of a research by Honary (2011) titled “the role of sport tourism in employment and income from the viewpoints of tourists, managers and interest groups” indicated that as a result of poor investment in sports (and wrestling in particular) the employment levels were low; he counted some factors such as lack of the required facilities and suitable infrastructures responsible for such levels of employment. In their research titled “winter tourism expansion in rural areas (case study: villages located around Shemshak ski resort in the north of Tehran)” Mahdavi, Hajilouei and Bishami (2014) asked this question: what are the suitable strategies for winter tourism expansion in the rural areas around Shemshak ski resort? They tried to present a suitable strategy for winter tourism expansion in rural areas through SWOT method; their findings indicated that the current tourism expansion strategies in the rural areas around Shemshak Ski resort are competitive strategies and they suggested offensive strategy focusing on participation to find a suitable position (a niche) in sport tourism. In a research titled “employment model of export tourism expansion”, Eslami et al (2014) presented an employment model for sport tourism; their findings indicated that sport tourism expansion has direct and

indirect impact on creating (part time and seasonal) employment opportunities; they argued that since Iran has unique sport tourism capabilities we can use it as a suitable strategy for creating employment opportunities. In their research titled “sport tourism capabilities of Aras free trade zone and effective strategies on its growth and expansion based on SWOT model”, Golzade et al (2014) studied sport tourism capabilities of Aras free trade area based on SWOT model, their findings showed that the expansion of Aras river beaches as one of the strategies of sport tourism expansion in the area and the lack of natural resources and cultural activities in the rival free trade areas are considered as the most and the least important threats for employment opportunities, respectively; on the other hand the lack of financial sponsorship for holding sport events in the area and negative attitude to foreign tourists among the people are considered as the most and the least important factors that threaten sport tourism activities in Aras free trade area.

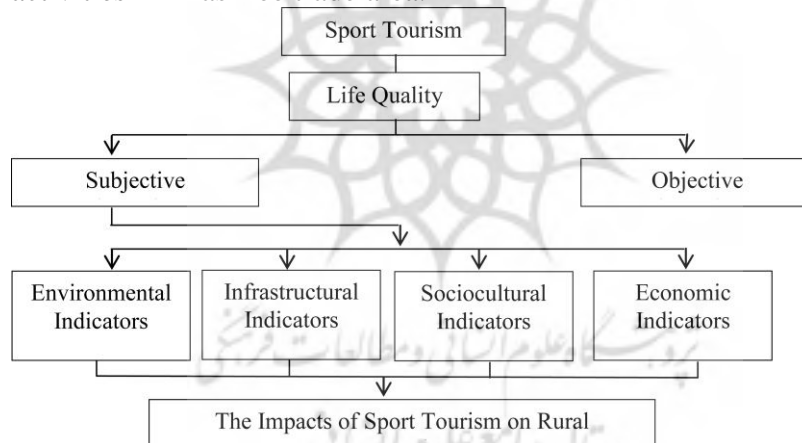
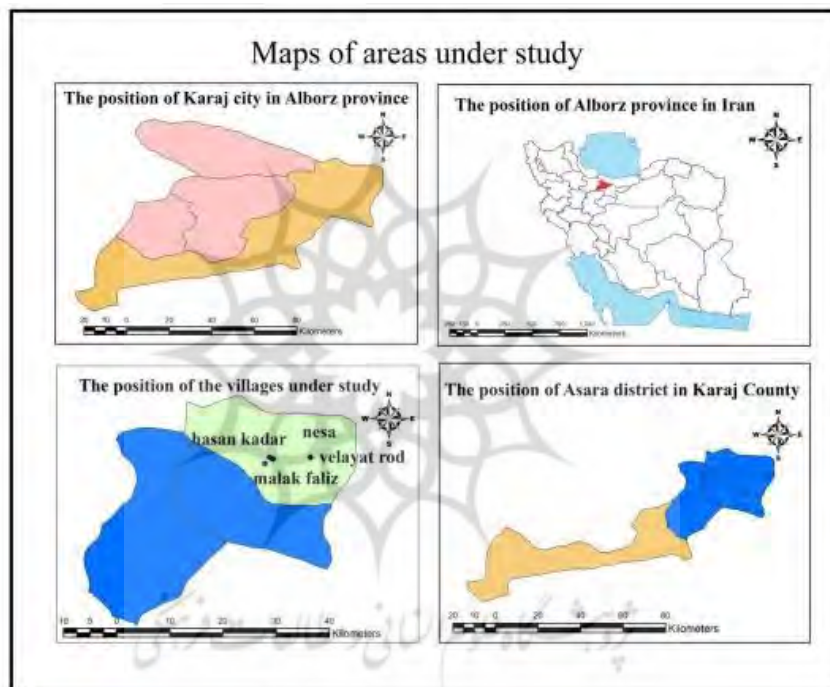


Figure 1. Research Roadmap

The area under study

Asara district is located in the northeast of Karaj county, Alborz province, Iran; the district includes Asara, Adaran and Nesa rural districts in a mountainous area and their villages and countries are built in steep valleys or on high hillsides; based on national census in 2011, Nesa, the most northern rural district of Karaj county includes 17 villages with a population of 4272 people in 1983 families; the area is about 409 square kilometers, which leads to Alborz mountain range

and Mazandaran province from the north, from the south to Asara rural district, from the east to Shemiranat, and from west to Savejbolagh; in this regard one of the main attractions of this district is Dizin ski resort and the villages under study are located 20 kilometers from the ski resort at maximum. The Ski resort is 123 kilometers from Tehran at an altitude of 3800 meters above sea level. It is the first ski and winter sport resort in Iran which has been officially recognized and granted the title by the international ski



federation for its capability in administrating official and international competitions. This complex includes 23 ski runs, 4 tele-cabins, two ski lifts, seven dish tele-skis and one hammer tele ski.

Figure 2: Maps of areas under study

Research method

Research method is descriptive which was done through surveying by questionnaires. First the validity of the designed questionnaire was confirmed by some experts and university professors in the related area; Cronbach's Alfa was used for testing its reliability, in this test the value is from 0 to 1. The closer values to 1 indicate stronger

reliabilities, with Cronbach's Alfa coefficient bigger than 0.7 the reliability is strong, the values between 0.5 to 0.7 the reliability is strong and values smaller than 0.5 the reliability is not acceptable. The result of Cronbach's Alfa is presented in table 2. Population under study was residents of Nesa rural district who were 4272 people in 1983 families and 17 villages based on 2011 census. Since most of these villages are of population less than 100 people and due to other limitations such as lack of access to all of those villages of Nesa, seasonality of the occupation in some of these villages, it is tried to study villages with a large portion of the population. Accordingly, four villages (Velayatroud, Hasanakdar, Malekfaliz and Nesa) with the population of 2806 people were selected as research population. Using Cochran's formula 338 people were selected randomly from among that population.

Table 1. Descriptions of the villages under study

| Province | county | district | Rural district | village | Total population | male | female | Family |
|----------|--------|----------|----------------|-------------|------------------|------|--------|--------|
| Alborz | Karaj | Asara | Nesa | Velayatroud | 1464 | 738 | 726 | 482 |
| Alborz | Karaj | Asara | Nesa | Hasanakdar | 304 | 152 | 152 | 99 |
| Alborz | Karaj | Asara | Nesa | Malekfaliz | 448 | 215 | 233 | 131 |
| Alborz | Karaj | Asara | Nesa | Nesa | 590 | 293 | 297 | 182 |

Data resource: national statistics

After data collection data analysis was done through SPSS, t-test and one-way variance analysis (F) were also used for data analysis.

Table 2: Reliability of the used indicators

| Indicator | Cronbach's Alfa |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Economic | .717 |
| Sociocultural | .673 |
| Environmental | .729 |
| Infrastructural | .762 |

Research data were analyzed in the form of four main indicators, economic, sociocultural, environmental, and infrastructural; following conditions were studied for each indicator (fig 3).

| | |
|--|--|
| Employment condition in service sector – women employment – new employment opportunities – the impact on local market and production – creating new opportunities such as female local instructors – optimal utilization of existing resources such as land use, labor force, working capital - improving life quality standards - construction and reconstruction of houses - new investment opportunities, increasing general income, absorbing more financial resources and governmental budgets- change in the value of real state – the impact on increasing house construction and reconstruction – the degree of reliance on sport tourism and other activities (such as farming, horticulture etc.) – improving transportation system – improving information system and ICT – rural housing pattern (using modern architecture)- improving rural roads and tracks – building residential areas – improving physical | Improving consumption pattern – decreasing migration from rural to urban areas – evaluating the level of social obligation – healthcare condition – personal security for the local population – local participation – cultural exchange between local people and tourists – the impact of tourists' behavior on local people – the increase of some crimes and social problems – causing a noisy and chaotic situation – environmental destruction as a result of change in land use – dumping – continual bustle of people coming and going; pollution – endangering animal and plant species. |
|--|--|

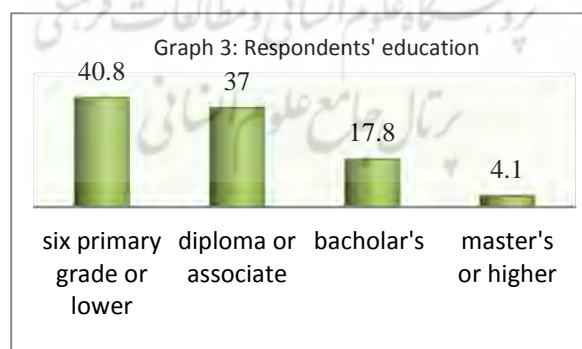


Figure 3. The studied indicators in the research

Research findings

Research findings were evaluated in two different sections: descriptive and inferential findings. Descriptive findings indicate the respondents' education, age and gender.

In terms of education 40.8 percent of the respondents were people with or lower than six primary grade, 37 percent with high school diploma or associate degree, 17.8 percent with bachelor's degree and finally 4.1 percent with or higher than master's degree. There was almost a balance between genders, that is 52.4 percent of the respondents were men and 47.6 percent of them were women. 1.8 percent of the respondents were young people between the ages of 17 and 20; 18.3 percent were people between 21-30; 23 percent were people between 31-40; 37.3 percent were people between 41-50; and finally 18.9 percent were people higher than 51.



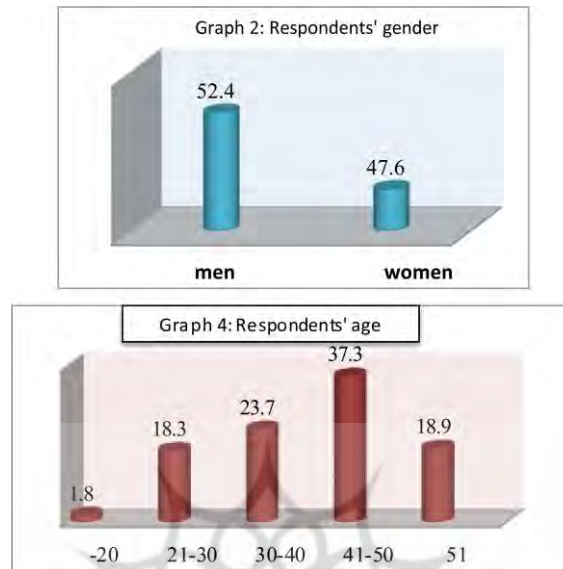


Figure 4: Graphs representing descriptive condition of respondents

Inferential findings

With regard to the impact of sport tourism on rural life quality considering economic, sociocultural, infrastructural, and environmental indicators following results were obtained:

The results confirmed a meaningful relationship between sport tourism and economic indicator with the p-value of 0.013; since the obtained mean value (3.1781) was higher than the desirable level (3.1) it was concluded that sport tourism has improved economic conditions of the studied rural areas with considering items such as improving employment levels in the service sector, improving employment opportunities for women, creating new employment opportunities such as female local instructors in ski resorts, improving house construction and reconstruction (table 3).

Table 3: The impact of sport tourism on the quality of economic indicator (from local people point of view)

| | T | Degree of freedom | Mean difference | Significance | Mean difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
|----------|-------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|---|------------|
| | | | | | | Low limit | High limit |
| | | | | | | Desirable level (3.1) | |
| Economic | 2.492 | 329 | 3.1781 | .013 | .07814 | .0165 | .1398 |

The quality of economic indicator was also studied in other villages under study to define the areas with maximum and minimum impact of sport tourism on this indicator; since the obtained mean values for economic indicator in Velayatroud and Hasanakdar villages were higher than the given mean value, it was confirmed that sport tourism had positive impact on the quality of economic indicator in both areas. The close proximity of Velayatroud village to the ski resort makes it possible for many tourists to visit this area, which has a direct and indirect impact on the improvement of its economic condition; moreover it led to the creation of some service-related jobs such as restaurants, fast food restaurants and supermarkets. On the contrary Malekfaliz and Nesa villages with the mean values of 2.9874 and 2.8259 were lower than the given mean values of 3.10 and 3.20, respectively, which showed that sport tourism did not improve the quality of economic indicator in those villages. This was in part due to the lack of suitable places to stop cars in Nesa and the close vicinity of Malekfaliz to the main road (table 4).

Table 4: Comparative analysis of villages under study based on the impact of sport tourism on economic indicator

| Economic indicator | Velayatroud | Hasanakdar | Malekfaliz | Nesa |
|--------------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------|
| Median | 3.4660 | 2.3022 | 2.9574 | 2.8259 |
| Mean | 3.40 | 1.00 | 3.10 | 3.20 |
| Standard deviation | .43314 | .84393 | .59106 | .45095 |

With regard to the impact of sport tourism on sociocultural indicator of the people living in the areas under study, p-value (.035) was lower than .005, so sport tourism had positive impact on sociocultural indicator and it did not affect this indicator negatively; moreover, the median (3.1348) was higher than the accepted level (3.1) which indicated that there was a positive meaningful relationship between sport tourism and sociocultural condition of the areas under study (table 5).

Table 5: The impact of sport tourism on the quality of sociocultural indicator from local people viewpoint

| T | Degree of freedom | Mean difference | Significance | Mean difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|---|------------|-------|
| | | | | | Low limit | High limit | |
| | | | | | Desirable level (3.1) | | |
| Sociocultural | .965 | 335 | 3.1348 | .035 | .03481 | .0362 | .1058 |

The quality of sociocultural indicator was also studied in other villages under study to define the areas with maximum and minimum impact of sport tourism on this indicator; since the obtained mean values for sociocultural indicator in Velayatroud and Nesa villages (3.2128 and 3.0819, respectively) were higher than the given mean value (3.13 and 3.00), it was confirmed that sport tourism had positive impact on the quality of sociocultural indicator in both areas. Two items (the impact of tourists' behavior on local people and their way of life as well as making the area a noisy and chaotic situation) which were studied as two negative aspects that might endanger sociocultural condition with the mean value of 2.6722 did not affect the area significantly. On the contrary Hasanakdar and Malekfaliz villages had lower mean values (2.7656 and 2.9954 respectively) than the given one, which indicated sport tourism did not significantly affect sociocultural indicator in those areas (table 6).

Table 6: Comparative analysis of villages under study based on the impact of sport tourism on sociocultural indicator

| Sociocultural indicator | Velayatroud | Hasanakdar | Malekfaliz | Nesa |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------|
| Median | 3.3660 | 2.3022 | 2.9574 | 2.8259 |
| Mean | 3.40 | 1.00 | 3.10 | 3.20 |
| Standard deviation | .43314 | .84393 | .59106 | .45095 |

The results confirmed a meaningful relationship between sport tourism and environmental indicator with the p-value of .000; since the obtained mean value (3.3927) was higher than the desirable level (3.1) it was concluded that sport tourism had positive impact on environmental conditions of the studied rural areas with considering items such as environmental destruction as a result of change in land use, dumping, continual bustle of people coming and going, pollution, endangering animal and plant species, disturbing ecological balance, etc. It is noteworthy that the mean values of this indicator were quite different for different villages (table 7).

Table 7: The impact of sport tourism on the quality of environmental indicator from local people viewpoint

| T | Desirable level (3.1) | | | Significance | Mean difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|---|------------|
| | Degree of freedom | Mean difference | Mean difference | | | Low limit | High limit |
| | | | | | | | |
| environmental | 9.400 | 331 | 3.3927 | .000 | .29267 | .2314 | .3539 |

The quality of environmental indicator was also studied in other villages under study to define the areas with maximum and minimum impact of sport tourism on this indicator; the results indicated that all villages under study were affected environmentally by sport tourism and among them Velayatroud village with mean value of 3.5744 and the given mean value of 3.00 was the highest environmentally affected area by sport tourism, which is due to its close proximity (5 kilometers) to Dizin ski resort; in this regard Hasanakdar, Nesa and Malekfaliz villages were in the second, third and fourth rank, respectively (table 8).

Table 8: Comparative analysis of villages under study based on the impact of sport tourism on environmental indicator

| Sociocultural indicator | Velayatroud | Hasanakdar | Malekfaliz | Nesa |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------|
| Median | 3.5744 | 2.3841 | 3.2363 | 3.5561 |
| Mean | 3.00 | 2.00 | 3.00 | 3.22 |
| Standard deviation | .44166 | .81472 | .61059 | .55398 |

The results confirmed a meaningful relationship between sport tourism and infrastructural indicator with the p-value of .000; since the obtained mean value (2.9625) was lower than the desirable level (3.1) it was concluded that sport tourism did not have any/significant positive impact on infrastructural indicator of the studied rural areas with considering items such as improving transportation system, improving information system and ICT, rural housing pattern (using modern architecture), improving rural roads and tracks, building residential areas, improving physical condition of the rural areas under study, etc. (table 9).

Table 9: The impact of sport tourism on the quality of infrastructural indicator from local people viewpoint

| T | Desirable level (3.1) | | Significance | Mean difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|---|------------|--------|
| | Degree of freedom | Mean difference | | | Low limit | High limit | |
| | | | | | | | |
| infrastructural | -4.978 | 317 | 2.9625 | .000 | -.13755 | -1919 | -.0832 |

The quality of infrastructural indicator was also studied in other villages under study to define the areas with maximum and minimum impact of sport tourism on this indicator; the results indicated that sport tourism did not have a significant infrastructural impact on the villages under study; nonetheless Malekfaliz village with the mean value of 3.0206 was in better infrastructural condition than other

villages under study but it was lower than the desirable level. That was in part due to lack of planning to attract tourists who aim to see the natural attractions, handicrafts, local culture and traditions of the people living in the villages under study (table 10)

Table 10: Comparative analysis of the villages under study based on the impact of sport tourism on infrastructural indicator

| Sociocultural indicator | Velayatroud | Hasanakdar | Malekfaliz | Nesa |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------|
| Median | 3.0206 | 3.1478 | 2.9734 | 2.9827 |
| Mean | 3.00 | 4.00 | 3.20 | 3.50 |
| Standard deviation | .40351 | .91960 | .79683 | .57506 |

DUNCAN follow up test was used to compare the impact of sport tourism on life quality indicators of different villages under study. Using ANOVA, p-value (.000) was lower than .005, which showed a meaningful difference; in other words the impact of sport tourism on life quality indicators of the villages under study was different (table 11).

Table 11: The results of ANOVA test

| | Sum of square | Degree of freedom | Mean square | F | significance |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|--------|--------------|
| Inter group | 8.962 | 3 | 2.987 | 34.221 | .000 |
| Intra group | 26.363 | 302 | .087 | | |
| Total | 35.325 | 305 | | | |

DUNCAN follow up test was used to compare the impact of sport tourism on life quality indicators (economic, cultural, social, infrastructural and environmental indicators) of different villages under study. The obtained results were divided into three different columns. Velayatroud village with the mean value of 3.3209, indicating maximum impact of sport tourism on the mentioned life quality indicators in this village, was placed in the third column; it is noteworthy that sport tourism had positive impact on some indicators and negative impact on the others such as environmental indicator. Nesa and Malekfaliz villages with the mean values of 3.1054 and 3.0775 were in the second and third ranks, respectively; it is noteworthy that the difference between these two villages was not significant so they were placed in the second column. Hasanakdar village with the mean value of 2.8240, indicating minimum impact of sport tourism on the mentioned life quality indicators, was in the fourth rank.

Table 12: Comparative analysis of villages under study based on the impact of sport tourism on life quality indicators

| Villages | Sample number | Subset for alpha = 0.05 | | |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------------|--------|--------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Hasanakdar | 40 | 2.8240 | | |
| Malekfaliz | 58 | | 3.0775 | |
| Nesa | 57 | | 3.1054 | |
| Velayatroud | 151 | | | 3.3209 |
| Sig | | 1.000 | .605 | 1.000 |

Conclusion

Suitable employment of the capabilities of regions with special potentials and attractions may develop the area locally, nationally and internationally; in this regard Dizin ski resort with its natural potential has paved the way for a special tourism called sport tourism. In the case of a suitable and detailed planning of this ski resort not only it can change the quality of the neighboring areas but also can develop tourism activities nationally. Research findings indicated that from among the studied indicators, economic indicator was highly desirable from local people's viewpoints; this is clear from the items assessing this indicator such as relative improvement of employment in service sector, the increase in women's participation and employment (with the emphasis on Velayatroud and Hasanakdar villages), creating new employment opportunities in service sector, improving house construction and reconstruction, and increasing investment opportunities, etc. It is noteworthy that there was a meaningful relationship between the distance from Dizin ski resort and the impact and profitability of the sport tourism. Velayatroud village, for example, due to its close proximity to the piste (5 kilometers) was the village with the highest economic improvement from local people's viewpoint, but on the contrary Malekfaliz and Nesa villages due to their long distances to the ski resort and lack suitable infrastructures were the villages that had the lowest economic impact from sport tourism, and observing no natural or sociocultural attractions tourists kept driving without any stops. Hence, creating suitable stops at the entrance to the villages under study, and providing services such as the provision of recreation and toilet facilities etc. can attract tourists then local people can provide services. In the case of sociocultural indicator, the results indicated that the impact of sport tourism was really significant on Velayatroud village; this was evident in local

people participation, rural-urban migration decrease, and improvement in consumption pattern; it had also negative effects such as noise pollution, tourists' influence on youth's culture and behavior etc. but positive impact of this kind of tourism was significantly higher than its negative impact. Hence, considering the economic impact of this tourism is vital and affect sociocultural aspect directly. On the other hand, creating job opportunities and income for the local people can reduce rural-urban migration, and increase local participation and social dependency. Persuading tourists to visit other villages under study is an effective strategy that paves the way for improving economic indicator and it needs strategic planning to alleviate its negative impacts. In the case of environmental indicator, the results indicated that sport tourism had negatively affected the environmental quality indicator in all of the villages under study. Since the area under study is the corridor that leads tourist to the ski resorts which has led to environmental destruction as a result of change in land use, dumping, continual bustle of people coming and going, pollution, endangering animal and plant species, disturbing ecological balance, etc. In this regard Velayatroud village due to its close proximity to the ski resort had got the highest negative impact from sport tourism. In the case of infrastructural indicator, considering factors such as improving transportation system, improving information system and ICT, rural housing pattern (using modern architecture), improving rural roads and tracks, building residential areas, improving physical condition of the rural areas under study, etc. the results indicated that sport tourism did not improve the quality of this indicator. This is due to the concentration of the facilities in Dizin ski complex not the areas around. Considering infrastructural factors only Velayatroud village affected by sport tourism. Although sport tourism had negative impact on Velayatroud village, in comparison it got the highest improvement in the case life quality indicators. Nesa, Malekfaliz and Hasanakdar villages were in the second, third and fourth rank, respectively.

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