

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## The Study of the Role of Religious Tourism in the Quality of Life of a Host Society (A Case Study: Salehabad City of Ilam, Iran)

**Roya Karimi Doustan**

M.S. Student, Department of Tourism Management (Development Planning),  
Bakhtar University of Ilam, Ilam, Iran

**Younes Azadi**

Professor, Bakhtar University of Ilam, Ilam, Iran

### **Abstract:**

*Today, religious tourism development has occupied a special place in the economic, cultural, social and political fields and its role in sustainable development of regions cannot be ignored. The development of this industry in developed and developing countries has caused different social, economic and environmental changes and reforms in the host societies in recent decades. This study has been conducted aiming to investigate the role of religious tourism in the quality of life of the host society in Salehabad City of Ilam through a descriptive-analytic method. The study population includes 1707 citizens of Salehabad City, 314 of whom have been studied as the sample through Cochran formula. The statistical data of the study has been collected through a questionnaire made by the researcher whose reliability has been confirmed by a number of professors and experts in the field of tourism. Also, its reliability has been confirmed to be 0.78 using Cronbach's alpha. The process of statistical calculations in this study has been performed based on Ordinal regression analysis. For this purpose, the effectiveness of three economic, physical, (facilities and infrastructure) and socio-cultural indicators of religious tourism development in Salehabad City has been tested. The results suggest that religious tourism makes an impact on environmental development, infrastructure, socio-cultural, and economic indicators, respectively.*

**Keywords:** religious tourism, quality of life, host society, Salehabad City

### **1. Introduction**

Today, tourism industry is considered one of the most important economic activities and also one of the world's three major industries and within a short time, large amounts of money have been spent on it in global exchanges (Fazelnia et al., 2010: 149 -148). Also, it has been regarded as one of the largest and most diverse industries in the world and its fast development has brought about many social, economic and environmental changes (Taghavi et al., 2009:159).

In fact, tourism is one of the global trends that adequately represents the combination of economic, social and cultural affairs (Holjeva et al., 2003: 132).It is an activity that has many social and cultural effects, in addition to economic and entrepreneurial advantages (Hezarjaribi et al., 2010:54). In general, the effects of tourism can be classified in four categories: economic, political, social, cultural and environmental effects, each of which includes negative and positive effects (Zahedi, 2009: 5).

In fact, tourism is defined as the set of activities that people carry out to travel from their place of residence to other places for leisure, rest and so on (Zahedi, 2009: 3).One type of tourism in this field is religious tourism. With the propagation of Islam and the spread of Shiism in Iran in the early centuries of Islam, cities and villages of Iran became centers for life and after the death of the Imamzadehs, their shrine became a place for enthusiasts' pilgrimage which is considered one of the important aspects of leisure in people's life (Mansouri, 2004: 63).

Tourism industry experts believe that in terms of religious and cultural situation of Iran among other countries, religious tourism in our country can be developed to a great extent. However, despite the existence of 8919 religious and holy places, religious tourism in Iran still lacks specialized and centralized organization and this chaotic situation is observed even in major cities such as Mashhad and Qom while at least 4319 works are among the works listed in the National Heritage List and in addition to religious attractions, they have with cultural and historical attractions. Of course, some parts of these important religious places are located in major cities (Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization of Khorasan Razavi, 2012).

Today, a large part of tourism literature centers on economic outcomes and its positive role in creating new jobs and opportunities but other aspects have been neglected (Nouri Kermani et al., 2009: 139). One of these very important aspects is the issue of the role of religious tourism in the life quality of host society. The issue of quality of life in recent years has become the subject of a number of discussions (Andereck et al., 2011: 248).It has also raised important issues in the field of urban planning to such an extent that today, the quality of urban life has become the most significant concept in urban planning. Accordingly, in many developed countries,

planners are trying to show the levels of life quality in various geographic levels so that they can achieve optimal solutions to improve the quality of life in underdeveloped regions in terms of indices under study (Faraji Molaei et al., 2010: 13).

The quality of urban life in urban planning at least can be used in two stages of the planning process. The first stage is where planners want to have accurate and reliable perspective of the city's current status. In fact, at this stage, planners seek to take into consideration specifically the priorities and issues that matter most and the investigation of different dimensions of quality of urban life can be a suitable guide for them at this stage. The second stage is where programs and projects should be evaluated so that the effectiveness and efficiency of them can be approved (Lotfi, 2009: 68).

The improvement of the quality of urban life is affected by many factors and activities in cities. In this regard, the development of religious tourism is considered as a source of varying economic, social and environmental features that has the potential to improve the quality of life. The role of religious tourism in creating a good quality of life is formed through high standards of living (Liu et al., 1986: 213), increasing tax revenues, higher job opportunities, economic diversification (Milman et al., 1988: 191), an increased level of leisure facilities, development of infrastructure and public services in society (Choi, 2003: 58), cultural exchange and increasing the level of awareness of people and tourists (Ghadami et al., 2010).

Different studies have been performed on the economic, social, cultural and environmental impact of tourism on residents. However, few studies have been done on the effect of religious tourism on the life quality of residents. Therefore, the role of religious tourism in the quality of life of residents in Iran has been little understood (Aref, 2011: 26) which shows the significance of this research.

As a result, it is obvious that the development of religious tourism which is followed by desirable and undesirable impacts and consequences can play a role in promoting and degrading the quality of life of citizens. Therefore, it is necessary that an effective measure be taken for the sustainable development of tourist attractor and urban settlements through investigating and understanding the role of urban tourism development in improving the quality of life of citizens.

According to the World Tourism Organization, religion is known as one of the main motivations to travel. This is an important issue that should be taken into account in religious tourism and in general tourism development. Hence, with understanding the above issue, and the importance of religious tourism in the tourist attraction and development of regional economics, this paper aims to evaluate the role of religious tourism in the quality of life of the host society and for this purpose, it has selected the city of Salehabad as the sample and it investigates the effects of tourism on the quality of life of its residents through three main components: economic, socio-cultural and physical (environmental and infrastructure) components along with their associated parameters. It also seeks to answer the question "how is the role of religious tourism in various aspects of quality of life of Salehabad city residents"

## 2. The Review of Literature

### 2.1. Religious Tourism

Religious-spiritual travel is a travel that in the first place is like going to a sacred place but in fact it is carried out for spiritual goals and personal perception. Today, religious-spiritual travel is defined differently as a non-religious or traditional-religious travel. This phenomenon is the experience of a world that has shrines with old reputation and attract those who have spiritual purposes. Religious-spiritual travel is a kind of tourism or individual and collective movement that constitutes different scientific subjects. These movements include daily transportation processes, going to religious places, business trips and collective movements (Hall, 2009: 16). In general, it can be said that religious tourism is a type of tourism in which the participants have religious motives (exclusively or in combination with other motivation) and visit the holy places, such as churches, mosques, shrines of Imamzadehs and the like.

According to the above definition, we have two different categories of tourists in this field: the first one includes the pilgrims who travel merely for religious motives and the time of their residence does not depend on leisure time. The second category includes the religious tourists who, while making a pilgrimage and participating in religious ceremonies, visit other tourist attractions (including both religious and non-religious). In other words, they travel for many purposes while the pilgrimage is considered as their priority. Religion has a positive effect on people's lifestyle and the Holy Shrines of the family of Prophet (SA) have been built since people love them and wish to commemorate their honors, efforts and struggles for reforming the affairs of Muslims and religious and social services.

### 2.2. Religious Tourism and Host Society

Religious tourism makes different impacts on destination and host society. These effects include a wide range of sociocultural, economic, political or environmental effects. Given the diversity and complexity of tourism activities, the effects of these activities have also extensive and interconnected aspects that are to be taken into account in studies of tourism effects. The type and amount of religious tourism effects at a destination is affected by many factors, the most important of which includes the features of the host and guest society and the nature of tourists' activities at a destination. According to Burns and Holden, when there is much difference between the culture of the host and local society, it is more likely that effects will increase (Ziaee et al., 2010: 207). Moreover, there is a direct relationship between the life cycle of tourism and the impacts of religious tourism on the community of residents. Therefore, due to perceived economic benefits, a large amount of tourists' desires and demands is usually met in the early stage of development of religious tourism. Nevertheless, in the later stages, due to unpleasant changes in the natural environment and the type of tourists who have been attracted, people's perception of the effects of religious tourism gradually becomes distorted. Usually in the early stage of religious tourism development, economic benefits are given more attention, but in the later stages of development on a large and uncontrolled scale, social and environmental costs also become important. However, with various factors such as the importance of

local tourism, tourists’ capacity and their activities, strength of the local environment, power of culture and local traditions, the level of these effects also changes (Aligholizadeh Firouzjayi et al., 2007: 3 5).

As we have witnessed many host societies, the residents of each host region may think highly of religious tourism thanks to its potential for job creation, income generation and improvement of public facilities and infrastructure. In contrast, as in many host societies, the residents of each host region may also criticize religious tourism for its socio cultural and environmental costs, (Androit, et al., 2003: 172). In general, when a society became a destination for tourism, the life of its residents will be affected by tourism and the residents’ support for the development, planning, and successful action and sustainable tourism becomes necessary (Aref, 2011: 26). In fact, many unintended consequences may spread without religious tourism planning. These consequences include damages to the natural environment, harmful effects on cultural environment and reduction in the contexts of economic benefits. The negative experience of unplanned tourism destinations and the success of planned local and regional destinations affirms the fact that the development of religious tourism should be based on a planning process which includes a valid assessment of resources at destinations and attractive potentials of these places (Kim, 2002: 23). The effects of tourism, particularly, those of religious tourism on the host society in various aspects are presented in table (1) while taking into account their general positivity and negativity.

The tourism structure of Ilam in the last century, particularly after the Islamic Revolution and the structural changes of the country (intellectual, cultural, economic, etc.) changed from religious form to religious-cultural one. This means that, in the relative accordance with the demand (change in tourists’ tendencies), the current structure of tourism of the city turned organically from merely religious function to religious-cultural tourism function, in addition to diversification of their structures (supply elements) and having specific characteristics the tourism functions. This change in tourism function of the city makes significant economic (job creation, income, investment, etc.) and cultural (growth of popular culture, etc.) impacts on the city and region, although it could not have the optimum utilization in this regard with variety of tourist attractions and capacities in the city and region such as (natural, recreational, commercial attractions, etc.). The elements of the current tourism structure of Ilam have often a one-way communication, and end in the Holy Shrine as the most fundamental attraction of the city.

Negative effects	Positive effects
<b>economic</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. increasing goods and services price index in tourist destinations</li> <li>2. contradiction between supply and demand for land and injustice in its division</li> <li>3. high economic costs to expand it in developing regions</li> <li>4. increasing local property prices</li> <li>5. economic imbalance of regions in case of monopoly in a particular area</li> <li>6. changing indigenous landowners to non-indigenous landowners</li> <li>7. low wages as a result of the seasonality in tourism</li> <li>8. increasing residents’ cost of living</li> <li>9. employment displacement of indigenous people in</li> <li>10. high reliance of the region on tourism industry and one-sidedness of economic activities in the region</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. diversification of the local economy</li> <li>2. Development and promotion of development indicators in developing regions</li> <li>3. increased demand for special goods and services</li> <li>4. the attraction of a large number of the labor force due to the effectiveness of the industry</li> <li>5. the acceleration of the flow of money in the economy of the country</li> <li>6. the improvement of local transportation and the access to local markets</li> <li>7. enhancement of economic strength and agricultural activities of the region</li> <li>8. increasing cross-border trade</li> <li>9. improving land use</li> <li>10. creating new markets for local products</li> <li>11. Creating new jobs</li> </ol>
<b>environmental</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Production of waste, water pollution due to raw sewage, etc.</li> <li>2. air, water, noise, and landscape pollution</li> <li>3. ecological disruption</li> <li>4. land-use problems</li> <li>5. Creating the physical facilities and construction of agricultural lands</li> <li>6. pollution and traffic congestion for drivers and pedestrians</li> <li>7. inefficient concentration of welfare services</li> <li>8. damage to archaeological and historical sites and other scenic areas</li> <li>9. putting much pressure on environment potential</li> <li>10. destruction of forests, wetlands and other unique habitats</li> <li>11. expansion of crowded and dirty villages</li> <li>12. outbreak of infectious diseases</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. renovation of buildings, monuments and available historical sites</li> <li>2. motivating and taking action for planning and natural environment management</li> <li>3. continuous and permanent environment protection</li> <li>4. Improving payments for the protection of archaeological and historical sites</li> <li>5. development of infrastructures</li> <li>6. increasing the awareness of residents of the natural and cultural environment</li> <li>7. helping to protect natural resources</li> <li>8. development of environment</li> </ol>

Negative effects	Positive effects
<b>Socio-cultural</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. lack of adequate introduction of the culture and customs of visited region</li> <li>2. improper support of tourists in some cases, and negative impacts on indigenous people</li> <li>3. influencing the host society in terms of culture and customs of tourists</li> <li>4. possibility of increasing insecurity and chaos in the region</li> <li>5. intensifying social conflict between different classes of people</li> <li>6. the possibility of popularity of luxurious goods and the spread of consumerism</li> <li>7. putting the cultural richness and cultural originality in danger</li> <li>8. changing the lifestyle of indigenous people in the host country</li> <li>9. income differences between natives and tourists will lead to dramatic effects</li> <li>10. commerciality of some cultural aspects</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. expansion of cultural exchanges between tourists and native people</li> <li>2. personality growth and development of talents and promotion of level of knowledge and awareness of residents</li> <li>3. improvement of equity between men and women in terms of access to employment opportunities</li> <li>4. development of intellectual, cultural and social relationships of host and local society</li> <li>5 People's understanding of the culture and civilization of other countries</li> <li>6. protection and promotion of the traditional arts and ancient customs</li> <li>7. reviving cultural identity and sense of national pride</li> <li>8. improving the quality of life of the host society</li> <li>9. change, modernization and introduction of local culture</li> </ol>

*Table 1 : Different Effects of Tourism on the Host Society*

*Source: Khani et al., 2009*

### 2.3. The Quality of Life

The quality of life is a concept that defines the state of human life. Given that this situation is reflected by a number of factors and features, the quality of life is usually synonymous with well-being, facilities, life satisfaction, prosperity, fulfillment of needs, the power of life and development of capabilities, poverty, human poverty, living standards and development (Rezvani et al., 2012: 31). This concept shows the general socio-economic characteristics of the environments in one area which can be used as a powerful tool for monitoring social development planning. Also, it has been defined as a standard to measure the level fulfillment of mental, psychological, material needs of the society and the family (Akbarian et al., 2013: 887).

Due to various definitions of the quality of urban life and the lack of consensus on its definition, it can be said that the quality of urban life is a very obscure and interpretable word and varies with area of application and type of study. Although the definition of quality of urban life is different in different countries and even in the regions of a country, the fulfillment of the basic material and spiritual needs in two subjective and objective aspects is common among them (Kokabi, 2007: 76).

Generally, quality of life is defined as having a comfortable life and having access to the basic needs in an urban environment. The quality of life, in fact, means the livability of a place. In other words, in an urban society, the quality of life involves the common experience of residents of the city (e.g., the quality of air, water, traffic, recreational and occupational opportunities, etc.) and the level of the city's capability to realize the desired goals of city's residents (Rahnamayi, et al., 2012: 50). The involvement of the concept of life quality in the areas of planning, management, design, sociology and urban economy has caused the construction and definition of the concept of quality of urban life. The studies on the quality of urban life can provide the context for identifying problematic areas, more important priorities of citizens' life, intervening and mediating variables and causes of people's dissatisfaction with urban management services and can be considered as a useful tool for politicians and urban researchers (Shafia et al., 2013: 22).

Despite the conceptual and operational pluralism, quality of life is generally a multi-dimensional concept which becomes important with economic and social development and improvement of living standards and shows the general social and economic features of the environment in an area. Thus, it can be used as a powerful tool to monitor social development planning. Ventegots (2003) has designed a model titled "an integrated theory of life quality" in which the nature of life can include a range from subjectivities to objectivities. This range covers the feeling of well-being, life satisfaction, biological balance, understanding of one's capacities, fulfillment of needs and objective factors such as income, marital status, or education. In general, this model clarifies that the quality of life includes three basic subjective, objective and existential dimensions which interact with one another. (Pourtaheriet al., 2011: 17).

### 2.4. Quality of Life and Religious Tourism

The level of life quality in a local society is connected with different stages of tourism cycle life model. In different theories on tourism life cycle which are generally based on social capacity, it is believed that during the early stages of development, positive changes are made in the level of life quality of residents, but then, when the capacity or level of acceptable changes of society reach the threshold, negative changes resulting from tourism development will appear in the society and the quality of life of residents will gradually become lower. In their study, Crot and Hoeland have concluded that tourism development made positive impacts on objective indicators of quality of life of local residents, such as health, entertainment, services, sales level and reduction in poverty. Moreover, Perdio, Lange and Gastek measured some objective indicators such as population, income level, education, health, welfare and crime rate in their study of quality of life at destination. Their findings indicate that tourism development can increase the level of

population migration, occupational diversification, educational costs, general improvement of the level of education and health care facilities at destination (Ghadami et al., 2010). One of the ways of operationalization of the concept of quality of life is design and development of indicators of quality of life. The concept of life quality includes objective and subjective indicators. Objective indicators are measured based on the frequency or physical quantity, such as income and subjective indicators are measured qualitatively based on psychological responses such as job satisfaction and happiness. The subjective indicators bring an insight into the person's satisfaction and everything which is satisfying for people (Kharazmi 2004: 5). It is believed that in planning and policy-making, subjective indicators are far more suitable than objective ones, because they give acceptable feedbacks (Pourahmad et al., 2012: 23).

Negative	Positive	Effects
Price increases during special events, the emergence of land rent-seeking	Economic development, job creation and employment	economic
Environmental damages, congestion	Construction of new facilities, improvement of local infrastructure	physical
Development of greed, acceleration of adverse social trends such as uncontrolled urbanization	Enhancement of the country's strength through volunteer work	social
Tendency toward defensive attitude of the host regions, increasing conflicts between host and local societies	Increasing local pride and vitality of the society, raising the awareness of non-local perceptions	psychological
Commercializing the activities that may be personal or private. Changes in the nature of cultural activities to adapt to tourism	The emergence of new ideas as a result of exposure to other cultures and ways of life, strengthening local traditions and values	cultural
Economic exploitation of people by political elite to satisfy the ambitions, distorting the true nature of events to reflect the values of modern political system	Promoting international understanding of the region and its values, and promotion of political values by the government or people	political

Table 2: The Impacts of Tourism on Quality of Life

### 3. The Region under Study

In terms of mathematical situation, Ilam Province is located in the southern half of the northern temperate zone. This province has an area of about 20150 square kilometers in the southwestern part of the country and has a common border about 425 km with Iraq. In terms of latitude, it is located in the southern half of the northern temperate zone between latitudes of 31 degrees and 58 minutes and 34 degrees 15 minutes of northern latitude from the equator and 45 degrees and 24 minutes and 48 degrees and 10 minutes of eastern longitude from Greenwich meridian.

Ilam Province is one of the provinces in the south west of Iran which has the largest land border with Iraq and is very important in terms of its strategic location. Ilam Province is located in southwestern margin of the Zagros Mountains and is composed more of mountain and Mahoor hill and ends in low plains with its sharp slope. From the south, east, north and west, Ilam province is adjacent to Khuzestan, Lorestan, Kermanshah, and Iraq, respectively. Based on the political divisions, Ilam Province has 10 counties, 19 districts, 25 cities, 49 rural districts and 1055 villages.

Salehabad is one of the minor districts of the Mehran County in Ilam Province in West of Iran. This district has one rural district called Hejdandasht and one urban area called Salehabad. Salehabad City is the center of Salehabad district. The appellation of this city is due to the existence of the shrine of Imamzadeh Ali Saleh (specifically Ali), the grandson of Imam Sajjad (AS) and grandfather of Ayatollah Seyyed Mohsen A'raji (Atlas of Iran's provinces, 2004). Ilam, Salehabad Road to Mehran border town with a length of 80 km is the nearest and most important communication tool of Iran for the transmission of pilgrims to the Holy Shrines and sending goods to Iraqand, compared with the other borders of the country, it has the minimum distance to the Holy Shrines.

The Holy Shrine of Ali Saleh (AS) is one of the most attractive religious places which is considered as the most comprehensive, valuable and beautiful architectural sets (arch, porch, domes, minarets, shrine, etc.) of the country. The appellation of this city which is one of the minor district of Mehran County in Ilam Province is due to the existence of this Holy Shrine. Due to its religious importance and role, this attraction has extremely affected the structure and function of religious-cultural tourism of the city of Ilam. However, in addition to its fundamental attractions, the Holy Shrine of Imamzadeh Ali Saleh (AS) has unique and various tourist attractions with different functions and if they are available in the process of tourism planning, they can make many positive economic, social, cultural and ecological impacts on the city, region and country (such as increased job creation, income generation, economic stability, dissemination of cultural and religious tourists in the region and increase in the capacity of the city's tourist attraction, etc.). Accordingly, the most fundamental tourist attractions of Ilam City, sets of service elements, residential units, agencies, transportation agencies and organizations, etc. are gathered around the Holy Shrine of Imamzadeh Ali Saleh (AS) which has formed the structure (secondary elements) of Ilam city's cultural and religious tourism and created a special cultural landscape. Influenced by religious- cultural beliefs, economic, social, cultural indicators, tourists and local residents, this structure has been shaped by interaction with environmental factors.

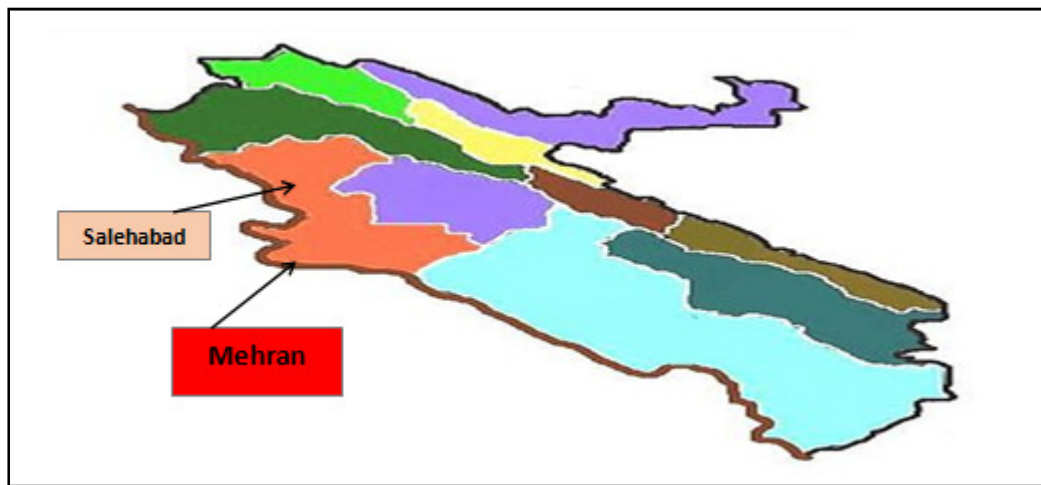


Figure 1: Location of Salehabad City in the Province Map

#### 4. The Model and Hypotheses of the Research

##### Primary and Secondary Hypotheses

The primary hypothesis: It seems that religious tourism makes a positive and significant impact on the promotion of the life quality of the host society of Salehabad City.

Secondary hypotheses:

1. Religious tourism makes a positive and significant impact on the promotion of physical condition of Salehabad City.
2. Religious tourism makes a positive and significant impact on the promotion of environmental indicator of Salehabad City.
3. Religious tourism makes a positive and significant impact on the promotion of economic indicators of Salehabad City.
4. Religious tourism makes a positive and significant impact on the promotion of socio-cultural indicators of Salehabad City.

#### 5. The Conceptual model of the Study (Indicators and Variables under Study)

Variable	Component	Main Dimensions and Indicators
Diversification of employment Increasing revenue Increasing handicraft productions	Job creation, income generation, investment opportunities, the prices of goods and services (positive / negative)	economic
Prosperity of public transportation Development of accommodation, services and entertainment facilities in the city Increasing investment opportunities Reducing seasonal unemployment Development of cultural / artistic opportunities	Facilities and infrastructure (positive (/ negative	physical
Improvement of health quality of streets Development of urban green space Improvement of the quality of drinking water Improving the collection and disposal of surface water Cleanliness of urban environment	(Environmental (positive / negative	Environmental
Reducing migration from the city Reducing economic inequalities Increasing the sense of belonging to the city Promoting satisfaction with life in the city Ability to meet the basic needs of the household A sense of personal security Enhancing the sense of satisfaction with social status	Customs, social relations, cultural values (positive / negative)	Socio-cultural

Table 3: Indicators and Variables under Study

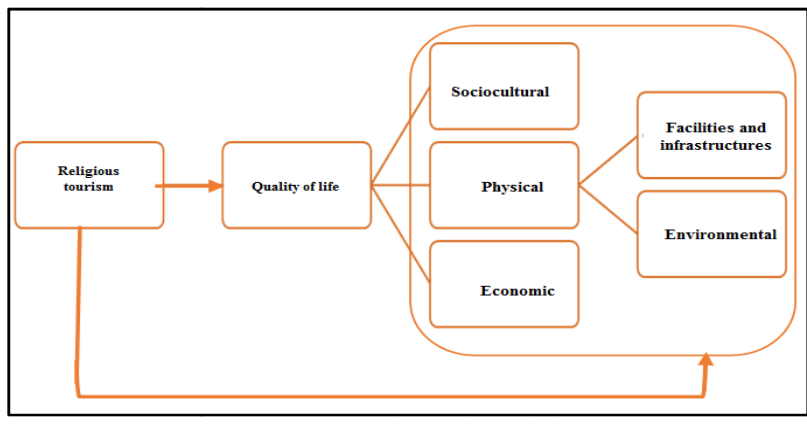


Figure 2: The Study Model

**6. Research Methodology**

The present study is an applied research in terms of purpose and has been carried out through descriptive-analytical method. The collection of the required data has been done by documentary and field method, the latter is based on questionnaire. The questionnaire has been designed by the researcher based on the findings of the theoretical framework. In the design of the questionnaire, five-item Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 to 5 (very low, low, medium, high, and very high) has been used. The population of this study includes the local households in Salehabad City, the number of whom reaches 1707 people according to the last census. Using Cochran method, 314 of them were selected as the sample to complete the questionnaire and through stratified cluster and simple random sampling, the questionnaire was completed by them. In this study, the validity of the designed questionnaire and indicators have been described from the point of view of experts and professors. Also, the assessment of reliability of the questionnaire was conducted through Cronbach's alpha method which is shown in table 3. The results are also presented through Ordinal regression analysis in order to measure the level of effectiveness of tourism in the quality of life of the host society. In this regard, for the better clarification of the subject and its conformity with survey activities, the selection of variables is for assessing the role of religious tourism in the quality of life in the target area through three main dimensions: economic, social, cultural and physical dimensions which involve two sections, such as facilities, infrastructure and environment as shown in Table (4). Moreover, based on the above-mentioned dimensions and variables, the conceptual model of the study has been presented.

Alpha Value	Item	range
0.86	6	Infrastructure and facilities
0.87	4	environmental
0.78	3	Economic
0.87	7	Sociocultural

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha Values

**7. Research Findings**

In order to investigate the hypotheses, Ordinal Regression test was used since all the variables of the research did not have normal distribution.

Test of Parallel Linesa		Pseudo R-Square	Parameter Estimates			
Sig	Chi-Square	Nagelkerke	Sig	Wald	Estimate	Model
.027	9.213	.389	.000	123.336	1.441	Body status

Table 5: Investigating the Coefficients in Ordinal Regression of Body Status Variable

As seen in table 5, in the regression equation, y is the dependent variable of body status. The coefficient of effect in independent variable of religious tourism (x) in the level of recognition .05 is meaningful (Sig=.000, Wald=123.336). So, the hypothesis of the research was confirmed (the effect of religious tourism in improving the status of body in Salehabad City).

Test of Parallel Linesa		Pseudo R-Square	Parameter Estimates			
Sig	Chi-Square	Nagelkerke	Sig	Wald	Estimate	Model
.052	7.710	.637	.000	176.017	2.429	Environmental status

Table 6: Investigating the Coefficients in Ordinal Regression of Environmental Status Variable

As seen in the table 6, in the regression equation, y is the dependent variable of environmental status. The coefficient of effect in independent variable of religious tourism (x) in the level of recognition .05 is meaningful (Sig=.000, Wald=176.017). So, the hypothesis of the research was confirmed (the effect of religious tourism in improving the environmental status in Salehabad City).

Test of Parallel Linesa		Pseudo R-Square	Parameter Estimates			
Sig	Chi-Square	Nagelkerke	Sig	Wald	Estimate	Model
.175	4.962	.233	.000	70.910	.966	Economic status

Table 7: Investigating the Coefficients in Ordinal Regression of Economic Status Variable

As seen in the table 7, in the regression equation, y is the dependent variable of economic status. The coefficient of effect in independent variable of religious tourism (x) in the level of recognition .05 is meaningful (Sig=.000, Wald=70.910). So, the hypothesis of the research was confirmed (the effect of religious tourism in improving the economic status in Salehabad City).

Test of Parallel Linesa		Pseudo R-Square	Parameter Estimates			
Sig	Chi-Square	Nagelkerke	Sig	Wald	Estimate	Model
.041	8.273	.334	.000	101.450	1.247	Social-cultural status

Table 8: Investigating the Coefficients in Ordinal Regression of Social-Cultural Status Variable

As seen in the table 8, in the regression equation, y is the dependent variable of social-cultural status. The coefficient of effect in independent variable of religious tourism (x) in the level of recognition .05 is meaningful (Sig=.000, Wald=101.450). So, the hypothesis of the research was confirmed (the effect of religious tourism in improving the social-cultural status in Salehabad City).

Test of Parallel Linesa		Pseudo R-Square	Parameter Estimates			
Sig	Chi-Square	Nagelkerke	Sig	Wald	Estimate	Model
.063	7.281	.508	.000	140.999	1.854	Life quality of the residents

Table 9: Investigating the Coefficients in Ordinal Regression of Main Variable of Life Quality among the Residents

As seen in the table 9, in the regression equation, y is the dependent variable of the life quality of the residents. The coefficient of effect in independent variable of religious tourism (x) in the level of recognition .05 is meaningful (Sig=.000, Wald=140.999). So, the hypothesis of the research was confirmed (the effect of religious tourism in improving the life quality of the residents in Salehabad City).

## 8. Conclusion

Today, one of the dominant currents and effects in the contemporary age under the categories of modernism and postmodernism is a phenomenon called tourism which causes the influx of tourists who seek to spend their leisure time at their destination. Therefore, the arrival of such tourists causes reconstruction and tremendous changes in all aspects of life of residents at destination which may be followed by positive or negative effects. This article has examined the role of religious tourism in the life quality of residents in Ilam (Salehabad City) as the host society. The existence of the Holy Shrine of Imamzadeh Ali Saleh (AS) can increase the number of religious tourists and improve this industry in the country and become a valuable source of job creation and income generation from religious tourism and economic and social development of the region, especially the city of Ilam. This is only possible with great planning and urban tourism management and can cause the development of religious tourism.

The results suggest that of the three economic, socio-cultural and physical indicators, the first indicator that enters the regression equation and is, in fact, influenced by the religious tourism variable is the physical indicator. In this regard, it can be said that with the development of religious tourism in the city of Salehabad, we can predict that the infrastructures of the city in this region will also develop. In fact, the basis of tourist attraction is the existence of standard and attractive infrastructures such as railways, roadways and airways, hotel and residential, service and entertainment facilities.

The second indicator which is influenced by the development of religious tourism and is defined as the regression model is the indicator of environmental indicator. The improvement of the quality of health of street networks, urban green space development, the quality of drinking water, the collection and disposal of surface water are the factors that can convince the managers and experts to plan in this field due to rural tourism development.

The third the fourth indicator influenced by the development of religious tourism is the economic indicator. The development and diversification of employment due to the arrival of tourists to the region create more various jobs and increase the travel agencies, hospitality and restaurants, etc. which itself causes an increase in people's income and government's revenue.

And finally, indicator which is influenced by religious tourism is social and cultural development. In fact, it can be said that the increase and development of religious tourism in the city of Salehabad develops urbanization facilities and urban development and reduce unemployment. This reduces migration, economic inequality and increases the sense of belonging to the city, satisfaction of life in the city, and sense of security, etc.

Consequently, the following suggestions are put forward in this regard:

- Prioritization of religious tourism development in the policies and plans of the tourism organizations
- Providing security in cities and inter-travels for attracting tourists to the province
- Financing and providing the required facilitates for the development of necessary capacities and infrastructures beside the Holy shrines
- Launching websites and weblogs for introducing tourist attractions and virtual tourism development



- Creating service, welfare, hospitality, health, transport, trade and economic facilities to simplify the attraction of tourists and pilgrims
- Using the capabilities of Ramadan Month in attracting tourists
- Political, cultural, social advertisements in the field of introduction of pilgrimage customs and culture shrine, reverence for pilgrims and tourists
- Submitting plans and policies for urban management and tourism management for the creation of the necessary context in the Holy Shrine of Imamzadeh Ali Saleh (AS) and sustainable development of the religious tourism
- Providing social, psychological and cultural security for pilgrims
- Controlling and monitoring all services to pilgrims and tourists
- Creating an independent unit called religious tourism as the organization of tourism (operational and strategic)
- Encouraging investors to participate in the construction of infrastructure beside religious attractions

## 9. References

- i. Akbarian Ronizi, Saeed Reza. Mohammadpour Jaber, Morteza. Sepahvand, Farkhondeh 2013, the role of small cities in improving the quality of life of local residents: case study: Roniz District, Journal of rural studies, No. 4, Pp. 881-900.
- ii. Pourahmad, Ahmad. Faraji Molaei, Amin. Azimi, Azadeh. Lotfi, Sediqeh, 2012. the analysis of classification of the quality of urban life through SAW method, Journal of Human Geography Studies, No. 4, Pp.21-44
- iii. Pourtaheri, Mahdi. Haji Nejad, Ali. Ahmad, Ali.2009. "The effects of commercial tourism on the physical development of urban areas, "A case study on the city of Baneh" Human Geography Studies, No. 70, Pp. 91-109.
- iv. Taghavi, Mahdi. Gholipour Soleimani, Ali.2009. "Factors influencing the development of the tourism industry of Iran". Economic Journal, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, No. 3, Pp. 157-172.
- v. Khani, Fazileh. Ghasemi, Abootaleb. Jani, Somayeh. Ghanbari Nasab, Ali.2009. "The study of the effects of coastal tourism, based on surveying rural households Case study: Chamkhaleh Village, Langerud city", Journal of Human Geography Studies, First edition, No. 4. Pp. 51-64.
- vi. Kharazmi, Shahindokht.2004, the quality of life and the requirements of the digital age in Iran, Tehran, The World Economy Journal.
- vii. Rezvani, Mohammadreza. Matkan, Aliakbar. Mansourian, Hosein.Satari, Mohammadhosein.2009. "Development and measurement of indicators of the quality of urban life. A Case Study: Nurabad City, Lorestan Province," Urban and Regional Studies and Research, first edition, No. 2, Pp.87-110.
- viii. Rahnamayi, Mohammad Taqi. Faraji Molaei, Amin. Hataminejad, Hossein. Azimi, Azadeh. 2012. The Analysis of the concept of quality of life in the city of Babolsar, journal of geography and urban and regional planning, No. 5, 49-76.
- ix. Zahedi, Shamsosadat, Najafi, Malek Mohammed.2009. "Tourism and Sustainable Development: the necessity of execution of environmental protection in tourism development policies." Tourism Studies, No.11, Pp. 1-22.
- x. Shafia, Saeed. Shafia, Mohammad Ali; Kazemian, Mohammad Ali. 2013.The analysis of methods and results of studies on quality of urban life in Iran, Journal of Applied Sociology, No.50, 21-40.
- xi. Ziaee, Mahmoud; Torabiyani, Pooneh. 2010, "The Assessment of the acceptable level of negative social effects of tourists on local communities. A case study of rural settlements, of Parishan Lake", Geography, No. 27, Pp. 25-52.
- xii. Aligholizadeh Firouzjaji, Naser. Badri, Ali. Faraji Saboksar, Hasanali.2007. "the host society's attitude to environmental and economic effects of tourism in rural areas: A Case Study of the central district of Noshahr Town", Journal of Village and Development. No.1, Pp. 1-22.
- xiii. Fazelnia, Gharib. Hedayati, Salah.2010.Suitable strategies for tourism development of Zarivar lake, Geography and Development, No. 19, Pp. 145-170.
- xiv. 14. Faraji Molaei, Amin. Azimi, Azadeh. Ziari, Keramatollah. 2010. "the Analysis of the aspects of quality of life in urban areas of Iran", urban research and planning, No. 2, Pp. 1-16.
- xv. Ghadami, Mostafa. Aligholizadeh, Naser. Ramezanzadeh, Mahdi. 2010.The study of the role of tourism in the changes in quality of life at destination (a case study: Kelarabad Rural District, city Tonekabon Mazandaran), a journal of social studies of Iran, No. 3, 152- 163.
- xvi. Kokabi, Afshin. 2007. the assessment criteria of the quality of urban life in urban centers, the Journal of the identity of the city, No. 1, pp. 75-86.
- xvii. Lotfi, Sediqeh.2009.The concept of quality of urban life: definitions, dimensions and its measurement in urban planning, Journal of new attitudes of Human Geography, No. 4, 65-80.
- xviii. Mansouri, A., 2004. "The role of tourism in urban planning of Shiraz," Ph.D. Dissertation .Geography of geography and Urban Planning, University of Isfahan.
- xix. Nouri Kermani, Ali. Ziqi, Ayoob. Yari Hesar, Arastoo; Alaei, Masoud. 2009. "Urban Tourism and its practical relationship with Ecotourism,A case study: Kurdistan Province", geographical space, No. 26, Pp. 137-156.
- xx. Hezarjaribi, Jafar. Najafi, Malek Mohammed.2010. "Social trust and the development of tourism", Urban and Regional Studies and Research, No. 7, Pp. 53-70.
- xxi. Aref.F.(2011).The effect of tourism on quality of life:a case study of shiraz.iran.life science journal.vol.8.issue.Pp:26 -30.
- xxii. Andereck.k.Nyaupane.G.(2011).Exploring the nature of tourism and quality of life perceptions among residents (journal of travel research ,50(3):248-260.

- xxiii. Andriotis, k, Vaughan, R (2003) urban residents attitudes toward tourism development: the case of crete. journal of travel research (42):172-175.
- xxiv. Choi, H (2003). Measurement of Sustainable Development Progress for Managing Community Tourism,
- xxv. Holjeva, Ivan ka (2003) A vision of tourism and the hotel industry in the 21 century, hospitality management, 22:129-134.
- xxvi. [http: www.google.com/search?hl=Fa&sit=&source=hp&ei=LHOGVEO](http://www.google.com/search?hl=Fa&sit=&source=hp&ei=LHOGVEO).
- xxvii. kim, k (2002) The effects of tourism impacts upon quality of life residents in the community (Virginia polytechnic Institute and state university black sbury, Virginia).
- xxviii. Liu, J. C., & Var, T. (1986). Resident attitudes toward tourism impacts in Hawaii. Annals of Tourism Research, 13(2), pp 193-214.
- xxix. Milman, A., & Pizam, A. (1988). Social impacts of tourism on central Florida. Annals of Tourism Research, 15(2), pp 191-204