

# The Identification and Prioritization of the Gastronomic Tourism Development Strategies

Parisa Saadat\*, Sepideh Aghayari

Department of Management, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

\*Corresponding author: Saadat.parisa@ut.ac.ir

**Abstract** The fabulous role of tourism industry in the growth of countries economy is undeniable. As a result, every country attempts to develop this industry in its territory. Undoubtedly, understanding of all the aspects of this industry and a thorough planning would greatly help the progress of each government. Due to the importance of breakdown of various types of tourism for all sectors, this study has considered the identification and prioritization of the gastronomic tourism development strategies. Iran is a historical country and every region has its unique style of cooking and its own history. Considering the potentiality of Iran in gastronomic tourism, we attempted to survey the expert attitudes on gastronomic tourism development strategies and rank them using the analytic hierarchy process (AHP). Unfortunately, gastronomic tourism has been disregarded, this study can provide good information for the planners and policy-makers.

**Keywords:** *Tourism, gastronomic tourism, prioritization, ranking, the analytic hierarchy process, AHP, strategy*

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## 1. Introduction

Due to the high level of contribution to economy, tourism has a special place in countries; many countries have been able to improve their situation and overcome their economic problems, such as low level of per capita income, high level of unemployment and shortage of foreign exchange earnings by the aid this industry [1]. Tourism makes use of the process of globalization and the continuing decline in the cost of travel. In 1950, 2.5 million international tourists are recorded, while this amount was 277 million in 1980, 438 million in 1990, 684 million in 2000, 904 million in 2007 and 922 million in 2008. From the year 1990, inbound international tourism has been increased 4.3 percent each year and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) predicts that this amount will continue to increase 4% per year over the next twenty years [2]. Accordingly, the people who are involved in this area, look for the guidelines for developing the tourism industry to consolidate their position in market. However, maybe the less noted point is that the rapidly changing and new environment of tourism needs ongoing researches to develop and introduce improved competitive strategies consistent with the demand changes of the industry [3].

During the first years of the twenty-first century, the tourism industry has undergone great changes; hence, tourists are looking for new destinations that provide them with unique and different experiences, and this issue has led to the emergence of a trend in the industry that tourists are more interested in non-traditional and less crowded places. This fact has caused great changes in mindset and needs of

tourists. Nowadays, tourists are looking for new experiences and senses. Moreover, in tourism, especially in cultural tourism, tourists use one of their five senses, visual sense. In fact, tourists are visitors of architecture, rural landscape, and the art displayed in museums. This means that tourists do not use their other senses enough. In response to the strong tendency towards visual aspects, tourists are seeking new kinds of travelling involving their other senses. Therefore, tourists should enjoy environment, local foods, and special events. As a result, gastronomic tourism has emerged so that tourists enjoy all their five-senses [4].

International organizations and those involved in the industry have presented various kinds of tourism based on different definitions; the most common ones are recreational, business, religious, health and sport tourism. Gastronomic tourism which has been known by other names such as "Wine and Gastronomic tourism" or "Gastronomic tourism", is one of the sub-categories of the tourism industry and is recently growing rapidly in the area of research and education [5]. Another name for this type of tourism is "Gourmet Tourism".

One of the attractions for tourists is familiarity with foods of different nations and tasting flavors that can perhaps never be repeated. Therefore, the food of any country can be considered one of the major tourist attractions. Tourists consider Iran as a country with rich cultural and historical legacy and usually they choose Iran as a destination for cultural tourism. Since local food is rooted in the culture and traditions of each nation [6], Iranian traditional food can introduce part of our culture to tourists. In fact, one of the strong points of Iran is its tremendously various kinds of foods that is due to the different ethnic groups and cultures.

The present study sought to answer the question that what the gastronomic tourism development strategies are and how their priorities are. In this study, first the strategies and criteria were found among the library-based resources and articles, then a decision tree was drawn and the questionnaire was designed using the analytic hierarchy process (AHP). The questionnaires were distributed among the experts and the results were analyzed and finally the strategies were ranked.

## 2. Literature Review

Tourism development can play an important role in the development of nations. The importance of tourism development can be considered from several perspectives: first, tourism development will lead to more interactions among different nations and by introducing different cultures to tourists and creating a mutual respect, it will provide a basis for world peace. Second, as economists consider tourism as an invisible export, this industry can contribute to the economic development of countries. Tourism industry is one of the most important tools for maintaining and promoting small businesses. Third, the industry can provide many new job opportunities and help to reduce the unemployment rate which is a big problem in our country. In fact, the most important reasons of governments for developing tourism are employment and profitability; and the forth perspective is that investors can benefit more quickly and reach their ROI in comparison to other industries.

Islamic republic of Iran has many tourist attraction (historical, religious, natural), however, due to the absence of effective policies, it has failed to achieve its proportionate share of the world tourism market. Therefore, many of the country's socio-economic problems that can be solved by tourism development, are still unresolved. So, it is necessary to examine the strategies for developing the tourism industry in Iran as well as studying the key challenges [7].

The overall tourism development strategies include:

- Security

The concepts of security and tourism have a reciprocal relation to each other. In other words, a safe country will have an active tourism industry, and it can provide employment for many people by investing in tourism sector. Tourism can play an important role in the economic development due to its capabilities in creating job opportunities and income [8].

- Strengthening the infrastructures
- Accurate and extensive advertising

Although a number of countries are in poor conditions in terms of tourism, historical and cultural attractions, they have entered the tourism industry; and by proper advertising and planning, they are increasing their income and the number of tourists visiting there. So, we can declare that the high revenues gaining from tourism are not obtained simply and without planning [9].

- Coordination with international standards
- And training skilled workforce

One of the points that must be noted when you make any decisions regarding the development of national tourism, is that national tourism development planning confirmed by economic, social and cultural development

planners, particularly the national development planners of culture and tourism is the most complex and sophisticated planning among other planning for economic development. National tourism including the country's tourism exchanges as well as domestic tourism among Iranians and foreign people residing in Iran, is one of the most major commercial sectors. Investing in tourism industry creates job opportunities; moreover, tourism development causes economic balance in the region, balanced distribution of income and increase in invisible export revenues more than any other fields. Tourism is the only kind of trade between two countries that low-income country would gain its profit more. To improve the economy of the deprived countries, the easiest way is to discover the tourist attractions of the area and use them [10].

Tourism is not only about going to travel and visit the natural and man-made places, but also enjoying the taste of new and sometimes unrepeatable experiences. Various aspects and types of tourism can be studied. Sometimes tourists travel for the purpose of visiting friends and family, sometimes for treatment, sometimes for visiting the historical sites and in other occasions people travel for doing some business jobs. But despite the differences between the various types of tourism, one of the striking similarities between all of them is eating food. The importance of food is perfectly understandable through the memories of tourists after they have returned home. Travelers frequently talk about the food they have eaten during their travel or their new experiences. From the economic perspective, nearly 100% of the tourists spend money on eating and restaurant business is largely dependent on tourists. In today's competitive world, every tourist destination is looking for a competitive advantage to distinguish themselves from other destinations. Local foods are specific to a certain area, so it can be used as a marketing tool to attract more tourists.

Eating out has become a recreation, and food is not only for satisfying the hunger, but also a kind of entertainment. The chart related to tourists published by the United States Department of Commerce, office of travel and tourism industries (OTTI), shows that eating is the second favorite activity of foreign tourists that have visited the United States and also the first favorite activity of Americans visiting other countries [11].

Not all the relations between food and tourism can be called gastronomic tourism. Gastronomic tourism can be attributed to the activities of tourists who travel primarily for the purpose of food. This activity can be done in rural or urban areas. However, gastronomic tourism is usually important for rural places, because the relationship between food and tourism provides good opportunity for developing the products and marketing and usually flourishes local agencies [12].

Following the recognition of the growing importance and attractiveness of gastronomic tourism for local communities and regions, the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) have attempted to develop food recipes as a tourism product in Canada in 2002. CTC declares that gastronomic tourism has the potentiality of increasing the length of stay and number of visits to the country. It must be considered that any activity during travel may be arbitrary, but eating is not [13].

There are several definitions for gastronomic tourism, but most of these definitions refer to activities that attract tourists to specific aspects of food and beverage. For the first time in 1998, Long used the term “gastronomic tourism” to present the idea of the experiences of foreign countries by tasting their cuisine. She stated that gastronomic tourism is about discovery of the culture and history through activities related to food and creation of a memorable experience. CTC (2002) defined gastronomic tourism as thousands of activities related to food and drinks which is designed for tourists and includes the discovery of food culture of a society. Wolf (2004) suggested that gastronomic tourism is in the heart of Agritourism (including spending holidays in farms, visiting farmers’ markets, and other similar activities) and emphasizes especially on searching, enjoying and preparation of food and beverage. There can be seen a large variety of definitions, but the common concept among all these definitions is that gastronomic tourism do not qualify only to eating in restaurants during travel, but it also refers to a wide range of food experiences focusing on cuisine, beverages, local foods or other aspects of local cultures [14].

According to the definition presented by Ignatov and Smith, gastronomic tourism refers to the travels in which tourists buy and use local foods (including beverages), or observe and study the food production process, so that it would become a major activity and motivation for travelling [15]. Also, according to the definition of the World Gastronomic Tourism Association, gastronomic tourism is the experience of enjoying the pleasure of drinking and eating certain foods and drinks and memorable travels.

Focusing on local foods of a region and using it as a tourist attraction, can have positive economic impacts as well as it can promote and present the food culture of that region. Tourists who travel to become familiar with the culture and customs of a region, are more involved in the culture of local people by eating their food. Gastronomic tourism is one of the cultural aspects of tourism. Raw materials, the recipe of cooking and even serving food show the traditions of a society. The effect of a good meal on a trip and improving the quality of experience is obvious to everyone. Undoubtedly, tourists satisfied with their experiences are sources of good advertising after returning home and telling about their enjoyable travel and flavors which is rooted in the rich culture of that area.

Since the creation of human civilization, Iran has been invaded and conquered by many nations. Therefore, our culture and subsequently our food have changed frequently. Iran has substantially influenced the menu of its invading or neighboring countries, as much as it has borrowed its recipes and ingredients, as sometimes it is difficult to recognize that for instance stuffed meatball or dolma have had Turkish or Persian origin. Indian cooking has a great impact on Iranian diet, as well as Turkish, Roman, Greek, Arabic and Afghani cooking. The variety and the effects of other countries’ cooking on our menu lead to its richness, and it can provide a good reason for tourists to be attracted to the unique and memorable food and drinks. The great potentiality of Iran in gastronomic tourism is an issue which is less noted and we can say that tourists have insufficient information about Persian food culture.

There have been few researches carried out about gastronomic tourism development strategies. One of these researches was conducted by Rebeca Leheup et al. in one of the cities of Canada, Ontario [16]. In this study, researchers examined the conditions and strategies for developing gastronomic tourism of Ontario. And finally, they have reached to some strategies which have been used in this study. WTTC has also presented some strategies downloadable in its website [17]. The following strategies were mostly obtained from these two sources [18].

**Table 1. Gastronomic tourism development strategies**

1. Providing supporting conditions and rules for gastronomic tourism development
2. Improving the health status of gastronomic tourism destinations and restaurants
3. Holding international food festivals
4. Enhancing the attention of the cultural heritage and tourism officials to gastronomic tourism and its potentiality in tourist attraction
5. Doing survey on tourists’ interests
6. Selecting several local foods as a symbol for the city or country
7. Training skilled workforce
8. Training and familiarization of the workers of the tourism industry with local cultures and foods
9. Establishing relationship and interaction with the leading countries in tourism
10. Developing and providing specific areas for urban restaurants
11. Enhancing the quality of services of restaurants
12. Increasing the number of restaurants
13. Emphasizing on the promotion of tourism in cities that have greater dietary diversity
14. Choosing an appropriate market for gastronomic tourism

ACCEPT method is one of the most practical methods of multi-criteria decision-making for prioritizing strategies in situations where there are multiple compensatory criteria for choosing and selection of strategies. In fact, this method is a method based on compensatory methods. In methods based on compensatory measures, deficiencies in one index can be compensated by the strength of other indexes. ACCEPT method evaluates the strategies based on the following six criteria.

**Table 2. Criteria for evaluating gastronomic tourism development strategies**

1. Providing supporting conditions and rules for gastronomic tourism development
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### 3. Methodology

With respect to previous studies and the nature of the issue under discussion, the prevailing approach here is descriptive analytic [19]. As of subjectivity, this study is an applied one and documentation, library works and field studies are applied for data collection. In regard of prioritization, among the 4 chosen villages, the data is gathered based on the theoretical aspects and then criteria definitions in tourism development are determined. This research is an applied research that uses qualitative and quantitative data. The research is based on AHP and TOPSIS methods [20]. In the beginning, researchers did library studies and some interviews with experts. Then the criteria for selecting an area for tourism investment were extracted. This step was done very carefully to make sure all criteria and sub-criteria has features such as comprehensibility, meaningfulness, proportionality with

reality, relation to the subject and scientific credibility. After outlining the decision tree, weighting of criteria and sub-criteria was done in the range of 0 to 9, using a questionnaire based on AHP method for experts.

This study is a descriptive-analytic research. The statistical population of this study consisted of five experts in the field of tourism planning and management [21,22,23]. The questionnaire was designed by the AHP method [23,24]. The experts were asked to score each of these strategies and determine the priority of each of them [25,26,27,28,29]. The geometric mean of every strategy was calculated and the weight of each of the strategies were obtained with Microsoft Excel and then the priorities were calculated. The stages of this research is presented in the chart below [30,31,32,33].

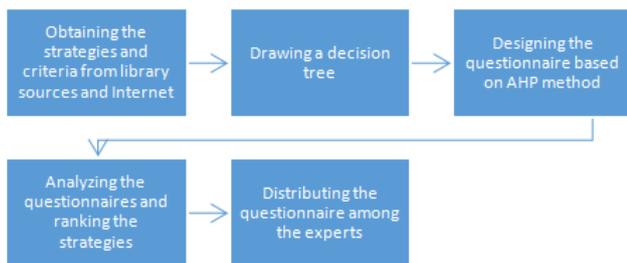


Chart 1. The processes of the research

### 3.1. Describing the Research Model

The AHP model is one of the most practical models of multi-criteria decision-making which is presented by an Iraqi-born man named “Thomas L. Saaty” in 1980s [30,31,32,33]. In this model, complex problems are broken down into simplified and hierarchical elements in line with the study objective [34-40].

In the AHP method, there are three basic principles:

1. Drawing a hierarchical tree (dividing the problem into smaller parts)
2. Establishing and identifying priorities (paired comparison between the various criteria and the priority of one criteria over the other ones)
3. The logical consistency of judgments (relations between components in a compatible manner) [41,42,43,44,45]

### 4. Data Analysis and Results

In this study, we tried to examine and plan the importance and priority of all the food tourism development strategies based on AHP method [46,47,48,49]. In this study, food tourism development can be divided into fourteen strategies and six criteria. The strategies include: Providing supporting conditions and rules for food tourism development, improving the health status of food tourism destinations and restaurants, holding international food festivals, enhancing the attention of the cultural heritage and tourism officials to food tourism and its potentiality in tourist attraction, doing survey on tourists’ interests, selecting several local foods as a symbol for the city or country, training skilled workforce, training and familiarization of the workers of the tourism industry with local cultures and foods,

establishing relationship and interaction with the leading countries in tourism, developing and providing specific areas for urban restaurants, enhancing the quality of services of restaurants, increasing the number of restaurants, emphasizing on the promotion of tourism in cities that have greater dietary diversity, choosing an appropriate market for food tourism. The criteria of this study are: attainability, costing, complication, effectiveness, popularity and timing. Thus, a hierarchical tree must be drawn in order to determine the strategies and criteria (chart 2).

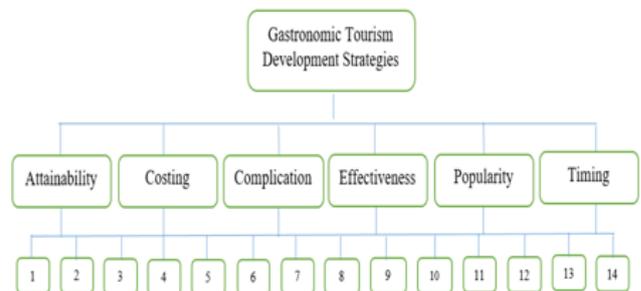


Chart 2. Hierarchical tree of food tourism development strategies and criteria

After drawing the decision tree, the questionnaires were distributed among five experts in the field of tourism planning [50,51,52,53,54]. They were asked to compare the strategies and criteria mutually. The experts were asked to score based on the fundamental 1-9 scale of absolute numbers (Table 3).

Table 3. The fundamental 1-9 scale of absolute numbers

Score	Definition
1	Equal importance
3	Moderate importance
5	Strong importance
7	Very strong
9	Extreme importance
2-4-6-8	Intermediate preferences

Considering that the experts had different ideas about the criteria and strategies, the geometric mean of ratings were calculated. Scoring was calculated using Microsoft Excel. The geometric mean of the criteria has presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The geographic mean of the criteria

Criteria	A	C	C	E	P	T
Attainability	1	1.12	1.16	0.87	1.78	1.86
Costing	3.00	1	2.17	1.46	0.80	1.62
Complication	0.86	0.46	1	1.48	1.70	2.34
Effectiveness	1.15	0.68	0.67	1	1.66	2.52
Popularity	0.56	1.24	0.59	0.60	1	1.58
Timing	0.54	0.62	0.43	0.40	0.63	1
sum	7.10	5.11	6.01	5.81	7.58	10.92

After obtaining the expert scores on these criteria and strategies, calculating the geometric mean, and converting them into a questionnaire, all the data were normalized into an interval of 0 to 1 (Table 5-Table 10).

**Table 5. The comparison of the strategies based on Attainability**

Attainability	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	S 6	S 7	S 8	S 9	S 10	S 11	S 12	S 13	S 14	mean
S 1	0.093	0.103	0.142	0.037	0.145	0.082	0.124	0.145	0.121	0.044	0.048	0.063	0.148	0.072	0.098
S 2	0.073	0.081	0.228	0.212	0.112	0.173	0.111	0.087	0.026	0.037	0.031	0.074	0.058	0.091	0.100
S 3	0.060	0.032	0.091	0.146	0.134	0.133	0.088	0.133	0.183	0.138	0.119	0.083	0.064	0.050	0.104
S 4	0.179	0.028	0.045	0.072	0.094	0.096	0.079	0.145	0.038	0.103	0.063	0.044	0.108	0.076	0.084
S 5	0.049	0.056	0.053	0.059	0.077	0.054	0.111	0.045	0.104	0.117	0.129	0.159	0.097	0.101	0.087
S 6	0.062	0.026	0.038	0.042	0.078	0.055	0.047	0.027	0.085	0.101	0.163	0.074	0.079	0.056	0.067
S 7	0.052	0.050	0.072	0.063	0.048	0.081	0.069	0.098	0.075	0.121	0.124	0.061	0.027	0.059	0.071
S 8	0.045	0.066	0.048	0.035	0.120	0.142	0.050	0.070	0.123	0.093	0.084	0.073	0.067	0.055	0.077
S 9	0.042	0.171	0.028	0.106	0.041	0.036	0.051	0.032	0.055	0.055	0.045	0.100	0.092	0.082	0.067
S 10	0.114	0.118	0.036	0.038	0.036	0.030	0.031	0.041	0.054	0.054	0.041	0.121	0.076	0.099	0.064
S 11	0.092	0.125	0.036	0.055	0.028	0.016	0.026	0.039	0.059	0.062	0.047	0.039	0.061	0.084	0.055
S 12	0.058	0.043	0.043	0.065	0.019	0.030	0.045	0.038	0.022	0.018	0.048	0.040	0.036	0.089	0.042
S 13	0.029	0.065	0.067	0.031	0.037	0.033	0.121	0.049	0.028	0.033	0.036	0.050	0.046	0.046	0.048
S 14	0.051	0.035	0.073	0.038	0.030	0.040	0.047	0.051	0.027	0.022	0.022	0.018	0.040	0.040	0.038

**Table 6. The comparison of the strategies based on costing**

Costing	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	S 6	S 7	S 8	S 9	S 10	S 11	S 12	S 13	S 14	mean
S 1	0.065	0.067	0.052	0.027	0.077	0.059	0.057	0.023	0.047	0.152	0.120	0.088	0.073	0.125	0.074
S 2	0.072	0.074	0.089	0.058	0.145	0.096	0.105	0.041	0.137	0.058	0.026	0.058	0.045	0.103	0.079
S 3	0.082	0.055	0.066	0.136	0.046	0.103	0.032	0.047	0.155	0.081	0.045	0.036	0.040	0.068	0.071
S 4	0.135	0.072	0.027	0.057	0.055	0.088	0.142	0.043	0.042	0.021	0.079	0.075	0.107	0.018	0.069
S 5	0.065	0.040	0.111	0.080	0.078	0.163	0.153	0.170	0.038	0.123	0.052	0.041	0.062	0.063	0.088
S 6	0.080	0.056	0.046	0.046	0.034	0.072	0.119	0.140	0.074	0.053	0.038	0.117	0.147	0.109	0.081
S 7	0.057	0.036	0.105	0.020	0.026	0.031	0.051	0.171	0.065	0.103	0.042	0.029	0.109	0.076	0.066
S 8	0.174	0.113	0.089	0.081	0.029	0.032	0.018	0.062	0.040	0.036	0.164	0.129	0.143	0.099	0.086
S 9	0.095	0.037	0.029	0.093	0.140	0.067	0.054	0.106	0.068	0.080	0.091	0.070	0.065	0.025	0.073
S 10	0.022	0.066	0.042	0.136	0.033	0.070	0.025	0.090	0.044	0.051	0.116	0.084	0.030	0.028	0.060
S 11	0.035	0.182	0.095	0.046	0.097	0.124	0.079	0.025	0.048	0.029	0.065	0.098	0.046	0.064	0.074
S 12	0.046	0.080	0.115	0.047	0.118	0.038	0.110	0.030	0.061	0.038	0.041	0.062	0.037	0.120	0.067
S 13	0.048	0.088	0.090	0.028	0.067	0.026	0.025	0.023	0.057	0.093	0.075	0.090	0.054	0.057	0.059
S 14	0.023	0.032	0.044	0.143	0.055	0.030	0.030	0.028	0.124	0.083	0.045	0.023	0.042	0.045	0.053

**Table 7. The comparison of the strategies based on complication**

Complication	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	S 6	S 7	S 8	S 9	S 10	S 11	S 12	S 13	S 14	mean
S 1	0.069	0.070	0.051	0.056	0.056	0.113	0.165	0.036	0.157	0.030	0.096	0.055	0.048	0.066	0.076
S 2	0.057	0.057	0.043	0.151	0.081	0.022	0.040	0.078	0.032	0.125	0.019	0.068	0.119	0.081	0.070
S 3	0.113	0.110	0.084	0.074	0.033	0.100	0.079	0.071	0.063	0.099	0.062	0.048	0.101	0.130	0.083
S 4	0.081	0.025	0.075	0.066	0.073	0.054	0.092	0.092	0.147	0.020	0.061	0.142	0.033	0.081	0.074
S 5	0.074	0.043	0.154	0.055	0.060	0.035	0.067	0.059	0.110	0.024	0.038	0.035	0.078	0.059	0.064
S 6	0.032	0.134	0.044	0.064	0.090	0.052	0.060	0.037	0.016	0.096	0.162	0.056	0.033	0.044	0.066
S 7	0.029	0.097	0.072	0.050	0.062	0.060	0.069	0.064	0.044	0.059	0.042	0.094	0.126	0.108	0.070
S 8	0.135	0.052	0.084	0.051	0.073	0.099	0.076	0.071	0.027	0.027	0.103	0.048	0.105	0.096	0.075
S 9	0.023	0.096	0.071	0.024	0.029	0.180	0.083	0.143	0.053	0.021	0.031	0.143	0.064	0.059	0.073
S 10	0.103	0.020	0.038	0.152	0.114	0.024	0.052	0.115	0.114	0.045	0.090	0.039	0.019	0.017	0.067
S 11	0.037	0.150	0.069	0.056	0.080	0.016	0.084	0.035	0.088	0.025	0.051	0.039	0.111	0.035	0.063
S 12	0.084	0.056	0.116	0.031	0.116	0.063	0.049	0.098	0.025	0.077	0.087	0.067	0.059	0.055	0.070
S 13	0.067	0.022	0.039	0.093	0.036	0.073	0.025	0.032	0.039	0.110	0.022	0.053	0.047	0.076	0.052
S 14	0.097	0.066	0.060	0.076	0.096	0.109	0.059	0.069	0.084	0.242	0.136	0.113	0.057	0.093	0.097

**Table 8. The comparison of the strategies based on effectiveness**

Effectiveness	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	S 6	S 7	S 8	S 9	S 10	S 11	S 12	S 13	S 14	mean
S 1	0.050	0.046	0.071	0.022	0.036	0.089	0.032	0.154	0.029	0.025	0.058	0.042	0.042	0.069	0.055
S 2	0.073	0.067	0.204	0.116	0.082	0.046	0.073	0.036	0.035	0.071	0.040	0.092	0.090	0.035	0.076
S 3	0.049	0.023	0.070	0.119	0.050	0.036	0.166	0.156	0.043	0.161	0.172	0.043	0.098	0.094	0.091
S 4	0.085	0.022	0.022	0.038	0.024	0.061	0.033	0.023	0.152	0.029	0.016	0.041	0.088	0.046	0.049
S 5	0.078	0.045	0.078	0.086	0.055	0.043	0.023	0.047	0.030	0.057	0.037	0.112	0.052	0.055	0.057
S 6	0.034	0.086	0.118	0.037	0.077	0.060	0.044	0.026	0.030	0.040	0.053	0.046	0.081	0.136	0.062
S 7	0.090	0.052	0.024	0.066	0.139	0.077	0.057	0.051	0.042	0.043	0.036	0.085	0.033	0.095	0.064
S 8	0.017	0.094	0.023	0.083	0.060	0.117	0.058	0.051	0.052	0.075	0.076	0.050	0.040	0.036	0.059
S 9	0.090	0.100	0.085	0.013	0.097	0.105	0.070	0.051	0.052	0.028	0.027	0.031	0.031	0.148	0.066
S 10	0.118	0.054	0.025	0.076	0.056	0.088	0.077	0.040	0.106	0.058	0.026	0.073	0.117	0.035	0.068
S 11	0.062	0.118	0.029	0.167	0.106	0.081	0.114	0.048	0.137	0.159	0.072	0.037	0.047	0.058	0.088
S 12	0.085	0.051	0.116	0.065	0.035	0.092	0.047	0.072	0.118	0.057	0.139	0.071	0.044	0.047	0.074
S 13	0.103	0.064	0.063	0.037	0.091	0.064	0.150	0.112	0.143	0.043	0.133	0.138	0.087	0.054	0.092
S 14	0.067	0.178	0.069	0.075	0.093	0.041	0.056	0.133	0.032	0.153	0.114	0.139	0.150	0.093	0.099

**Table 9. The comparison of the strategies based on popularity**

Popularity	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	S 6	S 7	S 8	S 9	S 10	S 11	S 12	S 13	S 14	mean
S 1	0.041	0.046	0.106	0.053	0.092	0.053	0.029	0.014	0.052	0.026	0.011	0.073	0.027	0.072	0.050
S 2	0.049	0.054	0.081	0.050	0.043	0.078	0.033	0.051	0.012	0.043	0.110	0.040	0.140	0.033	0.058
S 3	0.025	0.043	0.064	0.042	0.060	0.122	0.066	0.126	0.093	0.044	0.159	0.028	0.060	0.030	0.069
S 4	0.037	0.051	0.073	0.047	0.063	0.064	0.017	0.018	0.108	0.063	0.038	0.014	0.067	0.095	0.054
S 5	0.033	0.093	0.078	0.055	0.073	0.023	0.054	0.042	0.060	0.068	0.174	0.076	0.060	0.076	0.069
S 6	0.034	0.031	0.023	0.033	0.140	0.044	0.013	0.122	0.022	0.098	0.042	0.137	0.028	0.029	0.057
S 7	0.069	0.080	0.047	0.131	0.066	0.164	0.048	0.046	0.015	0.026	0.028	0.094	0.015	0.128	0.068
S 8	0.168	0.061	0.029	0.151	0.100	0.021	0.061	0.058	0.046	0.040	0.017	0.086	0.067	0.046	0.068
S 9	0.041	0.227	0.035	0.022	0.062	0.103	0.163	0.064	0.051	0.120	0.161	0.014	0.019	0.062	0.082
S 10	0.081	0.065	0.076	0.038	0.055	0.023	0.094	0.075	0.022	0.051	0.039	0.012	0.096	0.110	0.060
S 11	0.228	0.029	0.024	0.074	0.025	0.062	0.103	0.197	0.019	0.078	0.059	0.044	0.256	0.063	0.090
S 12	0.037	0.088	0.145	0.217	0.062	0.021	0.033	0.043	0.230	0.271	0.087	0.064	0.018	0.122	0.103
S 13	0.124	0.032	0.088	0.057	0.100	0.129	0.262	0.070	0.220	0.044	0.019	0.286	0.082	0.074	0.113
S 14	0.035	0.099	0.130	0.030	0.058	0.092	0.023	0.076	0.050	0.028	0.057	0.032	0.067	0.060	0.060

**Table 10. The comparison of the strategies based on timing**

Timing	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	S 6	S 7	S 8	S 9	S 10	S 11	S 12	S 13	S 14	mean
S 1	0.052	0.028	0.140	0.111	0.070	0.022	0.085	0.071	0.041	0.054	0.124	0.157	0.068	0.012	0.074
S 2	0.082	0.045	0.145	0.028	0.019	0.024	0.039	0.027	0.047	0.059	0.024	0.076	0.022	0.059	0.050
S 3	0.018	0.015	0.049	0.020	0.048	0.096	0.057	0.123	0.037	0.074	0.183	0.116	0.035	0.032	0.065
S 4	0.026	0.091	0.139	0.057	0.017	0.083	0.016	0.126	0.071	0.034	0.085	0.030	0.147	0.077	0.071
S 5	0.040	0.131	0.056	0.180	0.054	0.015	0.016	0.102	0.038	0.079	0.038	0.030	0.086	0.065	0.066
S 6	0.108	0.086	0.024	0.031	0.169	0.046	0.019	0.022	0.043	0.112	0.050	0.016	0.118	0.027	0.062
S 7	0.029	0.055	0.041	0.166	0.162	0.117	0.048	0.019	0.021	0.020	0.055	0.032	0.037	0.051	0.061
S 8	0.040	0.090	0.022	0.025	0.029	0.113	0.140	0.055	0.064	0.103	0.061	0.040	0.073	0.026	0.063
S 9	0.069	0.052	0.072	0.043	0.077	0.058	0.124	0.047	0.054	0.023	0.018	0.042	0.030	0.094	0.057
S 10	0.055	0.043	0.038	0.097	0.040	0.024	0.140	0.031	0.136	0.058	0.027	0.123	0.022	0.187	0.073
S 11	0.027	0.121	0.018	0.044	0.094	0.061	0.057	0.059	0.197	0.142	0.066	0.022	0.070	0.215	0.085
S 12	0.019	0.034	0.025	0.109	0.104	0.167	0.087	0.081	0.075	0.027	0.176	0.058	0.032	0.038	0.074
S 13	0.054	0.144	0.098	0.027	0.044	0.028	0.091	0.053	0.128	0.189	0.066	0.127	0.071	0.032	0.082
S 14	0.380	0.064	0.133	0.063	0.071	0.148	0.081	0.183	0.049	0.026	0.026	0.131	0.188	0.086	0.116

Table 11. Scoring and ranking of the strategies based on 6 criteria

	Attainability	Costing	Complication	Effectiveness	Popularity	Timing	Score	Ranking
S 1	0.098	0.074	0.076	0.055	0.049	0.074	0.072099	7
S 2	0.100	0.079	0.070	0.076	0.058	0.050	0.075288	2
S 3	0.104	0.071	0.083	0.091	0.070	0.065	0.082066	1
S 4	0.084	0.069	0.074	0.049	0.054	0.071	0.067273	12
S 5	0.087	0.088	0.064	0.057	0.068	0.066	0.073741	4
S 6	0.067	0.081	0.066	0.062	0.057	0.062	0.067532	11
S 7	0.071	0.066	0.070	0.064	0.068	0.061	0.067058	13
S 8	0.077	0.086	0.075	0.059	0.068	0.063	0.073434	5
S 9	0.067	0.073	0.073	0.066	0.081	0.057	0.070411	9
S 10	0.064	0.060	0.067	0.068	0.059	0.073	0.064239	14
S 11	0.055	0.074	0.063	0.088	0.090	0.085	0.073959	3
S 12	0.042	0.067	0.070	0.074	0.105	0.074	0.069998	10
S 13	0.048	0.059	0.052	0.092	0.113	0.082	0.070504	8
S 14	0.038	0.053	0.097	0.099	0.059	0.116	0.072398	6
weights	0.18	0.25	0.18	0.17	0.13	0.08		

0.067 in the thirteenth rate and the last strategy is Developing and providing specific areas for urban restaurants with a mean of 0.064 [83-89].

## 5. Conclusion

Increasing job opportunities is one of the main objectives of governments. Since the food and restaurant industry has a low cost, local people can enter this business easily and this industry can be highly profitable for them [55-60]. As a result, supporting and developing food tourism can be a source of employment and profit for the local community, and also it adds to the publicity of Iran and boost the tourism industry [61,62,63,64].

In this regards, the government should support this field and consider some strategies in their future works [65-70]. This study shows that the 3<sup>rd</sup> strategy, holding international food festivals, with the score of 0.082 has the highest importance. Holding these kinds of festivals enhances the publicity of Iran. The second rate belongs to the second strategy, improving the health status of food tourism destinations and restaurants, with the score of 0.075 [71,72,73,74]. Enhancing the quality of services of restaurants, with the score of 0.073 rates the third. Doing survey on tourists' interests, with a mean of 0.073 is the fourth important strategy [75-82].

The next priorities include training and familiarization of the workers of the tourism industry with local cultures and foods with the score of 0.073 in the fifth rate, choosing an appropriate market for food tourism with the score of 0.072.

In the sixth rate, providing supporting conditions and rules for food tourism development with the score of 0.072 in the seventh rate, emphasizing on the promotion of tourism in cities that have greater dietary diversity with the score of 0.070 in the eighth rate, establishing relationship and interaction with the leading countries in tourism with the score of 0.070 in the ninth rate, increasing the number of restaurants with the score of 0.069 in the tenth rate, selecting several local foods as a symbol for the city or country with the score of 0.067 in the eleventh rate, enhancing the attention of the cultural heritage and tourism officials to food tourism and its potentiality in tourist attraction with the score of 0.067 in the twelfth rate, training skilled workforce with a mean of

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