

Exploring the Link Between Place Attachment and the Proliferation of Second Homes in Rural Tourism Destinations: Evidence from Mazandaran, Iran

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Abstract

Purpose- This study examines the relationship between place attachment and the proliferation of second homes in rural tourism destinations, focusing on Mazandaran Province, Iran. It specifically investigates the effects of place dependence, place identity, social bonding, and nature bonding on place attachment and the effect of place attachment on second-home tourism.

Design/Methodology/Approach- The study uses a quantitative, descriptive-analytical approach. Data were collected from second-home owners in Mazandaran Province. 404 completed questionnaires were obtained through snowball sampling. Data were analyzed with Smart PLS 4.

Findings: The results show that place identity, social bonding, and nature bonding have significant positive effects on place attachment, while place dependence has no significant effect. Nature bonding is the strongest predictor of place attachment. Place attachment also has a strong positive effect on second-home tourism. Overall, emotional, social, and nature-based connections are more influential than purely functional relationships.

Research Limitations/Implications- The main limitations are the lack of a complete sampling frame for second-home owners and the study's focus on one province. Future research should compare different rural and coastal destinations and examine factors such as the duration and frequency of second-home use, environmental changes, and relationships with host communities.

Practical Implications- Destination managers should emphasize Mazandaran's natural and cultural assets, protect natural landscapes, strengthen interaction between second-home owners and local communities, and develop marketing strategies based on emotional and experiential values rather than focusing only on functional amenities.

Originality/Value- The study's originality lies in examining the functional, symbolic, social, and nature-based dimensions of place attachment simultaneously and linking them to second-home tourism in a rural Iranian context. The finding that nature bonding is the strongest predictor, while place dependence is not significant, provides a distinctive contribution to understanding second-home demand.

Keywords- Place attachment, Second-home tourism, Rural tourism, Mazandaran.

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1. Introduction

The main motivation for tourists to travel is to escape from daily life and relax (Wang et al., 2025). As urbanization accelerates, the fast-paced lifestyle of contemporary society significantly affects individuals' physical and mental well-being. Mental fatigue, caused by the stresses and strains of everyday life, is a common complaint in today's society. As urban residents strive to meet the demands of city life, their physical, psychological, and social resources are at risk of becoming overstretched (Luo & Jiang, 2022). According to Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1995), restorative natural environments can help alleviate stress and lead to improvements in emotions and attention (Wang et al., 2025).

Rural tourism is one of the most popular types of tourism (Nasiri Hendekhkhaleh et al., 2022), and it pays attention to creating new opportunities in service performance through shaping spaces, reconstruction reconfiguration and processes (Nasiri Hendekhkhaleh et al., 2022). Among the patterns of tourism in rural areas is the tourism of second homes. Second home development in rural areas, especially in villages with the potentials such as pristine nature and proper pathways and facilities, has resulted in economic, environmental and social-cultural consequences (Firoznia et al., 2020). Since 1945, tourism of second homes has gained a lot of acceptance, the reasons for which have been low income, having free time, improving transportation facilities, the desire to use non-urban healthy recreation, and the desire to invest personal savings.

Place attachment is an affective bond that people establish with specific places where they prefer to remain and where they feel comfortable and secure. From a phenomenological perspective, place attachment develops through perceptions of everyday symbols, activities, experiences, and meanings and can deepen over time (Falahat, 2006; Mahmoodi et al., 2018). Place identity refers to the symbolic and emotional meanings through which individuals incorporate a place into their sense of self, whereas place dependence concerns the functional capacity of a setting to support desired activities (Proshansky et al., 1983; Raymond et al., 2010). These dimensions should therefore not

be treated as interchangeable: identity captures symbolic meaning, dependence captures functional utility, and social and nature bonding capture important relational dimensions of the place. A central theoretical debate concerns whether attachment is driven primarily by social relationships and community ties or by physical and environmental qualities. Earlier work emphasized social environments (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Lewicka, 2011), while more recent studies indicate that physical environments can also be highly influential and, in some contexts, may be more important than social environments (Li et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2012). This debate is particularly relevant to second-home tourism because owners simultaneously seek social familiarity, symbolic belonging, and contact with distinctive natural environments, while their functional need for a particular location may be less central than it is for permanent residents.

The novelty and originality of this study lie in integrating four complementary dimensions of place attachment -place dependence, place identity, social bonding, and nature bonding- within a single empirical model of second-home tourism in a rural destination. While previous studies have examined individual dimensions of place attachment or have focused on residents and conventional tourists, limited attention has been given to how these dimensions jointly shape place attachment among second-home owners. By examining their relative effects and testing the subsequent relationship between place attachment and second-home tourism in Mazandaran, the study provides context-specific evidence on whether symbolic, social, natural, or functional relationships with place are most salient in explaining second-home demand. The study therefore contributes to the literature by connecting the multidimensional theory of place attachment with the specific phenomenon of second-home tourism and by highlighting the potentially greater role of affective and experiential relationships with

nature than purely functional place dependence.

The present study addresses this debate by bringing together four complementary dimensions of place attachment—place dependence, place identity, social bonding, and nature bonding—and examining their relative contributions among second-home owners. The selection of these variables follows the person–process–place framework of [Scannell and Gifford \(2010\)](#): place identity reflects the person-related symbolic dimension, social bonding captures the relational and social process through which attachment is formed, and nature bonding represents the physical/environmental dimension of place. Place dependence is included as the functional dimension of the place. This integrated model makes it possible to distinguish between attachment based on what a place means, the relationships it enables, the natural qualities it provides, and the functions it performs. The study is especially relevant to Mazandaran because the province combines strong natural attractions with rural cultural and social environments that have encouraged second-home development. The analysis therefore tests not only whether the four dimensions matter, but also whether the relative pattern of their effects can reveal what kind of place attributes are most salient to second-home owners.

2. Research Theoretical Literature

2.1. Rural Tourism

Rural tourism generally refers to tourism activities in rural areas ([Dai, 2023](#)). Rural tourism, as one of the methods used to promote economic development and attract tourists to rural areas, can be considered as an opportunity for economic development and employment in rural areas ([UNWTO, 2022](#)). In the 1970s, the depression and decline of rural economic and social structures in developed countries made rural tourism a key tool for the revival of rural areas and achieved remarkable progress to this end ([Su, 2011](#); [Su et al., 2019](#); [Moradbakhsh, Hashemi and Pourahmad, 2026](#)). Starting in developed countries, rural tourism is now emerging in both developed and

developing countries ([Su et al., 2019](#)). Some of the advantages of rural tourism include experiencing life in a natural environment, getting acquainted with local culture and traditions, experiencing local cuisine, and also having the opportunity to buy local arts and crafts ([UNWTO, 2022](#)).

2.2. Second home tourism

Despite the fact that second homes are booming worldwide ([Nouza et al., 2015](#); [Roca, 2013](#)), particularly in North America and Western Europe ([Strapp, 1988](#)), and Nordic countries ([Nouza et al., 2015](#)), there is a shortage of academic research on the topic ([Hoogendoorn and Visser, 2015](#); [Visser, 2008](#); [Seraphin and Dosquet, 2020](#)).

Rural tourism and its follower second home tourism is the result of extensive economic, social and cultural changes in the society after World War II. In our country, especially in the mountainous areas adjacent to big cities, as well as on the shores of the Caspian Sea, second homes have been expanding for the purpose of spending leisure time ([Anabestani et al., 2017](#)). Despite the recent history of the formation of second homes in rural areas, the tourism of second homes has recently experienced a revival, which can be explained by considering the new patterns of economic production and consumption ([Williams & Hall, 2000](#)). This trend is also a reaction against the rural crisis caused by the expanding agricultural restructuring ([Müller, 2002](#)). In some countries, owning second homes is considered an inevitable part of new life, and for this reason, more villages are domestic tourism destinations ([Aleskogius, 1993](#)). The development of second home tourism as a type of tourism in rural areas has affected various dimensions of development; This effect is both positive and negative ([Aligholizadeh Firouzjaei et al., 2010](#); [Salehi Naasab, 2005](#)). As a form of tourism, second homes are associated with terms such as routine and novelty; inversion; back-to-nature; identity; surety, continuity; work; elitism; aspiration; and time and distance ([Jaakson, 1986](#)); vacation home; holiday home and leisure home ([Roca, 2013](#)). Similar to other forms of tourism, second home tourism

contributes to capital inflows; employment creation; income generation for small businesses such as grocery shops; restaurants; services and leisure companies; and construction companies (Hoogendoorn & Visser, 2015; Larsson & Müller, 2017; Visser, 2008), partly because second home owners tend to have more disposable income than local inhabitants (Larsson & Müller, 2017; Seraphin & Dosquet, 2020).

2.3. Place attachment

The interaction between man and place is examined in three cognitive, behavioral and emotional dimensions. The cognitive aspects of interaction are led to spatial perception, during which people recognize environmental elements and use them to navigate their way. Behavioral aspects of interaction refer to the activities and functional relationship between people and the environment. Affective engagement with a place refers to satisfaction and attachment to a place (Altman and Lowe, 1992). This connection can be so strong that it creates a link between the person and the components. In this regard, people's experiences are the main means of their perception. Place attachment as one of the levels of the sense of place, since the early 1980s and following the concept of place in the 1960s, was raised as one of the important concepts in the field of environmental psychology (Pourjafar et al, 2014). The sense of place in people can motivate them to take care of their living environment and to return or become close to meaningful places (Mahmoodi et al, 2018). Shumaker and Taylor (1983) defined place attachment as a positive emotional bond or connection between people and their residential environment (Shumaker and Taylor, 1983). In a seminal study, Relph, (1976) claimed that place attachment develops as a result of the activities and behaviors of people in a particular environment, and with other people in that environment. Also, Tuan (1977) defined place attachment as the connections people make with their environment. Guthey, Whiteman, and Elmes (2014) defined place attachment in terms of the attachments people make to place as a result of their daily activities, their imaginations, their real live experiences and by what they read about a place. Regardless of the lack of a universal definition for place attachment, most researchers agree that place

attachment is required if the place is to be successful (Shabak et al, 2015).

2.4. Place identity

Researchers interested in the biophysical dimension of place have placed considerable emphasis on a two-dimensional model of place attachment comprising of place identity and place dependence (Williams et al., 1992). Place identity refers to those dimensions of self, such as the mixture of feelings about specific physical settings and symbolic connections to place (Proshansky et al., 1983; Raymond et al, 2010). Place identity is the self-awareness of one's membership to a place related community, involving the emotional and evaluative significance of this membership (Belanche et al, 2021).

2.5. Place dependence

Place dependence refers to the functional or goal-directed connections to a setting; for example, it reflects the degree to which the physical setting provides conditions to support an intended use (Schreyer et al., 1981, Raymond et al, 2010). In fact, place dependence refers to a strong relationship between a person and a specific place, in which the quality of that place and the quality of alternative places are comparable to that place. The physical and functional quality of the place has a significant effect on the degree of dependence and belonging to the place as a bed for social activities and interactions (Ujang, 2012).

2.6. Social bonding

Most studies have focused on the social aspect of place attachment (Casakin et al., 2021, Lewicka, 2011, Scannell & Gifford, 2010, Sun et al., 2020, Verbrugge and van den Born, 2018). Social bonding includes people's desire to be members of a group, such as friends and family (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974, Mesch and Manor, 1998), as well as emotional connections based on history, interests, and common concerns (Raymond et al., 2010). In general, groups, families and members of society and similar cultures are common in place attachment. Place attachment is related to those activities that people do in their cultural conditions (Hashemnezhad et al, 2013).

2.7. Nature bonding

Nature is related to many aspects affecting place attachment and place identity, such as climate, recreation, landscape, familiarity (lack of change) and possibilities to engage in urban or rural lifestyles (Husband, 2005). Intimate contact with the natural world, contributes to form meaningful bonds and positive values toward the natural environment (Hinds and Sparks, 2008; Ramezanzadeh Lasboyee and Samian, 2025; Torabi et al, 2025). rural lifestyles offer unique opportunities to develop meaningful place identities more focused on recreation (e.g. outdoor activities), privacy (e.g. opportunities for isolation), and self-determination (e.g. higher control of a given place) than urban ones (Husband, 2005; Belanche et al, 2021).

2.8. Theoretical rationale and hypotheses

The four predictors are theoretically distinct but complementary. Place identity reflects the symbolic incorporation of a place into the self and is expected to strengthen attachment when individuals perceive the destination as part of who they are (Proshansky et al., 1983; Belanche et al., 2021). Place dependence, in contrast, is primarily functional: it reflects the extent to which a setting provides opportunities that are difficult to obtain elsewhere (Schreyer et al., 1981; Raymond et al., 2010). Social bonding represents attachment generated through family, friendship, community, shared history, and common interests (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Mesch & Manor, 1998), while nature bonding represents an affective relationship with landscape and the natural environment (Hinds & Sparks, 2008).

The expected influence of nature bonding deserves particular attention. Attention Restoration Theory proposes that contact with restorative natural environments can reduce mental fatigue and support psychological restoration (Kaplan, 1995). In rural destinations, landscapes, forests, coastlines, climate, and opportunities for outdoor recreation may therefore create affective value that extends beyond functional utility. This logic is consistent with evidence that affective connection

with nature contributes to meaningful environmental relationships (Hinds & Sparks, 2008). In Mazandaran, the combination of the Caspian coastline, forests, wetlands, waterfalls, and mountain landscapes may make nature a particularly salient source of place meaning. Accordingly, the study does not assume that nature bonding must always be the strongest determinant; rather, it tests whether its effect is comparatively strong in this specific rural second-home context.

The social-versus-physical debate also leads to a theoretically informative test of place dependence. If second-home owners primarily value a destination for the functions it performs—recreation, accessibility, privacy, or other practical uses—place dependence should contribute to attachment. However, second homes are often used intermittently and are associated with leisure, lifestyle, identity, and emotional meanings (Jaakson, 1986; Roca, 2013). Functional dependence may therefore be weaker than identity, social, and nature-based bonds in this context. The non-significance of place dependence, if observed, would not mean that physical characteristics are irrelevant; rather, it would indicate that the functional dimension of the physical setting is less important than the symbolic and affective meanings attached to that setting. This distinction provides a more precise way of interpreting the social-versus-physical debate.

Based on this theoretical rationale, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Place dependence has a positive and significant effect on place attachment.

H2: Place identity has a positive and significant effect on place attachment.

H3: Social bonding has a positive and significant effect on place attachment.

H4: Nature bonding has a positive and significant effect on place attachment.

H5: Place attachment has a positive and significant effect on second-home tourism.

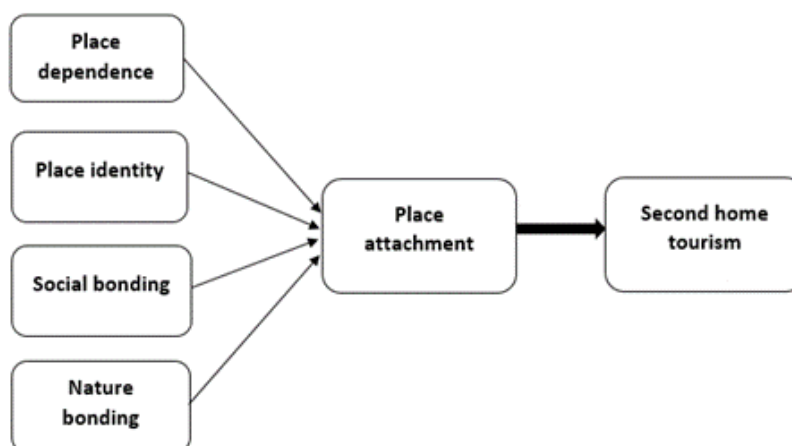


Figure 1. Conceptual model and hypothesized relationships

3. Research Methodology

This research is quantitative in nature and descriptive-analytical in terms of data analysis. Data were collected using library, documentary, field, and survey methods. The target population consisted of owners of second homes in Mazandaran Province. Because an official and complete sampling frame for all second-home owners was not available to the researchers, the population was treated as large/unknown for the purpose of initial sample-size estimation. This should be understood as a practical approximation rather than a literal claim that the population is infinite. In the sample size estimation method, since the statistical population is unlimited, the sample size was determined according to the Cochran's formula for an unlimited population:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

with

$Z = 1.96$ (representing a 95% confidence interval), $p = q = 0.5$, and d as the allowable margin of error (0.05). The formula yielded a required sample of 384. However, to ensure higher reliability, 404 questionnaires were collected for the final analysis.

Sampling procedure- A snowball sampling technique was employed in this study. Respondents were recruited from across Mazandaran Province, ensuring that the sample was not confined to a specific geographic location.

Questionnaire design and measurement- The questionnaire measured place dependence, place identity, social bonding, nature bonding, place attachment, and second-home tourism. The precise number of items used for each construct is detailed in Appendix A, located at the end of this article. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale.

Data analysis- The measurement and structural models were evaluated using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM was selected because the study is primarily predictive and examines a model with multiple latent constructs and a relatively complex set of relationships. Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS software, version 4.

For the measurement model, factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, Rho_A, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) were assessed. Convergent validity was considered satisfactory when AVE exceeded 0.50. For the structural model, bootstrapped t-statistics and p-values were used to evaluate the significance of the hypothesized paths; a two-tailed t-value above 1.96 and $p < 0.05$ were treated as evidence of statistical significance.

3.1 Geographical Scope of the Research

Mazandaran is located on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, Iran. It is bordered clockwise by Golestan, Semnan and Tehran provinces. This province also borders Qazvin and Gilan to the west. According to the latest country divisions,

Mazandaran has 22 counties, 57 cities, 57 districts, 132 villages and 3645 villages. Mazandaran province has an area of 24091.3 square kilometers and occupies about 1.46% of the country's area. This province consists of plain and mountainous parts. Mazandaran province has many tourism potentials such as Mazandaran Sea, 12 forest parks, 9 national parks and wildlife areas, 12 important waterfalls, 10 lakes and hundreds of rivers, 4 wetlands, mineral waters and more than 170 historical and national monuments, which

make this province It has become one of the most important tourist spots in Iran (FathTabar Firouzjah, 2011). Mazandaran province has many summer resorts such as Javaherdeh, Lavij, Lahijan, Kajur, Do Dange, Hazar Jarib and famous hot mineral waters such as Lavij, Larijan, Ramsar, Flaban and beautiful wetlands such as Miankale lagoon and peninsula. These attractions have increased the desire of people to have a second home in this province (Ourmozdi, 2007).

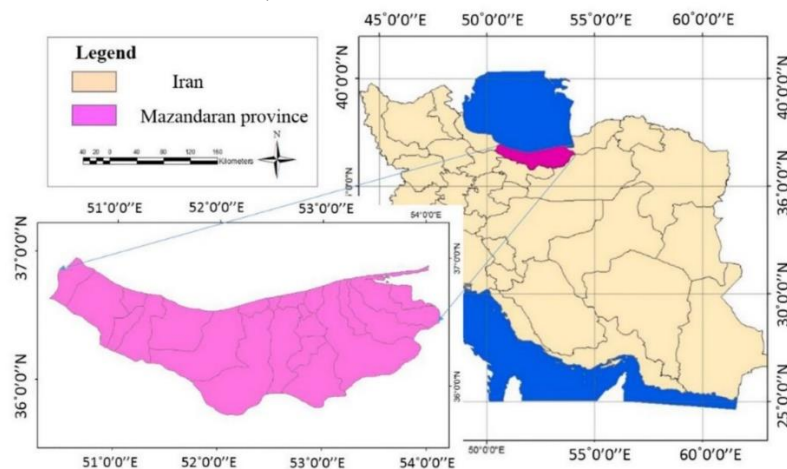


Figure 2. Geographical location of the studied area

Source: journals.sagepub.com

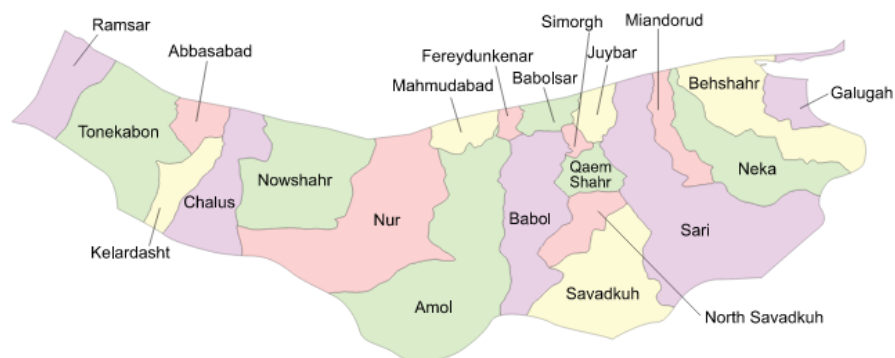


Figure 3. Map of Mazandaran province by city

Table 1. Variables related to research

Variable type	Name	objects	Source
Independent variable	Place dependence	place dependence refers to a strong relationship between a person and a specific place, in which the quality of that place and the quality of alternative places are comparable to that place.	Ujang, 2012
Independent variable	Place identity	Place identity is the self-awareness of one's membership to a place related community,	Belanche et al, 2021

Variable type	Name	objects	Source
		involving the emotional and evaluative significance of this membership.	
Independent variable	Social bonding	Social bonding includes people's desire to be members of a group, such as friends and family, as well as emotional connections based on history, interests, and common concerns.	Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974, Mesch and Manor, 1998
Independent variable	Nature bonding	Nature is related to many aspects affecting place attachment and place identity, such as climate, recreation, landscape, familiarity (lack of change) and possibilities to engage in urban or rural lifestyles.	Husband, 2005
Mediator	Place attachment	Place attachment can be defined as a positive emotional bond or connection between individuals and their residential environment.	Shumaker & Taylor, 1983
Dependent variable	Second home tourism	Rural tourism and its follower second home tourism is the result of extensive economic, social and cultural changes in the society after World War II. In our country, especially in the mountainous areas adjacent to big cities, as well as on the shores of the Caspian Sea, second homes have been expanding for the purpose of spending leisure time.	Anabestani et al,2017

4. Research Findings

4.1. Descriptive Indicators of the Study

The descriptive findings indicate that 48.3% of the respondents were male and 51.7% were female. In terms of age, 44.8% were 20–35 years old, 30.4%

were 36–50 years old, and 24.8% were above 50. Regarding education, respondents with a bachelor's degree represented the largest group (49.0%), whereas respondents with guidance-school education represented the smallest group (1.2%).

Table 2. Descriptive Characteristics (Gender, Age and Education) of the Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentages
Gender	Male	195	48.3
	Female	209	51.7
	Total	404	100.0
Age	20-35	181	44.8
	36-50	123	30.4
	Above 50	100	24.8
	Total	404	100.0
Education	Guidance school	5	1.2
	diploma	101	25.0
	Bachelor	198	49.0
	Master	87	21.5
	P.H.D and above	13	3.2
	Total	404	100.0

According to Table 3, 32.9% of respondents were private-sector employees, 4.7% were public-sector employees, 38.4% were self-

employed, 11.6% were retired, 10.4% were housewives, and 2.0% were unemployed.

Table 2. Job Status of Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentages
Job Status	Private sector employees	133	32.9
	Public sector employees	19	4.7
	self-employed	155	38.4
	retired	47	11.6
	housewives	42	10.4
	unemployed	8	2.0
	Total	404	100.0

As shown in Table 4, most respondents (60.4%) reported a monthly family income of more than 25

million tomans.

Table 4. The Monthly Income of the Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentages
The amount of family income	Less than 5 million tomans	1	2
	5 to 10 million tomans	6	1.5
	10 to 15 million tomans	18	4.5
	15 to 20 million tomans	62	15.3
	20 to 25 million tomans	73	18.1
	More than 25 million tomans	244	60.4
	Total	404	100.0

4.2. Inferential Findings

Examination of Factor Loadings of the Observed Variables- The factor loading of each observed item on its corresponding latent construct was examined. Following the study's screening criterion of 0.40, all retained items had factor

loadings above 0.40, indicating an acceptable relationship between the observed indicators and their respective constructs.

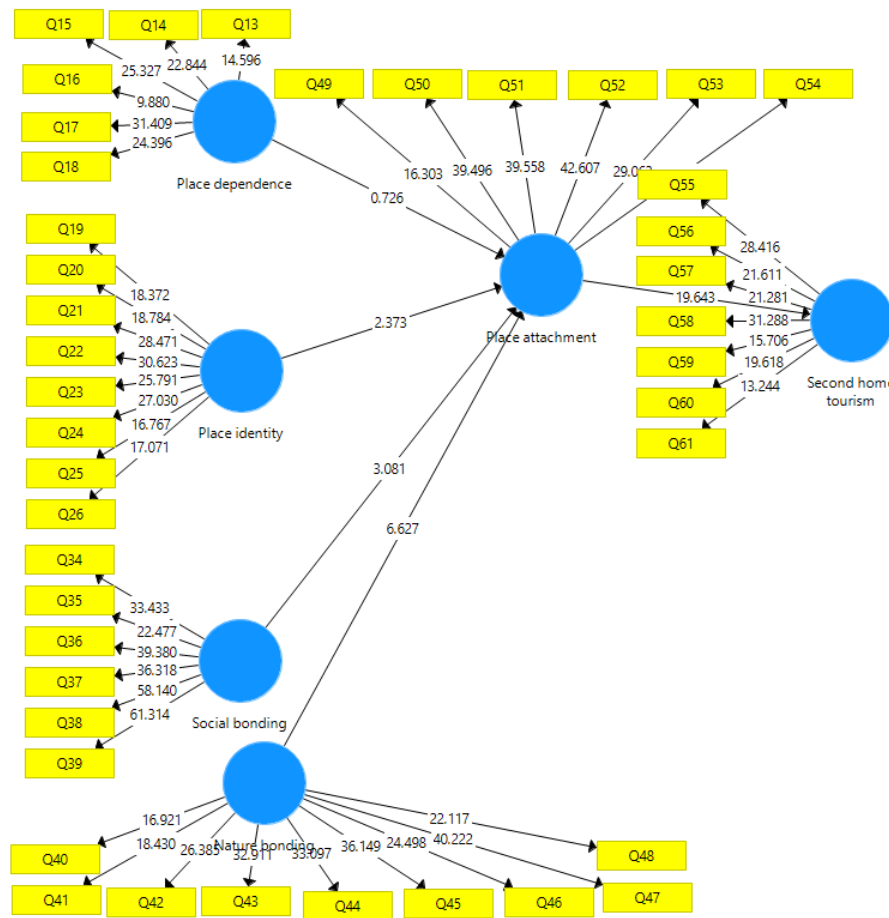


Figure 4. Primary measurement model in the screening mode of factor loads

Reliability Check- Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, Rho_A, and composite reliability. As shown in Table 5, all constructs exceeded the commonly used 0.70 threshold for internal consistency. Composite reliability was also above 0.70 for every construct, providing additional evidence that the measurement scales were reliable.

Convergent Validity- Convergent validity was assessed using average variance extracted (AVE). All constructs reported AVE values above 0.50 (Table 5), indicating that each construct explained more than half of the variance in its observed indicators and therefore demonstrated satisfactory convergent validity.

Table 3. Reliability and validity check

	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Nature bonding	0.937	0.94	0.947	0.665
Place attachment	0.895	0.903	0.92	0.66
Place dependence	0.844	0.852	0.888	0.574
Place identity	0.898	0.901	0.918	0.584
Second home tourism	0.911	0.915	0.93	0.657
Social bonding	0.922	0.935	0.939	0.718

Examination of Direct Effects- The structural model was evaluated by examining the path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. A two-tailed t-statistic greater than 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05 were used as criteria for statistical

significance. Nature bonding had a positive and significant effect on place attachment ($\beta = 0.475$, $t = 6.627$, $p < 0.001$). Place attachment also had a strong positive and significant effect on second-home tourism ($\beta = 0.757$, $t = 19.643$, $p < 0.001$).

Place identity ($\beta = 0.181$, $t = 2.373$, $p = 0.018$) and social bonding ($\beta = 0.229$, $t = 3.081$, $p = 0.002$) were also significant positive predictors of place

attachment. In contrast, place dependence was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.054$, $t = 0.726$, $p = 0.468$).

Table 4. The result of the path coefficient check

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Nature bonding - Place attachment	0.475	0.475	0.072	6.627	0
Place attachment - Second home tourism	0.757	0.764	0.039	19.643	0
Place dependence - Place attachment	0.054	0.053	0.074	0.726	0.468
Place identity - Place attachment	0.181	0.186	0.076	2.373	0.018
Social bonding - Place attachment	0.229	0.227	0.074	3.081	0.002

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Second home tourism is considered as an important part of tourism activity. In fact, second home tourism is one of the models of tourism development in rural areas. These houses are bought and built in rural areas for recreational and leisure purposes and are used temporarily in some days of the year and mostly during weekends, holidays and summer (Rezvani, 2008).

The findings provide a more nuanced picture of place attachment among second-home owners than a simple confirmation of the hypotheses. H1, which proposed a positive effect of place dependence on place attachment, was not supported ($\beta = 0.054$, $t = 0.726$, $p = 0.468$). This result is theoretically important because place dependence captures the functional or goal-directed relationship with a setting, whereas the other dimensions in the model capture symbolic, social, or affective bonds. Second-home owners use their properties intermittently, primarily for leisure and temporary residence, and second-home tourism has long been associated with escape, lifestyle, identity, and emotional meanings rather than with the necessity of using one particular place for everyday functions (Jaakson, 1986; Roca, 2013). The non-significant effect therefore suggests that, in this context, functional utility alone may be insufficient to generate strong place attachment. This finding does not imply that the physical qualities or amenities of Mazandaran are unimportant; rather, it indicates that their functional usefulness may be less salient than the

meanings, relationships, and emotional experiences that owners associate with the destination.

H2 was supported: place identity had a positive and significant effect on place attachment ($\beta = 0.181$, $t = 2.373$, $p = 0.018$). This result is consistent with the view that people develop stronger attachment when a place becomes incorporated into their sense of self and acquires symbolic and evaluative meaning (Proshansky et al., 1983; Belanche et al., 2021). For second-home owners, the destination can function as more than a convenient location for recreation: it can represent a preferred lifestyle, memories, continuity, and a distinctive rural identity. The positive effect of social bonding (H3: $\beta = 0.229$, $t = 3.081$, $p = 0.002$) further indicates that attachment is also relational. This finding accords with research emphasizing community ties, family and friendship networks, shared histories, and social interaction as important foundations of place attachment (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Mesch & Manor, 1998; Lewicka, 2011). Together, these results suggest that second-home attachment is partly produced through the meanings and relationships that owners develop around the destination, not simply through its physical functionality.

H4 received the strongest support among the four antecedents of place attachment: nature bonding had a positive and significant effect, with the largest path coefficient in the model ($\beta = 0.475$, $t = 6.627$, $p < 0.001$). This finding is theoretically consistent with the restorative role of natural environments described by Attention Restoration

Theory (Kaplan, 1995) and with evidence that affective connections to nature can produce meaningful bonds with environmental settings (Hinds & Sparks, 2008). Mazandaran provides a particularly relevant context for this mechanism because its tourism appeal includes the Caspian coastline, forests, wetlands, waterfalls, lakes, and mountainous landscapes. For owners who use their second homes as places of escape from urban routines, these natural qualities can become central to the emotional meaning of the destination. The result also helps reconcile the social-versus-physical debate identified in the literature: the physical environment matters, but the present findings suggest that its affective and experiential meaning (nature bonding) is more influential than its purely functional dimension (place dependence). Thus, the study's contribution is not simply that physical factors matter; it is that the type of relationship people develop with the physical environment appears to matter.

H5 was also strongly supported: place attachment had a positive and substantial effect on second-home tourism ($\beta = 0.757$, $t = 19.643$, $p < 0.001$). This result indicates that stronger emotional bonds with a destination are associated with greater second-home tourism and helps explain why second-home development can persist beyond purely economic or functional motivations. Taken together, the results show a clear hierarchy within the proposed model: nature bonding is the strongest antecedent of place attachment, followed by social bonding and place identity, whereas place dependence is not significant. The model therefore supports an interpretation of second-home demand that emphasizes affective, symbolic, social, and environmental meanings. This pattern is particularly relevant for rural destinations where the attractiveness of the landscape and the experience of rural life are central to the tourism product.

Practical implications follow directly from this pattern. First, destination marketing organizations should promote the distinctive natural and cultural identity of Mazandaran rather than relying primarily on functional amenities. Campaigns aimed at potential second-home buyers can

emphasize the province's landscapes, rural heritage, local traditions, and opportunities for restorative leisure. Second, policymakers and destination managers should protect forests, wetlands, coastlines, and other natural assets because environmental degradation may weaken the nature-based bonds that underpin place attachment. Third, local authorities can support initiatives that facilitate constructive interaction between second-home owners and host communities, such as local cultural events, community-based tourism activities, and participatory destination initiatives. Finally, planning policies should recognize that second-home demand is not only a market for housing or recreation; it is also connected to emotional investment in place. Managing second-home development in ways that preserve environmental quality and strengthen local cultural and social relationships may therefore contribute to more sustainable rural tourism development.

Future research should examine the model across different rural and coastal destinations in Iran to determine whether the relative importance of nature, social, identity, and functional dimensions varies by destination type. Comparative studies could also examine permanent residents and second-home owners separately, test whether frequency and duration of second-home use moderate place attachment, and investigate how environmental degradation or changes in host-community relations affect the relationship between place attachment and second-home demand.

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The authors equally contributed to the preparation of this article.

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تحلیل رابطه میان دلبستگی به مکان و افزایش خانه‌های دوم در مقاصد گردشگری روستایی (مورد مطالعه: استان مازندران، ایران)

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چکیده

۱. مقدمه

در عصر حاضر با تسارع شهرنشینی و تغییر سبک زندگی به سمت فعالیت‌های پرشتاب، سلامت جسمی و روانی شهرنشینان با چالش‌های جدی مواجه شده است. خستگی ذهنی ناشی از استرس‌های زیست شهری، یکی از شکایات رایج در جوامع مدرن است که منجر به فرسایش منابع روان‌شناختی و اجتماعی افراد می‌گردد. طبق «نظریه بازیابی توجه» محیط‌های طبیعی و توانایی بازسازی تمرکز از طریق تعامل با طبیعت، ابزاری کلیدی برای کاهش استرس و بهبود وضعیت عاطفی هستند. در این راستا، گردشگری خانه‌های دوم به عنوان یکی از الگوهای مهم توسعه در مناطق روستایی ظهور کرده است. این پدیده که از اواسط دهه ۱۹۴۵ میلادی با انگیزه‌هایی نظیر تمایل به تفریحات سالم غیرشهری، بهبود زیرساخت‌های حمل‌ونقل و سرمایه‌گذاری شخصی رونق گرفته، فرصت‌های اقتصادی و اجتماعی-فرهنگی ویژه‌ای را برای مناطق با پتانسیل‌های طبیعت بکر فراهم آورده است. از این جهت؛ با توجه به اهمیتی که موضوع افزایش خانه‌های دوم در مناطق روستایی دارد و همچنین با توجه به خلا علمی و شکاف پژوهش که در ارتباط با پژوهش‌های انجام شده پیشین در این زمینه وجود دارد، می‌توان به لزوم انجام این پژوهش پی برد. از این رو؛ هدف اصلی این مقاله تحلیل رابطه بین دلبستگی به مکان و افزایش خانه‌های دوم در مقاصد گردشگری روستایی استان مازندران می‌باشد. همچنین این مقاله ۴ هدف فرعی را دنبال می‌کند که عبارتند از: بررسی رابطه بین هویت مکانی و دلبستگی به مکان، بررسی رابطه بین وابستگی به مکان و دلبستگی به مکان، بررسی رابطه پیوند اجتماعی و دلبستگی به مکان، بررسی رابطه بین پیوند طبیعت و دلبستگی مکانی.

۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

مبسوط

پژوهش حاضر بر پایه مفهوم «دلبستگی به مکان» استوار است؛ پیوند عاطفی و ادراکی که افراد با محیط‌های فضایی برقرار می‌کنند تا در آن‌ها احساس راحتی و امنیت یابند. از منظر پدیدارشناسان، این دلبستگی از طریق درک نمادهای روزمره و فعالیت‌های محیطی عمیق‌تر می‌شود. در این راستا، مدل سه‌گانه «فرد-فرآیند-مکان» و مدل دوبعدی دلبستگی (شامل هویت مکان و وابستگی به مکان) مبنای تبیین روابط در این تحقیق هستند. هویت مکانی، فرآیند تعریف خود از طریق تعلق به یک مکان خاص است، در حالی که دلبستگی مکانی از دو جنبه اصلی «طبیعت» (ابعاد بیوفیزیکی) و «جامعه» (ابعاد اجتماعی) تشکیل می‌شود. اگرچه مطالعات سنتی بر اهمیت محیط‌های اجتماعی در شکل‌گیری دلبستگی تأکید داشتند، اما شواهد اخیر نشان می‌دهند که محیط‌های فیزیکی و طبیعی نیز نقشی حیاتی و گاه تعیین‌کننده در شکل‌گیری این پیوند ایفا می‌کنند. در این زمینه تعاریف مفاهیم اصلی موجب درک بهتر موضوع می‌شود. هویت مکان، خودآگاهی از عضویت فرد در یک جامعه مرتبط با مکان است و در واقع به عنوان ارزش و احساسی تعریف می‌شود که فرد به سبب عضویت در یک جامعه پیدا می‌کند. اما وابستگی به مکان به رابطه قوی بین یک فرد و یک مکان خاص اشاره دارد که در آن کیفیت آن مکان و کیفیت مکان‌های جایگزین با آن مکان قابل مقایسه است. پیوند اجتماعی نیز شامل تمایل افراد برای عضویت در یک گروه، مانند دوستان و خانواده و همچنین ارتباطات عاطفی بر اساس خاطرات، علایق و نگرانی‌های مشترک است. طبیعت با بسیاری از جنبه‌های تأثیرگذار بر دلبستگی به مکان و هویت مکان، مانند آب و هوا، تفریح، منظره و امکان درگیر شدن در سبک زندگی شهری یا روستایی مرتبط است. تماس صمیمانه با دنیای طبیعی نیز، به شکل‌گیری پیوندهای معنادار و ارزش‌های مثبت نسبت به محیط طبیعی کمک می‌کند.

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۳. روش تحقیق

این پژوهش از نظر ماهیت، مطالعه‌ای کمی و از نظر هدف، توصیفی-تحلیلی است. داده‌های پژوهش از طریق روش‌های کتابخانه‌ای، اسنادی و پیمایشی گردآوری شده‌اند. جامعه آماری هدف، مالکان خانه‌های دوم در مقاصد گردشگری روستایی استان مازندران هستند. جهت تحلیل مدل مفهومی و آزمون فرضیات، از مدل‌سازی معادلات ساختاری با استفاده از نرم‌افزار PLS استفاده شده است.

۴. یافته‌های تحقیق

تحلیل داده‌ها نشان داد که دلبستگی مکانی، متغیر وابسته اصلی در رابطه با گردشگری خانه‌های دوم است. نتایج مدل ساختاری حاکی از آن است که متغیرهای «هویت مکانی»، «پیوند اجتماعی» و «پیوند با طبیعت» تأثیر معناداری بر تقویت دلبستگی به مکان دارند. با این حال، برخلاف برخی پیش‌فرض‌های نظری، متغیر «وابستگی به مکان» تأثیر معناداری بر دلبستگی به مکان نشان نداد. این یافته‌ها تأکید می‌کنند که در مقاصد گردشگری، میزان کیفیت تعامل با طبیعت و هویت اجتماعی محیط، تعیین‌کننده اصلی سطح دلبستگی است. بنابراین اگر در مکانی به هویت مکان، پیوند اجتماعی و پیوند طبیعت در مکان بیشتر توجه شود، دلبستگی افراد نسبت به آن مکان

افزایش یافته و در نتیجه باعث افزایش تعداد گردشگری خانه دوم در آن مکان می‌شود.

۵. بحث و نتیجه‌گیری

یافته‌های این تحقیق مؤید آن است که توسعه پایدار گردشگری خانه‌های دوم در مناطق روستایی، به‌ویژه در استان مازندران، مستلزم مدیریت هوشمندانه ابعاد محیطی و اجتماعی است. از آنجا که دلبستگی مکانی مستقیماً بر پذیرا بودن و افزایش گردشگری خانه‌های دوم اثر می‌گذارد، سیاست‌گذاران باید بر تقویت هویت مکانی و بهبود پیوندهای اجتماعی و طبیعی تمرکز کنند. در واقع، ایجاد محیط‌هایی که در آن‌ها فرد احساس تعلق و پیوند با طبیعت را تجربه کند، نه تنها سطح دلبستگی را افزایش می‌دهد، بلکه باعث تداوم حضور گردشگران و توسعه اقتصادی مناطق روستایی می‌گردد.

کلیدواژه‌ها: دلبستگی به مکان، گردشگری خانه دوم، گردشگری روستایی، مازندران.

تشکر و قدردانی

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