Assessment of the Quality of Life (QL) in Rural Areas Using Numerical Taxonomy: The Case of Esfandegheh Area of Jiroft County

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(Received: Dec, 21. 2014; Accepted: Jan, 29. 2016)

Abstract
Today, the improvement of the quality of life (QL) is one of the main objectives of development programs in every country. Thus, at first, an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the current status of QL should be achieved through a systematic approach. Therefore, the aim of this research was to assess the QL status of rural areas of Esfandegheh Township. A survey research method was used in this study. Research population included villages with 10 or more households (34 villages) that about 343 household heads of these villages were selected as research sample based on Kerjcie and Morgan Sampling table. A researcher constructed questionnaire was used to collect data that its validity was verified via face validity procedure and its reliability was also verified calculating Cronbach’s Alpha reliability ($0.63 \leq \alpha \leq 0.82$). Numerical Taxonomy, coefficient of variation and one sample T tests were used to analyze data. Data processing was done using MATLAB10 software. The findings of the current situation of QL criteria showed that the studied villages had an inappropriate conditions in some aspects of QL such as property, education, community resources and satisfaction about eco-tourism situation. Moreover, the findings of numerical taxonomy showed that villages named Dowlatabad, Ferdows and Hosseinabad ranked first to third respectively and Gloueieh, Darrehbami and Dehnezam ranked last in terms of QL. The overall results of this study showed that the QL is not in a good situation in the studied areas and spatial distribution of quality of life in the study areas is not in a balanced state.

Keywords: Quality of Life, Numerical Taxonomy, Rural Areas.

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