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The Impact of Human Resources in the Development of a Sustainable Tourism Economy (case study: Iran, Fars province)

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Abstract

Nowadays, human resources are considered one of the important elements in advancing the goals of companies, therefore, the impact of human resources in various sectors, including the sustainable tourism industry, can provide the basis for the development of the economy. 294 samples were chosen at random from the statistical population, which comprised professionals in the sustainable tourism sector and economic activists in the province of Fars. This study uses a descriptive-survey methodology, and its goal is practical. The data was collected in the field via the researcher's questionnaire among the statistical sample, therefore, the regression test was used to analyze the data of research hypothesis. This study's results show that among the six selected components, two components focusing on experience and training and development obtained correlation coefficients of 1.192 and 1.021, respectively. In this regard, the impact of human resources in the development of the sustainable tourism economy of Fars province is significant.

Keyword: Impact of human resources, economic development, sustainable tourism

Introduction

Today, the tourism industry is one of the most profitable, and efficient economic activities in the world, which makes a significant contribution to the sustainable development of a country. In today's world, countries are looking to use tourism capabilities in their lands so that using present resources, capacities, and abilities, they can attract tourists, create jobs, attract foreign currency and gain economic profit in this sector, so as to create the ground for Develop sustainable tourism(Ismael- Robertson,2018:606. Khidaee and Kalantari Khalil Abad, 2012:48).

In fact, smoke-free industrial tourism is considered, which has a lot of potential and empowerment(Dizej and Partners, 2016;602). World Tourism Organization has considered a general definition for tourism: "Tourism is limited to vacation activities, because people who travel to and stay in places outside their borders for more than one consecutive year, leisure and at least 24 hours , do business and other purposes"(Han, 2016). The development of tourism industry with other favorable factors can bring new windows of knowledge, and sustainable development to the communities(Pourahmad & Partners, 2012;105-128). Conversely, sustainable tourism is a very dynamic industry that is seeing significant growth. The United Nations has recognized this sector as a primary driver of economic growth, job creation, and revenue generation. In developing countries, tourism has led to the diversification of income, and integration of the economy which has created an opportunity to export with more advanced methods than traditional methods(Han,2016). Based on the statistics of World Tourism Organization, with the start of the corona virus epidemic, it had a wide impact on the global tourism markets, which decreased by 20 to 30 percent the number of international incoming tourists between 290 and 440 million people. The damage caused to the world's tourism markets in terms of the spread of Corona was far more destructive than the outbreak of Sars in 2003, and the recession of the world economy in 2009(The world of economy,2020). Regarding the reports of World Travel and Tourism Council, the world tourism industry faced a 50.4% decrease in its share of the world economy in terms of the corona restrictions in 2020. Meanwhile, the share of the tourism industry in the GDP in 2022 has been associated with a 22% growth. Moreover, this industry could account for 7.6% of the world's gross domestic product in 2022(Hayat Economic Group,2023). Iran may draw both local and international visitors to secure a significant portion of the global tourism market, owing to its rich historical background and many natural, religious, and historical tourist attractions. However, the absence of suitable legislation has hindered this capacity. In this sector, it has not been able to get its share from the world markets. In line with the development of a sustainable tourism economy and reducing dependence on oil, the tourism industry has revived in the last two years in Iran. Based on the latest statistics of World Travel and Tourism Council, the share of the tourism industry in the economy has been accompanied by a 40% growth in 2021. Furthermore, based on these statistics, the share of the tourism industry in the total economy of Iran in 2022 increased by 39.2 percent and reached 4.6 percent of

the total economy of Iran. By the boom of tourism, the amount of job creation in 2022 in Iran faced a growth of 11.2 percent, and the share of this industry in the total employment in Iran in 2022 reached 6.2 percent. Statistics show that in 2022, foreign tourists have spent 6.2 billion dollars in Iran, which was a 73.5% increase compared to last year. On the other hand, domestic tourists spent 316 thousand billion tomans, which was a 40.1% growth compared to 2021 (Irna, 2022; Hayat Economic Group, 2023). On the other hand, the approach of human resources to this sector will have a direct and indirect impact. In accordance with the realization of growth and advancement in the Shiraz tourism sector as a result of tourist attractions (historical, natural, and religious), this study on the influence of human resources in the establishment of a sustainable tourism economy was produced. The main problem was to identify the important variables by helping the researcher's conceptual model on the importance of the impact of human resources in the development of the tourism economy of Fars province, and analyze the research hypothesis by using regression correlation test technique and its correlation coefficient to improve the results. and solve the problem.

Research Background

At the end of the 20th century, and the first decade of the 21st century, with the emergence of new concepts, managers of organizations and companies, with the aim of increasing productivity, ensuring production quality, and creating effective patterns in organizational behavior, caused them to pay more attention to human resources (Lyskova & Rudakova, 2020). Today, human power is considered a valuable capital that has the power of reproduction. From Walton's point of view, human resources are defined as "a set of organizational activities that take place in a certain period of time and are designed to create behavioral changes in employees." (Khidaee & Kalantari, 2013; 7). The tourism industry is considered a service activity and the service providers are part of the product. The growth of destinations and visitors' happiness are influenced by human resources, which are crucial for the preservation and survival of system performance. Consequently, training plays an important role in satisfying customers and improving the organization or company to achieve the desired goals (Mahmoudi & Naimi Majed, 2016). In this research, Katunian shows that the sustainable development of human resources can be effective in the sustainable, and extensive development of an organization and society. Therefore, various cases, such as tourism companies, governments, educational institutions, and international organizations should participate in the sustainable development of human resources in the tourism industry. In this regard, the cooperation between these two institutions will lead to the development of sustainable tourism (Katunian, 2019). Baum and Sivas believe that the tourism industry everywhere in the world is closely related to the labor market and the skills created in that region. Furthermore, the dependence between labor force and service standardization plays a very important role in shaping the visitor (Baum and Sivas, 2008). Without a doubt, companies or organizations that are known for useful and appropriate future planning do not ignore the role of human resources in their growth and development, and they understand that the presence of creative and skilled human resources can provide them with a significant competitive advantage. be taken into account (Dong, 2019). In fact, the success or failure of an organization or company has a direct relationship with the quality of recruiting and hiring human resources (Akhwan Kharazian & partners, 2019). Moreover, the human resources are considered the most important capital and competitive advantage (Batarliene & partners, 2017). The present activities and approaches of human resources have played an important role in the economic development of sustainable tourism in developed and developing countries. Among these approaches are the recruitment, training and retention of employees, etc. in the tourism industry sector. Human resource managers have a central role in creating useful and appropriate policies, and approaches so that the behavior of the personnel is aligned with their goals and visions for growth and development in the global markets of the tourism industry. Furthermore, they focus on approaches such as leadership, loyalty, employment and appreciation to motivate employees. Employees in the tourism industry play an essential role for the success of a company (Marija Džopalić, Jovan Zubović, Ivana Domazet, 2008). Due to the importance of human resources in recent decades, various researches have been conducted in this field. The investigation's findings and research demonstrate the value of knowing, driven, and competent labor for an organization's ability to be creative, productive, and provide high-quality services. On the other hand, based on the available reports and statistics, it can be pointed out that human resources are very important in the tourism industry with emerging needs as a sustainable business, and it highlights the importance of the economic impact in this sector. Different methods on the approaches and impact of human resources in the tourism sector, emphasis on sustainable business models to achieve the promotion, and improvement of the qualitative level of the evolving workforce, and social challenges have caused its role and impact in the development of a sustainable tourism economy. Among the factors that can have a role in the economy, we can mention job creation in the tourism industry, which has direct and indirect effects. Hence, the proficient implementation of the human resources strategy in the tourist sector may foster expansion and advancement, hence augmenting a country's gross domestic product via sustainable tourism development. Therefore, the development of sustainable tourism can be important

for any country to achieve the goals of economic development and human resources (Konstantina Ragazou& Partners,2023).

Theoretical foundations of research

Human resources are an important element in organizations, and companies that play a very important role in progress and development. In today's world, with the progress and changes in technology, it has affected the needs of the market. Based on this, human resource management has faced changes, and beneficial effects with the needs of the global market in line with the vision and goals of the organization and the company. The term human resources were first used in the early 1900s and then more widely in the 1960s to describe the people who work for an organization. Human resources is the concept of all human potentials in the company or organization, including knowledge, skills, ability, creativity, innovation, and motivation to achieve the desired goals of the organization. This concept refers to the characteristics that can play an important role in the prosperity of the company or organization. Due to the advancement and changes in the current period, human resources employ new techniques to adapt and enhance productivity in the face of fulfilling the demands of the company and being successful. Some notable factors are the use of technology, adaptability, expertise, ingenuity, and emphasis on work experience. So, it can be considered that the impact of human resources plays a key role to improve the performance, progress towards the promotion and efficiency of the organization or company. Furthermore, guide the organization in the direction of achieving its desires (Marija Džopalić, Jovan Zubović, Ivana Domazet, 2008. Rira Company Team,2023). On the other hand, human resources can be classified into the following groups in terms of quality characteristics:

1. Individual abilities, such as thinking, creativity and innovation, level of education, work experience, knowledge and skills
2. The motivational structure of employees, including personal interests that are not related to one's professional activities
3. Psychological characteristics of employees, such as health status, stress management, flexibility(Lyskova,2018)

The tourism industry consists of various activities that are carried out in a chain to serve tourists. Tourism assumes all phenomena, and relationships resulting from interaction with tourists, sellers and suppliers of tourism products, the host community in the process of attraction and reception. In industrialized and developed nations, the growth of the tourist sector leads to the broadening of revenue sources and the mitigation of economic imbalances. Conversely, in emerging nations, it presents a chance for exporting, therefore augmenting the pace of economic expansion. The 21st century was called taking advantage of valuable business opportunities in the service sector, especially in tourism. The term sustainable development was coined in the early 1970s at the time of the "Kokovik" Declaration on Environment and Development. From that date, international organizations that wanted to achieve a suitable and beneficial environment created a special name in the sustainable development strategy. Using the term sustainable development became widespread in scientific circles after the Rio de Janeiro conference in 1992. The best definition of sustainable development was presented in Bratland's report titled "Common Future" in 1987, which is: development that can meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs(Horobin & Long,(1996),15-19). The key effective and constitutive factors of tourism, including external and internal factors and stakeholder groups, were clearly explained in order to provide the principles of the most suitable forms of sustainable tourism development(Heidari Chianeh&Zargham Borojni,2008). Based on this, the impact of human resources in the tourism industry in the public and private sectors on the sustainable success of various sectors and continuous improvement can be summarized as follows:

1. Providing suitable services based on the needs of tourists
2. Increasing job satisfaction and creating a dynamic work environment in tourist places
3. Reducing costs and increasing the profitability of tourism enterprises
4. Increasing the productivity and efficiency of employees in the public and private sectors of tourism
5. Ensuring the satisfaction of tourists in tourist places by providing standard services to them

Finally, reaching the long-term and short-term goals of the tourism industry will be effective in obtaining income from supply, and economic demand(Khodae& Kalantari Khalil Abadi,2013;7).

Therefore, the sustainable development of the tourism industry and the increase in economic growth in this sector are mutually related to the impact of human resources such as skills, competence, creativity and innovation, education, etc. (Marija Džopalić, Jovan Zubović, Ivana Domazet, 2008). By focusing on the advancement of the sustainable tourism sector in Iran, there has been a consequential increase in economic prosperity and progress, as well as a decreased dependence on oil. Tourism, like to other economic endeavors, is a company that operates based on the principles of supply and demand. The more the prosperity of this sector, the more the associated firms will flourish and expand. One of the best advantages of tourism is the possibility of regional balance, and achieving sustainable development in areas with growth potential(Irna,2022). The share of Iran's tourism industry in GDP is 5% and the share of this industry in job creation is 6%. Despite the available capacities in Iran, including

Fars Province, the interest in investing in the tourism industry by activists and applicants has increased and the tourism curve in the country has increased (Payam Bagheri at the opening of the Mazandaran National Tourism Event, 2023). Based on the data of the World Bank, the total share of the travel and tourism economy in Iran's GDP will reach 313 thousand billion tomans from 2019 to 2028 (Irna, 2022). Hence, recognizing the significance of human resources in the tourist sector, it is essential to conduct comprehensive study to effectively address the influence of human resources on the growth of a sustainable tourism economy.

Conceptual model of research

Based on the review and the information available in the theoretical foundations, the conceptual model of the research was compiled in diagram number 1. The variables deal with the impact of human resources in the development of the tourism economy of Fars province and form the hypothesis of the research.

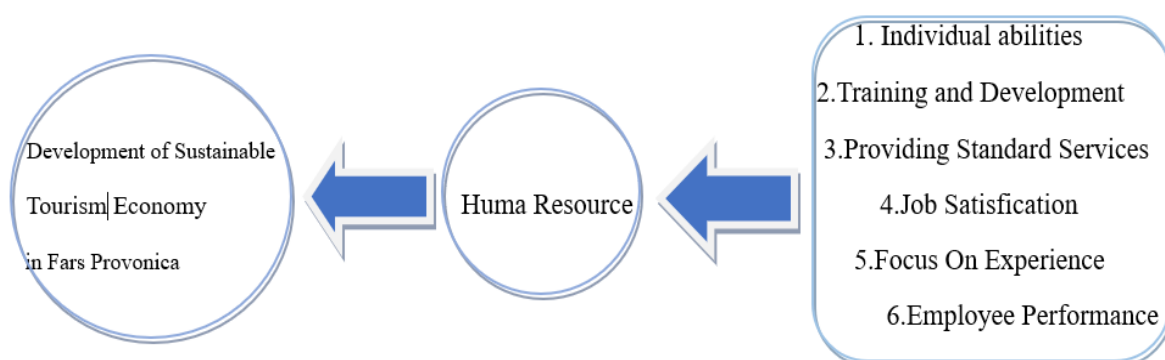


Figure 1: Conceptual model of the research

(Source: the author based on the theoretical foundations of the research)

The Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is the impact of human resources in the development of sustainable tourism economy in Fars province. Historically, religiously and naturally, Fars province is considered one of Iran's tourism hubs. Based on the present tourism capacities in Fars province, the importance of human resources for the prosperity and development of the economy is felt in this sector. Conversely, the examination of the information and data from this study allowed for the identification of the key factors that might contribute to the growth of the province's sustainable tourism industry. Based on these components that were mentioned in the conceptual model of the research, the most important impact of human resources such as individual abilities, training and development, providing standard services, job satisfaction, focusing on the experience and performance of employees was selected. Using these variables in a targeted manner in the direction of micro and macro policies and planning in the sustainable tourism industry will lead to the development of the economy in this sector, which will create employment, reduce inflation and gain currency, etc. in Fars province. The conceptual model of the research in the results of data analysis to achieve the selection of the effective variables of human resources in the development of the sustainable tourism economy of Fars province is important in order to reach the desired goal and provide a suitable proposal that the impact of human resources in the development of sustainable tourism in Fars province to achieve.

Research Method

This research is descriptive-survey and practical in terms of purpose. The statistical population of the research includes economic activists and experts in the development of sustainable tourism in Fars province. Based on Cochran's formula, 294 people were randomly selected from the statistical sample of the research. The collection of information, and data was done by two library and field methods. The library method was used to collect information to compile the background and basics of the research. In this regard, the researcher used the field method to collect information by distributing a questionnaire with 28 questions among the selected statistical community. Because Cronbach's alpha is often a trustworthy sign for assessing the measurement instrument and the coordination between its aspects, it was also utilized to establish the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient with 0.713 in the test results showed that all dimensions of the questionnaire used in the research had the necessary reliability. After distributing and collecting data, correlation test technique and regression correlation coefficient were used to analyze them.

Descriptive Research Findings

The analysis of descriptive findings related to economic activists and sustainable tourism specialists shows that out of the total of 294 people studied, 56.8% are women and 43.2% are men. It should be noted that in Iran, the population of women is more than men, so it was expected that the population of women in the sample of the statistical population is more than men. In the next part, the age of people in the statistical population of the sample of 294 people studied showed that people 20-30 have 12.9%, 30-40 have 71.4%. 40-50 had 15.7 percent. In terms of education, they included 10% under Diploma, 16.7% Diploma, 12.2% Post Graduate, 40% Bachelor and 20% Master and above. 38.6% had less than 5 years of work experience, 42.9% had 5-10 years of work experience, 10-15 years of work experience had 10%, and 8.6% had more than 15 years of work experience. Due to the prevailing social and economic circumstances in Iran and Fars province, the younger population is inclined towards pursuing higher education in universities. Consequently, it is anticipated that individuals in the workforce may have minimal or no prior experience.

Data Analysis

The results obtained from the research hypothesis in the regression model state that the level of significance for all the components of the impact of human resources was smaller than the level of error, so the results show that all the components considered on the impact of the human resources approach. It is necessary and important to predict the development of sustainable tourism economy in Fars province. Among the present components on the impact of the human resources approach, the components of education and development and focus on experience on the development of a sustainable tourism economy had the greatest impact.

Table 1: The final coefficients of the regression model based on the conceptual model of the research

Coefficients of the regression model estimated with the research hypothesis model					
Research Model	Unstandardized Beta coefficients	Standardized Beta coefficients	(t)	Significance level	
	B	Standard Deviation	(Beta)	(sig)	
The width of the origin of the regression function	- 28.342	4.114	- 8.205	0.000	
Individual abilities	0.401	0.416	1.168	0.155	0.000
Training and development	1.021	0.350	0.129	3.536	0.000
Providing standard services	0.101	0.101	1.112	0.601	0.000
Job Satisfaction	0.040	0.118	- 0.010	0.824	0.000
Focus on experience	1.192	0.123	0.401	7.894	0.000
Employee performance	0.229	0.227	0.089	0.364	0.000

Variables predicted by the model: the rate of development of sustainable tourism economy in Fars province

Based on the hypothesis of the research, there is a significant relationship between the impact of human resources on the sustainable tourism economy of Fars province. Human resources research was employed as an independent variable in the regression model, while the development of a sustainable tourist economy in Fars province was used as a predictor or dependent variable.

Table 2: The results of the regression test of the research hypothesis

Research Model	Imported variables	Omitted variables	Method
Independent variables	The impact of human resources (individual abilities, training and development, providing standard services, job satisfaction, focusing on work experience, employee performance)	There were no omitted variables in the model	Entrance
The Dependent variables	Development of sustainable tourism economy in Fars province	There were no omitted variables in the model	Entrance

Predicted variables of the model: development of sustainable tourism economy in Fars province

Conclusion and Recommendations

Currently, the tourism industry is known as one of the most profitable industries in the world because it is a dynamic, competitive and entrepreneurial environment that is considered sustainable in the development of the economy, including the tourism economy, so human resources are one of the key elements in this field, which pay attention to all the elements of this sector provide the basis for the improvement and productivity of the sustainable tourism industry. Consequently, the development of the sustainable tourism industry will lead to prosperity and development in the economy and this industry. The country of Iran and Fars province is blessed with tourism attractions (historical, cultural and religious), therefore, using appropriate strategies and policies, it can develop a sustainable tourism industry and reduce the dependence of the economy on oil sales. The global tourism statistics' public data and studies indicate that the sustainable tourism sector has grown more rapidly in recent years. In this sense, the expansion of this sector has coincided with the rise of the GDP of the economy. By studying and examining the information collected in this research, the effective components in the human resources sector, which include individual ability, training and development, providing standard services, job satisfaction, focusing on the experience and performance of employees, were selected. Based on this, by analyzing the data in the regression correlation technique, two important components, including focusing on experience, education and development, were obtained on the impact of human resources in the development of sustainable tourism economy in Fars province. Therefore, with the results obtained from the analysis of statistical data, as well as the study and review of information, the prioritization of human resources components can help in the development of the sustainable tourism economy of Fars province and attract more domestic and foreign tourists. Based on the sample statistical population of 294 economic activists, and sustainable tourism specialists, it showed that work experience of less than five years and 10-5 years is included in the highest percentage, for this reason, appropriate strategies for the training and development of the active and young workforce in the company non-related and related to the sustainable tourism industry should be adopted. Furthermore, using efficient strategies to incentivize investment in this industry, the productivity of workers may be enhanced. Consequently, the economic growth of the tourist sector in Fars province will ensue. Based on the results obtained from this research, it is suggested that the managers and activists of the tourism industry interact with the economic managers in this sector and using the appropriate strategy, create the context for training and development, individual abilities, providing standard services, job satisfaction, and employee performance. and focus on the experience of human resources of companies and economic enterprises in the tourism industry. The actions that can be appropriate and effective in this section are presented as follows:

- Attention to employee training
- Clarification of duties
- Creating suitable opportunities for growth and learning
- Job satisfaction of employees by increasing salaries and bonuses
- Conducting internal and external training courses
- Interaction with employees

Targeted planning and implementation of these measures can provide the basis for the economic development of sustainable tourism industry in Fars province. Additionally, emphasizing employee experience, recruiting, training, and development may be crucial components of internal business growth and promotion in the human resources department, which will support economic expansion in the Fars province tourist industry sector. The need to pay attention to human resources in terms of the high potential of Fars province in the tourism industry makes it possible to provide the conditions for progress and development in this sector and increase the attraction of domestic and international tourists because the attractions in the province make it possible to witness growth The arrival of international tourists to the country and province. The result of these actions will increase the growth of GDP economy in the sustainable tourism industry of the country. Unfortunately, Iran's economy has developed a reliance on the sale and export of its oil and gas reserves. Undoubtedly, the sustainable tourism sector has had a

discernible expansion in the economy in recent years. However, there is still a considerable distance to go in order to achieve the intended objectives. Therefore, considering the importance of the economy in different sectors, the role and importance of the tourism industry should be understood despite the many tourist attractions in the country, and the field should be used for economic development in this industry, so using the variables mentioned in the research with emphasis on The impact of human resources provides the basis for increasing economic development. Finally, the impact of two variables of human resources, including focus on experience and education and development can have the greatest impact on the development of sustainable tourism economy in Fars province.

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