

Sociological analysis of the scenarios of the business environment of Isfahan province with the future research approach of 1408 horizon

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is sociological analysis of the scenarios of the business environment of Isfahan province with the future research approach of 2029 horizon. This research is applicable in terms of purpose, and mixed (qualitative-quantitative) in terms of method. The statistical population of the research includes 17 experts consisting of Isfahan province specialists selected by purposeful sampling. The tools of data collection are interviews and questionnaires. Data analysis was done using Delphi method as well as Scenario Wizard-MICMAC software. Using the mik-mak method, 8 key factors affecting the business environment of Isfahan province up to the horizon of 2029 were extracted, including good governance, stability of laws, international political and non-political interactions, expected inflation, priority of politics over economy, tax system, banking system, expansion and development of virtual space; based on which, 5 scenarios (from the most optimistic to the most pessimistic) have been compiled. The results show that sociological components, along with economic elements, play a decisive role in the future of the business environment in Isfahan province and the decision-making of national and provincial officials. Based on this, it is recommended to rely on good governance, stability of laws, international political and non-political interactions, etc. to provide the necessary platform for improving the business environment of the province. Also, there should be mutual trust in the relations between them. In the field of improving the business environment, it is possible to benefit from educational programs or to use environmentally stimulating advertisements, and the management in different sectors should be based on people's demands.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

The business environment is one of the indicators that determine the economic status of each country, which can be used to analyze the economic conditions of each country. The more transparent and competitive the business environment in the countries, the more increase in the economic health of the countries and the adoption of favorable policies, which will lead to the improvement of economic indicators. In this regard, examining the status of business indicators, both micro and macro, and explaining the existing challenges can be fruitful in creating and developing the business environment in the country (Nozari, 2017). What is certain is that reforming the business climate and improving the aforementioned indicators in the global arena is not only a positive and fundamental step in the direction of strengthening the private sector's participation in the economy and improving the level of employment and production, but also, definitely, from the perspective of foreign investors are among the most important indicators for entering the host country and a necessary condition for promoting and facilitating the flow of technology entering the country (Masovic, 2018).

Businesses have both economic and social goals. The business environment, development of plans and scenarios related to it, innovation in the production and sale of products or services cause a lot of diversity and transformation in the society and economy of any country, so sociological investigation of the subject is important. And Weber was the first sociologist who answered the question of why successful and innovative businesses flourished in the areas where Protestant ethics and Calvinist spirit prevailed in the book "Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism" (Nozari, 2017). According to Weber, the success of people in new businesses is the product of specific cultural and social conditions. According to him, social characteristics are the determining factor of entrepreneurial spirit. In other words, the issues and problems of economic development are non-economic.

What can be imagined for the future is that the society will change from a managerial state to an entrepreneurial state. In other words, in future societies, people will make an unprecedented effort to control many educational, economic, cultural and etc. variables (Nazari Sheikh, 2022). Therefore, in this research, the researcher intends to answer the basic question: what is the sociological analysis of the scenarios of the business environment of Isfahan province with the future research approach of 2029 horizon?

Theoretical Framework

Business space

Business environment is a set of policies, legal conditions, institutions, and regulations that govern business activities. Macroeconomic stability, the quality of the country's infrastructure, the quality of executive bodies, the system of making laws and regulations, the cost and the possibility of accessing information and statistics, work culture, and other such factors are among the factors that affect the performance of economic units, while managers of economic units cannot have much influence on them. Inappropriate business environment increases the cost of economic enterprises and causes the loss of investment motivation and also the country's producers lag behind global competitors (Bakhtiari & Shayesteh, 2012).

Futurology

Futurology is a systematic and collaborative process that provides information about the future and creates medium-term to long-term perspectives, in a way that aims to make decisions and mobilize joint actions. In other words, in future studies, a picture of the future is depicted so that planners can design the way to reach it (Fazli & Gholizadeh, 2020).

Shafaei et al, (2024) investigated the effect of knowledge management on organizational performance considering the mediating variable of business process management. The

findings of the research showed that all three hypotheses were confirmed based on the significant values related to the hypotheses. The effect of knowledge management on business process management was 0.742, the effect of knowledge management on organizational performance was 0.422, and the effect of business process management on organizational performance was 0.652. Therefore, the most important proposal of the research is to pay attention to the preservation, sharing and application of knowledge, which is effective both in managing business processes and in increasing the level of organizational performance.

Nazari Sheikh et al, (2022) in his research entitled "Sociological analysis of the effect of cultural components of business on the production-commercial performance of industrial units (Ardebil province)"; which was conducted with the participation of 184 entrepreneurs active in the industrial sector, came to the conclusion that cultural-social components have a positive effect on the production-commercial performance of industrial units. Also, the findings of the research indicated that the components of low power distance, individualism, low uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and masculinity have a positive effect on the production-commercial performance of industrial units.

Research methodology

This research is applicable in terms of purpose, and mixed (qualitative-quantitative) in terms of method. The statistical population of the research includes 17 experts consisting of Isfahan province specialists selected by purposeful sampling. The tools of data collection are interviews and questionnaires.

Research findings

Data analysis was done using Delphi method as well as Scenario Wizard-MICMAC software. Using the mik-mak method, 8 key factors affecting the business environment of Isfahan province up to the horizon of 2029 were extracted, including good governance, stability of laws, international political and non-political interactions, expected inflation, priority of politics over economy, tax system, banking system, expansion and development of virtual space; based on which, 5 scenarios (from the most optimistic to the most pessimistic) have been compiled. The results show that sociological components, along with economic elements, play a decisive role in the future of the business environment in Isfahan province and the decision-making of national and provincial officials. Based on this, it is recommended to rely on good governance, stability of laws, international political and non-political interactions, etc. to provide the necessary platform for improving the business environment of the province. Also, there should be mutual trust in the relations between them. In the field of improving the business environment, it is possible to benefit from educational programs or to use environmentally stimulating advertisements, and the management in different sectors should be based on people's demands.

Conclusion

The current research was carried out with the aim of sociological analysis of the scenarios of the business environment of Isfahan province with the future research approach of 2029 horizon. The results of this research are in agreement with the results of Shafaei et al, (2024), Sahraei & Mafibalani (2023), Nazari Sheikh et al, (2022), Dvorský & Petráková (2021), Soni et al, (2021), Farzin et al, (2020), Safar & Bahram (2019), Shams et al, (2019), Nozari (2017), Zabetpour & Aghajani (2016), Ritter & Pedersen (2019), and Masovic (2018). Shams et al, (2019) showed that elements including the growth of the urban middle class, the large and attractive market of the service sector, the government's support for start-up businesses, the change in lifestyle in Iran and the world, the organizational culture of start-up businesses, and

transformation of social problems were identified as social factors (environmental culture or ecology) affecting future businesses.

According to the results of the research, the following suggestions were presented:

According to the results of the study, 8 factors have been identified as key factors affecting the business environment of the province, based which, 4 scenarios explain the business environment of the province until the horizon of 2029 in a storytelling method.

It is obvious that in the wide range of challenges faced by the rulers and the multitude of possible solutions to improve the business environment, identifying the main factors of changing the business environment will prevent wasting time and national funds.