

# Conceptualization and Presentation of a Tourism Industry Development Model in Iran's Environmental Conditions

Ahad Ghasemi Kolahi<sup>1</sup>, Mohammad Reza Salmani Bishek<sup>2</sup> , Vahid Ahmadian<sup>3</sup> ,  
Parviz Mohammadzadeh<sup>3</sup>

1- PhD Student, Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accounting, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

2- Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accounting, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

3- Associate Professor, Department of Accounting, Faculty of Economics, Management and Accounting, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

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**Abstract**

The aim of this study is to present a tourism industry development model in Iran. The research method is fundamental in terms of its purpose, and mixed in terms of its implementation (qualitative-quantitative), with an approach based on grounded theory. The statistical population in the qualitative section includes 23 experts in the field of theoretical and practical foundations of the tourism industry; including university faculty members and tourism managers selected in a snowball method; and in the quantitative section includes 374 experts in the field of tourism. The tool for collecting findings is a semi-structured interview in the qualitative section, and a researcher-made questionnaire in the quantitative section. Data analysis in the qualitative section carried out based on the grounded method by MAXQDA software, and in the quantitative section by SPSS software. The results of the study showed that, according to the determined goal; tourism infrastructure, international relations, social factors, and governance attitudes are among the effective factors that must be managed. Factors such as presence in the global tourism scene, facilities and infrastructure, tourist attraction policies, and existing potentials are considered as the basis and context for the development of the tourism industry in Iran and need to be improved.

**Keywords:**

Tourism industry development,  
Economic tourism,  
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**Publisher:** Research Center of Resource Management Studies and Knowledge-Based Business

**Corresponding Author:** Mohammad Reza Salmani Bishek

**Email:** [mrsalmani@tabriz.ac.ir](mailto:mrsalmani@tabriz.ac.ir)

## Extended Abstract

### Introduction

Tourism is an expanding industry and its importance is constantly increasing, and more and more people are getting involved with it. The United Nations World Tourism Organization states in its report that the tourism industry is the world's largest service industry in the 21st century and will maintain this position in the future (Amini et al., 2018). Tourism is a set of activities of people who travel to places outside their usual community environment for leisure, entertainment, business, or any other purpose and stay there for a while. The importance of tourism is that this field is considered a dynamic, competitive, and income-generating industry. A significant part of the budget of developed and developing countries is provided by the tourism industry. Many tourist countries adopt written strategic plans to improve their performance in this industry (Yahya Zadeh et al., 2023). Tourism is vital to the success of many economies around the world. The experience of the last two decades has shown that some countries, despite the lack of natural resources, have been able to achieve very high incomes by investing in the tourism industry (Qiu et al., 2020).

Since Iran is a country with pristine nature and great potential in the health, trade, and historical-cultural sectors of the Middle East, the present study tries to minimize the gap in expectations between tourists and legislative institutions, and in this regard, using a data-based approach based on the opinions of relevant experts, an attempt was made to present a paradigmatic model for the development of the tourism industry. In the second stage of the study, using the opinions of experts, the executive factors in the development of the tourism industry were examined, and the results are presented in the following description of the findings so that it can be effective in the socio-economic development of the country in accordance with the national development plan and related perspectives. Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer this question: What is the development pattern of the tourism industry in Iran?

### Theoretical Framework

#### Tourism Industry

The tourism industry is one of the important socio-economic phenomena with cultural, political and environmental impacts. In recent decades, tourism has been growing and diversifying and has been one of the largest economic sectors in the world (Veicy, 2018). The tourism industry is an important source of income and an effective factor in cultural exchanges between nations and societies; and as the world's largest service industry, it has a special economic position (Hoseini & Mosavi, 2024.)

Fani (2025) examined the influential and effective factors of marketing to tourism industry customers in Iran using the fuzzy DEMATEL technique approach. The findings showed that 3 dimensions, 8 components, and 41 indicators were identified. The extracted dimensions consist of the service quality dimension, including the components of satisfaction with tourism services, infrastructure facilities, tourism costs; the marketing policy dimension including the components of macro-policy, planning and management; and the tourism experience dimension including the components of tourists' feedback, tourism culture, and advertising and marketing.

Momeni et al. (2025) examined the design of a smart tourism model with a meta-synthesis approach. The present study evaluated 128 articles and sources in the field of smart tourism using the meta-synthesis method. During the stages, 34 sources and articles were consistent with the accepted criteria. As a result of combining the findings, 8 subcategories were extracted, including improving cost management in tourism, providing smart tourism services, smart cloud services, an online service system for tourists, quality of services and

facilities, the Internet of Things, identifying customer needs in a smart way, and dynamic pricing. Finally, for the development of smart tourism in Iran, it is recommended to adopt a comprehensive perspective considering both the micro and macro levels. At the macro level, more attention should be paid to raising the priority of smart tourism development in the long term, national development policies, paying more attention to planning, coordination, and monitoring, and improving the infrastructure required for the development of smart tourism.

### Research Methodology

The research method is fundamental in terms of its purpose, and mixed (qualitative-quantitative) in terms of its implementation method, with an approach based on grounded theory. The statistical population in the qualitative section includes 23 experts in the field of theoretical and practical foundations of the tourism industry; including university faculty members and tourism managers selected in a snowball method; and in the quantitative section includes 374 experts in the field of tourism. The tool for collecting findings is a semi-structured interview in the qualitative section, and a researcher-made questionnaire in the quantitative section.

### Research findings

Data analysis in the qualitative section is based on the grounded theory method and MAXQDA software was used, and in the quantitative section, SPSS software was used. The research results showed that, according to the determined goal; tourism infrastructure, international relations, social factors, and governance attitudes are among the effective factors that must be managed. Factors such as presence in the global tourism scene, facilities and infrastructure, tourist attraction policies, and existing potentials are considered as the basis and context for the development of the tourism industry in Iran and need to be improved.

### Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the aim of providing a model for the development of the tourism industry in Iran. The results of this study are consistent with the results of Fani (2025), Momeni et al. (2025), Mansoori et al. (2024), Ghodrati et al. (2024), Rajabi et al. (2024), Kwabi et al. (2023), Yahya Zadeh et al. (2023), Al Fahmawee & Jawabreh (2023), and Asadpour Kordi et al. (2022). Mansoori et al. (2024) showed that the nine main factors affecting the formation of higher education tourism in Iran, in order of influence, are: dynamic political exchanges with the world at the national level, the existence of national macro-policies in the field of academic interaction, facilitating the admission process in political and administrative dimensions, the existence of economic and technical infrastructure for foreign students, the international language level of faculty members and staff and a dynamic and receptive higher education structure, the existence of a sense of security in social, security and political dimensions for foreign students, and the factors of being a brand of universities and introducing and presenting historical, cultural and religious attractions to the world. According to the results obtained, it is suggested that the development of the tourism sector in both categories through changes in infrastructure and extensive advertising at the national and international levels should be a priority for the authorities, and the authorities should pay special attention to the foreign tourism sector to generate foreign exchange, growth, and development of the tourism sector. It is suggested to the government, ministries and relevant institutions, considering the experiences of neighboring and similar Islamic countries such as Turkey and Malaysia, to try to see the tourism sector as one of the most important sources of income in order to move away from budgeting based on oil and taxes and pressure on domestic factors.