

The Role of Potentials of Islamic Azad University of Fars Province (Marvdasht Unit) in Creating Tourist Attractions

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Abstract: Due to its direct and beneficial impact on the social, economic, cultural, and educational activities of nations, the tourism business is of utmost significance in the modern world. Travel by visitors to each other's countries is the primary means through which cultural exchanges occur. As a good example of this diversity, the Islamic Azad University of Marvdasht has been able to take meaningful steps in several scientific and cultural sectors. Contribute to the advancement of the scientific and cultural growth of society at the municipal, regional, national, and even worldwide levels. The focus of (Marvdasht Branch) is to attract visitors. In this survey-based study, the capacities of the Islamic Azad University of Fars Province (Marvdasht Branch) are examined. Students and university administrators of the Islamic Azad University of Fars Province, Marvdasht Branch; Tourists and managers of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism of Fars Province comprise the statistical population of the current research. To evaluate the study hypotheses, a researcher-made questionnaire, a one-sample t-test, and SPSS software were used. The sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula, and 392 individuals were picked using a cluster sampling approach. The findings demonstrated that the cultural potential of Marvdasht city and the tourism facilities of the Islamic Azad University of Fars Province (Marvdasht branch) have a significant influence in drawing visitors to this city.

Keywords: Tourism potential of Islamic Azad University of Fars province, tourist attractions, creation of tourist attractions.

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Introduction and problem statement

After the oil and car sectors, tourism is now the world's third biggest employment-producing business, and it has brought diverse countries, ethnicities, and cultures closer together while creating significant currency and revenue (Zare, 2010). Tourism has consistently had the biggest and quickest economic growth in the world during the last six decades. The World Tourism Organization determines the greatest tourism destinations in the world based on two essential indicators: the number of arriving visitors and the amount of revenue generated by the tourism business. (Zamani Farahani 28.27.1392)

Despite its unique climatic circumstances, thousands of years of history and culture, exquisite historical and natural green structures, a pleasant environment, the potential of four seasons throughout the year, and deep cultural roots, Iran is a popular tourist destination. It is regarded as the most powerful nation on the planet. However, Iran's revenue portion of the world tourist market is relatively little and minuscule, indicating that the Iranian tourism sector has tremendous obstacles and is in desperate need of long-term strategy and development. In 1392, Ali Nahri Yousefi believed that investment in Iran's tourist business, particularly in the rural tourism sector, would offer the foundation for major development in foreign currency and rial revenue for the country if the industry was well planned and managed. According to Yahya Kamali's 2012 study, the growth of contemporary tourism and its long-term viability need sound policy, regardless of the topic, as well as attention to specialized tourist variables.

As a result, one of the measures that need to be done to the role of industry is to pay attention to scientific and practical solutions to attract more tourists to Iran by producing knowledge and adopting effective policies and long-term planning, the optimal introduction of Iran to tourists around the world.

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Make the role of tourism in economic and social growth and prosperity more obvious. In 2012, Rabiee and his colleagues concluded that, in addition to accurate policy-making, the process of tourism development in Iran requires identifying potentials and potential sources of tourism in various parts of the country, organizing the enrichment process, and creating creative social attractions for Iran's competition. It is required and similar to the sorts of tourist services provided by neighboring nations in the region's tourism industry, and a competitive advantage should not be disregarded.

Rural tourism, according to Jenny Bryden Hahn and her colleague Eugene Vickers (2014), is seen as a development alternative that boosts the economic potential of border regions while also promoting social change and better living circumstances in rural areas. They feel that locations with undeveloped natural and cultural resources are more effective in building tourism attractions and routes. In undeveloped regions, real social engagement, along with public sector backing, gives prospects for the development of indigenous tourist ventures. This research looks at the growth of rural tourist routes in South Africa and the characteristics that make them successful.

Boroumand and his colleagues investigated the localization model of competitiveness of Iran's tourism destinations in 1397, as well as nine key indicators of tourist attraction in infrastructure development, services and destination management, accommodation facilities, price competitiveness, destination atmosphere and human factors, recreational attractions, and transportation. Finally, they have the appropriate planning and policies in place. As an example of a diverse range of Iranian tourism, the Islamic Azad University of Marvdasht has been able to develop a variety of infrastructure, destination management, accommodation facilities, destination atmosphere, and recreational, historical, and sports attractions, all of which have made a positive contribution to attracting tourists to the country. It has been utilized to recruit more students, academics, and university employees to date.

This paper aims to look into the potential of tourism in the Islamic Azad University of Fars Province Marvdasht Branch, the role of this unit in attracting tourists, and how the Islamic Azad University of Fars Province Marvdasht Branch can act and play a considerable role in sustainable development and be beneficial in the tourism industry.

Tourist attractions of Fars province and Marvdasht city

Fars province has relics of old Iranian civilization, making it one of Iran's most popular tourist destinations. Natural, historical-cultural attractions, religious places, treasures (museums), Nomads, handicrafts, local gastronomy, and lastly the province's traditions are among the province's tourist attractions. 1392) (Zamani Farahani, 1953).

Marvdasht is one of the central cities in Fars province, which is bordered on the south by Shiraz, on the west by Sepidan, on the north by Eghlid, on the northeast by Pasargad, and on the east by Arsanjan. This city, with its headquarters in Marvdasht, covers 4649 square kilometers and is 45 kilometers from Shiraz. This city has a lengthy history, as it is noted in the name of this city, which was founded near the remains of Istkhr city, that Merv was the name of one of Istkhr city's neighborhoods. The modern city of Marvdasht was founded in 1314 AH in conjunction with the establishment of a sugar mill, and by 1370 AH it had grown to become the province's second biggest city after the center of the province. (345, 1392) (Sabzian)

This city is significant for agricultural, particularly wheat, maize, and the petrochemical sector, in addition to historical and natural characteristics. The natural and extremely beautiful view of Tang-e Bostanak or the lost paradise, as well as the Dorodzan dam lake, are two of the city's natural attractions for travelers to visit. At kilometre 2 of the Persepolis private road, Marvdasht city contains a three-story residential unit named Persepolis Service Complex to host visitors and tourists. (Fars Province's General Directorate of Cultural Heritage website)

Tourist attractions of Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht Branch

Because of its vicinity to the core of Fars province and its proximity to one of the greatest and most amazing historical sites and civilizations in ancient Iran (Persepolis), this institution is one of the five key university tourist units. This university unit is concerned with generating wealth and revenue via social services and tourism. This university unit contains an Imam Reza (AS) educational, welfare, and cultural complex, which covers around 110,000 square meters and spans 15 kilometers. It is situated west of Marvdasht and has greenery, lovely open space, and entirely standard roadways with a nighttime

lighting system that is highly eye-catching. The educational, agricultural, athletic, social, and cultural amenities in this compound are excellent. There are two four-story buildings in the complex that have been transformed into student and office dormitories, there are villa structures in the complex that can be converted into tourist accommodation and hotel units, and there are reception halls with computers. It has a seating capacity of 1,500 persons and can accommodate many ceremonies at once. This complex enjoys a moderate and pleasant temperature due to its closeness to the Marvdasht mountains, making it ideal for trekking and climbing.

Negotiating with the Vice Chancellor for Tourism of Fars Province to create appropriate investments and plans, as well as special cultural elements for the educational, welfare, and cultural complex of Imam Reza (AS), is one of the important actions of the Student-Cultural Vice Chancellor of Marvdasht Azad University. In December 2016, the Vice Chancellor for Students and Culture of Marvdasht University launched the University Tourism Center, which already has around 60 archeological students and professors in this subject, in keeping with the university's five aims. The center's main activities include developing and designing a tourism site, introducing Imam Reza's (AS) educational, welfare, and cultural complex to students and domestic and foreign tourists, running extensive environmental advertisements in the country's and province's airports, and providing welfare and tourism services to students and tourists. Be. (From the website of the Islamic Azad University of Marvdasht and Wikipedia)

Research hypotheses:

- 1- The cultural potentials of Marvdasht unit play a very significant role for attracting tourists.
- 2- Climatic (environmental) potentials of Marvdasht unit have a very significant role in attracting tourists.
- 3- The present facilities of the Islamic Azad University of Fars Province (Marvdasht Branch) are a significant factor for attracting tourists to this city.

Operational definition of variables

Independent variables

Cultural potential and spiritual heritage: The present study evaluates the variable of cultural factors and spiritual heritage with various indicators such as: handicrafts, religious potentials, rituals and ceremonies and ethnic and tribal and nomadic traditions, clothing and local clothing of nomads, food and local cuisine, poems and museums. The following are the Likert four-choice spectrum responses to the questions posed in the preceding section. Very high, high, low, and very low, questions 1 through 9 investigate the cultural and spiritual heritage variables.

Climatic potential (environmental): In this research, the variable of climatic potential (environmental) is assessed by a variety of indicators, including urban texture, climatic characteristics, rural texture, mountaineering and rock climbing, and natural attractions. On a four-point Likert scale, the following are the responses to the questions posed previously: Extremely high, high, low, very low: Questions 1 through 7 analyze the climate potential variable (environmental).

Potential of the Marvdasht unit: In the current study, the climatic potential (environmental) variable is estimated by a variety of indicators, including dormitories, educational and research lands, sports, welfare, and educational facilities. The responses to the aforementioned questions are presented in the form of a Likert four-choice spectrum, with the following options: Very high, high, low, and very low, questions 1 through 5 analyze the Marvdasht unit's tourist appeal variable.

In the present study, the variable of tourist attraction in the Marvdasht unit is regarded as a dependent variable and is associated with a number of indicators, including dormitories, educational and research fields, sports, welfare and educational facilities, urban context, and characteristic features. Assessing the climate, rural landscape, mountaineering and rock climbing, and natural attractions.

Theoretical basis of research

This study is based on Bernard Lann's theory of epistemic tourism development, which claims that sustainable tourism examines destination locations as a tripartite interaction between destination or host regions (nature and its inhabitants), visitors, and the tourism sector. These three components dominate the tourist business. Sustainable tourism strives to resolve conflicts between the three sides of the

triangle, with the goal of preserving their equilibrium throughout time. Sustainable tourism lowers environmental harm, attracts visitors, and stimulates economic expansion. (From Papli, 2009)

Effective tourist growth in the area involves cooperation and positive interaction between many elements influencing development. The connection between the components of development, as well as their coordination and synergy, plays a crucial role in attaining the growth and development objectives of the tourist industry. Synergy occurs when the forces and abilities of the components combine to produce a result that is greater than the sum of the components. Tourism's coordinated and sustainable growth results from the use of synergistic features in its epistemological development (Stefano et al., 2009)

The main variables in the growth of tourism are visitors, hosts, and attractions, which determine the degree of adaptability and overlap between these three regional components from which the eponymous development is shaped. The field of tourism refers to all persons who visit a place as tourists, including their expectations and wants, culture, values, and personality, as well as their economic and financial capabilities.

Triple factors of epithelial tourism development

The host area encompasses all residents of the destination, as well as visitors, and includes the region's residents' expectations and demands in regard to the tourism industry and culture, as well as the values and features of their social personality and socioeconomic level.

The term "destination area" also refers to historical, cultural, and ecological aspects that set a place apart from others. If these three things are combined in the perfect condition, epistemic development and 100% tourism will occur. This isn't always the case, however. There are two types of epidemiological tourism development strategies: passive development strategies and active and effective development strategies. There are three areas for modification in a passive approach, which are sometimes tense and sometimes contradictory. By making the required adjustments and corrections in the three key variables, successful methods attempt to enhance the overlap and compliance of the three areas while reducing waste areas. There are three types of waste:

A place where visitors and locals get along, but the destination's qualities aren't covered. To compensate for the loss, changes to the destination area are required.

It is a place where the qualities of the destination and the attitudes of the locals are in sync, but where the best use of amenities is not achieved owing to a lack of tourist organization. For recruiting visitors, customized marketing methods are beneficial.

It is an area where tourists like and are interested in the region's qualities, but owing to the region's unique attitude toward tourists, etc., it is devoid of visitors. Educational tactics, guiding, and educating the public are effective alternatives. 1381, 77, 81 (Alwani)

In general, more regional knowledge and engagement in tourist development increases the likelihood of conserving the region's resources, services, and attractions, and tourism growth happens (Carlinger, 1393).

Research Methods

In terms of goal, this study is a developmental research project, and in terms of data collecting, it is a survey description. The data collecting instrument is a 21-question questionnaire created by the researcher and constructed on a four-choice Likert scale. It receives a very high score of 4 and a very low score of 1, and which is divided into three sections: climatic and environmental potentials (7 questions), cultural and spiritual legacy (9 questions), and the potential of Marvdasht Azad University in attracting tourists (5 questions).

In 1400, the statistical population included students and university administrators from the Islamic Azad University of Fars Province, Marvdasht Branch, as well as tourists and managers from the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism of Fars Province. The sampling method used was cluster and classification.

The Cochran's formula is used to obtain the statistical population and sample size in the table above.

<i>Sample size</i>	<i>Statistical Society</i>
<i>322 people</i>	<i>2000 students</i>
<i>45 people</i>	<i>200 tourists based on the study season (spring)</i>
<i>20 people</i>	<i>40 managers of Marvdasht University</i>
<i>6 people</i>	<i>20 directors of cultural heritage of the province</i>

A 7-member elite community of tourism academics has approved the formal validity of this study, as well as the dependability, predictability, and correctness of research instruments.

SPSS software was used to analyze the data in this research. The test alpha is bigger than the significance threshold for all hypotheses (0.05). The null hypothesis is so accepted. As a consequence, the data is distributed normally. As a result, the hypotheses are tested using a t-test.

The sample size is 392 participants, including 322 students, 45 visitors by season, 20 Marvdasht University managers, and 6 heritage managers fully completing the questionnaire.

Descriptive weaves of research

75.8% of respondents were men and 24.2% were women.

Age pyramid of respondents, people under 20 years with 8.7%, people 20 to 30 years with 64%, people 30 to 40 years with 19.1%, people 40 to 50 years with 6.4%, people 50 to 60 years with 0.8% and people above 60 years with 1% of the sample.

Respondents with a diploma or less have 5.4 percent, masters with diplomas have 15.1 percent, bachelors have 54.6 percent, masters have 19.6 percent, and doctorates have 5.4 percent.

Inferential research findings

Klomogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the normality of the data.

H0: The data are normal.

H1: The data are not normal.

<i>The potential of Marvdasht</i>	<i>Climatic potential</i>	<i>Cultural potentials</i>	
<i>1.871</i>	<i>1.964</i>	<i>1.165</i>	<i>Klomogorov statistics</i>
<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.132</i>	<i>The significance level</i>

The test alpha is bigger than the significance threshold for all hypotheses (0.05). The null hypothesis is so accepted. As a consequence, the data exhibit a normal distribution, hence the hypotheses were tested using a one-sample t-test.

Hypothesis 1: The cultural potentials of Marvdasht unit play a very important role in attracting tourists.

To test this hypothesis, we use one-sample t-test. The results of this test are as follows:

Table 1- Sample t-test

Standard error standard	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	
0.02776	0.54960	2.8268	392	Cultural potentials

Test value = 2.5					
% 95 confidence interval					
upper line	Low limit	Mean difference	The significance level	Degree of freedom	T
0.3814	0.2722	0.32681	0.000	391	11.773

The sample size, mean response, standard deviation of response, t-statistic, degree of freedom, mean difference, and 95 percent confidence interval for the mean difference are all presented in the table above. The study hypothesis is verified since the significance level is less than 0.05. In other words, the Marvdasht unit's cultural potentials are crucial in luring visitors.

Hypothesis 2: Climatic (environmental) potentials of Marvdasht unit have a very important role in attracting tourists.

Table 2 - Climatic (environmental) potentials of Marvdasht unit

Standard error standard	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	
0.02736	0.54179	2.7878	392	University Climatic Potentials

Test value = 2.5					
% 95 confidence interval					
upper limit	Low limit	Mean difference	The significance level	Degree of freedom	T
0.3416	0.2340	0.28784	0.000	391	10.519

The sample size, individual mean responses, standard deviation of responses, t-statistic, degree of freedom, mean difference, and 95 percent confidence interval for mean difference are all presented in the table above. The study hypothesis is verified since the significance level is less than 0.05. To put it another way, the climatic potentials of the Marvdasht unit are crucial in attracting visitors.

Hypothesis 3: The existing facilities of the Azad University of Fars Province, Marvdasht Branch, have a very important role in attracting tourists.

Table 3- Available facilities of Fars Province Azad University, Marvdasht Branch

Standard error standard	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	
0.03535	0.69992	2.4092	392	Available facilities of the university

Test value = 2.5					
%95 confidence interval					
upper limit	Low limit	Mean difference	The significance level	Degree of freedom	T
-0.0213	-0.1603	-0.09082	0.011	391	-۲,۰۶۹

The sample size, mean response, standard deviation of response, t-statistic, degree of freedom, mean difference, and 95 percent confidence interval for the mean difference are all presented in the table above. The study hypothesis is verified since the significance level is less than 0.05. In other words, Marvdasht University's present facilities play a critical role in luring visitors.

Surveying the priority of factors affecting tourist attraction in Marvdasht:

To test this hypothesis, we use my Fried test. The results are as follows:

Table 4 - of Freedman test

<i>Average rating</i>	
2.20	<i>Climatic potentials</i>
2.32	<i>Cultural potentials</i>
1.48	<i>Available facilities of the university</i>
392	<i>Number</i>
167.343	<i>Chi-square</i>
2	<i>Degree of freedom</i>
0.000	<i>The significance level</i>

This test, as you can see, has two outcomes. The average ranks in these three potentials are shown first. According to this table, cultural potential has the largest influence on recruiting visitors in Marvdasht Fars, whereas Azad University facilities have the least impact. Second place goes to climate potential.

The following step displays chi-square statistics and significant levels. As you can see, the significant level is lower than the test alpha (0.05), indicating that the relevance of variables influencing visitor appeal varies.

Comparison of average scores in different groups:

This study included four groups of inhabitants from Marvdasht and Shiraz: students and administrators from the Islamic Azad University (Marvdasht branch), visitors, and managers from the Fars Province's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization. The average responses to

questions by various groups are compared in this section. We utilize the analysis of variance (ANOVA) test for this. The following are the outcomes:

Table 5 - ANOVA test results

<i>Mean</i>	<i>Number</i>	
2.6929	6	<i>Tourism managers</i>
2.5528	45	<i>Tourists</i>
2.71159.	20	<i>University administrators</i>
2.6879	322	<i>Students</i>
2.6739	393	<i>Total</i>

As you can observe, the university administrators had the highest score on all the questionnaire questions, and the average of answers was the lowest for tourists.

Discussion and conclusion

Tourism has grown to become one of the world's most significant and profitable sectors. According to published figures, this business is the world's third largest employer behind the oil and car industries, and it has brought diverse countries, ethnicities, and cultures closer together while creating cash and wealth. Every year, millions of individuals travel throughout the globe, and these travels have become an integral part of their life.

Despite the rising requirements of urban residents for relaxation, quiet, and peaceful environments in nature and villages, as well as the potentials and potentials of Iran's regions, this business has received little attention in our country.

Infrastructure considerations, or infrastructures, are one of the fundamental cornerstones of tourist activity. The presence of this structure is critical to the tourism scenario. Accommodation facilities, sometimes known as hotels, are one of the most significant infrastructures in tourism, and they must match tourist demand in order for the sector to succeed. These amenities are critical to the success of each region's tourist development efforts. If the quality and quantity of services and lodging facilities are lowered, tourist demand will decline, and the region's tourism would suffer significantly. All three hypotheses of this study were verified, and the Islamic Azad University of Fars Province (Marvdasht cultural branch) potentials, climatic (environmental) potentials, and current facilities are major factors in drawing visitors to this city. According to the findings, university officials had the largest and highest proportion of the study population, while visitors had the lowest participation. Our findings are compatible with those of Nehruyefi's study in 1392, Kamali's research in 1391, Jenny Bryden's research in 2014, and Boroumand's research in 1397. Despite the Marvdasht branch of Azad University's climatic and natural charms, cultural potentials, and amenities, there has been no defined role for this university unit in luring visitors. The need to pay more attention to scientific and practical solutions to attract more tourists than at any other time and period is felt more strongly than ever before, and should be accomplished by producing knowledge, implementing effective and long-term policies, and coordinating planning, among other things. Despite the industry's critical role in economic and social growth and prosperity, if policy and implementation are not done properly, not only will there be no advancement, but there will be further recession and regression.

Research-based suggestions

- 1- Consistent and integrated management in tourism policy development and planning
- 2- Reviving cultural potentials in tourist planning in the nation (such as ethnic and tribal rituals and traditions, local clothing and clothing, local food, folklore and traditional poems and stories, celebration and mourning rituals, etc.)
- 3- Increasing private sector desire to invest in tourism in the Marvdasht area
- 4- Improving recreational and tourist facilities and services in the Marvdasht region

Proposals for Future Research

- 1- It is proposed that further research on this topic be undertaken in other provinces and the findings compared to this study.
- 2- It is advised that further research on this topic be done at other institutions, with the results compared to the findings of this study.

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