

The Study of The Effect of Tourism Development on Strengthening Iran's National Power

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Extended abstract

1. Introduction

National power is a set of potential and actual capabilities of a country that is used to achieve national interests. Increasing national power is one of the most important goals of countries and efforts are always made to achieve it. National power plays an important role in the geopolitical weight of countries, which determines their position in the international system. Tourism can strengthen national power by strengthening the soft aspects of national power. This is why countries focus on tourism to achieve this goal. Iran is considered one of the ten largest countries in the world in terms of various historical, religious and natural tourist attractions, and it can use this opportunity to strengthen its national power. The present study aims to explain the importance and impact of tourism on national power components in Iran.

2. Review of Literature

National power has various origins and foundations that produce national power in a collective function. Economic, political, military, social, geographical and scientific factors are some of the main factors shaping the national power of countries. The impact of tourism on the economy is one of the direct and indirect methods of per capita income, as well as government revenues and increasing employment opportunities. Tourism also contributes to a fair distribution of income and directs money from the rich and middle classes to the poor, and can have a significant impact on improving the economies of less developed countries. Politically, tourism often helps increase political stability. With the increase in social interactions resulting from tourism, peace and understanding among nations will increase and in fact tourism is a tool of public diplomacy. Tourism can provide a positive and unmediated mental image of countries. Another effect of tourism is

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increasing security in the community. Socially and culturally, tourism helps to strengthen local values, traditions and culture, and also renews some customs and traditions. Tourism helps to raise public awareness and learn more about other cultures. Tourism protects historical monuments and buildings.

3. Methodology

A descriptive-analytical and survey research method was used in this study. The study subjects consists of 40 elites and academic specialists. Field research methods (5 pint likert scales questionnaire) were used for data collection purposes. The reliability of questionnaire with score of 0.7 confirmed. The collected data were analysed using SPSS software and GLM repeated measures analysis of variance test and one- sample t-test.

4. Findings and Discussion

Regarding the impact of tourism on national power dimensions, the one-sample T-test with an average value (3) indicated the mean values of 4, 3.85, and 3.91 for the economic, socio-cultural and political dimensions respectively. It was statistically significant at the alpha level of 0.05, indicating the impact of tourism on the national power of Iran. Regarding the impact of tourism on national power factors, the one-sample t-test showed that all factors of three economic, socio-cultural and political dimensions had mean values higher than average, and it was statistically significant at the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that tourism can strengthen the national power of Iran in all three economic, socio-cultural and political dimensions.

5. Conclusion

Today, the importance of tourism has attracted the attention of governments and nations, and countries are trying to develop tourism by adapting their national structures to these activities, not only to introduce their culture, country, land, nation, history and national identity to the world, but also they have good economic interests and a special place in the international trade of the tourism industry. Given the numerous and diverse capabilities and opportunities in the field of tourism that Iran has, the present study has explained the importance and the role of tourism in strengthening the national power of the country. The results of this study show that the development of tourism is effective in strengthening the national power of the country in macroeconomic, political and socio-cultural dimensions. Among these dimensions, tourism has the greatest impact on the economic dimension by strengthening the components of "increasing national income" and "strengthening the private sector." The overall results showed that tourism development both strengthens and develops the country's economic by increasing income, production, job creation, strengthening the private sector, trade development, increasing justice, strengthening domestic and foreign policy, increasing welfare, education, increasing national cohesion and solidarity and simultaneous cultural exchanges at the national

and international levels, as well as it strengthens the country's domestic and foreign policies, and ultimately, strengthens the national power, the country's geopolitical position at the regional and global levels. Along with the above results, the following suggestions are provided:

- To increase the awareness of legislators, policymakers and planners of the country with the position of tourism in strengthening national power;
- To develop an integrated policy and planning system between policy makers and tourism planning agencies;
- To create expert interactions between the foreign policy apparatus and policy makers and executives of the country's tourism industry;
- To familiarize diplomats and experts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the capabilities and potentials of tourism;
- To expand relations with international tourism-related organizations such as the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the World Travel and Tourism Council, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Keywords: Tourism, National power, Iran.

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