Prioritizing and Measuring Barriers to Tourism Development with Emphasis on Cultural Barriers of the Case Study: Ardabil Province, Iran

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to prioritize and measure barriers to tourism development in Ardabil province with emphasis on cultural barriers using Vikor decision making technique. In this research, after theoretical explanation of the topic, it was tried to use any method that contributes to the validity of the information and the results. To accomplish this goal, in this research, statistical decision making and deduction methods were used to compare the findings with the theoretical model of research. Therefore, this research is an applied and exploratory research based on purpose type, and statistical analysis of hypotheses test was performed using Excel and SPSS softwares. According to the findings obtained from the analysis and summarization of Vikor's model on tourism development barriers for respondents, the factor of cultural barriers (0.000) was identified as the first influencing factor and next priorities were identified as social capital (0.106), institutional barriers (0.373), social barriers (0.388) and individual barriers (1), respectively. The results showed that from the viewpoint of tourists, the correlation coefficient of tourism development with cultural barriers, institutional barriers, social barriers, social capital and individual barriers were 0.439, 0.659, 0.644, 0.583 and 0.01, respectively. The last relation is not significant. The results of regression analysis showed that the three variables of institutional barriers, social barriers and social capital explained 58% of the dependent variable changes. The results showed that the standardized coefficients of significant variables in the equation were 0.396, 0.143, 0.352 for institutional barriers, social barriers and social capital, respectively, and for one unit change in each of these coefficients, change or succeeded will be resulted in the dependent variable as much as mentioned values for coefficients and cultural barriers is considered the main barrier to tourism development in Ardabil province.

Keywords: Tourism Development, Cultural Barriers, MCDM, Ardabil Provinc.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is the world's largest income-generating service industry whose growth results in many social and economic changes to the destination. As an ordinary part of human daily life, this industry is one of the most important sources of income (Glaser, 2014:2). Success in this industry is as important in terms of the socio-economic development of countries so that economists have termed it as "invisible exports" (Movahed, 2017:34). Therefore, according to the World Tourism Organization (2012) statistics, tourism as a way of economic and social development of communities has been interested by most of countries, especially developing countries (Lai & Nepal, 2006: 54). In this regard, the policy of sustainable tourism development is a public approach that has been taken into consideration by governments, through which tourism to be accepted ecologically, to be self-sufficient financially, and socially and ethically for local communities to be useful (Altinay and Kashif, 2005: 274). In recent decades, the growth, development and adoption of the tourism industry as one of the major economic activities have led planners to pay particular attention to two major issues of increasing tourist satisfaction and enhancing the quality of the tourism experience for increasing revenues from tourism activities (Ghalibaf and Shabaninezhad, 2011:148). In this regard, explaining and summarizing the barriers of tourist attraction and development are important topics of this study. It is hoped that this study help to develop the cognition in the field of social, moral and cultural barriers to tourist attraction. It should be noted that this research emphasizes cultural barriers that have been less addressed, and so the focus of this research is on prioritizing cultural barriers to tourism development.

According to existing empirical and theoretical literature, the tourism industry as one of the most important and high-income industries with annual revenues of nearly 1000 billion $ in worldwide, not only has economic impacts, but also plays an important role in advancing social and cultural goals and the closeness of human societies through exchanging cultures. It is not unreasonable to refer to tourism as a smoke-free industry that this property is a cause and a consequence of the process of its globalization. In terms of economic aspect, according to studies, the income from the attraction of a foreign tourist equals the income from sale of 15 barrels of oil and in exchange for the entry of 6 tourists, one person will be employed in the country (Yaghoubzadeh, 2014:14). Tourism can also be called white industry because, unlike most manufacturing industries, it is without contaminating the human environment, fosters friendship and understanding between nations and brings peace and security to the people (Mohseni, 2009). Meanwhile, Iran is among the first 9 countries in the world in terms of historical buildings and among the top 10 countries in terms of ecotourism attractions. However, in line with these capabilities, it should benefit from 400 billion $ in tourism revenue and its share should be at least 5% of that amount, but Iran's income is not only that, but much lower and less than 0.05% of the share mentioned and is ranked 92nd among the countries in the world (ibid).

In addition to the significant difference in the level of tourist attraction in macro-scale with the country analysis unit, it is observed that there are also significant differences between provinces at national level in attracting domestic and foreign tourists. For example, the number of foreign tourists through air route in Isfahan province, Fars province and Ardabil province in 2016 was 43500, 90000 and 61, respectively. According to the results of the National Tourism Survey, in the spring of

2016, out of the total number of 75260770 trips across the country, Ardabil province was the destination for only 1815194 people and Ardabil was ranked 14th among the top 20 tourism cities. According to the statistical yearbook of 2016, the number of visits to Sheikh Safieddin Ardabili's monument complex has increased from 130282 in 2006 to 157495 in 2016, indicating that there has been no significant increase in the number of visits to museums (Tourists statistical yearbook of Ardabil Province, 2016). Statistics show that the number of domestic and foreign tourists who selected Ardabil province as a destination is far from the forecast of the Tourism and Cultural Heritage Organization, so that it was assumed that the number of domestic and foreign tourists would reach to 8489893 people in 2013, to 8659692 people with 2% growth in 2014, to 8832886 people in 2015, to 9009544 people in 2016 and to 9279830 people in 2017 that these estimates were not realized. (Table of Forecast of the number of tourists, Tourism and Cultural Heritage Organization, 2018).

Thus, the existing literature suggests that there are many stabilizing and destructive factors involved in attracting tourism are at different levels of analysis have relationship with each other. Among these are spatial inequalities and distributive disruptions in a variety of areas including infrastructure development, transnational and structural components in the four economic, cultural, political, and social domains. It should be noted that the theoretical and empirical literature in this field is largely reductionist and has focused on one of the ecological, economic, or service quality factors. Meanwhile, factors of micro, macro and transnational levels have been less taken into account in an integrated approach. Therefore, in this study, the theoretical framework is based on different levels of analysis and it has been attempted to prioritize the components related to the factors of tourism development barriers with emphasis on cultural barriers using prioritization methods first and then measured and evaluated using the statistical tests. Therefore, dynamic routes have been suggested to achieve results at different levels. Therefore, it has been attempted to select a position according to the theoretical framework of this study to apply appropriate causal processes at multilevel simultaneously and systematically, to deal with various levels and dimensions in a continuity, starting from the quality of factors acting at the micro level and continuing at the macro level to provide a comprehensive and systematic view of the barriers to the development and attraction of tourism in Ardabil province. Therefore, regarding the stated cases, the most important research questions are "what are the barriers to tourism development in Ardabil province?" and "what are the most important priorities for measuring the cultural barriers in Ardabil province?".

Despite the multitude of empirical studies conducted on tourism, the majority of studies have been based on reductionist, and have failed to study all of the software and hardware factors affecting tourism attraction and development beside each other using a hybrid approach. In this study, however, it is attempted to refer to the most important national and international studies at the micro and macro levels.

A number of studies have considered the impact of economic factors on tourist attraction. In this regard, Moussaie (2004) studied the last three decades of the Iranian economy and stated that 1% increase in the ratio of consumer price index in Iran to the global consumer price index reduces services consumption decreases tourism demand in Iran by 0.25% and 1% increase in global GDP boosts tourism demand in Iran by 0.45%. Foreign exchange income from foreign tourists is also heavily influenced by national issues and internal developments. Kharazmi (2005) studies the causal relationship between tourism and business in Iran using data collected over 1959-2001

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and concluded that there is a relationship between these two variables. International studies conducted in the field of economics also partly confirm these results. There are also studies that point to the role of multiple factors in this relationship. Sharifzadeh and Moradinejad (2002) expressed lack of specific institutional and legal frameworks such as empowered governmental organizations and lack of private organizations and institutions that can adopt a common policy and exploit each other's capabilities as the major barrier to the development of the tourism industry. In an article entitled Identifying Tourism Infrastructure Needs, Shafiee (2003) stated the lack of an independent organization to hire experienced and empowered managers and to systematize tourist organizations as well as the lack of utilization of tourism industry resources as barriers to tourism growth in Iran. Madoshoushi and Nasserpour (2003) examined the barriers to the development of tourism industry in Lorestan province in five distinct categories including organizational and structural barriers, cultural-social barriers, market barriers, educational barriers, and specialized manpower shortages. The underlying barriers divide. Madoshoushi and Nasserpour (2003) examined the barriers to the development of tourism industry in Lorestan province and divided these factors into five distinct categories including organizational and structural barriers, cultural-social barriers, marketing barriers, educational barriers, and shortages of specialized manpower and infrastructural barriers. Vejdan Taleshmakail (2008) stated lack of infrastructures and services, seasonal demand, poor advertising and information, cultural and social barriers and non-cooperation of tourism development organizations as the barriers to tourism development in his master's thesis entitled "Barriers and Challenges of Domestic Tourism". In their research, Pour Faraj et al. (2008) examined the relationship between ICT, tourism industry and economic growth in 70 countries and found that the development of tourism industry enhances economic growth and its intensity in developed countries is more than developing countries. Furthermore, per capita GDP, degree of openness of economy, human capital and per capita education expenditure have a positive and significant effect on tourism attraction. Rahimpour and Karbasi Yazdi (2011) introduced organizational structure and institutation (organization, resources, management practices and human capital), facilities (accommodation centers, catering, transportation facilities and tour guides) and marketing (information and tourism advertising) (in order of priority) as factors affecting the development of tourism industry of the Islamic Republic of Iran using Rembrandt method. The results of the study of Arbabian et al. (2013) also show that economic growth along with the development of facilities and equipment leads to the development of tourism and the increase in per capita income leads to an increase in tourism demand. Ghobadi et al. (2012) showed that problems such as lack of infrastructure and welfare facilities, lack of proper understanding of residents and officials about tourism, lack of proper information network and lack of support and insufficient attention of government are the most important problems of tourism development in Kermanshah province. Hashemnejad (2014), in his PhD thesis entitled "Sociological Survey of Domestic Tourism and Multiple Operating Structures Affecting on It in Sari", has concluded that factors such as the appropriate and expected mental image of the city as a destination for tourism and coordination among economic, social, cultural and political institutions influence on the development of tourism industry (Quoted by Azkia and Aghajani, 2015).

     In international studies, Bazbi (2000) found that the lack of appropriate advertising and irrational and bohemian cultural encounters are major barriers to the

boom in the tourism industry. Diamond (2006), in his field findings, found that the immaturity and low level of awareness of the host community are among the factors influencing the growth and prosperity of the tourism industry. Operman (2006) considers the officials distrust local people, the lack of easy access to the attractions by tourists, the lack of amenities and services in the areas, and the centralization of public offices in the center as influencing variables of tourism development. Yuzama (2008) showed that tourism development involves paying attention to the dimensions of development at all individual levels, directing capital, directing technological progress and structural and institutional change that are adapted to the present and future needs of tourists and in the meantime, the tourist attractions can be effective in the development of the tourism industry. Villarino (2009) showed that the lack of awareness of individuals about the economic impacts of tourism, the lack of publicity and information, the lack of amenities and services, the lack of communication and coordination between organizations and institutions are barriers to tourism development. Kapoor (2010) concluded that expanding welfare and infrastructural facilities, improving health, improving communication lines are among the activities that help to improve tourism. In the meantime, Amit (2011) believes that in addition to the lack of services and facilities for the villages, the lack of proper planning in the field of tourism is also an obstacle to tourism development.

As existing evidence shows, researchers have less focused on the role of individual and social factors, especially cultural barriers, in other words, the integration of factors in tourist attraction. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of agency and social structure, especially internal culture, in attracting tourists using an integrated approach, and to provide adequate theoretical and empirical evidence in relation to the purpose of the research by introducing empirical examples.

Tourism is a complex system that affects different aspects of human life, including social, cultural, economic, political, environmental and physical aspects in the territorial area. In fact, tourism is a production and consumption industry whose development has always contributed to increasing employment and national income and generating demand for many goods and services (Haghighi et al., 2015:866). Due to the relative deprivation of Ardabil province and high unemployment rate, it is necessary to think about using the regional abilities to eliminate deprivation, create employment and earn money. The expansion of the tourism industry as an industry, which relates with different areas such as economy, agriculture, culture, environment and services, can be considered as one of the main development tools in this province that has great potential in this area. To this end, this study aims to identify, validate and prioritize the problems and barriers to the development of the tourism industry by emphasizing cultural barriers from the perspective of experts, tourists and citizens.

Considering the importance of this goal, along with the numerous causal conditions that can help us achieve this goal, we find that researchers have less focused on the software factor for achieving that goal in their theoretical and empirical studies. In this unique research study, the researcher tries to find the rule governing a relational system in which there is no disturbance in the distributive, normative, and relational domains, and it is expected that the discovery of this relational rule will open a new horizon at the social system level for the executive policymakers to realize the main purpose of the current research that is to prioritize and evaluate the barriers to tourist attraction and to use their material and non-material benefits. The advantage of the current theoretical study is that it was tested and it was attempted to confirm the

theoretical aspect of the research by double-checking its validity and strength through providing scientific evidence during the study. This research was important as a new normative horizon was opened for policy makers and executives in the field of tourism to consider important factors that were unknown and less concerned theoretically/practically and to address practical aspects of the issue more and more.

METHODS

It will not be possible to achieve scientific goals or scientific knowledge unless it is done with the correct methodology. In other words, research is validated by its method not its subject (Khaki, 2008:155). In this study, it was attempted to use a method that facilitates the validity of information and results. To achieve this goal, were used several levels to match the findings with the theoretical model of research. Such a methodology that emphasizes the multiplicity of research methods and their integration. In other words, this research is an applied research in terms of purpose and a descriptive-analytical research in terms of materials and methods. The statistical population of this study consists of two groups of population, the first of which includes all tourists entering Ardabil province that is 1815194 people based on the available statistics (Statistical Yearbook of Iran Statistical Center, 2016). In this study, sampling was performed using Cochran method. The sample size is calculated based on Cochran's formula as following (Hafez Nia, 2007:140).

$$N = \frac{\dfrac{t^2 pq}{d^2}}{1 + \dfrac{1}{n}} \left[\frac{t^2 pq}{d^2} - 1 \right]$$

In this formula, N represents the size of the population under study, t is the variable size in the natural distribution, P is the percentage of the trait distribution in the community, q is the percentage of people without the trait, and d denotes the difference of the actual proportion of trait in the population (ibidi:140-138). 384 samples were estimated for the main purpose of the study, ie collecting data from tourists, by calculating the sample size through Cochran method with 0.05 error and 0.95 confidence level (according to the above relation). The sampling method used in this study was random multi-stage cluster sampling in which the sampling operations were along with dividing cities and subdivisions into areas and regions and collecting data from these areas and regions. It should be noted that because some questionnaires were incomplete as some citizens were reluctant to answer all the questions, so the number of them was limited and some of which were also excluded in analyzing data. In the case of tourists, as some cities in the province are more receptive to tourism, it was attempted to distribute the estimated sample size to some cities according to the research logic and to collect the necessary information from tourists randomly. The following table shows the sample size distribution in the cities of Ardabil, Meshkinshahr, Sareyn and Moghan Plain Festival.

Table 1: Distribution of tourist sample size by target cities by deleting other cities

Number of distributed questionnaires	City	No.
200	Ardabil	1
90	Sareyn	5
60	Meshkin Shahr	7
34	Moghan Plain Festival	8
384	-	Total

The data and theoretical information needed were collected through two library and field methods. Therefore, in order to answer the research problem, a survey method must be used that the research tool used in this research was a researcher-made questionnaire based on theoretical literature. The questionnaire questions were designed to collect information from the study population. The validity test used in this study is formal and content validity. The questionnaires were given to tourism and management experts (in the field of identification of the development barriers) and some academics to perform formal and content tests. Then, corrections and adjustments were made according to the comments and suggestions. Finally, some of the questions in the questionnaire were modified or eliminated so that the number of questions was reduced from 87 to 60 questions. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was also used to assess the reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha for the research variables is estimated separately in the following table.

Table 2: Tourist Questionnaire Reliability Coefficient (by Factors Affecting)

Cronbach's alpha	Variables
0.791	Cultural barriers
0.862	Institutional Barriers
0.834	Social barriers
0.915	Social capital (public education, social values, psychological capital),
0.775	Individual obstacles
0.854	Tourism development

Reference: Field Studies

Finally, descriptive and inferential techniques and statistics were used for analysizing data. Initially, the research variables were tested by descriptive statistics and were then examined by statistical methods. Statistics such as Pearson correlation coefficient, regression analysis, variance analysis were used in inferential statistics. It should also be noted that multi-criteria decision making (MCDM) methods were used to prioritize and rank the importance of tourism development barriers with special emphasis on cultural barriers (Aghdaie, 2014:770). Vikor, which has been introduced to optimize multi-criteria problems in complex systems (Ekhtiari, 139:166), is a multi-criteria decision-making method to solve a discrete decision problem with inappropriate and different criteria conflicting (Amiri, 2007:171). This method determines a rated set of available options with respect to contrasting indices. The main purpose of the Vikor technique is to get closer to the ideal answer of each index (Asghari Zadeh et al.,

2011:34). This technique focuses on the categorization and selection of a set of options and determines adaptive solutions to one problem with conflicting criteria. This method uses the concept of best option to rank, and the degree of compromise between options distance compared to the best option is discussed. The Vikor method is used to solve problems with incompatible indicators. The steps are as follows: 1- Forming the decision making matrix 2- Normalizing the decision making matrix 3- Weighting the normal matrix 4- Determining the highest and lowest values of the weighted normal matrix 5- Determining the desirability index (s) and dissatisfaction index (R) 6- Calculating Q value and final rating. In this method, according to the values of Q, R and S, the options are arranged in three groups from small to large. Finally, an option, which is recognized as the best option in the Q group, is selected as the best option. Finally, the options are ranked based on the descending value (lowest value, rank, or first priority) (Vikor value fluctuates between 1 and 0). Since the research factors or criteria were not of equal importance, it was necessary to determine the relative importance of each of them and to apply special coefficients as weight in analyzing the information for evaluating factors or criteria more accurately (Padarvandi, 2013:82).

Ardabil province with an area of 17953 km2 and 1270420 people in 2016 (with a change of -2.01% compared to the previous census) is located in the northwestern Iran plateau and is 1.09% of the total area of the country. It is surrounded Aras River, Moghan Plain and Balah River in Republic of Azerbaijan from north, Talesh and Baghro Mountains in Gilan province and Republic of Azerbaijan from east, mountains, valleys and continues plains of Zanjan province from south and East Azarbaijan province from west. The special geology and topography of the area have created attractive natural landscapes that show the richness of natural and cultural aspects of its urban, rural and tribal areas. It should be noted that since Ardabil province has the rank of 19 in terms of industrial indices, rank of 26 of health indices and rank of 25 in terms of cultural indices and on average is ranked 24 in terms of development indices, so pay attention to investment even special attention to tourism in this province is undeniably important (Rajabi and Aghaie, 2017:7).
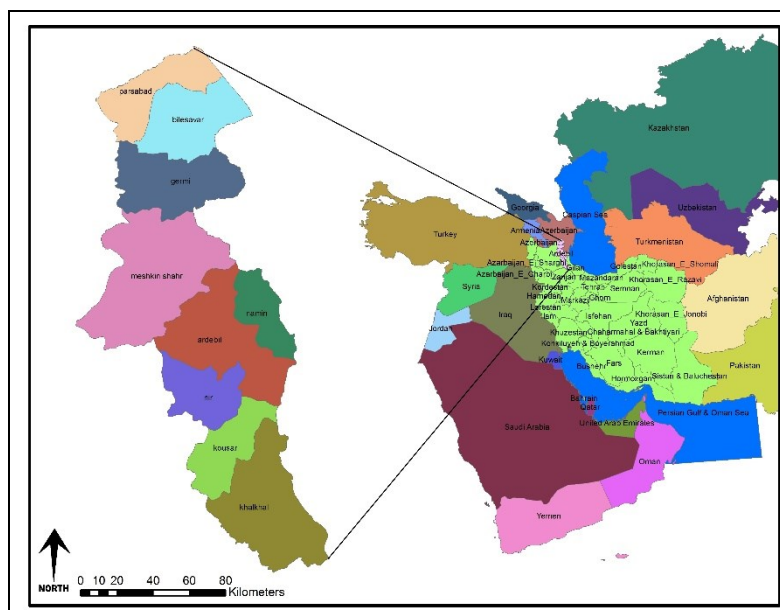

Figure 1: Map of the study site

Ardabil province is known as the countryside of Iran for having a suitable climate and has many tourism capacities and sometimes unique natural, historical and cultural areas and is one of the most important developmental areas of the province. Sheikh Safi Al-dien-Ardabili Complex, which is Twenty-second Iranian registered UNESCO monuments, is located in this province (Ardabil Province Tourism and Cultural Heritage Office Report, 2017). This province has 1,800 historical monuments identified, about 920 national registered works and 120 Imamzadeh. Ardabil province has 13 museums called Chini Khaneh, Archeology, Anthropology, Crafts, Martyrs, Religious Art, Natural History, Science History, and Municipality Building in Ardabil and 4 museums in Meshkinshahr, Khalkhal, Namin and Nair (ibid). Other historical arts have been identified in different parts of Ardabil province, the most important of which are: Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili Complex, Ardabil Historical Bazaar Collection, Sheikh Jabrayil Kalkhuran Monument Collection, Jomeh Mosque, Saleh and Sadr al-Din and Halimeh Khatoun Imamzadeh in Ardabil, Sheikh Haidar Monument in Meshkinshahar, Shahriri Historical Site (Pirazmian-Arjagh), Pars Abad Oltan Castle, Qirmizi Korpi (Red Bridge), Shah Abbasi Caravanserai and Bowen Yughun Castle in Nir, Saram al-Saltaneh Hoose in Namin, Kanzag Stone Architecture in Sareyn, Qiz Qalehsi in Bileh Savar in Bile Savar, Ghanli Bolagh caravanserai (Sarbaz-e Vatan) in Razi.

Sabalan Mountain Massif with height of 4811 meters as one of the seven tourism hubs of the country, is the source of hot and cold mineral springs and the lake located on its peak and Shirvan Valley are known as Geo Park in Ardabil Province. This province has 110 mineral springs including 75 hot springs and 35 cold springs. Therefore, "Ardabil, the land of Heavenly Springs" is chosen as the tourism slogan of the province. Qinarjee hot water with 84 ºC as the hottest mineral hot water, Guthur Soui with pH of 2.7 as the most acidic mineral hot water and Gavmish Gouli with flow rate of 65 liters per second as the highest-water hot mineral water spring are located in the Ardabil province (Ardabil Province Tourism and Cultural Heritage Office Report, 2017).

26 modern water treatment complexes including Iranian, Sabalan, Ershad (Pahnlu), Shahr-e Aftab, General, Ghahveh Soui, Khatam Mountain, Nine Springs, Lursoui Valley, Royal Park, Besh Bajilar in Sareyn, and Sardabeh and Ghie Soui in Ardabil, Qinarjee, Shabil, Waleh Zid, Moeil, Shafaie Moeil, Akharbakhar Dodo, Negin Dodo, Aiqar Qinarjee, Malek Soui, Yel Soui and Kasra in Meshkinshahr, Aftab Shahr (Barjloo) and hot water springs of Gavmish Gouli, Sari Su, Villadare and … in Sareyn and Qinarjee in Nir and Givi (Isti Su) in Kowsar are promoting the development of health of tourism in the province (Ibid.).

Ardabil province has 37 international, national, regional and local tourism areas, 12 tourism target villages and 52 villages with tourism attraction. Telecabin of Heiran-Fandoghlu Tourism Complex in Namin, snow ski resort and Chairlift of Alwares Tourism Area in Sareyn and Suspended Bridge Complex with 365 m long and 80 m high in Tourism Area of Khyav in Meshkin Shahr are in Ardabil Province. The variety of handicrafts of Ardabil province made it as one of the most important and active provinces in the country in terms of handicrafts. More than 50 types of handicraft products are produced in rural, nomadic and urban areas of Ardabil province and are offered to national and international markets. Carpets, varnishes, rug, masnad, course (Jajim), all kinds of leather products and … are important products exported abroad. Savalan Bali (Sabalan honey), Iran Ashi (yogurt soup) and Qara Halwa (Black Halva) are souvenirs of Ardabil province and most tourists traveling to Ardabil province buy meat

and dairy products along with other souvenirs of the province (Rajabi and Aghaie, 2017:10).

Ardabil province has 75,000 tribal population with 43 tribes, ranking third nationally and boosts tribal development in the province. Moghan cultivation in Pars Abad city with mechanized farming, horticultural, livestock and conversion industries is a factor for the development of agricultural tourism in the province. The province has 224 accommodation units, including hotel, hostel and motel and two eco-tourism resort complexes, 146 houses for passenger and is ranked third in terms of number of accommodation centers. This province has 55 travel agencies and 34 welfare services complexes (Ardabil Province Tourism and Cultural Heritage Office Report, 2017).

Although the province attracts a large number of national and international tourists each year and its statict are generally based on speculation, an overview of the state of tourism and its development in the province shows that the tourism has grown unevenly in this region and most areas of the province do not enjoy its benefits. According to studies conducted in Ardabil province, the highest level of spatial inequality in terms of tourism development among the provinces is related to accommodation facilities. A survey of available statistics shows that 73.4% of all accommodation types (hotels, hostels and motels) are located in Sareyn. Ardabil is in second place with 13.8%, an only 12.8% of the province's residences in other eight cities. Services and equipment index is the second indicator of spatial inequality among Ardabil provinces. In addition to these indicators, other attraction, communication, infrastructure, financial and commercial indicators are also noteworthy. These cases indicate that the pattern of spatial distribution of tourism elements and resources and consequently the development of the province's tourism zones is a heterogeneous pattern that causes imbalance in the province's tourism development and its positive and negative effects on the regions. Therefore, considering the province's ranking in terms of tourism development, using cluster analysis, the whole province can be classified in three main clusters in terms of tourism development: the first cluster is Sarayn with high development, the second cluster is Ardabil with medium development and the third cluster with 8 sub-clusters contains 8 underdeveloped cities (Statistical Yearbook, 2016 and Afarakhteh et al., 2016:120).

According to the National Census of Tourism in the spring of 2016, destination of 1815194 out of 75260770 trips across the country were Ardabil province that 825946 out of which were with night accommodation and 989248 out of which were without night accommodation. This static for the next year was 2051026 out of 84461780 trips across the country that 893066 out of which were with night accommodation and 1157960 out of which were without night accommodation. Ardabil has been ranked 14 out of the top 20 tourism destinations in the country with a total of 84461780 trips. Moreover, Ardabil has been ranked 12 out of 20 cities in terms of major destinations for domestic travel, with a total trip of 703161 (Iran Statistics Center, 2016). These statics show that the actual number of tourists who selected Ardabil province as their destination is far from the expected level. The following table provided by Ardabil Province Tourism and Cultural Heritage, reflects the predicted share of each city of the province in attracting tourists (national and international) separately from 2013 to 2017.

Table 3: Forecast of the number of tourists by year

The predicted number of tourists by year					City	No.
2017	**2016**	**2015**	**2014**	**2013**		
3126107	3035055	2975544	2917200	2860000	Ardabil	1
375270	364340	357196	350192	343325	Meshkinshahr	2
82018	79629	78068	76537	75036	Khalkhal	3
819783	795906	780300	765000	750000	Namin	4
437218	424483	416160	408,000	400,000	Beile Savar	5
561314	544965	534279	523803	513532	Nir	6
380379	369300	362059	354960	348000	Pars Abad	7
327913	318362	312120	306000	300,000	Kosar	8
437218	424483	416160	408,000	400,000	Germi	9
2732611	2653020	2601000	2550000	2500000	Sareyn	10
9279830	9009544	8832886	8659692	8489893	Ardabil provinceӧ	

Reference: Statistical Yearbooks

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Framework: Cultural, Social and Ethical Factors and Barriers: Stabilizing and Disruptive for the Development of Tourism

Numerous factors are involved in the development of tourism that relation and interaction between them cause the development of tourism. The three main factors in tourism development are: tourists, local people and destination characteristics; in other words, the three main factors of guests, hosts and attractions are involved in tourism development (Following Figure: Alwani and Pirouz Bakht, 2006:112). On the other hand, the tourism boom is based on four important principle: attraction, facilities, security and image. Obviously, other factors are also effective in this regard, but the above four factors are the most important and main factors (Taghvaie and Akbari, 2009:119).
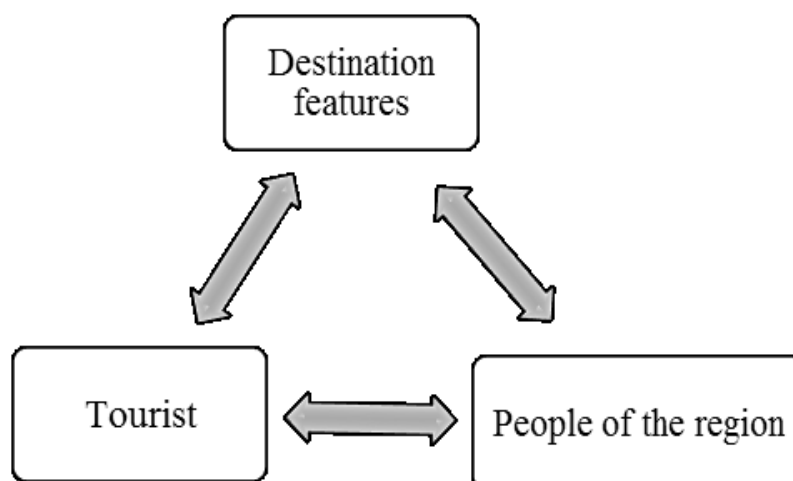

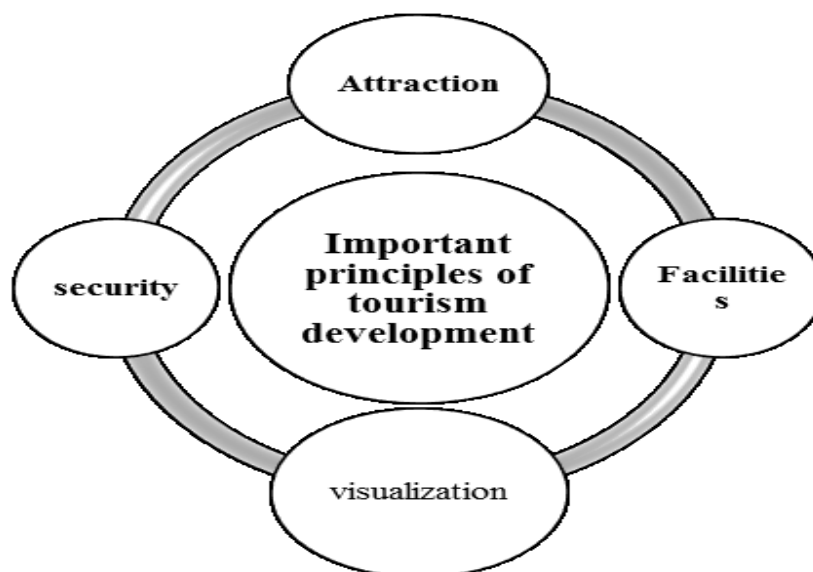Figure 2: Factors affecting tourism development

Figure 3: Four important steps of tourism industry development

In this study, the theoretical framework is based on the components relating cultural and social factors as causes of a reality and social phenomenon (tourism development). In this regard, social capital is expressed as one of the most important explanations in this relation. Social capital in social theories and studies is cited as a central element in facilitating developmental behaviors and processes. The host community of tourists most of all requires trust, education, participation and social communication, which are essential components of social capital. In other words, a person who is mentally prepared to receive tourism in his or her area has a higher level of social trust, social participation and social communication than others, and this can increase the tourist entry into the region, as tourism is a process based on the interaction of trust and partnership between tourists and local people in the tourism destination areas or host community. This concept, which is relatively new in tourism studies, is generally understood in terms of norms and networks that enable individuals to act publicly (Sato, 2001:12; Wolcock and Narayan, 2000:226). The concept of social capital has a great relation with the public good. Knack and Keefer (1997) have found that economic activity and institutional performance in relation to tourism are significantly influenced by social capital as trust and civic cooperation (Okazaki, 2008:516). Therefore, it is necessary to create social capital to promote the tourism industry in the socio-cultural sense (Foris, 2014:1081).

At the individual level and factors influencing it, two variables of generalized trust and orientation towards social values are factors affecting on cooperation. The studies in this field suggest that individuals are more likely to be trusted that can better understand the other party's situation or, in other words, people who have a better perspective (Irwin et al., 2008:387-8). Therefore, trust is the basis for the cooperation and participation of members of society, and even different communities with each other, so that it is shaken by the lack of common things between members. The community-based tourism (CBT) model emphasizes social participation in this relation. Hoywood (1988) and Reid (2003) consider the application of this concept in the tourism industry. This concept emphasizes the position of destination tourism communities and local governments in tourism development (Okazaki, 2008:514). Rowlands (1997:14)

clearly states that the destination's social potential has central role in developing the tourism industry (Timothy, 2007).

Another factor in the development of tourism can be the facilities and equipment of tourism. Tourism facilities allow individuals to become familiar with the cultural and social environments within society, which increases the likelihood of its universalism. In this case, their self-centeredness, ethnicity, and individualism are reduced, and they learn to see others same in everywhere of the community (Chalabi, 1996:242). Furthermore, universalism results in acceptance of differences. Alexander and Taylor believe cultural pluralism is based on recognizing and accepting differences. This distinction is expressed by acceptance (Hartmann et al., 2005:231-2). The emphasis on distinction and differentiation and the clearing of borders can be considered as cultural particularism. In all cultural particularisms, the reconstruction of borders is relatively emphasized through different ways, and self/nonself reconstruction is on the agenda of particularist movements (Selverman, 1999: 51). In this regard, Teo and Li (2003) conclude that universalism and particularism must be together. In this respect, the impact of the importance of local differences and reactions is emphasized to meet the needs of tourists. Relating this issue, Woosnam et al. (2009) have used Durkheim's (1915) theoretical framework on emotional correlations between residents and tourists and have stated three main trends in this regard that reinforce the sense of similarity. Shared beliefs, common behaviors and interactions (Okazaki, 2008:518) influence the development of tourism in terms of acceptance culture and cultural factors.
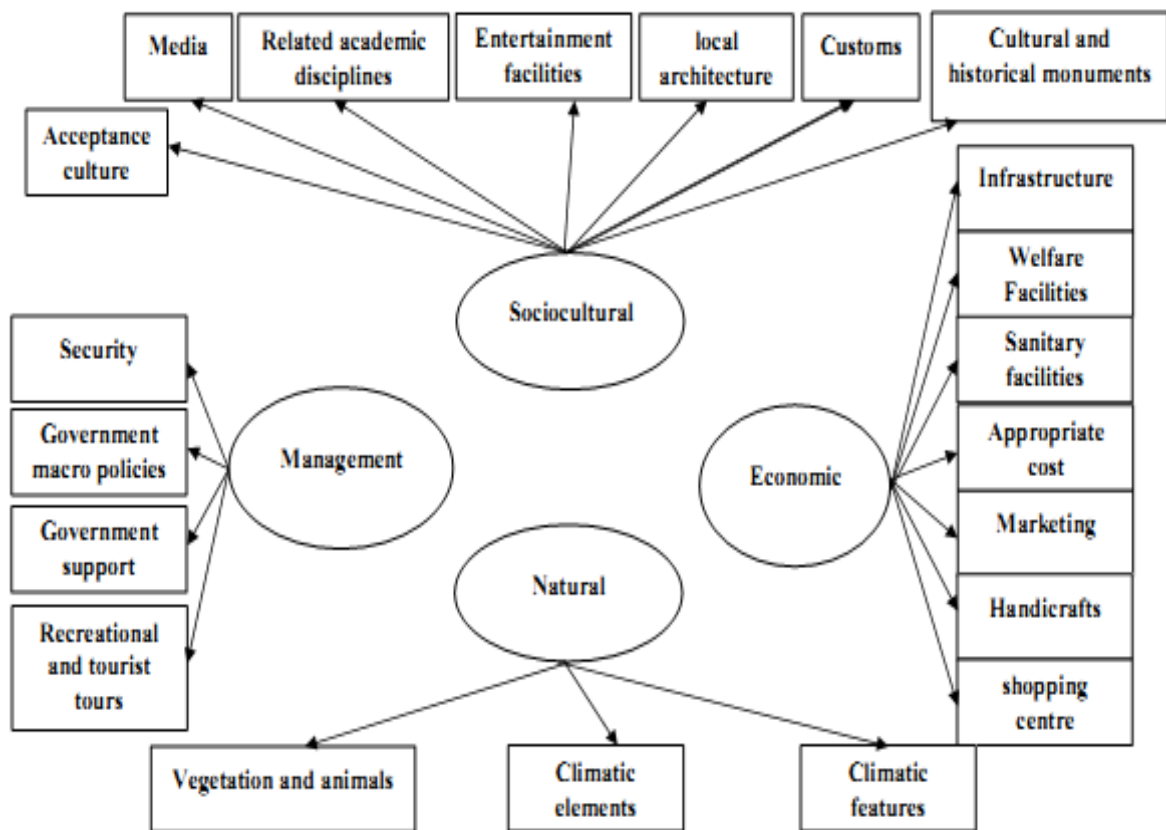

Figure 4: Indicators affecting the development of the tourism industry

Descriptive analysis of tourist questionnaire data showed that according to the data extracted, 69.5% of the participants were men and 30.5% of them were women. 51.3% of participants were single and 48.7% of them were married. Most of the participants (55.5%, 213 individuals) had bachelor's degree, 31% (119 individuals) of them had master degree, 6.8% (26 individuals) of them had PhD, and 5.7% had undergraduate degree. In other words, the overwhelming majority of participants had graduate degree, indicating the reliability of participants in terms of education. Most of the participants (48.1%) were between 18-30 years old. In addition, 33% were in the age range of 30-45, 18.2% were in the age range of 45-60, and 1% were under 18 years of age. It should be noted that the use of high experience in research questioning is also needed as the majority of participants was of middle age.

Statistical Indicators of Research Variables from the Tourist Viewpoint

The following table presents statistical indicators such as mean, variance and standard deviation of the main variables of the survey from the tourists' viewpoint. According to the table below, the highest mean of variables was related to the cultural barriers variable with 3.61, with the variance of 0.227 and the lowest one was related to the individual barriers variable with the mean of 2.97. The variables of institutional, social and social capital barriers have mean values of 3.37, 3.36 and 3.51, respectively. According to the mean of the variables, participants have a relatively close viewpoints on most of the variables.

Table 4: Descriptive information and statistics of research variables

Variance	SD	Mean	Number of sample	Variable	
0.271	0.520	3.61	384	Cultural barriers	
0.611	0.781	3.37	384	Institutional Barriers	
0.575	0.758	3.36	384	Social barriers	
0.647	0.804	3.41	384	Public education	Social capital
0.533	0.729	3.61	384	Social values	
0.463	0.680	3.61	384	Psychological capital and strengthening participation	
1.116	1.05	2.97	384	Individual barriers	
0.448	0.669	3.55	384	Tourism development	

Reference: Field Studies

Table 5: Descriptive Information and Statistics for Cultural Barriers Component

Variance	SD	Mean	Number of sample	Variable
1.155	1.075	3.73	384	Social Participation of Destination Citizens
1.131	1.063	3.74	384	Destination Citizens Trust
1.212	1.101	3.57	384	The friendly and intimate relationships of the destination citizens
0.813	0.902	3.83	384	Tolerance and social tolerance (tolerance of diversity, different opinions and thoughts) of destination citizens
1.141	1.068	3.81	384	The integrity of the citizens of destination
1.130	1.063	3.59	384	Bigotry and discriminatory behavior of destination citizens

1.103	1.050	3.57	384	The amount of social commitment of the destination citizens
1.628	0.793	3.97	384	Primacy of public benefit to the individual
1.690	0.831	3.96	384	Fairness of destination citizens in economic transactions and social exchange
1.516	1.231	3.28	384	Ardabil people's weakness in hospitality
1.385	1.177	3.04	384	Weakening of the local arts and crafts regeneration and traditional cultural activities
1429	1.195	3.54	384	Lack of tourist awareness of host culture
1.083	1.41	3.16	384	Fear of the devastating effects of tourism on the native culture

Reference: Field Studies

Moreover, as the cultural component is more important than the other five main barriers and other components and barriers, the information and descriptive statistics of this variable have been presented in the following table. Within this component itself, the highest mean (3.97) is related to the primacy of public benefit to the individual, and the second is related to the fairness variable (3.96). The least influential component among the cultural components is the weakening of the local arts and crafts regeneration and traditional cultural activities with a mean of 3.04 and fear of the devastating effects of tourism on the native culture with a mean of 3.16. The mean and descriptive statistics of each of components of cultural barriers have been presented in the following table.

Prioritizing and ranking the components of tourism development barriers

In this part of the study, the analysis of the 5 main variables of the study was considered for prioritizing and ranking, and then the variables and components of the barrier with highest priority were identified (cultural barriers with 13 components). Then, the weight of each of 5 and 13 criteria selected as the most important variables of barriers to tourism development was calculated using Shannon's entropy method. The following table presents the views of tourists on the important criteria of barriers to tourism development in relation to 5 main components and 13 sub-components. It should be noted that in this analysis, the details of each step of the analysis have been avoided and only a summary of each step has been presented.

Table 6: Raw data matrix of research variables

Weight average	Criterion
3.61	Cultural barriers
3.37	Institutional Barriers
3.36	Social barriers
3.54	Social capital
2.97	Individual barriers

Reference: Field Studies

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Table 7: Relative weight of research variables

Relative weight	Criterion
0.214	Cultural barriers
0.200	Institutional Barriers
0.199	Social barriers
0.210	Social capital
0.176	Individual barriers

Reference: Field Studies

Table 8: Raw data matrix of criteria of cultural barriers

Weight average	Criterion
3.73	Social Participation of Destination Citizens
3.74	Destination Citizens Trust
3.57	The friendly and intimate relationships of the destination citizens
3.83	Tolerance and social tolerance (tolerance of diversity, different opinions and thoughts) of destination citizens
3.81	The integrity of the citizens of destination
3.59	Bigotry and discriminatory behavior of destination citizens
3.57	The amount of social commitment of the destination citizens
3.97	Primacy of public benefit to the individual
3.96	Fairness of destination citizens in economic transactions and social exchange
3.28	Ardabil people's weakness in hospitality
3.04	Weakening of the local arts and crafts regeneration and traditional cultural activities
3.54	Lack of tourist awareness of host culture
3.16	Fear of the devastating effects of tourism on the native culture

Reference: Field Studies

Table 9: Relative weight of criteria of cultural barriers

Relative weight	Criterion
0.079	Social Participation of Destination Citizens
0.080	Destination Citizens Trust
0.076	The friendly and intimate relationships of the destination citizens
0.081	Tolerance and social tolerance (tolerance of diversity, different opinions and thoughts) of destination citizens
0.081	The integrity of the citizens of destination
0.076	Bigotry and discriminatory behavior of destination citizens
0.076	The amount of social commitment of the destination citizens
0.084	Primacy of public benefit to the individual
0.084	Fairness of destination citizens in economic transactions and social exchange
0.070	Ardabil people's weakness in hospitality
0.064	Weakening of the local arts and crafts regeneration and

	traditional cultural activities
0.075	Lack of tourist awareness of host culture
0.067	Fear of the devastating effects of tourism on the native culture

Reference: Field Studies

Ranking barriers to tourism development using the Vikor model

In this regard, 5 main barriers were ranked by the Vikor model. As shown in the table below, based on the findings of the analysis and summary of the Vikor model on tourism development barriers in terms of participants' viewpoint, cultural barriers (0.000) are the first influencing factor on tourism attraction and development in the province and the following priorities will be social capital of destination citizens (0.106), institutional barriers (0.373), social barriers (0.388), and individual barriers (1) (in order of priority). Moreover, the results of ranking the 13 criteria of the cultural component as the most prioritized barrier based on the Vikor model show that the priority of public benefit with 0.000 is the first priority and other criteria including citizen fairness, tolerance and social tolerance, integrity, trust, social participation, bigotry and discriminatory behaviors, friendly and intimate relationships, social commitment, lack of awareness of tourists about host culture, poor hospitality of people, fear of destructive effects of tourism on native culture, weakness of local arts and crafts generation and traditional cultural activities ,have second to thirteenth priorities. The following table shows the Vikor value and rank of each criterion by priority.

Table10: Ranking the obstacles to tourism development using Vikor model

Rank and Priority	Vikor Value	Criterion	No.
1	0.000	Cultural barriers	1
2	0.106	Institutional Barriers	2
3	0.373	Social barriers	3
4	0.388	Social capital	4
5	1	Individual barriers	5

Reference: Field Studies

Table 11: Ranking Criteria of Cultural Barriers to Tourism Development Using the Vikor Model

Rank	Vikor value	Barriers	No.
1	-0.179	Primacy of public benefit to the individual	1
2	-0.166	Fairness of destination citizens in economic transactions and social exchange	2
3	0.000	Tolerance and social tolerance (tolerance of diversity, different opinions and thoughts) of destination citizens	3
4	0.020	The integrity of destination citizens	4
5	0.103	Trust of destination citizens	5
6	0.126	Social participation of destination citizens	6
7	0.295	Bigotry and discriminatory behavior of destination citizens	7
8	0.325	The friendly and intimate relationships of destination citizens	8
9	0.331	The amount of social commitment of destination citizens	9
10	0.358	Lack of tourist awareness of host culture	10

11	0.699	Poor hospitality of Ardabil people	11
12	0.841	Fear of the devastating effects of tourism on native culture	12
13	1	Weakening of local arts and crafts generation and traditional cultural activities	13

Reference: Field Studies

Inferential Findings

In this section, Pearson correlation method was used since the variables are distance-distance. The results of correlation coefficients show that each of the variables of cultural barriers, institutional barriers, social barriers, social capital and individual barriers with tourism development have correlation coefficients of 0.439, 0.659, 0.644, 0. 583 and 0.101, respectively. Regarding the relation between these variables, only relation between the individual barriers and the dependent variable was not significant.

Based on the above results and the following table, it can be stated that from the viewpoint of tourists, there is a significant and direct relationship between all mentioned variables and the development of tourism in Ardabil province, except for individual barriers. It should be noted that these variables are made up of a combination of several components that this combination is done for each of the variables. It should be noted that in constructing the main variables of the research, the main components of each variable were averaged.

Table 12: Pearson Test of Impact of Tourism Development Barriers from the Viewpoint of Tourists

Tourism development	Individual barriers	Social capital	Social barriers	Institutional Barriers	Cultural barriers	Variable
0.439 0.000 384	0.016 0.757 384	0.390 0.000 384	0.454 0.000 384	0.433 0.000 384	1	Cultural barriers
0.659 0.000 384	0.140 0.006 384	0.350 0.000 384	0.770 0.000 384	1	-	Institutional Barriers
0.644 0.000 384	0.138 0.007 384	.0469 0.000 384	1	-	-	Social barriers
0.583 0.000 384	0.044 0.394 384	1	-	-	-	Social capital
0.101 0.049 384	1	-	-	-	-	Individual barriers
1	-	-	-	-	-	Tourism development

Reference: Field Studies

Regression analysis

In this analysis, the set of independent variables was entered into the regression equation using the Inter method. Among these variables, only the variables of institutional, social and social capital barriers were entered into the equation and were able to predict 58% of the changes in the dependent variable. The results of analysis of

variance also confirmed the regression equation with P = 0.000 and F = 107. 594. Moreover, considering that cultural barriers are the first priority, if it entered into the regression, it could affect the incompatibility of relationships and significant percentages. Therefore, this emphasized barrier has been avoided to use in this part.

Table 13: Table of coefficients explaining the variables in the equation

Durbin-Watson	Mean criterion error	Modified Determination Coefficient	Coefficient of Determination	Correlation Coefficient
2.122	0.432161	0.582	0.587	0.766

Predictors: Institutional Barriers, Social Barriers, Social Capital, and Individual Barriers
Reference: Field Studies

As noted, the results of analysis of variance also confirmed the significance of the regression model. The following table reflects the relevant statistics.

Table 14: Analysis of variance of regression equation

P	F	Average of squares	Degrees of freedom	Sum of the squares	Variation range
0.000	107.594	20.136	5	100.682	Intergroup
-	-	0.187	378	70.743	Intragroup
-	-	-	383	171.425	Total

Reference: Field Studies

The results showed that the standardized coefficient (Beta coefficient) of the significant variables in the equation for institutional barriers, social barriers and social capital were 0.396, 0.143, and 0.352, respectively. These results indicate that for a unit of change in reducing institutional barriers, nearly 40% success will be achieved in tourism development. Moreover, one unit change in the reduction of social barriers will result in a 14% success in tourism development. Finally, for a unit of change in the amount of social capital, 35% success will be achieved in tourism development. It should be noted that in this analysis, the variables of cultural barriers and individual barriers could not play a role in determining the variance of the dependent variable in the final analysis due to lack of acceptable significance level (with wide distribution range). In other words, their causal effect on the dependent variable was not significant. This means that the component of cultural barriers is considered as the most important barrier to the development of tourism in the province of Ardabil, which confirms the similarity between the Vikor ranking technique and the inferential test.

Table 15: Results of regression analysis of significant and non-significant variables in the regression equation

Sig	t	Standard coefficient	Unstandardized coefficient		Variables
		Beta	Criterion error	B	
			0.176	0.372	Constant value
0.089	1.703	0.066	0.050	0.054	Cultural barriers
0.000	7.535	0.396	0.045	0.339	Institutional Barriers
0.011	2.568	0.143	0.049	0.126	Social barriers
0.000	9.142	0.352	0.040	0.366	Social capital
0.784	0.274	0.009	0.021	0.006	Individual barriers

Reference: Field Studies

Regression equation: Social Capital (0.352) + Social Barriers (0.143) + Institutional Barriers (0.396) = Y (Tourism Development)

Therefore, as the above equation shows, tourism development is a function of the three variables of institutional barriers, social barriers and social capital with acceptable significance level with beta coefficients of 0.396, 0.143 and 0.352, respectively.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of the analysis and summary of Vikor model on tourism development barriers in terms of participants viewpoints, cultural barriers (0.000) was identified as the first influencing factor in barriers to tourism development in Ardabil province and subsequent priorities were social capital (0.106).), institutional barriers (0.373), social barriers (0.388), and individual barriers (1), respectively. Moreover, the results of ranking the 13 criteria of the cultural component as the most prioritized barrier based on the Vikor model showed that the public benefit priority with 0.000 is the first priority and other criteria including citizen fairness, tolerance and social tolerance, integrity, trust, social participation, bigotry and discriminatory behaviors, friendly and intimate relationships, social commitment, lack of awareness of tourists about host culture, poor hospitality of people, fear of destructive effects of tourism on native culture, weakness of local arts and crafts generation and traditional cultural activities ,have second to thirteenth priorities.

In addition, the results of correlation coefficients showed that each of the variables of cultural barriers, institutional barriers, social barriers, social capital and individual barriers with tourism development have correlation coefficients of 0.439, 0.659, 0.644, and 0.101, respectively. Regarding the relation between these variables, only relation between the individual barriers and the dependent variable was not significant. Based on the above results and the following table, it can be stated that from the viewpoint of tourists, there is a significant and direct relationship between all mentioned variables and the development of tourism in Ardabil province, except for individual barriers.

The results of regression analysis showed that only the variables of institutional, social and social capital barriers entered into the equation and were able to predict 58% of the changes in the dependent variable. These results showed that the standardized coefficient of significant variables in the equation were 0.396, 0.143, 0.352 for institutional barriers, social barriers and social capital, respectively, indicating that a unit change in reducing institutional barriers results in nearly 40% success in tourism development. Moreover, a unit change in the reduction of social barriers results in 14% success in tourism development. Finally, a unit change in the amount of social capital results in 35% success in tourism development. Therefore, as the above equation shows, tourism development is a function of three variables of institutional barriers, social barriers and social capital and cultural barrier is considered as the most important barrier in tourism development of Ardabil province.

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