

Explaining Factors Influencing Sport Tourism Development Case Study: Minudasht County, Iran

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Abstract: Sports tourism is one of the growing types of tourism in which competitions and sporting events attract large numbers of tourists. In this regard, the present study has explored the factors affecting the development of sport tourism in Minudasht County through a descriptive-analytical method based on library and field studies. The groups involved in this study are: local community, local managers, and tourists. The first group size was estimated 380 using Cochran formula and its correction. 20 managers were used as the sample for the second group and 100 tourists were selected as the sample for the third group. Research findings suggest that among the potential of sports tourism, aerial sports such as paragliding are ranked first. The research findings also show that various factors affect tourism development process that in current study, 40 components and 9 main factors including geographical factors, risk level factors, quality of service factors, factors related to planning sport event, economic factors, capacity factors, competition factors, host community participation factors, and macro-policy of government factors that influence of all of these statistical factors on the development of sport tourism in Minudasht county was approved using multivariate regression test.

Keywords: Paragliding, Tourism Development, Minudasht County, Sport Tourism, Aerial Sports.

INTRODUCTION

Today, sport has taken on a wider meaning and has become one of the most influential political, social and cultural phenomena in societies. The important point in this regard is changing the of only sport attitude to sport events. Attention to sport, its development and reinforcement has become one of the important elements in the tourism industry and has created a new type of tourism that has attracted much interest among the world's people (Shojaee et al., 2011). In industrialized countries, sports tourism accounts for 4-6% of gross domestic product (GDP) and its growth rate is estimated about 10% per year (Hudsons, 2003). Therefore, many countries have attracted the impacts and benefits of such tourism by investing heavily in it and used it as an important resource for improving economic, social and political status (Emery,

2010), increasing employment and income, developing infrastructure and increasing their reputation and branding (Kozak, 2005: 221-232). For example, Korea is host of martial arts especially taekwondo, countries such as Austria and Switzerland are suitable host of winter sports, such as skiing, hockey because of their climate and Japan could attract a large number of sport tourists to its region and earn a large income each year through holding skiing competitions (Gibson, 2006). In this regard, Turkey has attracted 1,200 sports teams from around the world to hold preliminary sports camps by formulating a 2023 strategy in 2007 and investing in sports tourism capabilities, especially the coastal county of Antalya in 2007, thus it has earned \$ 6 million through this way (Icoz, et al, 2010).

Numerous studies on tourism show that sports-based tourism attractions have more economic, social and political advantages than other attractions (Hinch, Higham, 2006: 243-256). Undoubtedly, the optimal and continuous use of the effects and benefits of such growing tourism and its development require careful and purposeful study and planning. In this regard, recognizing the capabilities and resources and evaluating the factors affecting the development of sports tourism are the first important step in the development and management of sport tourism destinations. Therefore, the present study is to explain the factors influencing the development of sport tourism in Minudasht County; Minudasht county is located in the east of Golestan province in the north of the country. This area has not yet been able to achieve its real and worthy position despite having various potentials in various fields of tourism, especially sport tourism, that this failure can be firstly attributed to staying unknown factors affecting tourism development.

Travel for non-commercial (holiday) or commercial (non-holiday/professional) reasons for participating in or observing sports activities is called sports tourism (Adabi Firoozjah et al., 2009). Accordingly, a sports tourist is a temporary visitor who stays at a sports event for at least 24 hours (kim, 2015: 12-32). Sport tourism includes three main types of behavior: 1. Participating (active sport tourism); 2. Watching (sport event or non-event); 3. Visiting famous sport attractions such as visiting sport personalities, sport museums, important stadiums, etc. (Mahmoudi Yekta, 1391: 149-139). Deery and Jago (2006) believe that sport tourism plays an important role in the national and local economy and it seems to have the potential to increase it (Deery, Jago., 2006). Yamaguchi (2005) states that the reasons, factors, attractions, and barriers, which are important to tourists must be identified in any study conducted to planning and developing sport tourism (Nogowa, 1996). Therefore, the some of the results of related international and internal research are presented in the following.

Gratton and Henry (2001) point to a number of factors influencing the development of tourism, including the attractiveness of the sport event program, safety, security and financial constraints, the level of awareness and knowledge of individuals, increasing public interactions, relaxation, being new and interestingness of the sport events, the economic situation of tourists (Gratton, Ian., 2001). Chalip and Green (2001) emphasized the need for coherence and joint planning between the marketers of the host county and the organizers of the competition to attract visitors. They studied the 2000 Sydney Olympics and stated that hosting a sport event alone was not enough to attract tourists, but tourism agencies should also develop strategies for target tourists in collaboration with the officials of the Sports Events Committee (Chalip, Green, 2001). A study by Cho (2004) on the effect of taekwondo on the development of Korean sport tourism shows that traditional sports of a country or region can be more likely to attract

tourists to that country (Cho, 2004). Kozak (2005) emphasizes that natural resources and climate are motivating factors for tourists (Kennelly, Toohey, 2014: 1-12). According to Yat (2006), the important components of sport tourism development are: training and developing volunteers, development of event management skills and its processes, expansion of financial sponsorship participation, better understanding of knowledge of this industry, expansion of cooperation with other communities, expansion of political attention, more investment in sports, use of new strategies, increasing public awareness, increasing marketing credits and increasing state support (Taleghani, Ghafari: 2014: 289-298). In a study entitled "Service Quality, Satisfaction and Intention to Return in Sport Events", Shonk and Chelladurai (2008) concluded that among the factors (access, accommodation, sport complex and competition) affecting the quality of sport tourism services, competition is the most important factor. In a study titled "Strategic Alliance in Sport Tourism: National Sport organizations and Sport Tour Operators", Kennelly and Toohey (2014) examined a strategic alliance between the Australia National Sport Organization, the Australia rugby community and a sport tour operator. This research provides information on how the Australia national sport organization can facilitate and develop sport tourism for major events by connecting with sport tour operating organizations. The findings show that a range of obvious and intangible financial benefits will emerge through the joint efforts of the Australia national sport organization and the Australia rugby community that will provide an incentive for the existing strategic alliance. In a study entitled "Presenting a Management Model for the Development of Sport Tourism in Iran", Taleghani and Ghafari (2014) have described the main barriers to such tourism in three categories: cultural barriers, infrastructure barriers and tourist attraction barriers and emphasized providing strategies to remove these barriers and to develop such growing tourism. Kim et al. (2015) evaluated the social effects of hosting large-scale sport tourism events, and stated and emphasized that the host's perception of the social effects of hosting tourism events is an important factor in gaining the support and participation of the local community that it can be considered as a strength and weakness in tourism development. The findings of this study, which is related to Korea, show that this perception is influenced by six factors: economic benefits, social pride, local community development, economic costs, traffic problems and security risks.

Asadi (2010) examined the security aspects of sport tourism and introduced it as an important and effective factor (Asadi, 2011: 48-63). In a study on the quality of sport tourism packages in Iran, Ehsani et al. (2010) have found that "the existence of night entertainment", "the use of new technologies in holding events", "having rich art, music and architecture", "the existence of ancient sites", "the status of prices", "familiarity with culture and customs", "the suitability of nature", "paying attention to the tastes of tourists", "the existence of the culture of accepting sport tourists", "information in English", "getting tourism information through cell phones", "transportation condition and appropriate accommodation reservation method" are some of the important factors in the quality of sport tourism packages in the country that have been determined based on the marketing mix elements. Mahmoudi Yekta et al. (2012) studied the effect of tourism components on the tendency of sports tourists in Iran. The research findings showed that according to the average of the tourism components, the components of infrastructure, politics, natural and unnatural attractions, management and culture are in order of priority (Mahmoudi Yekta et al., 2012: 139-149). Khatibzadeh et al. (2014) have studied the factors affecting the quality of sport tourism services from the

perspective of tourists in Shahravard-e-Esteghlal and Persepolis. The results of this study show that all three variables of access quality, sports complex quality and competition quality have a significant effect on the quality of sport tourism services, but the impact of competition quality is more important than the other two variables (Khatibzadeh et al., 2014: 39-55).

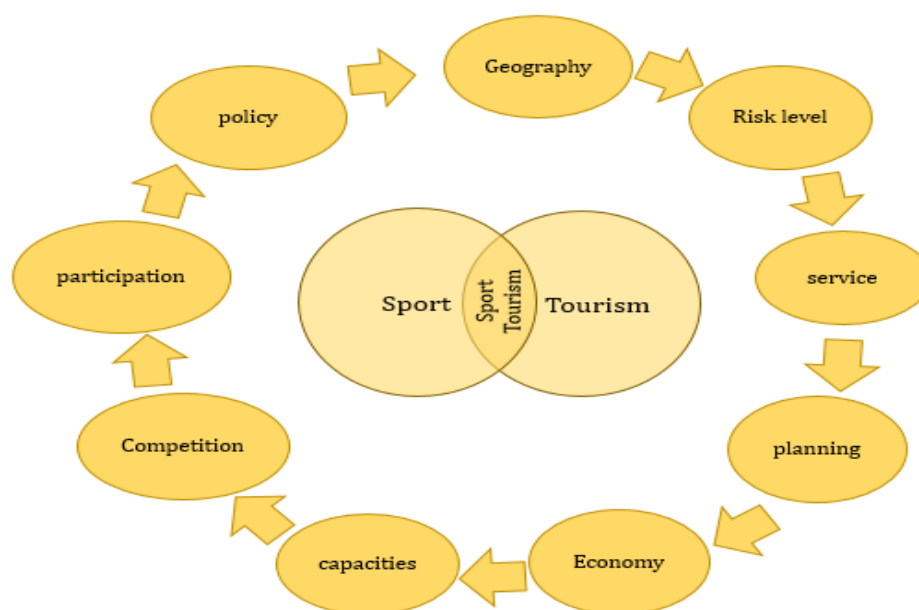


Figure 1: Conceptual research model

Method of the research

The present study is applicable in terms of nature and is descriptive-analytical in terms of method. The method and tools for collecting information according to the research objectives were of library and field type. In collecting field information, direct and regular observation methods and questionnaire were used. In this study, Cronbach's alpha test was used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, based on which the coefficient was obtained 0.74. The minimum acceptable level for the reliability of the questionnaire is 0.70. Moreover, in order to measure the validity of the questionnaire, the appearance and content of the questionnaire were approved by 10 experts¹ and specialists in the field of tourism who are experts in compiling the tourism questionnaire. In this research, the dependent variable is the development of sport tourism in Minudasht County and the independent variable is the factors affecting it that the findings of library studies were used to extract these factors. Accordingly, these factors were explained in the form of 9 main factors with 40 indicators.

The present study was conducted at three levels of local managers, local people and tourists (tourists who have visited Minudasht County during the one-year period from the beginning of summer 2013 to the beginning of summer 2014 and have been present in this county for more than 24 hours). The analysis unit is people over 15 years of age at all three levels. In the case of the first group, total counting was performed due to the low number of statistical population, so a total of 20 local managers (consisting of

¹ These 10 people consist of 3 PhD students, 3 PhD students and 4 master.

managers and experts of governorate, district, county council, municipality, organization of cultural heritage, handicrafts and tourism and Physical Education Office) were determined. In the case of the second group, the sample size was estimated to be 380 using Cochran's formula and its modified formula due to the high number of statistical population that were randomly classified according to urban and rural population. In the case of the third group, since there were no official and reliable statistics on the number of tourists, the statistical techniques and methods were not used to estimate the sample size and the personal estimation method was used. Thus, since the minimum sample size in the descriptive and survey field research is 100 people, so accordingly, 100 tourists were randomly selected as the statistical sample.

Introduction of the Study Area

Minudasht County with an area of 257.1576 km² is located in the east of Golestan province at 55 degrees and 13 minutes to 56 degrees and 1 minute of east longitude and 37 degrees and 0 minutes to 37 degrees and 29 minutes of north latitude. It has 126 km common border with Turkmenistan from the north. It is connected to Semnan province from the south, to Khorasan province from the east and to Gonbad-e Kavus from the west. Minudasht County has 2 districts (Markazi and Kuhsarat), 1 city, 4 rural districts (Chehel Chai, Qaleh Qafeh, Sargol and Garou) and 74 villages, 73 of which are inhabited and 1 village is uninhabited. Minudasht County has a population of 75659 people, 28478 (37.64%) of which are urban and 47181 people (62.36%) are rural. This county includes a total of 4.3% of the total population of Golestan province (Golestan Provincial Statistical Yearbook 2011).

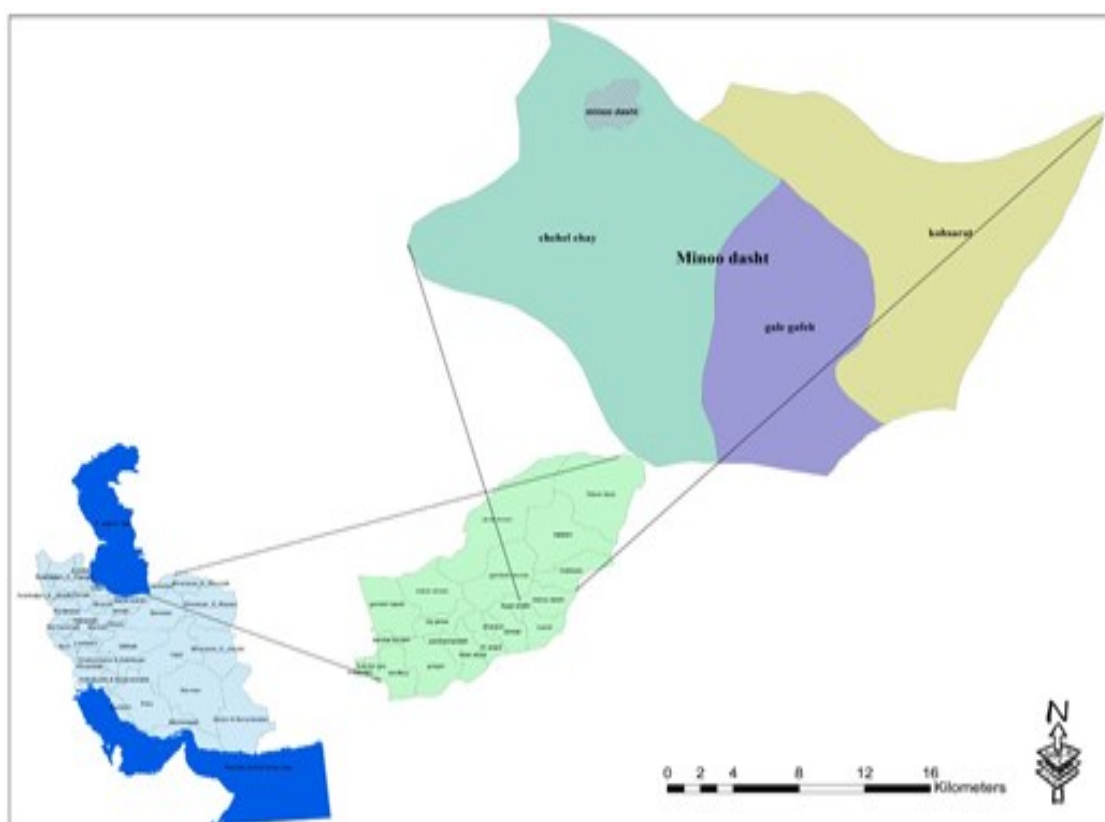


Figure 2: Location of the study area

Minudasht County, due to its special geographical location and favorable climatic conditions on the one hand, and having beautiful and unique places and resorts, is like a piece of paradise. There are many tourist attractions in this county, but the attractions that have a very high potential for tourism development in this county and are less known and exploited, are sport attractions, the most important of which are aerial sports, especially paragliding (direct and regular observations of authors, 2014). Minudasht County is the most important center of the country's aerial sports, so that 10 official paragliding festivals of the country have been held in this city so far. The existence of 12 sites in Minudasht County has provided a suitable potential for the development of aerial sports in this region. In this regard, the educational site of Minudasht industrial town with a height of 180 meters above sea level is a suitable place for paragliding fans and beginners. Other paragliding sites in Minudasht include 90-degree site, Mehrdad site, Zanglab village site, Rig Cheshmeh village site, Cheragh Tappeh site and Boqoto Qaleh site. After holding international competitions in the summer of 2013, it has gained worldwide fame in virtual space (ibid).

Findings

The statistical groups studied include three groups of local people, local managers and tourists whose characteristics and features have been shown.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of specifications of sample individuals

Tourists		Local managers		Local people		Group Sex
Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Number	Number	
66	66	80	16	56.05	213	Male
34	34	20	4	43.95	167	Female
32	32	10	2	23.42	89	Single
68	68	90	18	76.58	291	Married
41	41	15	3	38.42	146	30-15 years
37	37	45	9	32.89	125	31-45 years
15	15	35	7	18.95	72	46-60 years
7	7	5	1	9.74	37	More than 60 years
16	16	-	-	35.79	136	Lower than diploma
35	35	10	2	27.89	106	Diploma
8	8	-	-	7.37	28	Associate Degree
29	29	65	13	18.16	69	Bachelor
12	12	25	5	10.79	41	Master degree and higher
14	14	35	7	60.79	231	\$≤2000000
45	45	45	9	25.26	96	2000000<\$≤5000000
27	27	15	3	8.68	33	5000000<\$≤10000000
9	9	5	1	3.68	14	10000000<\$≤20000000
5	5	0	0	1.58	6	\$>20000000
100	100	100	20	100	380	Total

Reference: Field Studies of Authors, 2014

Ranking of sport fields providing potential for sport tourism

The research findings on the ranking of sport fields underlying tourism in both levels of the local population and local managers were studied. Findings of this section show that in the opinion of local people, aerial sports such as paragliding are among the top tourist attractions. They emphasized that due to the relatively long history of Minudasht County in holding competitions and festivals of aerial sports -so far ten national and international courses have been held - this city has enjoyed a reputation and advantage in this field. Therefore, it welcomes many tourists from all over the country and even international tourists during the year, especially in the first eight months of the year.

Table 2: Ranking of sport fields underlying tourism development

Mean	Very high	High	Relatively	Low	Very low	Group	Type of exercise
4.53	254	87	29	7	3	People	Aerial sports
4.7	15	4	1	0	0	Managers	
3.48	71	113	149	21	26	People	Mountain climbing
3.2	3	4	9	2	2	Managers	
3.07	49	66	168	57	42	People	Cave climbing
3.25	2	5	10	2	1	Managers	
3.5	88	101	133	30	28	People	Motor riding
3.4	4	4	9	2	1	Managers	
3.22	56	88	151	52	33	People	Skiing (grass and snow)
3.3	4	4	8	2	2	Managers	
2.17	12	23	107	116	122	People	Martial Arts
2.5	2	2	6	4	6	Managers	
2.36	14	31	127	112	96	People	Group sports
2.35	2	1	5	6	6	Managers	
2.14	9	20	102	134	115	People	Local sports
2.3	1	1	6	7	5	Managers	

Reference: Authors, 2014

Motorcycling ranks second after aerial sports. Motorcycling has a lot of potential and interest in this city, so that the existence of a well-equipped motorcycle resort in the city was one of the aspirations of most young people who were studied as the statistical sample. According to locals, mountain climbing is the third sport in this county with the potential to attract tourists. As the main part of the Minudasht county and its surroundings is plain, the heights of Minudasht in villages such as Qaleh Qafeh, Takht, Dozin, etc. welcome mountaineers from the surrounding cities. The next capability and potential in attracting tourists is related to skiing, which can be activated in the highlands of this county, especially in the vast pastures of Maran Kooh. Another sport that attracts tourists from the viewpoint of locals is caving. As the heights of this county are mainly limestone and marly, there are many caves in this county. Examples of these caves, which have also attracted tourists, are in around the village of Dozin. Moreover, according to locals, team sports, martial arts and local sports are next in terms of tourist attractions. Furthermore, the opinion of local managers is very close to the local people and they, like the people, have seen the greatest tourism potential in aerial sports and

motorcycling, and then skiing, caving, mountain climbing, martial arts, group and local sports.

Evaluation of the Level of Development of Sport Tourism in Minudasht County

Considering all the existing potentials, local managers and tourists were asked to evaluate the level of development of sport tourism in Minudasht County; the findings of this section show the level of development of sport tourism in Minudasht County is moderate as the average score was obtained 2.54, which is the middle. Accordingly, 16 people (13.33%) assessed the level of tourism development as very low, 44 people (36.67%) assessed it as low, 39 people (32.5%) assessed it as high and 21 people (17.5%) assessed it as very high. Most participants attribute the current level of development to the development of aerial sports, especially paragliding, in recent decades.

Table 3: Evaluation of the level of development of sport tourism in Minudasht county

Average	Very high	Top	Down	very low	Sport Tourism
2.54	21	39	44	16	Number
	17.5	32.5	36.67	13.33	Percent

Reference: Authors, 2014

Measuring the Factors Affecting the Development of Sport Tourism in Minudasht County

At this stage, the factors affecting the development of tourism were studied as 9 factors and 40 indicators with the Likert spectrum. Accordingly, if the average score of any index is higher than the middle (2.5), its desirability is confirmed. In this regard, the desirability of the first factor titled geographical factors was measured by three indicators of natural conditions, relative position of Minudasht County and the existence of other tourist attractions such as ecotourism and cultural attractions whose desirability in terms of the development of sport tourism was confirmed by scores of 2.72, 2.69 and 2.92, respectively. The second factor is the level of risk, which is expressed by the three indicators of security, safety level of sports and insurance activities, which according to the respondents, the desirability of all three indicators with scores of 2.97, 2.67 and 2.99 has been confirmed. The third factor is the quality of service; in this factor, only the status of the index of accommodation centers quality (hotels and inns) is approved with a score of 2.9 and the average score of other indicators as seen in Table 6 is lower than average. Therefore, their desirability is not confirmed. The fourth factor, which is identified as planning, consists of 9 indicators that the scores of the indicators of regular festivals and competitions (2.66), the attractiveness and excitement of sport events (3.3), gaining fame in a sport field (2.92), being specialized in a sport field (3.38), the existence of national and international sport sites (3.13) and proper scheduling of sport events (2.8) were above the middle, indicating the desirability of these indicators; in this factor, the status of three indicators of variety of sport events, proper scheduling of sport events and information on how and when desirable events occur has not been evaluated. The fifth factor called economic consists of four indicators in which the average score of 3 indicators of material and spiritual support of the organizers of sport events, low cost of attending sport events and financial ability of sport tourists were 2.58, 3.43 and 2.57, respectively, indicating the confirmation of the desirability and only

desirability of the existence of financial sponsors with a very low score of 1.26 has not been confirmed. The sixth factor is the capacities in which the statues of four indicators of successful development of sport tourism, the presence of experts in the field of tourism, the possibility of the presence of international tourists and athletes, and the broadcasting and coverage of sport events and news with scores of 2.6, 2.66, 3.23 and 3.51 have been approved, and only the status of the index of the use of existing experiences in the field of mutual development of sport and tourism with a score of 1.57 has not been approved. The seventh factor is competition, which has been introduced by only one indicator of the existence of serious competitors in the field of sport tourism with a score of 2.72 that in fact, it acts as a limiting factor. The eighth factor, called the participation of the host community, has three indicators that the statues of the first and second indicators of which, the participation of local managers in the development of sport tourism and the coordination and cooperation of government organizations with executors of tourism events, with scores of 1.72 and 2.18 has not been evaluated as desirable and only the desirability of indicator of participation and support of local managers in the development of sport tourism has been confirmed with score of 2.69. Finally, the ninth factor is macro-policies, which are defined by two indicators of government supportive policies for tourism and government supportive policies for sport development, the results of which do not indicate the desirability of these two indicators.

In order to explain the factors affecting the development of sport tourism in Minudasht County, the explanatory indicators of each factor were first combined and therefore their scale was converted from rank to interval and then the effect of these factors on the development of sport tourism in the county was evaluated using regression test. Multiple were measured together. In fact, all factors affecting tourism development were considered as independent variables and tourism development was considered as dependent variables, the results of which have been given in Table 5.

Table 4: Assessing the status of factors affecting the tourism development process in Minudasht city

Mean	Very low	High	Low	Very low	Index	Factors
2.72	25	46	39	10	Natural conditions	Geographical factors
2.69	16	63	29	12	Relative position of Minudasht city	
2.92	34	51	26	9	Existence of other tourist attractions	
2.99	39	52	18	11	Security	Risk level
2.67	17	55	40	8	Safety level of sports activities	
2.96	29	63	22	6	Athletes insurance	
2.05	14	25	34	47	Quality of public accommodation	Quality of service
2.9	23	69	21	7	Quality of accommodation centers (hotels and inns)	
1.47	1	2	50	67	Tourism agencies	
1.73	6	13	48	53	Quality of communication services	
1.77	4	15	50	41	Quality of transportation	

					services	
2.08	11	26	46	37	Quality of commercial services	
1.7	2	18	42	58	The quality of entertainment services	
1.18	4	21	43	52	Quality of public services of sport sites	
1.78	3	22	41	54	Quality of e-tourism services	
1.75	12	14	38	56	Quality of educational services in the field of sports	
2.98	31	58	29	2	Holding festivals and competitions	
2.78	16	68	30	6	Charm and excitement of sporting events	
2.94	22	72	23	3	Gaining fame in a sport field	
3.18	45	59	11	5	Specialization in sports	
1.67	3	7	57	53	Variety of sport event	
3.11	38	60	19	3	Existence of national and international sport sites	Planning
2.25	7	41	48	24	Proper scheduling of sport events	
2.16	6	33	55	26	Advertisements about sport attractions and events	
2.02	10	14	64	32	Information about how and when events occur	
2.48	22	32	47	19	Material and spiritual support for the organizers of sport events	
1.26	0	3	25	93	Existence of financial sponsors	Economic
3.43	73	27	18	2	Low cost of attending sport events	
2.57	30	35	29	26	Financial fitness of sport tourists	
1.57	6	14	23	77	Use of existing experiences in the field of mutual development of sports and tourism	
2.6	33	36	22	29	Existence of successful models for the development of sport tourism	Capacities
2.66	24	43	41	12	Existence of tourism experts	
3.23	62	31	20	7	Possibility of international tourists and athletes	
2.51	23	43	26	28	Broadcast and media coverage of news and events	
2.72	31	43	27	19	The presence of a serious competitive environment in the field of sport tourism	Competition
2.69	34	38	25	23	Participation and support of local people in the	Participation of the host

					development of sport tourism	community
1.72	7	16	33	64	Participation and support of local managers in the development of sport tourism	
2.18	19	27	31	43	Coordination and cooperation of government organizations with the organizers of tourism events	
1.89	2	11	79	28	Government supportive policies for tourism and tourists	Macro policies
1.54	1	8	46	65	Government supportive policies for sports development	

Reference: Authors, 2014

Table 5: Multiple regression test of factors affecting the development of sport tourism

(R) Regression coefficient	Coefficient of determination (R ²)	Adjusted R Square		Standard deviation assessment error	
0.879	0.772	0.754		0.397	
Model	Sum of squares	Df	Average of squares	F	Significance coefficient
Regression	58.987	9	6.554 158	41.483	000
Residual	17.379	110			
Total	76.367	119			

Reference: Authors, 2014

The results of this test show that the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.879, which indicates a very high correlation of independent variables with the dependent variable. Moreover, the coefficient of determination or R² is 0.772 and Adjusted R Square is 0.754, indicating development of tourism in Minudasht County is related to these factors. Moreover, the significance of the relationship between the research variables is 0.000, which indicates the research variables are related together at the confidence level of 99%.

Moreover, the results obtained from the separate effect of various factors such as geographical, service, economic, security and ... on the development of sport tourism show that geographical factors and planning at a significant level of 0.01 have a significant statistical relationship with the development of sport tourism in Minudash County. In addition, the factor of service quality has a significant statistical relationship at the level of 0.05 with the development of sport tourism. Moreover, the coefficient t indicates that the factors related to planning, geographical factors and service factors are the most influential factors on the development of sport tourism in Minudasht County, respectively.

Table 6: Measurement of significance of the relationship between each factor and the development of sport tourism

Factors	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Significance
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Total	2.288-	434.	-	5.276-	.000
Geographical	304.	077.	218.	3.949	.000
Risk Level	044.	091.	028.	.478.	.634
Service	288.	134.	130.	2.149	.034
Planning	1.090	123.	603.	8.877	.000
Economic	207-	095.	014-	288-	.774
Capacities	47.	094.	026.	497.	.620
Competition	018.	044.	020.	417.	.678
Participation	030-	079.	018-	379-	.705
Macro policies	135.	085.	081	1.597	.113

Reference: Authors, 2014

CONCLUSION

Sport tourism is a new branch of tourism that has become very popular and used by the people of the world, and today this field of tourism has grown significantly in developed countries. Therefore, its expansion in our country in general and in the study area in particular, as well as benefiting from its potentials, can have positive economic, social, cultural, political, etc. consequences. The obvious thing is that the development of sport tourism in any place requires the identification and explanation of the factors influencing this process. Undoubtedly, as long as the contexts and factors influencing this process are not identified and there is no conscious, systematic and purposeful effort to improve and organize them, it cannot be expected that tourism can create a profound change and lead to development in the true sense. According to the findings of this study, sport attractions are among the most important tourist attractions that aerial sports are the most exciting and popular of which. Various factors affect the sport tourism development process that can be classified as geographical factors, risk-related factors, factors related to the quality of service, factors related to the planning of sport events, economic factors, capacity factors, factors related to competition, factors related to the participation of the host community and ultimately the factors related to the government's macro policies, among which the factors related to planning, geographical factors and service factors are orderly the most influential factors. Accordingly, the findings of this study are in accordance with the results of research on the impact of various factors on sport tourism such as the study of Graton and Henry on "the attractiveness of sport events, safety, security and financial constraints, new and interesting sport event, economic situation of tourists", the study of Yat et al. on "expanding the participation of financial sponsors, expanding political attentions, investing more in sports", the study of Kozak on "holding important sport competitions", the study of Mahmoudi Yekta on "infrastructure, management, natural attractions factors", the study of Asadi on "security", and the study of Ehsani et al. on "quality of service". However, the findings of current study reject the results of the research of Cho on "the greater ability of traditional sports of a country or region in attracting sport tourism" because in the study area, despite the fact that sports such as wrestling are indigenous and traditional sports and being rooted in the cultural, social and historical monuments of the region, it has not been able to develop tourism and attract tourists,

while emerging exciting sports in the region such as paragliding have been able to quickly find a lot of fans in a decade and attract many national and international tourists. Finally, the present study offers the following suggestions for the development of sport tourism in the Minudasht County based on studies:

- 1- Combining natural tourism with sport tourism due to the existence of many natural attractions and the growing fame and specialization of the county in aerial sports;
- 2- Holding periodic and regular competitions and aerial sport festivals at the international level due to the existence of various flight sites with high security and the possibility of the presence of international tourists and athletes.
- 3- Setting the calendar of holding sport events in accordance with the peak time of the provincial and national travels in order to attract more tourists.
- 4- Providing extensive advertisements about sport attractions, scheduling events and how to hold them using the capacities of mass media.
- 5- Diversifying the sport events in the county by using natural potentials such as designing routes for mountain climbing, caving, ski resort, etc.
- 6- Equipping the public transportation network in order to increase the public use of the existing tourist attractions and opportunities considering the low cost of attending sport events.
- 7- Establishing coordination between various government institutions and departments and organizers of sport events to improve the quality of public services (such as parking, W.C, prayer halls, etc.) in sport tourism sites, especially aerial sport sites.
- 8- Development of electronic tourism services in order to advertise, inform and use the existing experiences in the field of mutual development of sports and tourism.
- 9- Serious material and spiritual support from the organizers of sport events in order to maintain competitiveness, especially in the field of aerial sport tourism, which Minudasht County has potential, history and advantage over competitors.
- 10- Participation of local managers, especially the municipal complex, in order to improve the quality of the urban landscape, to organize and adapt the entrance of the city and the main squares of the city according to the theme of sport tourism.

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