



## Effects of Tourism on Rural Employment (Case Study: Varkāneh Village of Hamedan County)

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### Abstract

**Purpose-**The effects of tourism on rural employment in the village of Varkāneh in Hamedan County, Iran were investigated. Rural tourism is one of the practical solutions to solve the problem of employment in these areas. This industry with its special dynamics can have major effects on the economic, social and environmental situation, especially at the local level.

**Design/methodology/approach-**The study is an applied correlational-descriptive study using a quantitative approach and a survey methodology. The research population was composed of 250 households out of whom 148 people were sampled by simple randomization. The sample size was determined by Krejcie and Morgan's table. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire whose items were arranged in three sections. Data were analyzed by path analysis and structural equation modeling using the WarpPLS software package.

**Findings-**The results show that the variables of economy, resources, occupation, agriculture, social capital, and welfare have directly influenced employment. The strongest impact on rural employment has been related to economy with a path coefficient of 0.364. In total, 56 percent of the dependent variable (increase in rural employment) in Verkane village is explained by five factors of economic effects, infrastructure and resources, agricultural effects, social capital, and social welfare.

**Originality/value-**Tourism, through the development of infrastructure such as the development of residences, transportation, shops and public places, telephone and internet, and infrastructures such as bridges, roads and mosques, has led to employment growth in the studied area. Therefore, one of the solutions for tourism development is to create tourism infrastructures in rural areas in such a way that this will lead to an increase in the number of tourists. The results of this research can help to plan for the development of tourism in rural areas and especially to solve the problem of employment in these areas.

**Keywords:** Welfare, Rural employment, Rural tourism, Rural development, Varkāneh (a village), Hamedan (a county)

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## 1. Introduction

Rural areas have turned into attractive destinations for people's leisure time where people resort to from their daily urban life routine (Jatav, 2023; Vaishar & Šťastná, 2023; Li et al., 2023). So, rural life versus contemporary urban life has become an essential element of rural tourism, especially considering the economic, social, and cultural changes of the world in recent centuries, and its significance is increasingly growing (Ferreira et al., 2023; Timothy, 2023). Therefore, demand for rural tourism has sharply increased in recent years (Zheng et al., 2023) so that this tourism is perceived by researchers to be the third most profitable economic activity in the world (Hara, 2008; Khoshkam & Rahimi, 2023) because nature, rural atmosphere, and the historical and cultural heritage of rural areas attract many tourists to rural life (Kunáková et al., 2016; Karyawanto et al., 2023). As such, there is ample potential for vitalizing the socio-economic development of rural areas by reducing unemployment, generating income, and enhancing the welfare of rural communities, which will naturally reduce the challenges of rural development (Avram, 2020; Radovic, 2017; Topcu, 2016). Rural tourism plays a key role in, especially, the economic development of rural areas by diversifying the activities of the host community, creating direct and indirect employment and income opportunities (Soteriades & Varvaressos, 2009; Castellani et al., 2008), expanding cultural exchanges and the resulting social benefits (Besculides et al., 2002), improving infrastructure and public services in rural areas (Castellani et al., 2008), redistributing income and employment in the process of rural development (Vázquez et al., 2012), and rehabilitating houses and dwellings (Paris, 2006). The significance of tourism in economic and employment-generation perspectives is related to the fact that it does not require a high level of skills and training and local people can operate service jobs with a little skill (Hezarjaribi and Najafi, 2011). Scholars suggest that due to the expansion of inappropriate urban lifestyle, rural tourism can be a key tool for the development of employment in rural communities by attracting infrastructure and development facilities, reinforcing local markets, and creating

new sources of earnings (Guaita-Martínez et al., 2019; Liu, 2010). Many studies also show that rural tourism is capable of being an effective means of economic growth when and where agriculture cannot be the mere source of livelihood for a long time (Wijijayanti et al., 2020; Khartishvili et al., 2019; Streimikiene and Bilan, 2015).

The last census in Iran shows that almost 26% of the population resides in rural areas. On the other hand, evidence implies that rural residential areas in Iran have poorer quality than urban residential areas. A key reason is the adoption of sectoral orientation in development planning and inattention to balanced and sustainable development so that the development of heavy industries and related activities with urban development has reduced investment in rural areas. In the last decade, 85% of the job opportunities were created in urban areas and the share of rural areas in these opportunities was only 15%, which has entailed extensive migration from rural areas to urban areas, the expansion of marginalization, the development of unproductive jobs, and many other social, cultural, and security issues and problems. Therefore, proper planning for any village in terms of its potentials can resolve the problem of unemployment. Planning for the development of tourism in rural areas is a practical way to solve the issue of unemployment in these areas. This highly dynamic industry can significantly influence economic, social, and environmental development at the local level (Bačik et al., 2016).

Hamedan is one of the key tourist centers in Iran with a long history and important historical attractions so that it has always been host to many domestic and international tourists. Therefore, given the potentials of the City of Hamedan and its villages, by planning and investing in the development of tourism in its rural and urban areas, a big step will be taken for its economic, social, and cultural development. Accordingly, the present research focuses on the effects of tourism development on employment in the village of Varkāneh. Varkāneh, located in Shara District of Hamedan County, is of crucial importance for its numerous historical, religious, natural, and social attractions so that it has been introduced as a target tourism village in Hamedan province by the Organization of Tourism and Cultural Heritage. So, this study attempts to identify different impacts of tourism on improving the economic and social conditions of people in this village and present

strategies and approaches for the development of rural tourism. As such, the main question that the research aims to answer is whether tourism can improve economic conditions and employment of people in the village of Varkāneh.

## 2. Research Theoretical Literature

Tourism has always been a rich source of income and employment diversity and expansion in the world so that it is capable of resolving many economic, cultural, and social bottlenecks. For instance, it can reduce unemployment, increase capital flow, boost handicraft industry and cultural commodities, expand cultural exchanges, reduce crimes, and enhance public culture. Rural tourism is a relatively new field in the tourism industry and rural development, which can open new opportunities for employment, income, and revival in rural areas (Mura & Šulterová, 2012). Many scholars have proposed theories as to the role of tourism in employment, some of which are reviewed below. Regarding rural tourism and employment, Sharpley (2011) suggests that since rural tourism is a new source of revenue for rural areas, it generates new employment opportunities (such as providing residence, catering, retailing, transportation, and entertainment to tourists), supports existing service activities (such as the transportation system, healthcare system, and traditional rural industries and professions), provides opportunities for multiple activities, thereby inhibiting temporary economic recession and supporting earnings, creates new and diverse employments in different regions, and reinforces local economy by reducing farming costs. Lea (1999) argues about the economic effects of tourism that tourism increases national income and net domestic product. He also suggests that tourism is a source of income for the government and that this industry can improve social services. Lundberg (2004) reports from the World Tourism Organization (WTO) that tourism is the biggest active industry in the world. According to this report, as per 1 million USD of income generated by this industry, 20,000 employment opportunities are created. Although the income from tourism may be lower than the income from other sources, it is the best option in the present conditions because it will increase tax revenue, reduce unemployment, and enhance the life quality of citizens. Regarding the effects of tourism on employment, Gee suggests that the importance of

the tourism industry for income and employment generation can be considered by those who have problems in planning for workforce employment. However, human resources are a sort of issue that those involved in the tourism industry should consider. WTO projected that the growth of employment created by this industry would reach 59% in 2005. Regarding the relationship between tourism and employment, Fennell & Cooper (2020) argues that tourism encompasses a very diverse set of industrial units, so it is difficult to estimate the number of employees in this sector. In addition, the nature of employment in the tourism industry with a diverse spectrum of coherence between tourism and other economic sector adds to the problem of valuing tourism.

According to some scholars, industrial tourism is labor-intensive and creates employment for people with various skills, so it is a way to cope with the issue of unemployment (Guy, 2003; Lea, 1999). A key benefit of the tourism industry in rural areas is that it creates revenue and wage for people working in this industry, who are mostly locals. So, the first economic impact of tourism is an increase in personal and/or public revenue of local people. Another positive impact of tourism is the creation of new job opportunities and the expansion of women's and youth's employment in the activities related to this industry (Sharpley, 2002). The development of rural tourism, especially in less-developed countries, is an effective way to cope with poverty and contributes to increasing the revenue of different classes, alleviating unemployment, boosting the economy, and enhancing people's life quality and social welfare. Since a significant share of the world's population, especially third world countries, still live in rural areas, what is certain is that if rural tourism is properly planned and managed, it can provide the conditions for achieving sustainable development in rural areas in all of the economic, social, cultural branches and reduce the problems of rural areas by providing new solutions and strategies (Pranita et al., 2022).

Various research studies in Iran have focused on the effects of rural tourism, and most have reported its positive effect on improving rural people's economic and social status. For example, Tulabinejad et al. (2023) showed that tourism in the villages of Chabahar had significant effects on the indicators of economic and social well-being of

rural households. The results of [Monazam Ismailpour's research \(2021\)](#) showed that rural tourism in the villages of the coasts of the Oman Sea has favorable effects on economic, social, environmental and physical-spatial indicators, and among the four dimensions, tourism development has the greatest effect on the economic dimension of the quality of life in the settlements. The results of the research of [Ghasemlou et al. \(2023\)](#) show that the effects of tourism development on the livability of rural areas are considered positive by about 69%; So that the greatest impact is related to the physical and the economic dimensions, and the least impact is related to the environmental dimension. [Mohammadi et al. \(2017\)](#) showed that tourism had a significant effect on the sustainable livelihood of rural people in the Uraman region of Iran in all five dimensions (human, social, natural, physical, and financial), consequently improving their life quality. [Lotfi et al. \(2017\)](#) found that tourism had been a critical factor, especially in recent decades, so that it had changed the spatial structure of the studied rural residential areas in Shemshak, Tehran, thereby changing their performance and accelerating rural development trends. Tourism was reported to drive social, cultural, and economic sustainability in the studied villages by making changes in the occupational structure of the rural areas, increasing revenues, reducing rural-urban migration, increasing the rate of immigration into the rural areas, and consequently increasing the willingness to stay in the rural area. [Yasouri et al. \(2018\)](#) explored the impact of rural tourism on employment from the perspective of rural tourists. The results revealed that tourism can contribute to increasing rural employment by the role it plays in expanding service facilities and drawing the attention of the officials to the rural health. Also, tourists spend a lot of money on buying souvenirs and using the residential and recreational facilities in the village, which helps the prosperity of the rural supermarkets and retailers. Finally, the results indicated that tourists could develop rural employment by creating a need for some services, which could be provided by private-sector and public-sector investment. [Shalchian Rabe \(2016\)](#) studied the role of tourism in increasing employment and alleviating poverty in the Qeshm Free Zone according to whose results the region possessed rich natural resources, tourism attractions, strategic location, and infrastructure

investments, so it had the potential to accomplish sustainable development and tourism development. This region is indeed characterized by its special ecosystems and its attractive and unique ecological capabilities, considerable potentials of its talented human resources, its high transportation capacity, its developed manual and modern industries, its service and welfare capacities, the existences of commercial and recreational facilities, and its strategic location by the Strait of Hormoz.

In a research, [Zhang et al. \(2022\)](#) examined the effects of tourism on rural incomes in China and showed that tourism significantly affects rural development in terms of employment, education, income and consumption. Also, rural development significantly moderates the effects of tourism on rural income inequality. [He et al. \(2022\)](#) found that rural tourism contributed to an overall increase in the income of farm households, but the effect of the increase in income differed significantly between poor and non-poor households. The research results of Scutaria and [Scutaria \(2023\)](#) in Romania showed that the tourism development had a positive effect on improving the standard of living of the local community. Their results showed that the intensification of the phenomenon of tourism does not seriously threaten the local environment, but it is necessary to increase the awareness of environmental impacts. According to [Romanenko et al. \(2020\)](#), the tourism industry has made a major contribution to the development of rural areas in EU countries, while the agricultural sector has characteristics such as slump of labor productivity, wage levels, and low growth rates of value-added products. Despite this, tourism development policy is implemented with the aim of solving environmental problems, competition in European tourism, increasing demand for services, improving tourism products and industrial development. The results of [Wang et al. \(2022\)](#), show that the development of international tourism can significantly reduce economic vulnerability. However, they suggest that less developed countries should first focus on developing other industries instead of international tourism. Finally, national income and industrial structure are introduced as two influential paths in the development of international tourism. Also, the research results of [Pranata et al. \(2022\)](#) showed that the development of industrial tourism in the studied villages in Indonesia has been effective on

variables such as increasing income, increasing job opportunities and improving the economic status of the villages.

Mura and Kljucnikov (2018) investigated the potentials and capacities of the rural areas in Slovakia for the improvement of rural occupations. They found that the development of the rural areas was dependent on their economic dimensions. A potential field for these regions was found to be tourism, especially rural tourism and ecotourism. The research assessed 142 business units from 2012 to 2016. The results revealed that the advantages of rural tourism and ecotourism had had a positive impact on the viability of occupations and had diversified the rural businesses. Li et al. (2018) concluded that rural tourism could be a good option for the restoration and rehabilitation of villages and a strategy to alleviating poverty in China. Their results revealed that rural tourism enterprises differed among the villages in their features. Additionally, the political and practical policies of rural tourism enterprises were influential on rural occupations and businesses. Choudhury et al. (2018) addressed the question as to how rural tourism could contribute to sustainable production and employment in rural areas. They found that the development of rural tourism can be considered a way for economic empowerment and employment generation in rural communities as it ensures sustainable livelihood supply. Furthermore, rural tourism would have direct benefits, including economic and social benefits, for local communities or stakeholders. In a study on modeling rural tourism indices in Korea, Kim (2012) states that tourism as an important driver plays a decisive role in mitigating economic problems of rural communities in Korea. In a study on tourism and the life quality of villagers, Reeder and Brown (2005) mention tourism as a factor contributing to the improvement of villagers' life quality in such indices as local development, wage levels, poverty alleviation, and the improvement of villagers' education and health. They state that, on the contrary, the control and planning of tourism in

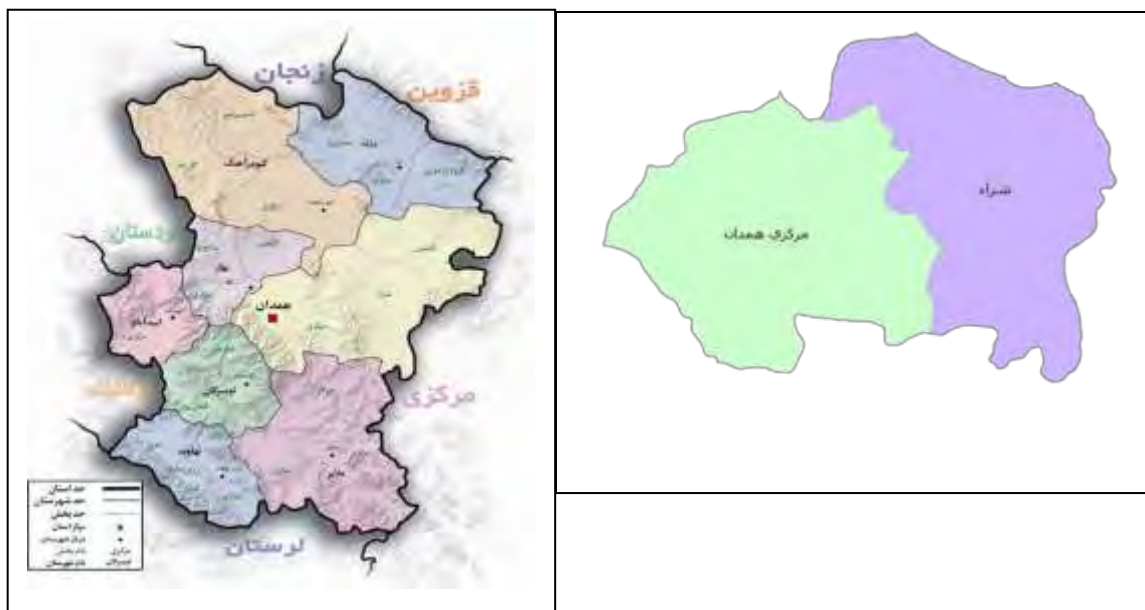
the destination is imperative considering the adverse impacts, such as the rise in prices and pollutions.

In the above researches, it has been pointed out the impact of tourism on increasing the level of income, job opportunities and quality of life in the village, but in this research more specifically, in addition to the impact of tourism on jobs and income, other variables have been measured such as improving agriculture, infrastructure, social welfare and Social capital. It can be said that these variables have not been tested simultaneously in previous researches. The results of this section will contribute rural development planners to implement rural tourism projects with adequate knowledge.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Geographical Scope of the Research

The study site was the village of Varkāneh in the central district of Hamedan County. The geographical location of this village is located at 48° and 37' of east longitude and 34° and 41' of north latitude, 23 kilometers from Hamedan city through the Malayer road. The houses of this village are made of stone. Varkaneh means next to water and springs. According to the results of the 2015 census, the population of this village was more than 1000 people. Varkaneh village of Hamedan is one of the tourist villages of Hamedan, whose name has been registered in the list of national monuments and has been proposed as a special tourism area of the country. Varkaneh village is located in the southern slope of Central Zagros and the villages of this region are generally considered to be very virgin areas due to their mountainous and beautiful nature. The history of Varkaneh village reaches more than 400 years and is relatively long, and its historical record is related to the early Safavid period. Varkaneh is one of the most popular options for a family trip for the people of Hamedan and other cities in the spring and summer seasons, with its stone cottages and walnut, apple and almond gardens.



**Figure 1. The geographical map of the study site**

### 3.2. Methodology

The present research was correlational-descriptive in type in which a quantitative approach and a survey methodology were employed. The research mainly aimed to explore the effects of rural tourism on job opportunities in Varkaneh village of Hamedan city. The statistical population was composed of all households living in Varkaneh in 2022. They amounted to 436 households with a total population of 1622 people, out of whom 205 households were sampled by simple randomization. The sample size was determined by Krejcie and Morgan's table. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire composed of three sections including items about demographic information (7 items) and items to assess the impacts of tourism on economic variables (9 items), employment expansion (6 items), infrastructure (8 items), social capital (9 items), agriculture (5 items), and social welfare (6 items). All items were based on a five-point Likert scale. The reliability was assessed by Cronbach's alpha, whose estimations supported the reliability of all sections. Also, data were initially processed in the SPSS19 software package and then, a path analysis was performed in the PLS3 software package.

## 4. Research Findings

### 4.1. Descriptive results

Based on the collected data, the age of the respondents varied from 13 to 58 years with an average of 39.98 years and a standard deviation (SD) of 15.47. In terms of gender, 63.9% were male and 35.4% were female. Also, the majority of the respondents (87.1%) were married. In terms of educational level, 17.9% had a diploma or a higher degree (an academic degree) whereas 41.4% were educated at the elementary level and 19.8% at the intermediate level. The remaining 19.8% were illiterate. In terms of occupation, 25.9% were self-employed, 20.9% were farmers, 33.5% were homemakers, and 8.4% were workers. Also, 1.5% were unemployed or lacked a permanent job, 2.7% were retired, 4.9% were civil servants, and 4% were students. Finally, the respondents were divided in terms of income into three levels (low, moderate, and high-income level) with 84%, 14.2%, and 1.8% in each group, respectively. The results of the descriptive phase reveal that the effect of tourism was not considerable on the economic indices of the studied village (assessed by nine items from the villagers on a scale from very high to very low) so that the means were under-standard. But, the economic effect of tourism was close to the mean and relatively acceptable in the field of the improvement of the villagers' general income ( $m = 2.94$ ) and the enhancement of the value of lands and residential properties ( $M = 2.72$ ). It was found that tourism had failed to properly influence the infrastructure

in the studied village (assessed by eight items on a scale from very high to very low). The highest mean was related to the improvement of communication infrastructure, including telephone

and the Internet ( $m = 2.70$ ) and the lowest was obtained for the establishment of recreational areas for villagers and tourists ( $m = 2.11$ ).

**Table 1. The mean opinions of respondents as to the effect of tourism on different indices in the studied village**

Variable	Items	Mean	SD
Economy	An increase in the general income of the villagers	2.948	0.981
	An increase in the value of lands and residential properties due to tourism development	2.728	0.923
	An increase in demand for rural household products	1.984	0.968
	An increase in revenue from the boom in handicrafts	1.869	1.493
	An increase in investment and government facilities for rural development	1.766	0.819
	An increase in private sector investment	1.785	0.789
	The alleviation of poverty in the rural area	1.873	0.878
	Diversification of agricultural and non-agricultural products	1.835	0.874
	The creation of new sources of income for the villagers	1.777	0.852
Infrastructure	Establishment and development of residential centers	2.47	1.003
	Improvement of the quality of transportation in the village	2.272	1.014
	Expansion of various services and facilities for the villagers, including shops and public places	2.164	0.944
	Improvement of communication infrastructure, e.g., telephone and the Internet	2.706	1.061
	Establishment of recreational areas for villagers and tourists	2.118	0.967
	Beautification of village texture such as houses and passages	2.329	1.003
	Creation and development of infrastructure, e.g., bridges, roads, and mosques	2.298	1.027
Employment	Recruitment of labor by the tourism sector from the agricultural sector	1.900	0.862
	Creation of a second job along with the agricultural sector	1.896	0.920
	New job opportunities for the villagers	1.911	0.892
	Villagers' job security	1.049	1.004
	Seasonal employment in the tourism and agricultural sectors	2.118	2.129
	Permanent employment of the villagers, especially the youth	1.869	0.840
Agriculture	A change in the cultivation pattern according to the new demand	1.842	0.878
	Agricultural mechanization due to the recruitment of workers by the complexes	2.30	0.889
	Discharge of agricultural labor	1.934	0.850
	Agricultural land-use change to other land uses	1.965	0.882
	An increase in the desire of young people to work in agriculture	2.007	0.964
Social trust	Trust between tourists and rural people	3.452	1.035
	People's connection with non-governmental and governmental institutions	2.724	0.984
	The villagers' sense of belonging to their village	2.896	1.078
	Economic or financial cooperation and collective capital among the people	2.927	0.999
	Cooperation between the local people	3.137	0.990
	Trust between the villagers	3.117	0.986
	Cooperation and physical participation of members in village development projects	3.291	0.956
	Empathy and unity between villagers and different ethnic groups	3.176	0.956
	Social and political cooperation and participation of the villagers in collective and public works	3.222	0.954
Social welfare	Changing the quality of life compared to before	2.145	1.011
	Enhancing the security of the village	3.498	1.069
	Creating happiness among the villagers	3.333	1.063
	Increasing hope for the future among residents	3.233	0.929
	Expanding public utility services by the government and the people	2.540	1.013
	Creating a sense of satisfaction among villagers with their lives	2.846	0.948

According to the results as to the effects of tourism on employment in the studied village, the items of

'seasonal employment in the tourism and agricultural sectors' and 'villagers' job security'

had the highest and lowest means of 2.11 and 1.04, respectively. It seems that the job security of the rural people is fragile, especially in the agricultural context. Also, the results about the effect of tourism on agriculture in the study site reveal that agricultural mechanization due to the recruitment of workers by the tourism-related complexes had the highest mean of 2.30. Regarding the effect of tourism on social capital, it was found that all indices were higher than the average, implying the strong impact of tourism on social capital. As the means indicate, trust between tourists and rural people has the highest mean (3.45) and people's connection with non-governmental and governmental institutions has the lowest mean (2.72). Concerning the impact of tourism on social welfare, the effect of tourism has been acceptable so that its effect on the security of the village exhibits the highest mean (3.49), and its effect on changing the quality of life compared to before exhibits the lowest one (2.14).

**4.2. Analytical results**

**The measurement model of rural employment-**

*This section analyzes and interprets the measurement model of tourism development in target tourism villages in Hamedan province. So, we estimated first the reliability of each index based on the factor loadings of each item and then*

*the internal consistency (construct reliability), convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The value of each factor loading of the indices of the relevant latent variable should be  $\geq 0.5$  (Faulkner and Miller, 1992). Figure 2 presents the factor loadings.*

As is observed in figure 2, the values of all measures related to the latent variable are greater than 0.5, so it can be claimed that the measurement model is reliable enough for the indices of the latent variables. Also, the p-values of all indices were shown smaller than 0.5, implying that the factor loadings and the values derived for the observed variables are significant at least at the 95% confidence level ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The second criterion to check the reliability of constructs is their composite reliability (internal consistency), which should be  $\geq 0.7$  (Nunnally, 1978). The values estimated for this index in the present work reflected the acceptable reliability of the constructs. The values for composite reliability varied from 0.829 for welfare to 0.938 for social capital. Cronbach's alpha also ranged from 0.760 for welfare to 0.924 for social capital. These composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values are acceptable and imply the reliability of the constructs.

**Table 2. the measurement indices of model fit**

Constructs	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
Economy	0.912	0.927	0.588
Infrastructure/resource	0.901	0.922	0.629
Agriculture	0.858	0.898	0.639
Social capital	0.924	0.938	0.631
Social welfare	0.760	0.829	0.501
Employment	0.899	0.922	0.665

The third criterion used in examining the internal consistency of constructs is convergent validity, which is analyzed by average variance extracted (AVE). AVE shows the variance of a construct (a latent variable) from the indices. The values of  $>0.5$  have been suggested for this criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). As is evident in Table 2, AVE was greater than 0.50 for all components, so all components were reliable enough. AVE ranged from 0.501 for welfare to 0.665 for employment.

So, the measurement model exhibited a relatively appropriate convergent validity.

To assess discriminant validity, the square root of AVE is calculated. This criterion should be greater than the correlation of other constructs. In Table 3, the values on the diagonal show the square root of AVE, and the other values show the correlation between the constructs. It is evident that the elements on the diagonal are greater than the other values (the values of the relevant row and column).



So, it can be said that all components had good discriminant validity.

The correlation table indicates that there is a significant correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable of employment ( $p < 0.05$ ). The direction of all

correlations is positive, and employment has the strongest relationship with resources (a coefficient of 0.656) and agriculture (a coefficient of 0.547). No close correlation is observed between the independent variables, so it can be concluded that we do not have the problem of multicollinearity.

**Table 3. the results of discriminant validity measures**

	Economy	Resource	Agri.	SC	SW	Empl.
Economy	0.767					
Infrastructure/resource	0.391	0.800				
Agriculture	0.544	0.547	0.815			
Social capital	0.476	0.457	0.656	0.793		
Social welfare	0.226	0.310	0.281	0.355	0.794	
Employment	0.360	0.371	0.505	0.550	0.474	0.707

**The structural model of rural employment-** This section presents an analysis of the structural model of the research. The model is composed of six latent variables and 41 observable variables. 'Economy', 'resources', 'agriculture', 'social capital', and 'welfare' are the independent variables, and 'employment' is the dependent variable. [Figure 2](#) displays the structural model of the research and the path coefficients. A coefficient is acceptable if its p-value is  $< 0.05$ . It was found that the coefficients were significant for all paths, so all components had a significant relationship with employment.

The impact of tourism on rural employment through improving the economic situation: The results showed that rural tourism has a positive and significant effect on rural employment through improving the economic situation ( $\beta=0.227$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). [Pranata et al. \(2022\)](#), [Zhang \(2023\)](#), [Li et al. \(2018\)](#), [Mura and Kljucnikov \(2018\)](#), [Castellani et al. \(2008\)](#), and [Mirzaei \(2018\)](#) also reached similar results in their studies.

The impact of tourism on rural employment through the improvement of resources and infrastructure: As shown in [Table 5](#), rural tourism has a positive and significant impact on rural employment through the improvement of resources

and infrastructure ( $\beta=0.364$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The results of this section are consistent with the findings of [Guaita Martínez et al. \(2019\)](#), [Li et al. \(2018\)](#), [Mura and Kljucnikov \(2018\)](#), [Castellani et al. \(2008\)](#).

The impact of tourism on rural employment through improving the agricultural situation: The results showed that rural tourism can significantly help increase job opportunities through improving the agricultural situation of the villagers ( $\beta=0.242$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). This part of the results is consistent with the studies of [Wijijayanti et al. \(2020\)](#), [Streimikiene and Bilan \(2015\)](#), [Khartishvili et al. \(2019\)](#).

The impact of tourism on rural employment through the improvement of social welfare: The results also indicate the existence of a positive and significant relationship between improving the social welfare of villagers and increasing their job opportunities through tourism ( $\beta=0.133$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). [Scutaria and Scutaria \(2023\)](#), [He et al. \(2022\)](#), [Avram \(2020\)](#) and [Shalchian Rabe \(2016\)](#) have also reached similar results.

In the structural model, social capital has the strongest effect (0.414) on welfare while the weakest effect (0.133) was related to the impact of welfare on employment.

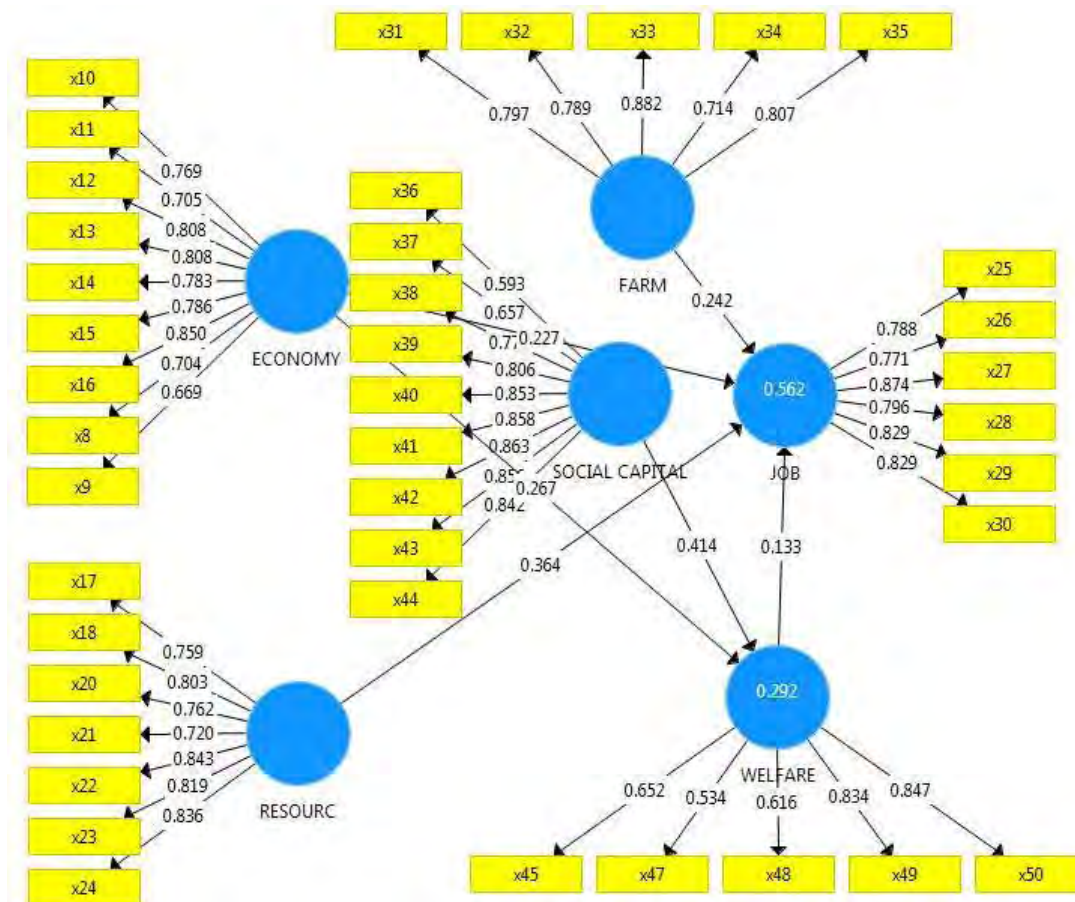


Figure 2. The conceptual model of the research

Table 4 presents the path coefficients and the significant values related to each one. The higher the coefficient is, the more influential the variable is. In the structural model of the present research, all variables influence employment and welfare significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results reveal that the four variables of economy, resources, agriculture, and welfare are effective in employment ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The most influential variable is resources with a coefficient of 0.364 followed by agriculture with a coefficient of 0.242. The results confirm the positive significant effect of economy and social capital on welfare ( $p < 0.05$ ). The intensity of the effect of economy on welfare is 0.267 and the intensity of the effect of social capital is 0.414.

Table 4. The path coefficients and the levels of significance in the rural employment model

Path	Path coefficient	Significance level	Result
Economy on employment	0.227	< 0.001	Confirmed
Economy on welfare	0.267	< 0.001	Confirmed
Resources (infrastructure) on employment	0.364	< 0.001	Confirmed
Agriculture on employment	0.242	< 0.001	Confirmed
Social capital on welfare	0.414	< 0.001	Confirmed
Welfare on employment	0.133	< 0.008	Confirmed

The prediction potential of the model is analyzed by estimating the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>)

for the dependent variable. Since 56.2% of the variance in the dependent variable (employment) is

accounted for by the variables included in the model, i.e., economy, resources, agriculture, and welfare, it is concluded that the structural model had adequate prediction potential and the independent variables have a strong impact on the dependent variable.

**The fit indices of the rural employment model-**  
In structural equation modeling, various indices

are used to ensure a model's goodness-of-fit or suitability. *Table 5* shows the most important indices. The results indicate that all fit indices are acceptable and none has a weak value. Overall, the fit indices reveal that the research model is well-fitted

**Table 5. The fit indices of the rural employment model**

Index	Acceptable value	Calculated value	Result
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	<0.1	0.082	Appropriate
p-value	<0.05	0.045	Appropriate
Ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom ( $\chi^2/DF$ )	1-3	2.87	Appropriate
Mean variance inflation factor (VIF)	<5	1.35	Appropriate
Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ )	>0.33	0.56	Appropriate
Goodness-of-fit (GoF)	>0.90	0.91	Acceptable

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Tourism is so advantageous that it can be regarded as an economic driver of any country and a major source of employment. The expansion of tourism within the framework of rural development can lay the ground for creating new opportunities in rural areas, including the generation of income and sustainable employment, the development of social and economic infrastructure, the mobility of other rural sectors, the security and comfortability of rural people, and the conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage. So, the present research addressed the effects of rural tourism on rural people's employment in the village of Varkāneh.

The descriptive phase of the study reveals that tourism has not been so influential on the economic indices in the studied village so that the means calculated were lower than the standard. But, the effect of tourism on increasing the general income of rural people and enhancing the value of lands and residential properties have been close to average and acceptable. The effect of tourism has not been considerable on the infrastructure of the studied village either, and the highest average was related to the improvement of communication infrastructure, including telephone and the Internet network. Regarding the effect of tourism on employment, the highest mean was related to the seasonality of employment in the tourism sector

and agriculture. This means that rural people are faced with numerous problems in job security in the context of agriculture. Also, the results as to the effect of tourism on agriculture in the studied village show that the highest mean was related to the variable of agriculture mechanization due to the recruitment of the agricultural labor by other sectors. Tourism has been most influential on social capital, reflecting the trust between tourists and the rural people. Regarding social welfare too, the results reveal the acceptable effect of tourism on it so that the effect of tourism on security in the village had the highest mean.

The results of the analytic phase show that rural tourism has positively influenced employment in the village from the economic, resources (infrastructure), agricultural, and welfare aspects. Among these four factors, resources (infrastructure) have had the strongest impact on employment generation in the studied region. Similar results have been reported by [Pranata et al. \(2022\)](#), [Zhang et al. \(2022\)](#), [Li et al. \(2018\)](#), [Mura and Šulterová \(2012\)](#), [Castellani et al. \(2008\)](#), and [Mirzaei \(2009\)](#). In fact, tourism has boosted employment in the study site by the development of infrastructure, e.g., the development of residential buildings, transportation systems, supermarkets, public places, telephone and Internet networks, as well as bridges, roads, and mosques. The development of rural tourism infrastructure in Varkāneh will attract tourists to this region. As the

tourists increase continuously, this industry will turn into a source of income and employment in the region. Tourism contributes to generating employment directly and indirectly. Direct employment can be exemplified in the personnel of inns, restaurants, transportation, recreational centers, and handicraft stores. Indirect employment includes the occupations that support those who are directly involved in tourism, such as inn facility and material supply companies, building and road construction companies, food producers, and handicraft manufacturers.

The second most influential factor in the relationship between rural tourism and employment is 'agriculture'. Indeed, tourism affects employment in villages through 'agriculture'. This finding corroborates the results reported by Wijjayanti et al. (2020), Khartishvili et al. (2019), and Streimikiene and Bilan (2015). This may be attributed to the impact of tourism on agricultural land-use change and their conversion to tourism land-uses, as well as the exit of the agricultural labor. Although as tourism-related occupations expand in the village, farming loses its importance, the release of the agricultural labor and their recruitment into tourism-related jobs contributes to the development of employment in the village.

The results reveal that tourism has influenced employment generation in the study site through the independent variable of 'economy'. This means that tourism development has improved people's economic status in terms of income, diversity of income sources, land and property prices, and so on, which have in turn reinforced their economic potential for the development of their own occupations and businesses. As the people's

economic status has been improved, they have been enabled to use governmental facilities, resulting in more investment in tourism-related occupations and an increase in the diversity of agricultural and non-agricultural products. Furthermore, the increased investment by the private sector has also played a significant role in boosting occupations and businesses. Avram (2020), Radovic et al. (2017), Topcu (2016), and Soteriades et al. (2009) also conclude that tourism is highly capable of boosting the economy of villages and creating employment opportunities directly and indirectly. The last variable affecting employment in the studied village was 'social welfare' whose impact was found to be positive and significant on generating job opportunities in the village. This is consistent with the reports of Scutaria and Scutaria (2023), He et al. (2022), Avram (2020) and Shalchian Rabe (2016). This reflects the fact that when tourism develops, the life quality is ameliorated and this enhances satisfaction and happiness among the rural people and increases their life expectancy. The enhancement of social welfare has directly affected employment development in the village too.

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#### **Authors' contributions**

Reza Movahedi: writing the first draft, editing, data analysing and methodology; Fatemeh Amiri: Writing persian version and editing, writing some theoretical framework.

#### **Conflict of interest**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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## بررسی اثرات گردشگری بر اشتغال روستایی (مطالعه موردی: روستای ورکانه شهرستان همدان)

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### چکیده مبسوط

#### ۱. مقدمه

نتایج بسیاری از مطالعات نشان داده که گردشگری روستایی این توان را دارد که به عنوان ابزاری موثر برای رشد اقتصادی در زمان و مکانی که کشاورزی نمی‌تواند به مدت طولانی تنها منبع معیشتی باشد، موثر واقع شود. در اکثر نواحی روستایی به دلیل غالب بودن اقتصاد کشاورزی و آسیب‌پذیری آن توجه به دیگر فعالیت‌های توسعه‌ای نظیر گردشگری به عنوان مکمل این بخش می‌تولند از جنبه‌های مختلف تضمینی در بهبود شرایط زندگی روستاییان باشد. از این‌رو، برنامه‌ریزی مناسب در هر یک از روستاها با توجه به پتانسیل‌های موجود در آن‌ها می‌تواند مشکل بیکاری و اشتغال روستاییان را از بین ببرد. برنامه‌ریزی برای توسعه گردشگری در مناطق روستایی یکی از راهکارهای عملی برای حل معضل اشتغال در این مناطق است. این صنعت با پویایی خاص خود می‌تولند تاثیرات عمده‌ای بر وضعیت اقتصادی، اجتماعی و زیست‌محیطی به ویژه در سطح محلی بگذارد. همدان از اصلی‌ترین مراکز گردشگری کشور و دارای سابقه و جاذبه‌های مهم تاریخی است و از این‌رو، همواره مورد توجه و میزبان تعداد زیادی از گردشگران خارجی و داخلی است. بنابراین، می‌توان با توجه به قابلیت‌های شهر همدان و روستاهای آن و با برنامه‌ریزی و سرمایه‌گذاری در زمینه توسعه گردشگری در بخش روستایی و شهری همدان، گامی مهم در راستای توسعه اقتصادی، اجتماعی و فرهنگی آن برداشت. بر این اساس، تحقیق حاضر بر آن است که به بررسی اثرات توسعه گردشگری بر وضعیت اشتغال در روستای ورکانه بپردازد. روستای ورکانه از توابع شهرستان همدان که در بخش مرکزی واقع شده است با بهره‌مندی از جاذبه‌های متعدد تاریخی، مذهبی، طبیعی

و اجتماعی، از اهمیت ویژه برخوردار است به طوری‌که از سوی سازمان گردشگری و میراث فرهنگی به عنوان یکی از روستاهای هدف گردشگری استان همدان معرفی شده است. از این‌رو، پژوهش حاضر می‌کوشد با شناسایی دقیق اثرات مختلف گردشگری در بهبود شرایط اقتصادی و اجتماعی مردم این روستا، راهبردها و راهکارهایی مناسب برای توسعه گردشگری روستایی ارائه دهد.

#### ۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

گردشگری بزرگترین صنعت فعال در جهان است و در ازای هر یک میلیون دلار درآمد تولید شده در این صنعت، بیست هزار شغل جدید ایجاد می‌شود. گوی، در مورد اثرات گردشگری در اشتغال معتقد است که اهمیت صنعت گردشگری از نظر ایجاد درآمد و شغل می‌تواند مورد توجه کسانی قرار بگیرد که برای برنامه‌ریزی شغلی نیروی کار دچار مشکل هستند. با وجود این، منابع انسانی از مسائلی است که دست‌اندرکاران صنعت گردشگری باید بدان توجه کنند. طبق آمار و پیش‌بینی‌های سازمان جهانی گردشگری در ۲۰۰۵ رشد مشاغل ایجاد شده از طریق این صنعت به ۵۹ درصد می‌رسد. در زمینه اثرات گردشگری روستایی، تحقیقات مختلفی در داخل کشور انجام شده که اکثر آنها حاکی از تأثیر مثبت گردشگری بر بهبود وضعیت اقتصادی و اجتماعی روستاییان است. برای نمونه، طولابی نژاد و همکاران (۱۴۰۱) نشان دادند که گردشگری در روستاهای شهرستان چابهار اثرات چشمگیری بر شاخصهای رفاه اقتصادی و اجتماعی خانوارهای روستایی داشته است. نتایج تحقیق منظم اسماعیل پور (۱۴۰۰) نشان داد که گردشگری روستایی در روستاهای سواحل دریای عمان اثرات مطلوبی بر شاخص‌های اقتصادی،

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طریق بهبود وضعیت کشاورزی اهالی روستا به طور معنی داری به افزایش فرصت‌های شغلی کمک کند ( $p < \beta$ ,  $0.01/0 = 0.242$ ). این بخش از نتایج با مطالعات ویجیانتی و همکاران (۲۰۲۰)، کارتیش‌ویلی و همکاران (۲۰۱۹) و استرمکین و بیلان (۲۰۱۵) همخوانی دارد. نتایج همچنین بیانگر وجود رابطه مثبت و معنی داری بین بهبود رفاه اجتماعی روستاییان با افزایش فرصت‌های شغلی آنان از طریق گردشگری می باشد ( $p < \beta$ ,  $0.05/0 = 0.133$ ). اسکوتاریا و اسکوتاریا (۲۰۲۳)، هی و همکارانش (۲۰۲۲)، و شالیچیان رابع (۱۳۹۵) نیز به نتایج مشابهی دست یافته اند.

### ۵. بحث و نتیجه گیری

نتایج نشان داد ۵۶ درصد از متغیر وابسته (افزایش اشتغال روستایی) در روستای ورکانه توسط پنج عامل اثرات اقتصادی، زیرساختها و منابع، اثرات کشاورزی، سرمایه اجتماعی، و رفاه اجتماعی تبیین می شود. گردشگری از طریق توسعه زیرساخت‌هایی مانند توسعه اقامتگاه‌ها، حمل‌ونقل، فروشگاه‌ها و اماکن عمومی، تلفن و اینترنت، و زیرساخت‌هایی مانند پل، جاده و مسجد موجب رونق اشتغال در منطقه مورد مطالعه شده است. بنابراین یکی از راهکارهای توسعه گردشگری ایجاد زیرساخت‌های گردشگری در مناطق روستایی است به گونه ای که این امر منجر به افزایش شمار گردشگران خواهد شد. نتایج این تحقیق می تواند به برنامه‌ریزی برای توسعه گردشگری در مناطق روستایی و به ویژه حل معطل اشتغال در این مناطق کمک کند. **کلیدواژه‌ها:** رفاه اجتماعی، اشتغال روستایی، گردشگری روستایی، توسعه روستایی، ورکانه (روستا)، همدان (شهرستان).

### تشکر و قدردانی

این پژوهش مستخرج از رساله/ پایان نامه یا طرح پژوهشی نیست و حاصل فعالیت پژوهشی نویسندگان بوده است.

اجتماعی، محیطی و کالبدی- فضایی داشته و از بین ابعاد چهارگانه، توسعه گردشگری بیشترین اثر را بر بعد اقتصادی کیفیت زندگی در سکونتگاه های روستاهای داشته است. نتایج تحقیق قاسملو و همکاران (۱۴۰۱) نشان می دهد که اثرات توسعه گردشگری بر زیست پذیری مناطق روستایی حدود ۶۹ درصد مثبت تلقی شده است؛ به طوری که بیشترین تاثیر مربوط به بعد کالبدی و بعد اقتصادی است و کمترین اثرات مربوط به بعد زیست محیطی است.

### ۳. روش تحقیق

پژوهش از نوع کاربردی و توصیفی- همبستگی است و در آن، از رویکرد کمی و روش پیمایشی استفاده شده است. جمعیت آماری تحقیق ۲۵۰ خانوار روستایی و جمعیت نمونه ۱۴۸ تن از روستاییان بودند که با استفاده از جدول کرجسی و مورگان و بر اساس روش نمونه‌گیری تصادفی انتخاب شدند. ابزار جمع‌آوری داده‌ها پرسشنامه بود که سؤالات آن در سه بخش تنظیم شد. تحلیل داده‌ها با بهره‌گیری از روش تحلیل مسیر و مدل معادلات ساختاری به کمک نرم‌افزار PLS صورت گرفت.

### ۴. یافته‌های تحقیق

نتایج نشان داد که گردشگری روستایی از طریق مسیر بهبود وضعیت اقتصادی تاثیر مثبت و معنی داری بر اشتغال در روستا دارد ( $p < \beta$ ,  $0.05/0 = 0.227$ ). پراناتا و همکاران (۲۰۲۲)، زانگ (۲۰۲۲)، و میرزایی (۱۳۸۸) نیز در مطالعات خود به نتایج مشابهی رسیدند. گردشگری روستایی از طریق مسیر بهبود منابع و زیرساختها تاثیر مثبت و معنی داری بر اشتغال در روستا دارد ( $\beta = 0.364$ ). نتایج این بخش با یافته‌های گایتا- مارتینز و همکاران (۲۰۱۹)، لی و همکاران (۲۰۱۸)، مورا و کلجانی‌کلاو (۲۰۱۸)، همخوانی دارد. نتایج نشان داد که گردشگری روستایی می تواند از



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