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The Role of Socio-Cultural Exchange Theory in the Organizational Crisis Management of Iran's Tourism Industry

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Abstract

The tourism industry is vulnerable to crises due to its direct interaction with people. Iran's tourism industry is always exposed to crises due to its political geography in the Middle East. In order to find an effective solution in accepting the crisis and providing practical measures, the theory of socio-cultural exchange in crisis management of Iran's tourism industry was investigated.

The current study is an applied research that was conducted using content analysis approach. Data collection was done from research literature and in-depth interviews with experts. Sampling was done in a targeted way. Value creation indicators and a positive image demonstrate the effectiveness of these factors. The indicators related to the theory of socio-cultural exchange were examined as solutions suggested by experts. Society exchange theory, with value creation as the main indicator proposes the sub-index of sharing of ideas, synergy, respect for the environment, adaptation to society and flexibility. Society exchange theory, with positive image as the main indicator; It suggests the sub-index of commitment, the promotion of professional ethics, the development of long-term relationships, and good relations between businesses.

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Introduction

Tourism is one of the most important industries in the world economy, and it is necessary to study the best ways to survive in the crisis in a way that causes the least damage to this industry. In addition, the impact of crises and disasters on tourism are measured by their nature, magnitude, and scale (Backer & Ritchie, 2017). Some incidents are over quickly and the recovery period may be short (e.g., terrorist attacks), while other events, such as natural disasters that damage infrastructure and communications (e.g., earthquakes), may take years for communities to recover.

As the latest, most visible and widespread crisis affecting the tourism industry, we can mention the COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought challenges to the world that go beyond those of the Second World War. In addition to jeopardizing social health, this crisis also posed a huge threat to the global economy (Asgari savadjani et al., 2021).

In addition to the types of crises already mentioned, among the crises that had a serious negative impacts on the global economy, we can also mention the financial crises of organizations. In recent years, a number of researchers, including Svedin (2016), have been looking for solutions that might be able to reduce losses to companies and organizations in an appropriate way during a crisis, but in order to survive in the growing crises, it is simply not possible to find a suitable answer, because crises exacerbate unpredictable situations and circumstances. As globalization continues and business diversifies, crises are becoming more complex and organizations are constantly encountering new events that require effective awareness and information to protect themselves and respond appropriately.

In a crisis situation, businesses see a large part of their customers and profits at risk. If the alarming situation continues, they face serious problems that even threaten their existence. Conditions that force organizations to face difficult issues, and as a result, organizations are looking for an effective solution to overcome the difficult situation.

In addition, there are discussions in the way of interaction between organizations and their stakeholders, as well as between stakeholders with each other, that are of interest to the business and how to provide these benefits in such a way that does not place any beneficiary at a lower priority (Idowu et al., 2013). This issue is tied to the company's success even in the face of many challenges and crises, which can be a suitable response in dealing with the crisis.

It should be said that a crisis is a situation in which the main cause of an event occurs through structural problems and improper management practices or inability to adapt to changes. This definition suggests that crises are usually caused by internal or man-made actions, such as wrong decisions by companies.

In order to prevent or reduce structural problems and incorrect management practices that can lead to management crisis, socio-cultural exchange theory can be proposed. In the theory of socio-cultural

exchange, the relationship between businesses with each other, then with policy-making managers, is in the center of attention. It is important to develop and maintain long-term relationships that are productive and profitable for all parties involved in the exchange (Neumann & Laimer, 2019).

Businesses in the past, were in such a way that the shareholders were the main owners of the companies and businesses. They had little responsibility towards the society, and if there were any problems, they would be solved with the intervention of knowledgeable people. After several decades of such thinking and as business has expanded and globalized, other challenges have emerged that require new conceptualizations and new thinking. According to the scope of socio-cultural changes, the understanding of business and value creation in business is challenged and thoughts and the previous assumptions are underestimated. It was noticed that how the realms of morality, culture and business are separated?

Due to the complexity of the societies, the ethical way in which businesses and their officials operate comes into focus. Also, the way of interaction and creation of common values between stakeholders (customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, communities, and managers) became the main focus of researchers' discourse.

According to these important points, stakeholder cooperation can be important and efficacious in crisis planning and recovery (Oloruntoba et al., 2018) if it leads to more participation and interaction and can expand competition at more efficient levels (Jiang & Ritchie, 2017). Indeed, that trust is formed as a result of this collaboration and partnership (McComb et al., 2016). It provides access to more valuable resources in joint disaster and incident management (Jiang & Ritchie, 2017). Furthermore, collaboration and participation lead to greater decision-making responsibility, which makes individuals and groups involved in the crisis more proactive, and in fact, decisions are made at a higher and purely managerial level together with other stakeholders (Morakabati et al., 2017).

Often, due to the existence of organizations and stakeholder groups with different capacities in terms of ability and resources, there is a possibility of challenging participation and cooperation, but cooperation among stakeholders is an urgent need that creates synergy and organizational flexibility in the tourism industry and destinations (Nguyen et al., 2017).

In other words, organizations with especial attention to social and ethical values cause the development of society, which can lead to the cycle of wealth in society and organizations, and create a stronger and more resilient foundation. Responding to socio-cultural needs leads to the provision of new products and services and even affects the quality and quantity of the value chain, and, leads to the stabilization of relations between organizations and societies. A mutually beneficial relationship in which the beneficiary becomes dependent on the company through the provision of resources, also, by creating value and optimizing resource utilization, more communication is established between the

company and its stakeholders. In other words, value creation and how to adapt to society are provided (Salminen, 2021).

In addition, having collaborative relationships is known as part of strategic planning in achieving a competitive advantage, and achieving competitive advantage is aimed at increasing the quality of companies' performance, which has positive and continuous effects (Neumann & Laimer, 2019).

According to the characteristics that are effective in creating a commercial relationship in business, in describing cooperation, it should be said that cooperation describes an action that has beneficial results for the participants in a relationship (Anderson & Narus, 1990). Cooperation leads to benefit if it is carried out along with a set of actions. In fact, the interaction between cooperation and commitment causes behavior that guarantees benefits for the parties of the relationship. The higher the level of trust, the more evident the continuation of the long-term relationship (Sin et al., 2005). Trust emphasizes factors such as satisfaction, communication, competence, shared values, benevolence and honesty, all of which are socio-cultural interactions. According to Franklin and Marshall (2018), participation and cooperation are important prerequisites for trust in business relationships, and the creation of participation, communication and cooperation of participants in the relationship creates a deeper understanding that leads to finding solutions. In other words, active participation in relationship sharing can promote trust, sharing of ideas, and knowledge exchange (Swift and Hwang, 2013).

In addition, it is the sharing and exchange of knowledge and experience that, by supporting goals and ideas, causes coordination and alignment of expectations and increases trust. What is important is the formation of commitment and mutual trust between stakeholders, which creates healthy relationships and healthy relationships between individuals and groups are a two-way process that increases effectiveness and improves business efficiency (Neumann & Laimer, 2019). In such a set, in the case of lack or lack of suitable alternatives, mutual cooperation is applied to support each other in a suitable way.

According to the information collected from the research literature and by examining the shortcomings and weaknesses of the business environment in Iran's tourism industry, which are mainly management weaknesses in critical situations, (such as: deficiencies in the formation of expert teams, lack of cooperation and commitment, lack of coherent relationships and coordination in responding to the crisis, the lack of a suitable environment for sharing ideas and the lack of an atmosphere of participation and identifying the capabilities and resources of companies, as well as the lack of government support and private sector support, etc.), there is a need for coherent exchange and cooperation and Coordination among different elements of the tourism industry is needed, and this problem can be solved by using social exchange theory.

Research Background

A research was carried out with the title of "Explaining a framework for expanding support for the development of rural tourism based on the integration of social exchange and place image theories (case study: villages in the wetland areas of the Khuzestan province)". In this study aim was to explain the factors affecting the support of tourism development among the residents of the wetland areas of the Khuzestan province, focusing on the development of a conceptual framework based on the social exchange and place image theories. The research instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire which its reliability was confirmed using composite reliability, as well as Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The statistical population of this study was the households living in the villages located in the four wetland areas of Khuzestan province, namely Shadegan, Miangaran, Bamedeh, and Hoor Al Azim. Using a stratified sampling method, we selected 316 households. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS and AMOS software. The results showed that among the variables of the theoretical framework, the awareness and place image had an effect on the perception of socio-cultural impacts, and the perception of the socio-cultural effects had an influence on the residents' attitude toward tourism development and also support for tourism development in the Khuzestan wetlands (M. Ghoochani et al., 2019).

A research titled "Comparative analysis of local residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism on rural areas: A case study of the villages in the basin of the Kolan river in Malayer county" was conducted with a mixed producer method. The data were analyzed by descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis, and cluster analysis. According to the exploratory factor analysis, the positive impacts were classified into economic, environmental, and social factors. Similarly, the negative impacts were classified into three factors in terms of environmental, social, security, and cultural impacts. The results of the cluster analysis showed three different perspectives. In most cases, there were significant differences between the perceptions of the local residents in terms of positive and negative impacts of tourism. The findings are consistent with the principles of social exchange theory (Bayat et al., 2018).

In the following, an article entitled "Identifying the impact of organizational citizenship behavior as a mediator on the relationship between perceived organizational support and social capital" is presented, which social capital as one of the most important intangible assets in modern organizations, the present study aims to add to the literature in this area and help managers to create and maintain this in their organizations. Specifically, the study has aimed to develop and fit a model that considers the employees' perceived organizational support as one of the major sources for creating social capital and highlights the importance of organizational citizenship behavior as a mediator. The applied research methodology is survey design and specifically the research is based on Structural Equation Modeling. The results indicated favorable fit for the model that considers organizational citizenship behavior as a mediator that explains the impact of perceived organizational support in creating social capital. Based

on the results of this model, the employees who conceive of their organization as supportive help improve the social capital through displaying citizenship behavior in the organization (Bakhti et al., 2011).

In an article entitled "Evaluating the factors affecting the attitude of the host community towards tourism and supporting the development of tourism" it is stated that the main objective of this research is to study the factors influencing this attitude based on the theory of social exchange, tourism life cycle and rational action theory. The study shows that the level of social participation of host societies in the development of tourism purposes has a significant role in supporting tourism, and this will be enhanced by increasing the benefits and contribution of communities to tourism. (Delafrooz & Saliminia, 2016).

In a research entitled "The importance of understanding the modern suburban tourist and decision-making related to the destination" it says that this study requires a creative and strategic thinking about the importance of understanding the modern suburban tourist and decision-making related to the destination, in order to develop appropriate and targeted digital marketing tactics, which lead to online interaction related to the destination brand for the city. Since digital and social media are based on the principles of social networking and sharing, businesses can benefit from observing the digital behaviors of modern and digital tourists through the lens of socio-cultural exchange theory. (Lamb et al., 2020).

In a research by Nunkoo et al. (2013), which examines "Residents attitudes to tourism: a longitudinal study of 140 articles from 1984 to 2010", 36 cases have been mentioned in which social exchange theory has been used, which shows the popularity of this theory. In social exchange theory, voluntary participation in exchange is explained by individuals or groups of individuals. Exchanges happen when the person or people who form a group understand the value or benefits of that exchange to compensate for the costs in the exchange. In the meantime, significant differences can be seen in the perception of residents and between groups. In other words, the residents who benefit economically from tourism have direct contact with tourists and are the ones who are likely to participate in tourism planning and have a relatively more positive understanding of the effects of tourism.

In a research entitled "Residents' support as main stakeholders in tourism development in the framework of socio-cultural exchange theory" it was stated that there is a close relationship between success and sustainability with place tourism. In other words, residents' perception of these potential effects can create active and passive attitudes toward destination development. As the main stakeholders in tourism development, the attitudes of residents are very important. Their support for tourism development is closely linked to the success and sustainability of the destination tourism. The framework of social exchange theory has been used in numerous studies to establish the relationship between residents' perceived tourism impacts and their support for tourism (Frleta & Jurdana, 2020).

In a research by Tham et al. (2020), it is said that with the increase of digital technology and as a result tourists rely on information in decision-making, tourists increasingly welcome social and digital media marketing and communication, whether through brand or user-orientated. Targeted digital marketing efforts are effective in tourists' decision making. The use of social media networks in tourism enables creative marketing approaches in targeting the right audiences to maximize brand awareness exposure. Tourists who get information through digital media usually use different sources of information when decide on their vacations. These sources often rely on authentic and reliable information about the destination by the user, such as that found in travel forums, specialist blogs and online sites.

Materials and methods

The dominant paradigm of this study is interpretivist, and the content analysis approach has been chosen as the research strategy in this study. This research is practical in terms of purpose. In relation to the research topic; the role of socio-cultural exchange theory in the organizational crisis management of Iran's tourism industry, materials were provided from reliable sources based on the type of data. This was a qualitative study from the perspective of implementation methodology. Then, it was continued by reviewing and analyzing the content and interviews with experts (13 people), until theoretical saturation was reached.

In the current study, the researcher used Atlas software to code the data. The data collected from research literature and interviews with experts were coded in several stages. Subcategories and main categories were separated between narrative and documentation. After summarizing the results from the data related to the socio-cultural exchange theory, 9 indicators were obtained in the form of 2 categories.

In this research, pluralism methods, member surveys, and paired surveys were used to increase internal validity. A survey of tourism industry managers and experts was conducted to examine the external validity of the study. This method has made the final model have sufficient generalization ability. The following strategies have also been used to confirm authenticity: Firstly, data were collected from multiple information sources to confirm the validity of the findings, including interviews with tourism managers and experts, and observation of researchers; then, credibility increases by the method of deepening and continuous comparison in data analysis.

Results

13 people (including nine men and four women), with an average age of 40-67 years old, with a master's degree (eight people) and a doctorate (five people), were interviewed. These people work in areas related to travel, transportation, accommodation and the hotel industry. The experts all have more than 4 years

of supervision experience, and the university professors all have more than 7 years of teaching experience related to tourism knowledge.

In the continuation of the research, after summarizing the data results related to the socio-cultural exchange theory, coding was implemented in three stages (open, central, selective) and data coding was performed using Atlas TI software.

Open coding: Examples of analysis of previous studies/interviews (open coding) are mentioned in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample analysis of previous studies/interviews (open coding)

Main categories (open coding)	Previous studies/interview text
Paying attention to social and ethical values leads to the cycle of wealth, strengthening trust, sharing of ideas in society and organizations, and partnership and exchange of relationship leads to synergy and providing mutual value, return on investment and improvement of productivity.	If organizations pay more attention to social and ethical values, they will develop a society, which leads to a cycle of wealth in society and organizations. In addition, what strengthens trust and the sharing of ideas and knowledge exchange (Swift & Hwang, 2013) is the active participation of stakeholders in the relationship, this leads to synergy (Nguyen et al., 2017) and mutual values in the organization, return on investment and improvement of productivity.
Collaboration and partnership provides valuable resources, and stakeholders' shared values influence commitment and trust, empathy and flexibility, and thereby building a positive image in the organization.	Franklin and Marshall (2018): collaboration and partnership provides access to more valuable resources in incident management. Stakeholder collaboration even influences commitment and trust, and the more these values are identified, the more they lead to relational commitment and stakeholder empathy, thereby building a positive image in the organization.
Crisis planning and recovery; more participation and interaction means creating value and how to adapt to society, and it is also an initiative to respect society and the environment and it causes changes the societies and business structure.	Frequent reviewing the value chain and assessing changes is the best approach in management, i.e. value creation and how to adapt to society is important. In addition, it provides the good relations between businesses and the development of long-term relationships, and even changes in social and trade structures when necessary, which is an initiative that respects society and the environment (Salminen, 2021). Stakeholder collaboration can be effective in crisis planning and recovery (Oloruntoba et al., 2018) if it can expand competition to a more effective level.
Good relations between businesses and the development of long-term relationships.	Part of the 9th interview (Code 16:1): Maybe knowing the behavior and demands of the business, maintaining and caring for the work team and human resources in difficult conditions, will make them stay together and understand each other.

Axial coding: In general, a number of codes were extracted from the analysis of the interviews, examples of which can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Identifying components extracted from interview coding (authors' design)

Main categories (open coding)	Main categories (axial coding)
Paying attention to social and ethical values, sharing ideas and exchanging relationships, leads to synergy, providing mutual value, improving productivity, value creation, how to adapt to society, and a movement to respect society and the environment and change the structure of societies and business.	Sharing of ideas, synergy, value creation, respect for the environment, adaptation to society, flexibility
Collaboration and partnership provide valuable resources, and stakeholders' shared values of commitment and trust, empathy, promoting professional ethics and flexibility, good relations between businesses, and developing long-term relationships lead to a positive image.	Commitment, positive image, promotion of professional ethics, development of long-term relationships and good relations between businesses

Selective coding: In total, a number of selective codes (creating ideas) were extracted from the summation of the central coding, which can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Selective coding (creating ideas)

Main categories (axial coding)	Main categories (selective coding)
Synergy, sharing of ideas, respect for the environment, adaptation to society, flexibility	Value creation
Commitment, promotion of professional ethics, development of long-term relationships, and good relations between businesses	Positive image

Discussion

In the continuation of the research, the data related to socio-cultural exchange theory, which was collected from previous studies and interviews with experts, was classified and approved by experts. Factors influencing socio-cultural exchange theory in tourism crisis management include: value creation (synergy, sharing ideas, respect for the environment, adaptation to society, flexibility), and positive image (commitment, promotion of professional ethics, development of long-term relationships and good relationships between business and Work). Then, based on Table 3 and reflections on the selected codes of socio-cultural exchange theory, and by using Atlas software, the model "The role of socio-cultural exchange theory in the organizational crisis management in Iran's tourism industry" was designed and can be seen in Figure 1.

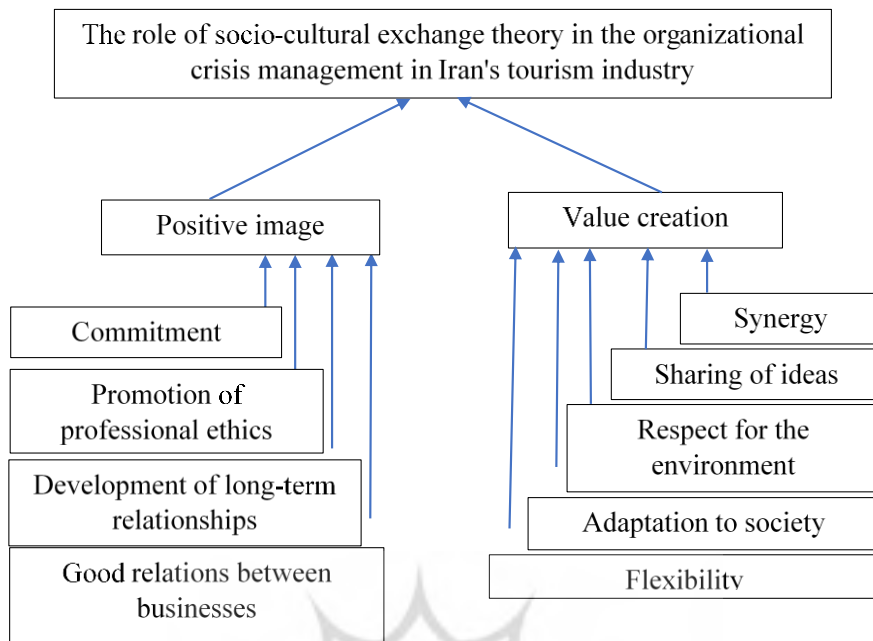


Figure 1. The role of socio-cultural exchange theory in the organizational crisis management in Iran's tourism industry

Conclusion

In the continuation of the research and after summarizing the results of the relationships obtained from the data related to socio-cultural exchange theory and interviews with experts, 9 factors were identified in 2 categories, which can play a significant role in the Organizational crisis management in Iran's tourism industry. The results of the research in relation to the synergistic index is aligned with the research results (Nguyen et al., 2017). Regarding the idea sharing index, it is also consistent with research results (Swift & Hwang, 2013). In relation to adapting to society and respecting the environment is also in line with research results (Salminen, 2021). In addition, the findings on positive image and commitment are consistent with the research (Franklin & Marshall, 2018) and as for the promotion of professional ethics, it is also in line with the research results (Swift & Hwang, 2013).

In addition, the need to pay more attention to upstream factors such as the government, policy makers and planners in relation to crisis management in the tourism industry is of particular importance, by using the model proposed in this research and the support of the Ministry of Tourism by approving laws and allocating funds, it is possible to implement the project related to the theory of socio-cultural exchange. The qualitative nature of the research can be considered as one of the limitations of this study, which was conducted using content analysis and interpretive paradigm approaches. Although the study was conducted through interviews with tourism industry experts and literature, the results cannot be

fully generalized. Consequently, empirical research and statistical investigations on other parameters effecting organizational crisis, such as corporate social responsibility and organizational resilience in Iran's tourism industry are suggested.

Conflict of interest

"The authors declare no potential conflict of interest regarding the publication of this work"

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