



## Qualitative Analysis of Obstacles Affecting the Development of Agricultural Tourism in the Rural Areas (Case Study: Zarivar Wetland in Marivan County)

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### Abstract

**Purpose-** The main purpose of this research is to identify and analyze the performance of the two dimensions of tourism namely supply and demand to achieve agricultural tourism development in the rural areas of Zarivar Wetland in Marivan County as a capable destination in the field of agricultural tourism.

**Design/methodology/approach-** This qualitative research has delved into documentary sources to collect data in the theoretical phase, and conducted purposeful interviews with the Delphi group (decision-making Delphi) in the field phase to identify effective obstacles. The Delphi group included 26 individuals of development authorities, tourism activists, local tourism entrepreneurs and informants as well as experts of rural development and tourism in the region. It was conducted applying grounded theory technique.

**Findings-** The findings showed that the effective factors on the development of agricultural tourism in the region are in the form of two levels related to the development of mass tourism and specialized in the field of agricultural tourism. In the public sector related to the development of mass tourism, weakness in tourism infrastructures and services, weakness in marketing, weakness in training, protecting and diversifying the attractions, weakness in planning, monitoring and performance of governmental institutions, inappropriate business space and weakness in the needs and performance of tourists including 68 variables were identified as the main factors. In the specialized field and related to the development of agricultural tourism, , funding and financial flow, specialized advertising and highlighting, empiricism and creativity orientation, planning and management and traditional agriculture in the form of 34 variables were identified as the most important and effective obstacles of its development and expansion.

**Practical solutions-** Changing the view of regional development and tourism managers to a systemic vision in tourism management and then changing the procedure in emphasizing the development of mass tourism in Zarivar Wetland and emphasizing the expansion of tourism with agricultural as well as paying attention to the villages on the edge of the wetland to present in the tourism market of the region are vitally important.

**Original/value-** In today's era, according to the changes in the tourism market in attracting tourists with special motivations and taking the distance of the tourism market from mass tourism, the development of agricultural tourism can play as an important advantage in the field of rural tourism of Zarivar wetland and attract more tourists and increase their longevity.

**Key words:** Agricultural tourism, tourism system, Rural areas, Zarivar wetland.

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## 1. Introduction

The advent of modern tourism geography in the form of expressions such as; Post-Fordism and Post-Industrialism and transition from mass tourism to specialized and niche tourism, has changed the form and content of tourism activities and tourism is done with the motivation of recognizing differences, creating pristine experiences and achieving special motivations. This trend has resulted in the formation of products, flexible markets and diverse and new branches of tourism (Ziaie, 2009; Medina-Muñoz, et al., 2016; Zheng, 2016; Zotic et al. 2014). Meanwhile, in the previous two decades, the demand for outdoor recreation and contact with more traditional styles of life among health-conscious vacationers and tourists seeking alternatives to sun-drenched destinations and mass tourism has increased. Agricultural tourism is a response to this demand in remote areas and rural areas particularly in the vicinity of big cities (Dubois et al, 2017). Nowadays, agricultural tourism is one of the most key and fastest types of rural tourism, and it has a growing importance in the development of agriculture in villages. Therefore, the development of this type of tourism has been taken into consideration by policy makers and rural development planners as a leading sector in revolutionizing and diversifying the rural economy (Shpresim & Giovanni, 2022; Nur Utomo et al, 2023). In fact, in the changing environment of rural areas and traditional agriculture, it is essential to find new tools and alternatives for livelihood as innovation is a key tool to gain profit and sustainability in the competitive market as well as take advantage of the opportunities resulting from the change. Small-scale agritourism businesses have the capacity to provide necessary motivation in order to transform local resources to tourism products and services in local communities (Norozei & Fathi, 2018; Khairabadi et al., 2020). In the meantime, it should be noted that the desirable expansion of various types of tourism industry, including the newest ones, namely event tourism requires several contexts since tourism is a broad and multi-sector activity (Kazemi, 2011; Anuar et al, 2012). Tourism is a complex system consisting of numerous sub-systems such as transportation, accommodation and hotels, food

and beverage, recreation and cultural activities, financial and banking, advertising and public services, etc. interacting with one another. Also, extensive changes in consumers' demand for agricultural products and the effectiveness of both dimensions namely supply and demand of tourism system are other sub-systems of tourism (Kazemi, 2011; Postma, et al., 2013; Ielenicz & Simoni, 2013). Hence, it can be deduced that tourism as a system consisting of numerous elements and sub-systems can fulfill its role to realize the development and the destinations can have sustainable demands when all the elements of this system are placed in a coordinated set with each other in terms of quantity and quality. Based on the theory of systems, if there is a defect and deficiency in one of the elements, the performance of the whole system is disrupted (Kazemi, 2011). Accordingly, if the success, dynamics and desired impact of tourism are sought, all the dimensions, sub-systems and actors of this broad scene should be evaluated. This matter leads to comprehensive understanding of obstacles and problems and then practical planning based on the reality to solve them.

The study area of the research is Zarivar wetland tourism axis in Marivan County in Kurdistan province. This area has suitable potentials for the tourism development due to its location and topographical conditions, a combination of mountainous, plain environment and the beautiful Zarivar wetland; along with the history of ancient civilization and indigenous cultural ceremonies that have turned into tourism events at the regional level. At the regional level, the existence of innovative youth in the field of agricultural tourism, agricultural lands with medicinal plants, small-scale greenhouses and innovative products in the region (gardens of grafted crops and raspberries) along with fertile lands and extensive agriculture based on the county's brand products in the fields of strawberries and grapes, which are also nationally recognized; has been able to provide the development of specialized agricultural tourism along with mass tourism. The border opportunity of the region, the arrival of tourists from Kurdistan of Iraq and the proximity to the international rural tourism region of Oraman Takht could be effective opportunities in attracting tourists to the region if it moves towards the specialized tourism. Therefore,

tourism on Zarivar wetland should take distance from current situation with short-term stay of tourists and merely relying on commercial tourism at the level of Marivan city markets and visiting Zarivar lake; and move towards diversifying tourism attractions and capabilities so that it can meet the tourists' needs and tastes and consequently move towards increasing tourists' satisfaction and consequently their loyalty and returning. Furthermore, there is a need for agricultural activities in the region as the dominant activity to achieve more diversification and value addition and to get out of the stagnation and hidden unemployment of human resource productivity. Therefore, the research questions are as follows:

1. What are the most important obstacles affecting the development of agricultural tourism in the rural areas of Zarivar Wetland?
2. What is the status of the value chain of tourism activities in the region to achieve development of agricultural tourism?

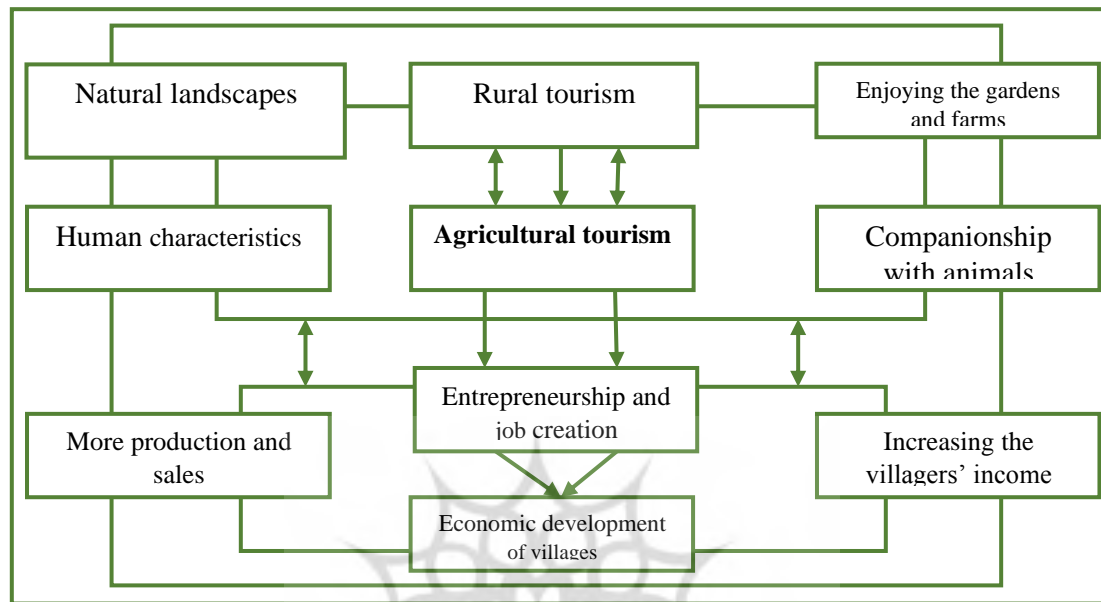
## 2. Research Theoretical Literature

Agricultural tourism refers to visiting a farm for educational or recreational purposes. Agricultural tourism is related to family farms and depends on the activities of farmers who seek to diversify their income and create resilience against economic instabilities in the field of agricultural markets and climate change (Whitt, 2019). Also, the development of agricultural tourism means diversifying tourist attractions in tourist destinations and increasing the resilience of these destinations against the risks of tourism markets. Agricultural tourism increases farmers' income by providing recreational, educational services and selling agricultural products in farm markets (Valdivia & Barbieri, 2014). To develop agricultural tourism, depending on the cultural and natural features of a region, diversity in product and service offerings should be addressed (Hernández-Calzada et al., 2019; Benur, 2015; Brune et al., 2023). In agricultural tourism, visitors not only get a tourist trip, but also perceive a new feeling, positive feeling and behavior from the environment; particularly the agricultural society and farmer culture (Nur Utomo et al., 2023). Four main elements are needed to occur agricultural tourism; 1) The farmer who receives the guests and provides the required services; 2) The farm that must have a special feature and charm; 3) The village that has a favorable level of access to

services and far from the city and very rich in terms of biodiversity and agriculture and 4) the tourists (Galluzzo, 2022; Baipai, 2021).

Agricultural tourism enables the local economy to develop and grow, provides employment opportunities for all ages and presents a quick response to the issue of unemployment. Agricultural tourism can reduce urbanization as well as migration on account of ameliorating the quality of life and work in the rural areas. Agricultural tourism contributes the rural community to achieve the two main goals of creating jobs and space for family members to diversify agriculture and consequently generating income. In fact, agricultural tourism encourages local businesses to emerge and develop because it creates demand for local products, which later leads to regional marketing. It also includes any effort to create added value and avoid intermediary costs. Basically, agricultural tourism allows the rural community to earn more income from the diversity of its economic activities. In addition, agricultural tourism strengthens social relations among villagers, because it requires cooperation among them to manage and promote the diversity of local heritage and cultural landscape. Another advantage is that agricultural tourism can reduce the issue of gender differences in the economic and social arena as it gives equal opportunities to men and women in tourism activities. Agricultural tourism increases tourists' respect for the native culture and traditions of the local community and value them. In addition, agricultural tourism benefits from the local natural environment. The main advantage is that it changes the approach of the rural people to the environment, makes them more sensitive to their environment and care more about it and consequently makes them more protective of the environment. Due to the benefits of the natural environment for the local people, the protection of the natural environment is considered significant for the local people, and they are encouraged to invest their funds in the protection of the natural environment and even promote the use of environmentally friendly technology. The development of agricultural tourism not only facilitates the protection and renovation of cultural and historical places, as well as other heritages, but also creates a positive atmosphere in the preservation of customs and traditions (Nur Utomo et al., 2023; Aguila & Ragot, 2014; Arroyo et al.,

2013; Ciervo, 2013). The relationship among rural tourism, agricultural tourism and rural development is depicted in figure 1.



**Figure 1. The relationship among rural tourism, agricultural tourism and rural development**

Experts consider the development of agricultural tourism as an action in line with the creativity and innovation in the field of tourism development (Nur Utomo et al., 2023). Accordingly, activists in the field of agricultural tourism should consider continuous innovation and creativity as important cores of activity development as it increases motivation and reduces price sensitivity for tourists (Sumanapala, 2017). The tourists' mind and their needs are constantly changing and demanding new products, which should be taken into consideration by those involved in the field of agricultural tourism in relation to demand measurement and changes in tourists' tastes (Gómez et al., 2016). The development of agricultural tourism as a type of rural tourism is accompanied by its own complexities, and the factors affecting the performance of its components and elements should be identified with a comprehensive view in order to make appropriate policies for its development (Shpresim & Giovanni, 2022; Nur Utomo et al., 2023).

In sum (Figure 2), tourism is a system and managing the development of its various types would not be possible without a systemic approach (Anuar et al, 2012). The two main dimensions of

the tourism system that shape the cycle, movement and development of tourism in a place are supply and demand: the demand includes all tourists applying for tourism from various national and international sources to the desired destination, which constitute the tourism target markets of that place and the supply includes attractions, accommodation units, transportation, services, tourism facilities, etc. of a place/region which attract tourists from the above-mentioned levels (Ghasemi Khozani, 2012). The tourism situation of the region should be investigated and evaluated based on a systemic approach to expand any type of tourism. Admittedly, destinations in the field of tourism will be leading and will reach sustainability in the field of tourism if all the sub-systems of its tourism system are in favorable conditions in terms of quantity and quality. Analyzing the state of tourism development in terms of supply and demand makes it possible to create a comprehensive view and identify strengths and weaknesses. This view makes the services, facilities and other indicators of the supply dimension match with the tourists' needs and willing (Heung et al., 2010). On the one hand, the sustainability and effectiveness of agricultural



tourism and the development and effective performance of the tourism system are mutually and bilaterally related; in such a way that the development of tourism (optimal performance of the tourism system) as the main driving force in attracting and sustaining demand and resources to the specialized field of agricultural tourism. On the other hand, the development of agricultural tourism

as a specialized part in the field of tourism also leads to attracting the demand of tourists with special needs, creating pristine experience and diversifying the tourist attractions of the destinations and consequently creating many benefits. This matter is the basis for the stability and performance effectiveness of the elements and actors of the tourism system.

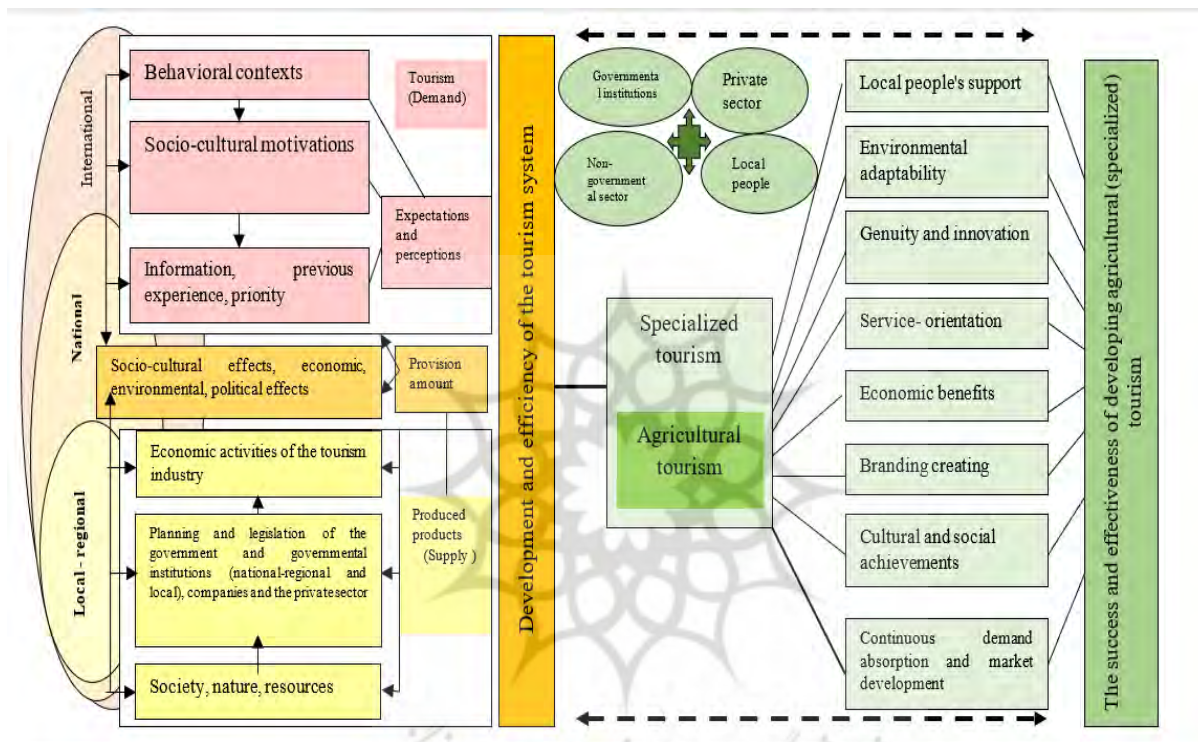


Figure 2. The theoretical framework of the research

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Geographical Scope of the Research

Zarivar freshwater wetland is located in 130 kilometers northwest of Sanandaj, the capital of Kurdistan province, and 3 kilometers west of Marivan city, and is one of the tourist attractions of Kurdistan province (Figure 3). Marivan city is also considered as one of the important tourist destinations of Kurdistan province due to its border and purchase attraction. Zarivar wetland tourism axis is considered as the most important rural tourism pole of Marivan County and the second

rural tourism pole of Kurdistan province, after Oraman in Sarvabad County which has been registered in the world.

8 villages (Seyf-e Sofla, Kani Sefid, Yengigeh, Tafi Valley, Kollan, Kani Sanan, Ney and Pir Safa) with a population of 6491 are located within the boundaries of this wetland. This tourism axis is highly welcomed by domestic and even foreign tourists. In this rural tourism axis, there are 2 eco-residences; 2 garden restaurants, 1 coffee shop, 5 juice sales units along with retail shops to provide welfare services and catering to tourists (Figure 4).

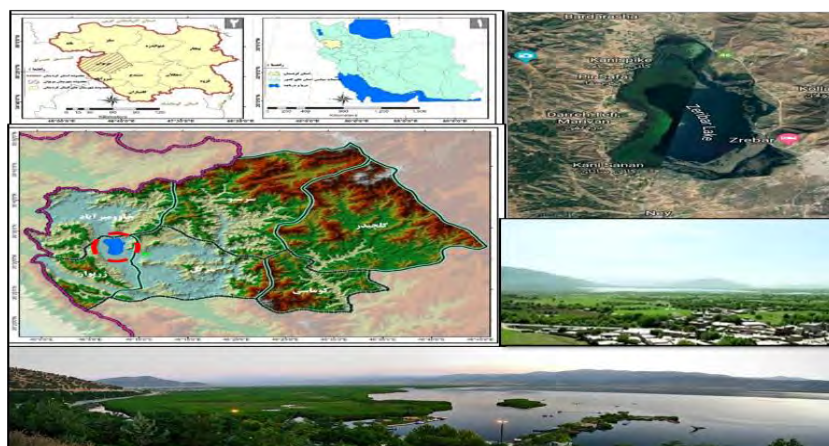


Figure 3. The geographic location of Zarivar wetland tourism axis

### 3.2. Methodology

The present applied research is descriptive-analytical in terms of method and qualitative due to the need to comprehensively understand and analyze the current status from all stakeholders' view point and to reach a clear status of the unknown current status. It has been carried out with the grounded theory technique. In this regard, it was necessary to form a Delphi group in order to identify key factors. In order to identify these people, a purposeful non-random sampling method was applied based on the snowball method. Theoretical saturation was achieved by interviewing with 26 people from the groups of development managers of the county (8 people with management experience over 4 years, natives, with relevant education in the field of rural development in the county governorship, Jihad Agriculture, Cultural heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization, Rural Cooperation, Omid Entrepreneurship Fund, Natural Resources, Environment, Housing Foundation), local rural informants (3 people with university education, good reputation among local people and participation in environmental and development NGO associations in the county, introduced by the district administration and sample village

managers), economic investors in the region (2 people with macro projects in the field of tourism and 2 people in the field of small production), scientific experts in the field of development, especially the rural development of the province and Marivan county (6 people involved in compiling the rural development plans of Kurdistan province, especially the economic development and job creation and expert academic researchers with numerous researches in the field of rural development of the province, identified through the management and planning organization of the province and the Kurdistan Research Institute Kurdistan University), sample village managers of the county (3 people selected by the county governor) and tour organizers in the region (2 people). In the following, after analyzing the interviews and acquiring key points with open coding technique, extracted variables formed a questionnaire with a Likert scale (from 1-completely disagree to 5-completely agree). 50 members of the mentioned groups were selected (determined by snowball method and in a purposeful manner with the mentioned criteria). The analysis of the interviews was conducted with the grounded theory technique.





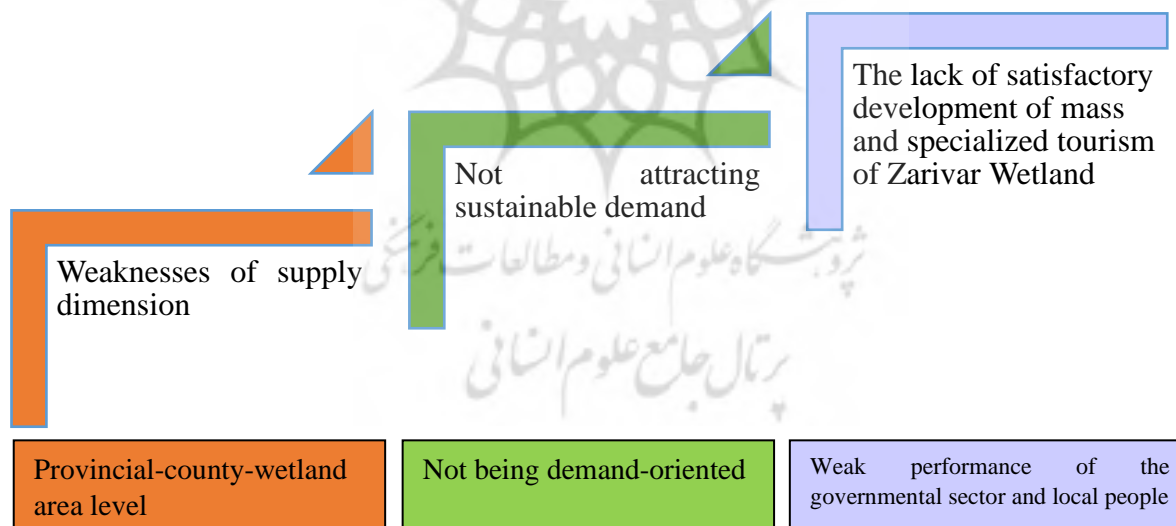
Figure 4. Some capabilities related to the agricultural sector and its complementary capabilities in the study area

#### 4. Research Findings

After three stages of coding in the grounded theory technique; the main factors affecting the development of agricultural tourism in the rural areas of Zarivar wetland axis and their transformation into villages with an agricultural tourism brand were identified. As can be seen, obstacles and problems identified in different components and elements of the village tourism system and in two sections related to the general problems of tourism development (Table 1) and special problems and challenges of specialized agricultural tourism development in villages (Table 2). The scale of obstacles and problems identified from levels beyond the village includes at the level of Zarivar wetland, Marivan County and even the provincial tourism management of Kurdistan province. This is a reflection of the systemic nature of tourism activities and the effectiveness of various components and elements of this open system in the broad tourism scene from various factors (Figure 5). In the general section; both supply and demand dimensions and in the

specialized section; identified obstacles and problems related to the supply dimension is effective in not being able to attract tourists.

The lack of desirability of the main elements of the supply dimension of the tourism system, from the provincial scale to the village level, encounters demand with numerous challenges and weaknesses. The problems identified in the demand dimension are also a reflection of the obstacles and problems in the supply dimension. This is despite the fact that in the important and outstanding destinations of the world's tourism field, the tourist destination acts in a demand-oriented manner, and today's modern tourism in its competitive market revolves around the demand dimension, which firstly requires the desirability of the supply dimension elements of the tourism destination. Furthermore, along with managers and planners as the main authorities of the rural development of the region, the local people are also effective by creating obstacles and challenges in the role of tourism as a diversifying factor in the village economy of the region.



**Figure 5. Obstacles and problems facing the development of agricultural tourism on the Zarivar wetland axis based on the systemic approach of tourism management**

principle of sustainability (protection while exploiting) of this wetland. However, the field reality (Increasing water pollution, increasing waste, inflowing of sewage from villages, increasing constructions around it, entering over the carrying capacity of tourists, increasing dried land around the wetland, etc.) show that there is no

Zarivar Wetland is facing myriad problems in the environmental field, which has threatened the survival of this wetland due to the unbridled growth of unorganized tourism. This is in spite of the fact that the development of agricultural tourism through this wetland could be possible only when it is maintained in accordance with the important



indicator or obstacle of the lack of context for the private sector to enter into investment.

The business space and the social environment are influenced by one another. In order to start new businesses that are here dependent on agricultural tourism in the villages, in addition to providing physical infrastructure, financial resources and favorable management; the social and cultural environment of the local people should support the start-up of new businesses of agricultural tourism. When, similar to the situation of the studied villages, the lack of local people's risk-taking to start new businesses (dependent on geotourism), the culture of determinism and villagers dependence, the fanatical and limiting beliefs of the women's presence in tourism activities, the villagers' willingness to attend in false and intermediary jobs due to being a border region, dominate the social environment of the villages, such an environment admittedly cannot support an entrepreneur or self-employed person by entering the field of agricultural tourism businesses. Such an inappropriate social and value environment to move towards the establishment of start-up businesses of agricultural tourism should be structurally and radically sought in the poverty indicator among rural households. Economic poverty is also along with social and cultural poverty, and this false sequence, like in the studied area, will have no result other than creating an inappropriate social environment and "anti" self-employment, competition and economic diversity values in the rural environment.

determination to manage and snort environmental sustainability of this wetland, and the continuation of this situation will mean a decrease in the level of attractiveness and ultimately the destruction of the wetland.

The villages on the border of the wetland have a satisfactory condition in terms of basic infrastructure (access to water, electricity, gas, and internet). Nonetheless, the desirability of the communication ways inside and outside the village is not in a satisfactory condition for expansion. A point to consider is the lack of providing infrastructure and facilities based on the specialized capabilities of the region. In the current state of development, the emphasis is on the specialized provision of infrastructures so that such existing capacities and capabilities can be beneficial and add value. There are no specialized complexes and centers in the field of tourism in the region, and specialized services are limited to a few ecotourism residences, which are far from real eco-oriented ecotourism residences.

Creating a security condition means threatening the most basic need of investment and micro and macro investors, that is, psychological security from investment return and investment security. Admittedly, in such a condition, even though Zarivar wetland and its surrounding villages have a great potential to expand agricultural tourism, private investors will not be able to take risks and invest. This matter, along with the lack of providing legal supports, has led to form an

**Table 1. Problems of the general field of tourism development in the rural areas of the Zarivar wetland axis in the direction of the development of agricultural tourism in the region**

Central components (dimensions)	Components	Concepts
Weaknesses of the supply dimension	Weakness in tourism infrastructures and services	Inappropriate initial spaces for tourists to enter the village and lack of appropriate elements for an important rural tourism destination, lack of accommodation and welfare facilities, especially during peak tourism times, not preparing high quality green and public spaces as a rest area for tourists, not completing the Hadi plan, the problem of supplying sustainable water in the residential part of the village
	Weakness in marketing	lack of using various advertising tools for marketing (especially digital marketing), lack of marketing and advertising in tourist destinations over the county and in the wetland area and Marivan city, lack of native tourist guides in the village and attraction of tourist tours, lack of a tourist guidance and leading center in Zarivar Wetland area, lack of segmenting tourism market, lack of specific approach and strategy in tourism marketing of the county

Central components (dimensions)	Components	Concepts
	Weakness in training	Not training officials in various departments and institutions related to tourism development about the performance, weakness in training and lack of capacity building and capacity development of the local community to support tourism (needs, behavior and necessity of hospitality to tourists), not supporting non-governmental associations in the field of tourism development in the village and Zarivar wetland area, lack or low level of skills of specialized and trained personnel in the field of tourism development in the county, wetland area and especially Yangijeh village, lack of the villagers' request and need feeling about the development of tourism from the authorities
	Lack of protecting and diversifying the attractions	Emphasizing the potential of nature tourism in Zarivar wetland area and not moving towards specialized tourism and specializing the attractions, changing the landscape of villages towards urbanization, the extreme land exchange and the extreme development of the second homes of city dwellers in the villages of the wetland area, lack of supporting for the most important tourist attractions of Marivan County and the villages of the Zarivar wetland area, that is Zarivar wetland and its destruction
	Weakness in planning, monitoring and performance of governmental institutions	Very weak market of tourism in Kurdistan province and Marivan County compared to the competitive tourism market of the country, lack of financial resources for the development of tourism in the county and villages around the Zarivar wetland area, absence of a long-term development program to identify the role and place of tourism in the development of the county and to identify target areas and villages and their capacities, not using local experts aware of the field conditions and the local community in making decisions related to tourism development especially in the villages of the wetland area, lack of organized efforts to attract investors to the field of tourism development in Zarivar wetland area, ignoring the value chain of tourism at county and even the provincial level, confusion in the field of management and exploitation of Zarivar wetland due to the multiple decision-making institutions, the lack of tourism development that supports the poor and the benefit of urban residents from the benefits of tourism in the villages of the wetland area, severe bureaucracy in granting facilities or obtaining permits in the field of tourism development especially in the wetland field due to environmental and security concerns.
	Inappropriate business space	Valorization of smuggling and profitability, tending to fake jobs, security vision in border management of the region, lack of small savings and investment funds, the poverty of the villagers and the weakness in providing (private) financial resources, the local people's lack of belief in receiving facilities with interest in order to invest in the field of tourism, existence of some bigoted opinions regarding the arrival and permanence of tourists, lack of economic competition in the region especially in the field of tourism among the villages around Zarivar wetland, low risk-taking of local people in starting new businesses especially in the field of tourism, the failure of previous businesses and investments at the village level and its inappropriate reflection, lack of supporting young entrepreneurs in villages and lack of motivation among these people and other young people.
Weaknesses of the demand dimension	weakness in the needs and performance of tourists	Short-term stay, low spending, cultural and social differences and contradictions, creating environmental contamination, the non-entry of many tourists from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to the region and their

Central components (dimensions)	Components	Concepts
		departure from the region and Kurdistan province, unfamiliarity of some authorities with the region.

The development of agricultural tourism in the villages of the region will be achieved only when it attracts demand for this potential and market, and this will be possible through proper marketing. In terms of training status, what is important is the accumulation of indicators of the lack of officials' training in various departments and institutions related to the management and development of the villages in the region. This indicates that continuous training as one of the basic principles of sustainable development of tourism, on which agricultural tourism is also based, is necessary for the development of this type of tourism in its destinations. Many administrative, social and cultural obstacles can be removed by continuous training of involved and local people. This training also contributes to awareness and capacity building of the local people in line with the adoption and development of agricultural tourism.

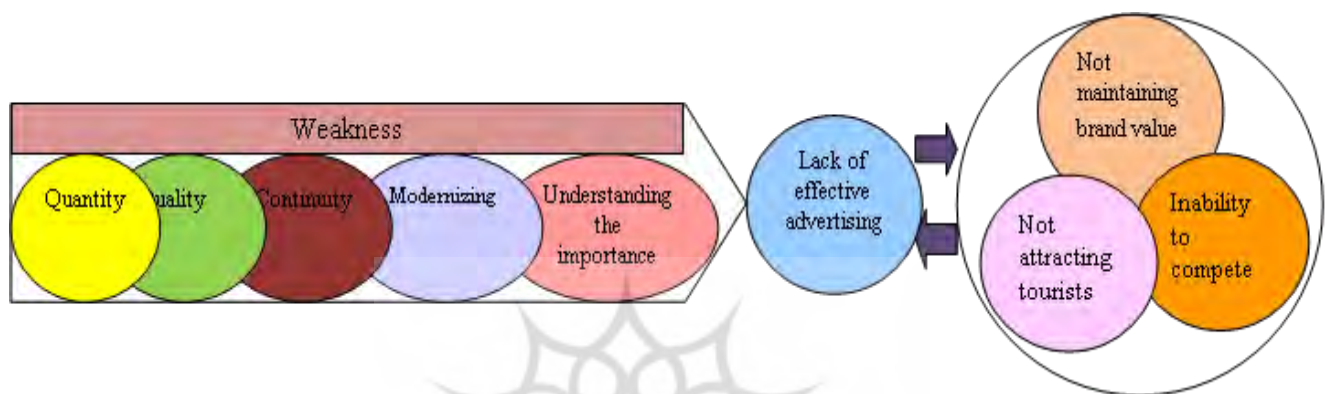
Weaknesses related to marketing were emphasized as one of the most important known weaknesses among all the conducted interviews. In fact, the emphasis of many interviewees is on the lack of penetrating the tourism market of the studied villages in the field of agricultural tourism due to the weaknesses related to marketing. These weaknesses are completely felt in the field of tourism of the studied villages, from advertising to experience creation and visualization. The lack of a specific marketing strategy has caused the authorities of tourism development in the villages to try to create a favorable and positive image and not to implement appropriate measures. The lack of a specific marketing strategy has not led to the separation and segmentation of the tourism market of the villages in different fields with potential, especially the field of agricultural tourism in Zarivar wetland and the attraction of its appropriate demand. In other words, the development of mass tourism is still emphasized. The lack of a specific marketing strategy has caused the role of marketing intermediaries (tour guides, travel agencies, etc.) to be ignored. It also has made demand attraction and market expansion from the destination to be neglected. Not having a specific marketing strategy has caused tourists not to experience and create

In the specialized field related to agricultural tourism (Table 2), the identified obstacles and problems reveals that there is still no serious determination in the development of agricultural tourism. In fact, the move towards the specialization of the tourism market has not been considered and the emphasis is still on the development of mass tourism. In addition, not turning to experience-based tourism and creativity, which are the modern principles of tourism development in important tourism destinations and the scientific foundations of tourism development, have made the existing attractions not be attractive for tourists or not be able to act as a factor in the return of tourists to the village. As before, tourist does not just have tendency to take a simple photo and tends to experience life and the feel new and memorable experiences. The attractions of the rural area of Zarivar wetland especially in the field of agricultural tourism have a lot of traction and the ability to attract tourists due to their cultural, social, and environmental history. Nevertheless, they have not been able to create a unique experience for tourists due to the lack of tourists' involvement and the general flow of tourism in the village and the lack of creativity in presenting the product. Another point of not turning to the development of specialized tourism based on agricultural attractions of the region is the lack of prevalence of activities related to this type of tourism in the economic field and the development of profit-oriented agriculture in the region. Even though innovative garden products and new gardens, as well as vast areas of the county's brand products with a name and mark in the field of agriculture can be observed at region level, the productivity of these farms is limited for a certain number of capitalist urban dwellers, and they do not see the need to expand and attract tourists to these farms. In other words, in the field of agricultural tourism, local people are not absorbed and do not have awareness. Indeed, if the development of agricultural tourism could be beneficial for the local people, the reception of the local people will be much more than the existing unfavorable situation.



marketing is an important and modern part of destination marketing in order to increase competitiveness. Nevertheless, the lack of experts in the field of tourism marketing, in the studied villages and Marivan County both in the administrative and executive field as well as the lack of proper and integrated management of tourism activities has caused marketing and market expansion to be neglected.

memories, and consequently the tourists' satisfaction and their loyalty and return will be severely challenged. In addition, the weakness of the specific marketing strategy has led to the ignorance of branding and the definition of a special brand, which is considered as a basic principle in marketing in all growing tourism destinations. Nowadays, marketing has entered the digital field and become specialized, and digital



**Figure 6. The shortcomings of the advertising field at the level of the studied villages and its effects**

Traditional agriculture and its problems are one of the significant and influential factors on the lack of satisfactory development of agricultural tourism in the region. When the farmers in the region do not feel the need for transformation and do not pay attention to the opportunities and potential of regional tourism in the direction of diversifying the incomes from their farms and are not willing to make the least investment and effort, or when agricultural lands and gardens are so small and fragmented that they threaten the economic efficiency of any investment; the development of agricultural tourism as an innovative activity will encounter with difficulty. A point to consider is selling virgin land that is prone to the development of agricultural tourism in the region to urban

dwellers and the conversion of these lands into second homes for urban tourists has destroyed the virgin opportunities for the development of agricultural tourism. In addition, the lack of cooperation and joint cooperation among farmers, especially farmers with major and virgin farms of the region's brand products, which is related to the weakness of networking in the region; will be a major weakness in the development of agricultural tourism at the regional level. The existence of these cooperatives and networking among the leading and major exploiters could become a flow in the direction of the development of agricultural tourism by bringing the small exploiters together and increasing the sense of trust among them.

**Table 2. Special obstacles and problems for the development of agricultural tourism in Zarivar Wetland tourism axis**

Central components (dimensions)	Components	Concepts
Weaknesses of the supply dimension	Funding and financial flow	Inability to attract investors and special budget for the development of agricultural tourism, unprofitability of agricultural tourism (economically) for local people.
	Specialized advertising and highlighting	The weakness of documentation of festivals held in the field of agriculture in the region, lack of movement towards branding innovative garden products produced in the region by rural entrepreneurs, not taking advantage of all kinds of advertising tools and continuous promotions at the right time and place to highlight the potential of the agricultural tourism sector in the region, not holding specialized low-cost tours in the agricultural tourism sector or supplementing it with the tour program introduced to tourism area of Oraman or Marivan city.
	Empiricism and creativity orientation	Neglecting the proper space creation of the village, based on a village with a tourism brand especially agricultural tourism, lack of theme-making (scenery) and marking for agricultural tourism attractions and special farms in the region, lack of making memories and involving tourists in the course of agricultural activities, not preparing souvenirs related to agricultural products and the indigenous and cultural environment of the village by the village's and farmers' handicraft workshop, lack of a specific place for holding events related to agriculture, not prevalence of the events held in the social and tourism field of the region (isolation and remaining unknown), lack of movement towards festivals in the field of agricultural tourism activities, neglecting agricultural activities in ecotourism residences as a tourist activity and attraction to involve and attract tourists, lack of accommodations in special farms in the region.
	Planning and management	Emphasizing the development of mass tourism and not moving towards creativity-based and specialized tourism in the field of tourism management of the county and Kurdistan province, lack of definition of agricultural tourism as a specialized and profitable tourism market at the level of Marivan county and Kurdistan province despite numerous capacities and the definition as the mission of the county in the province's land development document and tourism development document in the national arena, neglecting the nurture of a professional and trained staff in the field of agricultural tourism, lack of specific planning and strategy in the development of rural tourism in the region by highlighting the role of agricultural tourism, lack of an organizational and operational structure designed to hold events in the region, lack of demand-oriented evaluations (needs assessment and demand assessment), not conducting studies in the field of defining and identifying areas and products that can be converted into an agricultural tourism event, not having the design of a tourism package that can be presented to tourists during their arrival in the region with an emphasis on agricultural tourism products (from accommodation to departure).
	Traditional agriculture	Small and fragmented lands, the low literacy of agricultural exploiters in the region, not penetrating technological marks in the production and sale of products, not forming tourism cooperatives especially among small farmers in the field of agricultural tourism development, not turning local people to create small workshops for agricultural products and tourists' involvement in this process, the sale of virgin rural lands in the wetland area to urban capitalists and the unbridled growth of the land exchange, the lack of local and weekly direct markets for the sale of agricultural products.

of this product. This quantitative and qualitative chain coordination is not observed in a systematic set at the level of the studied villages. As depicted in the following figures (6, 7 and 8), there are many missing loops in the value chain of the studied area, which are not addressed here due to identifying the obstacles in the previous section. Admittedly, there is no vision of integrated and chain management of

***Investigating the tourism value chain of studied villages in line with agricultural tourism development:*** The tourism product value chain is a complex chain with numerous elements and subsystems, whose coordination in terms of quantity and quality in a systematic set will guarantee the development of tourism in the destinations and complete the value creation chain

villages of this chain from the first loop namely supply and support loops to the last loop related to the creation of experiences and measures related to the tourists' post-trip in order to create a sense of commitment and loyalty, many weaknesses and missing hoops have been formed.

tourism in the studied destinations. At the village level, the main view is based on attractions and at most, improving the level of welfare and accommodation services. However, forgetting other loops threatens the favorability of these mentioned loops. At the level of the studied

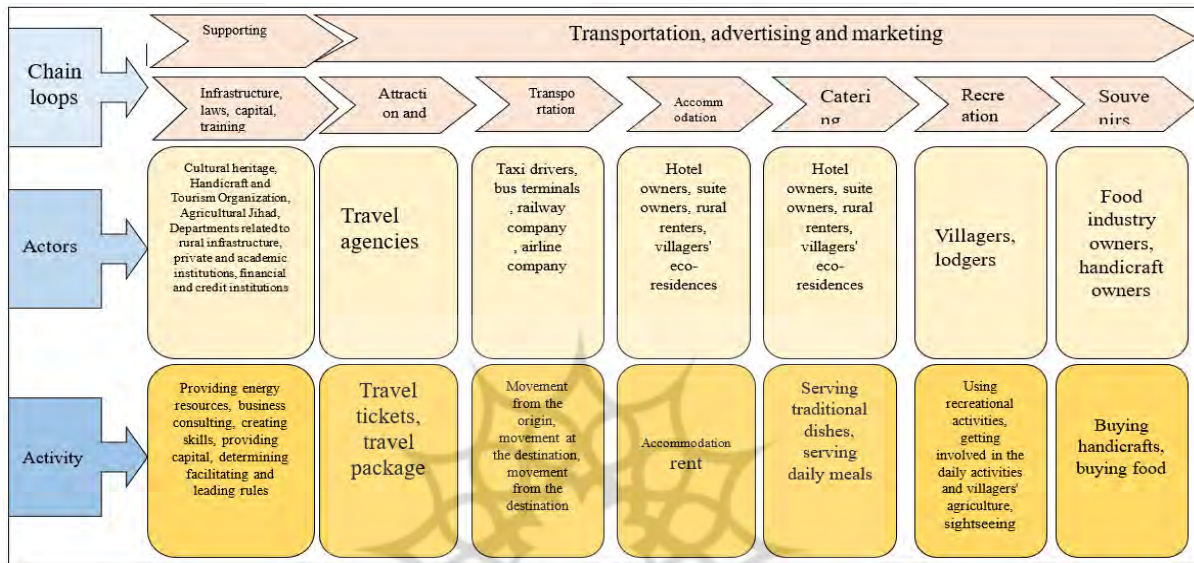


Figure 6- The value chain of the development of tourism activities

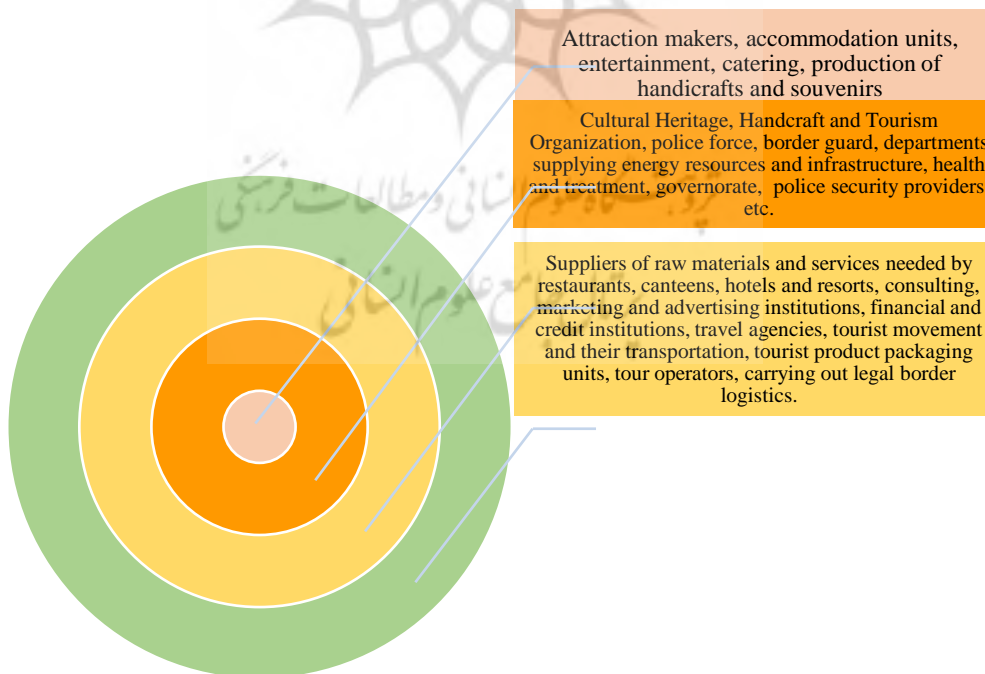


Figure 7. Actors in the main development loops of the rural tourism business cluster in the villages of the Zarivar wetland axis



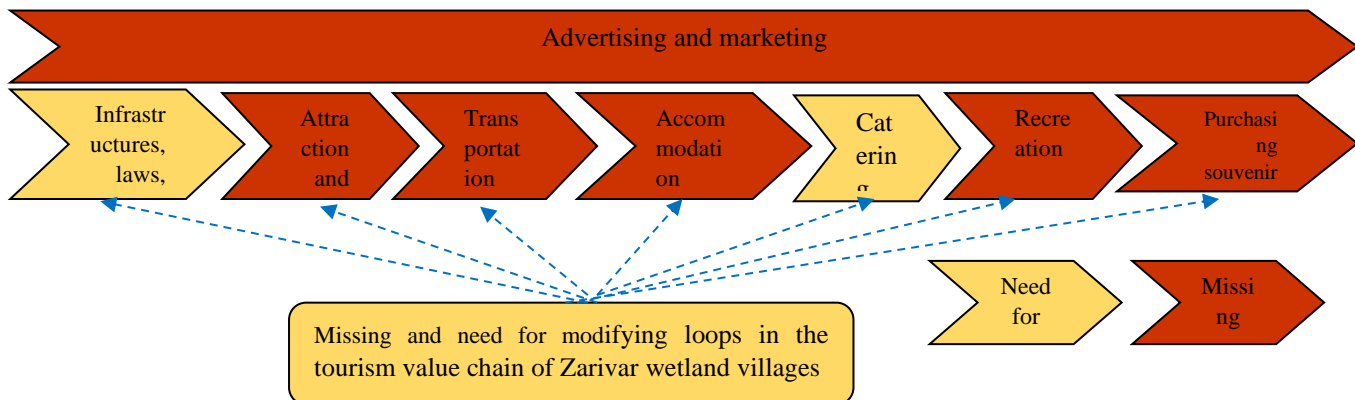


Figure 8- Missing and need for modifying loops in the tourism value chain of Zarivar wetland villages

Source: Research findings, 2023

**Supply and support loop:** In this loop, the main elements and players are governmental development institutions and organizations, then the private sector, and finally, non-governmental organizations. As discussed in the previous section, there are manifold problems from the planning situation to providing required infrastructure at the village level. There is no coordination between the private and public sector and then the entry of non-governmental organizations as the most important supporting institutions for tourism development at the village level. Development organizations in a county as a tourism destination at Kurdistan province level as a province with a tourism brand do not have a correct definition and an effective view on the development of rural tourism. Private sector is not supported. The investment risk is high in the region. The management vision in this border region is threat oriented and a waste of capital. The accommodation and welfare infrastructures needed at the village level in order to set up businesses related to tourism and provide services to tourists are very weak. The development of tourism is based on a centralized elite-oriented model without the involvement of local people and etc.

**Attraction and distribution loop:** In this loop, considered as the missing loop, the entry of travel tours to the village level is not in an organized way and through the travel agencies of the county or other regions. There are no tourism guides at the village level to attract tourist tours. Suitable packages are not considered to attract tourist tours.

**Transportation loop:** One of the most important loops in the tourism value chain of destinations is the transportation loop, because standard

transportation can be the basis for inducing a sense of pleasure and relaxation to tourists. At the level of the region, this loop faces many weaknesses. As mentioned, the communication road to Marivan County is known as death roads. The communication roads to the villages will only bring fatigue and stress to the tourists due to congestion and the passage of cargo trucks in Kolan village and inappropriate and non-standard conditions in Kani Sanan village. There are no air and rail connections to the region. Transportation of tourists, which is not organizedly monitored in the county, is carried out with low quality.

**Accommodation, catering and recreation loops:** The condition of accommodation, catering and recreational activities at village level is very poor. All these three loops are considered as missing loops in the tourism value chain of the region. One of the main reasons for the lack of spending by tourists at the village level and the short stay time is the lack of these loops. The perception of tourism at the level of villages is merely being close to Zarivar wetland with spectacular nature, without accommodation, welfare, catering and recreation facilities or with very basic and weak facilities. Although in terms of accommodation, the proximity of the villages to Marivan city provides access to all kinds of accommodations, and this can be considered as an advantage for their tourism development, it worth noting that a pristine experience and sense of place is of paramount importance in the development of tourism and Geotourism for tourists. Accordingly, there is a need to create related facilities particularly in the specialized field of geotourism, at the village level.

In this loop, proximity to Marivan city, where is considered as a top destination in the development and tourism management of the county led related investments not to be carried out at the village level.

The loop of purchasing souvenirs and creating experiences; the end of the journey: A loop that its lack severely damages the development of mass tourism and specialized tourism with emphasis on agricultural tourism and the economic benefit of the studied villages on the edge of the Zarivar wetland. Creating experiences is the missing loop in the sustainable development of tourism and agricultural tourism in the studied villages of the wetland. According to the theoretical literature about creating experiences and its significance and impact on the development of tourism destinations; it is vitally important to consider creating memorable and different memories for tourists entering the studied villages. Zarivar wetland, the pristine natural environment around it and overlooking the villages, unique ethnic and cultural traditions and ceremonies with a long history, local foods, special clothes, garden and agricultural lands with county brand products in the province and the country (grapes, strawberries, raspberries) and etc. are all capabilities that can be used to bring tourists from passive and a mere visit to active and immersion in the village environment. If tourists get the experience of getting involved and participating in the village environment, they will definitely be more loyal, return again and will be the advertisers for the tourism of these villages. Such situation is not observed in the current status and tourists simply pass by the villages or make small purchases. Moving towards experiential tourism, which is a completely appropriate direction in the sustainable tourism development, can guarantee economic growth, preserve Zarivar wetland and its surrounding natural environment, and the cultural and human values of the villages, and create pleasure for tourists, the principles of which form the core of agricultural tourism development.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

The findings related to the first question of the research, in line with Fotoohi et al., (2021), Baipai et al., (2021), Aghapour Sabaghi & Akbarnejad (2018) revealed that the obstacles affecting the development of agricultural tourism are in two levels namely mass tourism and specialized in the

field of agricultural tourism as a specialized part of the diverse market of tourism activities. These obstacles and problems remind the adaptation of a systematic and planned management approach for the development of tourism in destinations, particularly in more specialized fields such as agricultural tourism. In the public sector related to the development of mass tourism, weakness in tourism infrastructures and services, weakness in marketing, weakness in training, protecting and diversifying the attractions, weakness in planning, monitoring and performance of governmental institutions, inappropriate business space and weakness in the needs and performance of tourists including 68 variables were identified as the main factors.

It is noteworthy that the border villages, such as the studied villages, are somehow marginalized in the center-periphery model and the centralized model (from national to regional level) in the distribution and enjoyment of development benefits. In these border villages, due to the many weaknesses of the economic and social structures, it is governmental institutions and their management and planning situation that should; first of all, create the environment for economic activity and utilization of potentials. The environment which not only has infrastructural, managerial and financial weaknesses, but also it is not in a satisfactory situation in terms of social and supporting values needed to move towards starting and supporting new tourism businesses. This situation is rooted in the villagers' poverty as economic poverty also leads to cultural and social poverty and creates a psychological and mental environment whose main features can be found in dependence, lack of risk-taking, contentment with the status quo, lack of need for transformation and persistence. On the other hand, due to the lack of monitoring the changes in the tourism market, the development authorities of the region are still focusing on Marivan city and the expansion of mass tourism, which has taken on a chaotic aspect in the current situation. This has caused agricultural tourism to be ignored as a special type of tourism in the region, the studied rural areas cannot compete with Marivan city in attracting tourists or complement it, and Zarivar Wetland is also exposed to many environmental threats. The problems of the general field of tourism development in the region were identified in both the supply and demand

dimensions. Considering the dependence of the demand dimension conditions, which are related to the tourists' needs, motivations and their level of satisfaction, it can be deduced that the numerous deficiencies and obstacles identified in the various elements of tourism supply dimension in the region have led to the creation of problems in the area of demand, such as tourists' unfamiliarity with the region and the length of their stay and their low cost.

In the specialized field and related to the development of agricultural tourism, funding and financial flow, specialized advertising and highlighting, empiricism and creativity orientation, planning and management and traditional agriculture in the form of 34 variables were identified as the most important special effective factors in the direction of its development and expansion. In order to develop agricultural tourism in the region, it is necessary to distance from the traditional agriculture of the region, which prevents any transformation and reconstruction. Admittedly, agricultural tourism needs professional principles in the field of tourism development, which is in conflict with the structural weaknesses in the field of agriculture in the region, especially in the field of cultivating innovative products and making empiricism in agricultural farms. Zarivar wetland tourism axis has virgin lands and special ability to develop event-oriented tourism. However, neither advertising nor special marketing has been conducted in a specialized way so far and tourists entering the wetland area also leave the farms and agricultural gardens without creating a special experience.

The findings related to the second research question showed that due to the lack of systematic vision and comprehensive management of tourism activities at the regional level, tourism activities could not be shaped in the form of a connected chain of the required loops. The main emphasis on the attraction of Zarivar wetland or the attraction-oriented development of tourism at the regional level has caused other needed loops for the flow of tourism activities to be ignored or considered less important. In the region's tourism chain, the loops of attraction and distribution, transportation,

accommodation, recreation and creating experiences, along with advertising and marketing are the missing loops and infrastructures, laws, capital, training and catering are identified as the loops that need to be modified.

The lack of the empiricism loop causes the specialized tourism of the region not to be developed in the form of agricultural tourism and encounters little welcoming as the specialized tourists are seeking for pristine and unrepeatably experiences that create a sense of freshness and pleasure for them.

Finally, according to the findings, the following solutions are suggested in line with the development of agricultural tourism in the region:

At first, the development of agricultural tourism in villages of Zarivar Wetland axis should be seen in the form of rural tourism development in Zarivar Wetland axis and then, tourism development in Marivan city and event-oriented tourism in Kurdistan province. In this regard, considering the identification of the weakness of management and planning in both dimensions, as well as the obstacles identified in the form of this component as well as the systemic nature of tourism activities and the existence of multiple actors in its broad scene necessitates the need for integrated management for synergy, effectiveness, coordination and unified policy making.

Changing the view of development and regional tourism managers first to a systemic view in tourism management is of paramount importance. Then, changing the procedure of emphasizing the development of mass tourism in Zarivar wetland towards focusing on the expansion of tourism with agricultural and other special tourism motivations (sports, rural, adventure tourism, etc.) in Marivan city should be taken into consideration. Finally, attention to the villages on the edge of wetland is very necessary for these villages in order to be present in the tourism market of the region.

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پژوهشگاه علوم انسانی و مطالعات فرهنگی  
پرتال جامع علوم انسانی



## تحلیل کیفی موانع موثر بر توسعه گردشگری کشاورزی در نواحی روستایی محور تالاب زریوار شهرستان مریوان

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### چکیده مبسوط

#### ۱. مقدمه

امروزه گردشگری کشاورزی جزء کلیدی ترین و پرسرعت ترین اقسام گردشگری روستایی است و اهمیت فزاینده و رو به رشدی در توسعه کشاورزی در روستاها داشته و از این رو است که توسعه این قسم از گردشگری به عنوان بخشی پیش رو در تحول بخشی و تنوع بخشی به اقتصاد روستایی مورد توجه سیاستگذاران و برنامه ریزان توسعه روستایی قرار گرفته است.

منطقه مورد مطالعه پژوهش، محور گردشگری تالاب زریوار شهرستان مریوان در استان کردستان می باشد، منطقه ای که با توجه به موقعیت استقرار و شرایط توپوگرافی آن، همراه با سابقه تمدنی کهن و مراسم های بومی فرهنگی؛ زمینه های بسیار مناسبی را جهت توسعه گردشگری دارا می باشد. در این میان، در سطح منطقه، وجود جوانان نوآور در عرصه گردشگری و کشاورزی و ایجاد زمین های زراعی با دارا بودن گیاهان دارویی، گلخانه های کوچک مقیاس و محصولات نوآور در منطقه، همراه با زمین های حاصلخیز و گسترده کشاورزی، توانسته است زمینه های توسعه گردشگری کشاورزی تخصص محور را در کنار گردشگری توده فراهم آورد. فرصت مرزی بودن منطقه و ورود گردشگران نیز از اقلیم کردستان عراق و همجواری با منطقه بین المللی گردشگری روستایی محور اورامان تخت، از فرصت های موثر در راستای جذب گردشگران منطقه در صورت حرکت به سمت تخصص محوری گردشگری خواهند بود. لذا گردشگری محور تالاب زریوار، بایستی از وضعیت کنونی که با اقامت کوتاه مدت گردشگران و صرفا تکیه بر گردشگری تجاری سطح بازارهای شهر مریوان و بازدید از دریاچه زریوار، متکی است؛ فاصله گرفته و به سمت تنوع بخشی به جاذبه ها و توان های گردشگری حرکت نماید.

#### ۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

گردشگری کشاورزی به بازدید از مزرعه به منظور آموزش یا تفریح اشاره دارد. گردشگری کشاورزی وابسته به مزارع کار خانوادگی است

و وابسته به فعالیت کشاورزانی است که به دنبال تنوع بخشیدن به درآمد خود و ایجاد تاب آوری در برابر بی ثباتی های اقتصادی در حوزه بازارهای کشاورزی و تغییرات آب و هوایی هستند. همچنین، توسعه گردشگری کشاورزی به معنی تنوع بخشی به جاذبه های گردشگری در مقاصد گردشگری و افزایش تاب آوری برای این مقاصد در مقابل ریسک های بازارهای گردشگری است. گردشگری کشاورزی با ارائه خدمات تفریحی، آموزشی و فروش محصولات کشاورزی در بازارهای مزرعه ای، موجب افزایش درآمد کشاورزان می گردد.

صاحب نظران توسعه، گردشگری کشاورزی را اقدامی در راستای خلاقیت محوری و نوآوری در عرصه توسعه گردشگری می دانند. بر این اساس؛ فعالین عرصه گردشگری کشاورزی، نوآوری و خلاقیت مستمر را به عنوان هسته های مهم توسعه فعالیت در نظر داشته باشند چرا که موجب افزایش انگیزه و کاهش حساسیت بر روی قیمت برای گردشگران می گردد.

#### ۳. روش تحقیق

پژوهش کاربردی حاضر به لحاظ روش، توصیفی - تحلیلی و به واسطه نیاز به شناخت و تحلیل جامع وضع موجود از دیدگاه تمامی ذی نفعان و رسیدن به وضعیتی شفاف از وضعیت ناشناخته موجود، دارای رویکردی کیفی است که با روش تئوری بنیادی، انجام پذیرفته است. برای این کار نیاز به تشکیل گروه دلفی بود. به منظور شناسایی این افراد از روش نمونه گیری غیر تصادفی به شیوه هدفمند مبتنی بر تکنیک گلوله برفی، بهره گرفته شد. در این راستا تا حصول به اشباع نظری با ۲۶ نفر از افرادی از گروه های مدیران توسعه ای شهرستان (۸ نفر)، آگاهان محلی روستایی (۳ نفر)، سرمایه گذاران اقتصادی در منطقه (۴ نفر)، متخصصان علمی عرصه توسعه به ویژه توسعه روستایی استان و شهرستان مریوان (۶ نفر)، دهیاران نمونه شهرستان (۳ نفر) و برگزار کنندگان تورهای گردشگری در منطقه (۲ نفر)، مصاحبه ها انجام گرفت. در ادامه پس از تجزیه و تحلیل مصاحبه ها و

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#### ۵. بحث و نتیجه‌گیری

نتایج نشان داد که موانع موثر بر توسعه گردشگری کشاورزی در منطقه در قالب دو سطح مرتبط با توسعه گردشگری توده و به صورت تخصصی در حوزه گردشگری کشاورزی وجود دارد. در بخش عمومی مرتبط با توسعه گردشگری توده، ضعف در زیرساخت‌ها و خدمات گردشگری، ضعف در بازاریابی، ضعف در آموزش، عدم حفاظت و تنوع بخشی به جاذبه‌ها، ضعف در برنامه‌ریزی، نظارت و عملکرد نهادهای دولتی، فضای نامناسب کسب و کار و نارسایی‌های مرتبط با نیازها و عملکرد گردشگران به عنوان عوامل اصلی شناسایی شدند.

در حوزه تخصصی و در ارتباط با توسعه گردشگری کشاورزی؛ تامین و جریان مالی، تبلیغات تخصصی و برجسته‌سازی، تجربه‌گرایی و خلاقیت محوری، برنامه‌ریزی و مدیریت و کشاورزی سنتی به عنوان مهمترین عوامل ویژه موثر در راستای توسعه و گسترش آن شناسایی شدند. دیگر نتایج نشان داد که بواسطه فقدان دید و نحوه مدیریت سیستمی و جامع فعالیت‌های گردشگری در سطح منطقه، فعالیت‌های گردشگری؛ نتوانسته در قالب یک زنجیره بهم پیوسته از حلقه‌های مورد نیاز، شکل گیرد. تاکید اصلی بر جاذبه تالاب زریوار و در واقع، جاذبه محور نمودن توسعه گردشگری در سطح منطقه موجب گردیده تا سایر حلقه‌های مورد نیاز در راستای به جریان افتادن فعالیت‌های گردشگری، نادیده گرفته شده و یا کم اهمیت تلقی گردد.

**کلید واژه‌ها:** گردشگری کشاورزی، سیستم گردشگری، نواحی روستایی محور تالاب زریوار.


#### تشکر و قدردانی

پژوهش حاضر حامی مالی نداشته و حاصل فعالیت علمی نویسندگان است.

احصاء نکات کلیدی، متغیرهای استخراجی در قالب پرسشنامه‌ای در اختیار ۵۰ نفر از اعضای گروه‌های نام برده شده قرار گرفت. در نهایت، تجزیه و تحلیل مصاحبه‌ها با تکنیک تئوری بنیادی انجام گرفت.

#### ۴. یافته‌های تحقیق

پس از طی سه مرحله کدگذاری در تکنیک تئوری بنیادی؛ عوامل اصلی اثرگذار بر توسعه گردشگری کشاورزی در نواحی روستایی محور تالاب زریوار و تبدیل آنها به روستاهایی با برند گردشگری کشاورزی؛ شناسایی گردید. موانع و مشکلات شناسایی شده در دو بخش مرتبط با مشکلات عمومی توسعه گردشگری با در برگیرنده ۶۸ متغیر مرتبط با توسعه گردشگری توده، ضعف در زیرساخت‌ها و خدمات گردشگری، ضعف در بازاریابی، ضعف در آموزش، نبود حفاظت و تنوع بخشی به جاذبه‌ها، ضعف در برنامه‌ریزی، نظارت و عملکرد نهادهای دولتی، فضای نامناسب کسب و کار و نارسایی‌های مرتبط با نیازها و عملکرد گردشگران در به عنوان عوامل اصلی شناسایی شدند و در بخش تخصصی، چالش‌های ویژه توسعه گردشگری تخصصی حوزه کشاورزی در روستاها و در ارتباط با توسعه گردشگری کشاورزی نیز؛ تامین و جریان مالی، تبلیغات تخصصی و برجسته‌سازی، تجربه‌گرایی و خلاقیت محوری، برنامه‌ریزی و مدیریت و کشاورزی سنتی در قالب ۳۴ متغیر به عنوان مهم‌ترین موانع ویژه موثر در راستای توسعه و گسترش آن شناسایی گردیدند. همچنین؛ مقیاس موانع و مشکلات شناسایی شده از سطوح فراتر از روستا در سطح حوزه تالاب زریوار، شهرستان مریوان و حتی مدیریت استانی گردشگری استان کردستان را دربر می‌گیرد.

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