

# An Evaluation and analysis of the role of tourism in economic development (Case Study: Kish Island)

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**ABSTRACT:** In today's world, tourism has a vast economic effect on countries, increasing employment, reducing unemployment, improving people's living standards and improving infrastructure are among the most important positive economic effects of tourism. Free-trade zones paired with a certain climate and special geographical features are among the most important qualities for attracting tourists and developing tourism. Considering that the beautiful island of Kish, with its natural landscapes, historical monuments, cultural and tourist attractions, is the most important and long-standing tourist center among the Iranian islands of the Persian Gulf and has long been noticed by domestic and foreign tourists, especially in the last half a century, a lot of investment has been made into development and advancement. The question now is whether tourism on the island has played a role in Kish's economic development. This paper's objective is applied and its research method is descriptive-analytical; moreover, the data has been gathered through surveys. The statistical population of this study is the citizens of the island whose jobs are somewhat in the field of tourism, such as university professors, experts from public and private organizations, tourists and local managers. The sample size was 274 people, sampling was done through a purposive method and measurement tool was a questionnaire, to determine the validity of the instrument, content validity method was used and to assess the reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used. SPSS software was used to analyze the data and Chi-square test and one-sample T-test were used to prove the hypotheses. The results showed that tourism has a positive effect on creation of new job opportunities, increasing residents' incomes, improving living standards, reducing the unemployment rate and developing markets and shopping malls in free trade zones.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Kish Island, Economic Development

## INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is undoubtedly one of the most important industries in the world, so much so that according to the statistics of the World Tourism Organization, the revenue from international tourism after oil and automobile has the highest share of exports.

Also, according to the statistics of the same organization, tourism industry is responsible for about 6% of the world's GDP and one out of every fifteen jobs belongs to this industry. Iran's share in this global market is about one tenth of a percent.

Accordingly, this industry is becoming one of the main pillars of the world trading economy and many planners refer to it as the main pillar of development.

In fact, tourism in many countries is one of the most complex human businesses and as a multifaceted activity has various functions and positive effects, including job creation, income, attracting currency and strengthening infrastructure, etc. (Ghaderi, Faraji Rad and Borujeni, 1390: 102).

On the other hand, many countries have established free trade zones in order to achieve goals such as developing the national economy, attracting foreign investment, creating employment, increasing income and regional development. Therefore, the development of tourism activities in free trade zones in order to create diversity in foreign exchange earnings as well as economic prosperity in these areas is receiving more and more attention.

Tourism in today's world is a clean, thriving, developing business and is considered the third dynamic economic phenomenon that has overtaken other global industries behind oil and automobile industries (Ghaffari, 2007). According to the World Tourism Organization, the value of funds from tourism and travel in the coming decades will reach a higher level increasingly faster than exports in other economic sectors of international trade. (World Tourism Organization, 1995)

These days, tourism in many countries is the main force of economic recovery and by providing a strategic opportunity, it diversifies the local economy, creates jobs and income and increases the value of resources entering the local environment (Ghorbani et al., 2014).

Nowadays, the tourism industry has allocated an important bulk of the economic activities and production in both developed and developing countries to itself (Anoto, 2007), which as an international industry that can be viewed from different perspectives has entered the human equations in such a way that today many economies rely on the tourism industry to achieve economic growth and development (Haghighat et al., 2013). Many countries consider the tourism industry as the main source of income, employment, development of the private sector and infrastructure.

Although the conditions are different in different regions, but tourism is always an important factor for economic development (Motiei Langroudi, 2013)

The current study is designed to answer the following questions:

- To what extent is tourism involved the economic development of Kish Island?
- What is its impact on creation of new job opportunities and reducing the island's unemployment rate?
- What is the role of tourism in increasing income and improving people's living standards?

## **Theoretical Foundations**

Tourism includes all the activities that tourists do during the trip that are related to them, and this can include planning for the trip, travel between the origin and destination, accommodation (Ranjbarian and Zahedi, 2007: 49). One of the main sources of income for countries lacking in natural resources is the tourism industry (Kargar, 2007: 112). Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world and is a phenomenon that has high movements in economic, social, cultural and environmental changes, which by affecting the economic, social and environmental foundations, has various effects and consequences. (Hashempour et al., 2012: 50).

The 21st century is a century of taking advantage of valuable business opportunities in the service sector, especially tourism. Since travelers and tourists are considered a source of currency, travel and tourism play an important role in gross national product. (Gi, 2007: 263)

Tourism as a basic economic activity can provide the grounds for improving the quality of life of local residents (Ramezanzadeh Lesbouei et al., 2010: 62).

Economists refer to the tourism industry as a capital-generating and employment-generating industry and pay special attention to this industry; Therefore, they believe that the correct development of tourism economically increases foreign exchange earnings (Arbabian, 128: 2012).

The tourism industry has significant economic implications, including: employment, achieving a stable foreign exchange income and also recognition of two-way cultural aspects (Rokanuddin Eftekhari, 2003: 40).

The purpose of tourism development, both internationally and nationally, is the possibility of economic and social development of the destination areas in terms of income and employment. Tourism is a system that has extensive connections with other economic, social, etc, sectors.

Tourism has played an important role in encouraging investment in infrastructure, generating revenue for the government and creating direct and indirect employment around the world (Abu Nouri and Akbari, 2014: 34)

One of the important economic aspects of the tourism industry is the use of revenues from tourism in the same areas, therefore, tourism is a means of transferring huge sources of income from countries of origin to countries of destination (Pishvaei, 2011: 28).

Tourism is one of the fastest ways to return capital and has the highest coefficient of capital accumulation and has a high reproductive coefficient compared to other activities (Motiei Langroudi and Nosrati, 2011: 357).

The abundant development of the tourism industry in recent decades has made it one of the most important economic and social activities in many countries of the world, so that many development planners and policy

makers make it one of the fundamental pillars of sustainable development. (Papli Yazdi and Saghaei, 2009). Lewis Turner considers tourism as the most promising and complex industry that the Third World can make use of and believes that tourism has the greatest potential of replacing other income generating industries (Lotfi, 2005: 55).

Tourism not only generates direct income and multiplies the indirect monetary cycle, but also promotes the production of handicrafts and industrial products. The money that a tourist spends has a positive effect on the economic system of the host country (Amir Hajlou et al., 2013: 18).

Tourism can be a source of income for the regions, provided that proper and comprehensive planning with foresight is put in place for its rational and practical operation.

Kish Island is the first free trade and industrial zone in the country, one of the regions with high potential and tourism capacity in the Persian Gulf, which planning, policy-making and proper investment will provide current and future economic growth and development, among which The Kish Free Zone Organization can generate a large amount of income in line with its goals by carefully planning and implementing it, and with Iranian and foreign tourists, it can cause economic, social, cultural, political and legal prosperity of Kish Island.

Kish Island due to having comparative advantages over other tourist destinations such as special climatic conditions, natural attractions, artificial attractions, ancient history and culture, antiquities, architecture and handicrafts worthy of becoming the tourism hub of Asia and the world.

Based on existing capacities of this city, with proper planning and scientific management of urban tourism, Kish will become one of the most important tourism hubs in the world and as a result, economic growth and attracting extensive financial resources, creating employment and increasing income level of citizens of this city are not far from expectation, so serious efforts in the direction of efficient management in the field of tourism industry and the optimal use of standard and proven solutions in other tourism areas will consequently increase productivity in achieving the development of the tourism industry.

## Research background

Perhaps some theories can be related to the subject of current research and the scientific roots of this research can be sought in these theories. In their research, Ghorbani et al. (2021) evaluated the effects of tourism on the development of the urban economy (case study: Ardabil city).

The purpose of this study was to investigate and evaluate the effects of tourism on the economic development of Ardabil. The statistical population of the study includes 80 experts in the tourism industry of Ardabil.

According to the objectives of the research, the three components of economic justice, economic stability and economic welfare were used in the form of 23 items. The questionnaire was designed with closed questions in the form of Likert scale (very high, high, medium, low and very low).

LISREL and SPSS software were used to analyze the data. The results of data analysis showed that the largest factor among the indicators of economic justice dimension is the average annual household income (factor load 0.81), among the indicators of economic stability factor is the rapid growth of the commercial services sector (factor load 0.87) and among the indicators of economic welfare is allocated to the number of service and welfare centers (factor load 0.87)

In other words, these indicators have the most impact on tourism. Among the three dimensions, the economic welfare dimension with a coefficient of 0.94, the economic stability dimension with a coefficient of 0.9 and economic justice with a coefficient of 0.85, respectively, have the most impact. Beiranvand Zadeh et al. (2020), in their research, studied urban tourism and its role in the development of the urban economy (case: Shahr Shahin Dej). The study aims to investigate the importance and role of urban tourism in the economic development of Shahindej city by "analytical-comparative" method.

The SWOT model has been used to measure the tourism potential and analysis of tourism in Shahin Dej city and its role in economic development, and the ANP model has been used in the Supersign software to determine the most appropriate strategy to increase the tourism potential in Shahindej city.

The results of the analysis of internal and external factors affecting tourism showed that adjusting and reducing the indicators of weaknesses with a score of 0.331 to increase the potential of tourism is of great importance compared to other aspects of the SWOT technique.

On the other hand, forming a matrix for evaluating internal and external factors and calculating the average score of factors, the total score of strategies and increasing the tourism potential for four strategies were competitive / aggressive (SO), diversity (ST), review (WO) and defensive (WT). And strategy (SO) with an average total score (0.32) was selected as the most appropriate strategy to increase the capacity and potential of tourism for urban economic development of Shahin Dej. In their research, Parvin et al. (2009) evaluated the impact of tourism on the economic development of Tehran.

The objective of this study is to analyze and evaluate the impact of tourism on the economic development of Tehran. This research's objective is applied and its research method is descriptive-inferential and data collection has been done using library method and questionnaire.

The statistical population of the study is citizens living in Tehran, among whom a researcher-made questionnaire has been distributed and collected.

Using Cochran's formula, the number of 384 people in the statistical population was selected as a sample and data analysis and statistical tests were performed using SPSS software. According to the results, the growth of tourism and income sources from this industry can be one of the important and influential factors in economic development and income stability of Tehran.

The development of the tourism industry is also affected by factors such as infrastructure and facilities, information and advertising. Hemmati (2016), in their study examined the role of tourism capabilities and infrastructure in the development of modern tourism and economic dynamism with emphasis on the role of system variables, especially hotels and resorts. The objective of this article is to analyze the role of tourism infrastructure in the development of modern tourism and economic dynamism.

The main question of the article is what role do system variables, especially hotels and resorts, play in the development of modern tourism and economic dynamism? In addition to this, the main question raises other sub-questions in this article, including what is meant by tourism infrastructure? What are the features of modern tourism?

What is system tourism and what are its variables? The results of this article show that modern tourism plays a wide role in the economic dynamism of countries, but it is necessary to make use of the benefits of modern tourism, paying special attention to system variables, especially hotels and accommodation.

According to this introduction, this article will try to use library resources and scientific and research articles and compare and analyze tourism statistics in different countries to analyze and explain the role of tourism infrastructure with emphasis on the role of system variables, especially hotels. And accommodation in the development of modern tourism and economic dynamism.

Obaidzadegan and Haji Lou (2016) In their research, they examined the role of urban tourism in creating hidden revenue-generating opportunities for Tehran Municipality.

The method of this research was descriptive-analytical and data collection and information was done by library method and review of revenue information of Tehran Municipality. In this article, while examining global experiences in the field of urban tourism and identifying the hidden opportunities for municipalities to generate revenue from tourism, it tried to provide solutions for the development of urban tourism in Tehran and achieving sustainable incomes for municipalities. Sharbati (2015), in his study examined the role of tourism in the economic development of Golestan province. The objective of this study is to investigate the role of tourism in the economic development of Golestan province.

The research's objective is applied and its research method, which is based on case study, is descriptive-analytical. The statistical population in this study is experts and pundits of public and private organizations and institutions active in the field of tourism in Golestan province. The sample size was estimated based on the Cochran sampling formula of 195 people.

The sampling method was purposive. The assessment tool in this study was a questionnaire with an interview and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to test the validity and reliability of the assessment tool. SPSS software was used to analyze the data and Chi-square test (Chi-square) was used to prove the hypotheses.

Findings show that tourism has a positive and effective influence on creating and developing employment, increasing investment, improving income levels and improving living standards of people of Golestan province. Ebrahim Niasmakoush et al. (2013), in their research evaluated the role of urban tourism in the economic-environmental development of Babolsar. This research's objective is applied and its research method is survey and descriptive-inferential.

The required data have been collected using documents and library sources and also using a researcher-made questionnaire, field visits and interviews with related organizations and heads of households living in Babolsar. The results of the research using statistical tests. The results of the research using Pearson and Kendall b statistical tests show that tourism has significant effects on the economy and in addition to job creation and income generation, has led to an increase in land value.

environmentally, increase in tourism has led to a decrease in agricultural land and change in their use, increase in services and tourism facilities, increase in pollution and environmental degradation and ease of access to the city. Therefore, with principled planning and efforts to make the best use of tourists, the economic situation and, consequently, the environmental situation of the city can be improved.

Salimi Suderjani et al. (2011), in their study examined the effects of tourism industry revenue on the economic growth of D8 member countries. For this purpose, the combined data method has been used to examine the relationship between the variables in question during the period 1995-2006. The results of the study show that revenues from tourism have a positive and significant effect on the economic growth of this group of countries.

Also, the impact of other variables, such as labor force, the ratio of trade to GDP, human capital and gross products on the economic growth of this group of countries has been positive and significant. Therefore, it should be suggested that by increasing investment in the tourism industry and providing the welfare facilities required by this industry and also paying attention to tourist attractions in this group of countries, the possibility of exploiting the potential of this industry to increase economic growth.

In general, other researchers have concluded that the development of tourism in an area in terms of job creation has a considerable impact on young people, increasing temporary and part-time employment, providing the possibility of attracting seasonal employment, reducing unemployment, increasing local incomes, increasing public incomes of local institutions. Increase investment in infrastructure, especially tourism welfare services, prosperity of markets, development of hotels and public transport, improve income distribution, raise public awareness, change in cultural patterns, etc.

### **Research area**

Kish is an island in Hormozgan province located in the south of Iran.

In the past, the island was named Qais. The shape of this island is elliptical and is located 12 km off the coast of Shibkuh. From the most eastern beach to the most western beach is about 12 km, and its width is 7 km, it is 90 square kilometers. It is 12 feet above sea level, the middle of the island is higher.

It is located southwest of Garzeh village, 27 km from Charak port in the Persian Gulf. It is 90,457 square kilometers, is located 18 kilometers from the southern coast of Iran between the geographical coordinates of 53 degrees and 53 minutes to 54 degrees and 4 minutes east longitude of the Greenwich meridian and 26 degrees and 29 minutes to 26 degrees 35 minutes north latitude.

The island, also known as the Pearl of the Persian Gulf and is the country's first free trade-industrial zone, is currently home to more than 40,000 people, 82% of whom have migrated to Kish in recent years. Kish Island annually hosts more than one million domestic and foreign tourists. Kish is 26 km away from peninsulas such as Hindurabi, Khark 18 km, Abu Musa 174 km, Qeshm 220 km and Bandar Abbas 298 km.

This coral island has many tourist attractions despite its small size and this is due to its geographical location. The beautiful coral beaches surround the island, which is one of the most important and amazing places to see at any time of the day.

The sultry and humid climate, moderate vegetation, all kinds of fish, stones and shells with special azure colors are among the pros of this island.

### **Research area**

**Tourist:** A person who travels for a period of more than one night and less than one consecutive year with a purpose other than earning money to a land other than his usual residence.

**Tourism:** Murphy defines Tourism as the activities of people traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for leisure, business or other purposes for no more than one consecutive year. (Ranjbar and Zahedi, 2007: 49)

**Economic development:** It is economic growth with fundamental changes in the economy and increase of production capacities, including physical, human and social capacities. In economic development, there will always be production growth, but along with it, social institutions will also change. Economic growth looks at variables quantitatively, while economic development looks at variables qualitatively.

### **Research hypotheses**

- ✓ There is a meaningful relationship between tourism and the creation of new job opportunities on the island.
- ✓ Tourism has an effect on increasing the income of Kish Island residents.
- ✓ Tourism has an impact on improving people's living standards.
- ✓ Tourism has an effect on reducing the unemployment rate on Kish Island.
- ✓ There is a significant relationship between tourism and the development of markets and shopping malls.
- ✓ Tourism affects the development of indigenous culture and industry of Kish Island.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research is applied and its research method, which is based on case study, is descriptive-analytical. In this regard, with the aim of evaluating the role of tourism in the economic development of Kish Island,

reviewing the theoretical foundations related to the subject, the library method has been used and to obtain the required data, a survey method whose measurement tool is a researcher questionnaire.

The statistical population in this study is 274 university professors, experts in public and private sector organizations and institutions active in the field of island tourism, local tourists, and local managers. this statistical community was chosen for their familiarity of these people with the capabilities and obstacles of tourism development of the island, history of activities in the field of tourism, effective presence in the context of tourism activities, significant involvement in decision-making process, tourism project investors, accommodation owners and Tourism services, direct and indirect beneficiaries of tourism benefits and ....

The Cochran formula was used to calculate the sample size with a standard error of 5% and a confidence level of 95%. The sample size of this study was based on calculations and considering the elements of Cochran's formula, 274 people were determined. Random sampling method was used to select the samples.

The questionnaire was tested among 30 respondents and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.91. Finally, to analyze the data obtained using SPSS software and Chi-square and one-sample Chi-square tests, the role of tourism in the economic development of Kish Island is discussed.

**Table 1.** Frequency distribution of the sample population by type of activity

Row	sample population	count	percentage
1	University professors	36	13.1
2	Experts of government organizations (active in the field of tourism)	87	31.8
3	Experts of private institutions (active in the field of tourism)	69	25.2
4	Local managers	25	9.1
5	tourists	57	20.8
6	Sum	274	100

**Table 2.** Results of the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha)

Variable name	Number of questions	Number of questionnaires	Cronbach's alpha coefficients
Creation of new job opportunities	8	30	0.93
Increase residents' income	7	30	0.90
Improving living standards	7	30	0.89
Development of markets and shopping malls	8	30	0.92
Reduction in unemployment rate	7	30	0.88
Indigenous culture and island industries	8	30	0.91
Total	45	274	0.91

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Research

According to the results, 62% of the respondents are male and 37% are female. In terms of education, 47.2% of them have a bachelor's degree, 33.6% have a diploma or post-diploma education and 19.2% have masters or higher. The results show that in terms of age, the highest percentage with 42.8% belongs to the age group of 34-45 years.

In terms of occupation, 44% worked in government organizations and 66% in private organizations and institutions. Also, work experience of 51% of the respondents was between 10 and 20 years, and 17.8% was more than 20 years and 32% was less than 10 years.

**Table 3.** Frequency and percentage distribution of each of the independent and dependent variables of the research

Items	Abundance	very little	little	medium	Much	Very much	Total
role of tourism in creating new job opportunities	Count	19	23	25	99	108	274
	percentage	6.9	8.4	9.1	36.1	3.5	100
role of tourism in improving people's living standards	Count	13	25	21	102	113	274
	percentage	4.7	9.1	7.7	37.2	41.3	100
role of tourism in the development of markets and shopping malls	Count	14	19	20	104	117	274
	percentage	6.9	4.4	6.2	43.4	39.1	100
role of tourism in reducing the unemployment rate	Count	14	19	20	104	117	274
	percentage	5.1	6.9	7.3	38	42.7	100

The findings of the table show that 75.6% of the respondents believe in the impact of tourism on creating new job opportunities, 77.4% the role of tourism on increasing the income of residents and 80.7% the role of tourism on reducing the unemployment rate to a large extent. Also 78.5% responder believe living standards and 79.6% believe development of industries and the 82.5% deployment of market places and tourist centers was greatly affected by tourism.

**Inferential findings**

**Hypothesis 1: There is a meaningful relationship between tourism and the creation of new job opportunities on the island.**

Given the value of the statistic  $t = 27.2$  and the significance level  $Sig = 0.0$ , with 99% confidence we can say that the hypothesis's (H0) is rejected and as a result the hypothesis is confirmed.

**Table 4.** Analysis of the impact of tourism on creation of new job opportunities using t-test

Hypothesis	Chi-square statistics	Degree of freedom df	Significance level sig
The link between tourism and the creation of new job opportunities	27.5	4	0.0

**Hypothesis 2: Tourism has an effect on improving people's living standards.**

Given the value of 28.6 statistics and a significant level with 99% confidence, it can be said that the null hypothesis is rejected and as a result, the hypothesis is confirmed.

**Table 5.** Analysis of the impact of tourism on improving people's living standards using t-test

significance level	value of t	Standard deviation	Average	Total frequency
0.0	28.6	0.64	4	274

**Hypothesis 3: Tourism has an effect on increasing the income of Kish Island residents.**

Considering the value of 25.4 statistics and the level of significance with 99% confidence, it can be said that the null hypothesis is rejected and as a result, the hypothesis is confirmed.

**Table 6.** Analysis of the impact of tourism on increasing the income of islanders using t-test

significance level	value of t	Standard deviation	Average	Total frequency
0.0	25.4	0.56	4.2	274

**Hypothesis 4: Tourism has an effect on reducing the unemployment rate of Kish Island**

Given the value of the statistic  $t = 36$  and the significance level  $Sig = 0.0$ , with 99% confidence, we can say that the hypothesis's (H0) is rejected and as a result, the hypothesis is confirmed.

**Table 7.** Analysis of the Impact of tourism reducing the unemployment rate using t-test

significance level	value of t	Standard deviation	Average	Total frequency
0.0	36	0.69	5.4	274

## CONCLUSION

In case of principled planning for the development of tourism industry in Kish city, Considering the historical, cultural, natural, commercial, medical, therapeutic and sports attractions, as well as the important opportunities and public events happening in the city, we can hope for significant economic growth of Kish city through tourism.

Examining the results of this study, it can be well understood that there is a significant relationship between tourism and economic development with the results of research by Ghorbani et al. (1400), Beiranvand Zadeh et al. (2016), Parvin et al. (2009), Hemmati (2016.), Sherbati (2015), Ebrahim Niasmakoush et al. (2013) were consistent. Ultimately Comparing the results of the present study with previous studies shows the compatibility of the results and confirms the importance of tourism in a region, results in development of all dimensions Especially economically for the residents and even the country, and policymakers and stakeholders should pay more attention to this point and to have more programs for the development of tourism as one of the economic activities, which is the most important factor of progress and development in attractive areas.

Even not considering its free trade status of the island, Kish Island has a lot of untapped capacities in accepting tourists and tourism, especially in the international sector, which can bring a lot of foreign exchange income to the country.

Considering Iran's small share in the tourism industry, it can be concluded that there are still many shortcomings in this industry, which can be identified and eliminated to achieve more and better economic development.

Tourist attractions must somehow be able to create attraction and value, and influence the tourist's attitude and create a sense of satisfaction in them.

Tourist attractions can create value and satisfaction in tourists when they are given the special attention the deserve by the host country and to not only prevent their destruction but also to add more facilities according to the tastes of tourists.

By reviewing the laws and regulations related to tourism and adopting appropriate policies, government can further support the tourism-related sectors with their marketing activities, it is possible to identify the needs of tourists and determine the target markets and reap the benefits of the economic, social, and cultural boon brought by tourism industry, not only for the country but also for Kish in particular.

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