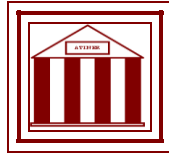


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**Recognition of Sport Tourism  
Capacities in Lorestan Province of  
Iran**

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## **Recognition of Sport Tourism Capacities in Lorestan Province of Iran**

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### **Abstract**

The main goal of this study is the investigation and Recognition of sport tourism capacities in Lorestan province of Iran.

From the point of view of sport tourism, one of the most important specifications of this province is collection of beautiful aspects of creation in one place. Something such as close bank to Zagros Mountains, natural sea (for example: Gahar sea), river, lakes, ponds and full water dams and thousands of other attraction ready for any type of sport. The method of this research is descriptive. In this research used from research questionnaire (Kronbach: 80%) and also other complementary information current contexts and resources, the latest result of performed researches on the field in order to collect required information. Statistic population of research includes the persons in charge, native persons and present tourists at Lorestan province. Thus 235 persons (58 persons in charge, 68 tourists & 109 native persons) were selected as the statistical sample by random. SPSS17 software was used for analyzing of data along with descriptive analyzing to the data of questionnaire. About 73.26% of subjects considered the Gahar and Que sea, bank of Lorestan province as the best place for development of water /lake sports (Cano, water ski...). About 80.19% consider snow covered mountains of Lorestan province as a suitable place for mountain sports (Grass ski, mountain climbing) and air sport such as Kit and 69% of them considered traditional sports such as Dalpalon, Ghighach and as the important tourism attraction of Lorestan province. About 73.76% of subjects considered Lorestan province as a reach place for tourism development due to its tourism attractions (natural, religious place of pilgrimage, commercial & industrial, historical & sporting aspects).

**Keywords:** Tourism, Enrichment, sport tourism, Lorestan province

**Contact Information of Corresponding author:**

## Introduction

Sport represents a universal need. Therefore, a clear description of sports is important. It is predicted that tourism and travelling industry will see 5% growth each year until 2020; the growth rate for sports tourism is to be 10% per year. Therefore, cities and regions across the world are already competing to attract more tourists and consequently enjoy the ensuing growth potential (Weed, 2006.). According to Standeven and De Knop (1999) tourism industry had the main growing Fragment that named 'sport'. Some increasing demand for "active sport holidays" and "second holidays" are being observed." the number of participants in sport activity is much higher and is still growing; the trend in sport tourism is to practice in several activities and to look for variety (p. 227)". De Knop and Standeven (1998) define sport tourism as:

Travel for non-commercial (holiday) or for commercial (non-holiday/business) reasons to participate in or observe sporting activities. Based on this definition, eight types of sport tourism can be identified. These are illustrated in Figure 1. The defining characteristics of the sport tourism offer are such that they present specific issues for practicing managers (adapted from Augustyn, 1996): (1) Supply-related: The multisectoral and complex nature of the product which represents

a mixture of various elements (for example, the destination with its facilities, attractions and accessibility); the rigidity of the main elements of the offer that limit speedy responses to changing consumer tastes; . The highly fragmented supply ± many businesses may contribute to the overall experience; the intangibility, inseparability and perishability of certain aspects of the offer; and. staff issues ± tourism is a "people industry" (see also Morrison, 1989).

(2) Demand-related:-

- high elasticity;
- seasonality;
- changing needs, attitudes and preferences of customers;
- little brand loyalty; and
- Heterogeneous customer groupings.

While the above list is not exhaustive, it highlights some of the features that help to differentiate this sector from conventional product markets and as a consequence suggest modifications to traditional management practices.

Sport tourism is a relatively new and ever increasing industry in the tourism industry focusing on the target planning of developing countries. It is also believed that sport tourism shall restructure the rural and urban communities from social and economic perspectives.

Seemingly, sport tourism shall improve the individuals' life quality through tourist attraction and results in the economic welfare of the local communities (Swart and Bob, 2007). Sport tourism is defined as a temporary movement from a person's settlement to pass their free time playing and watching games and so forth (Preuss et al., 2007). Today, sport and tourism are concerned with

the important economic activities in the developed and developing nations (Swart and Bob, 2007). Based upon the world tourism organization estimates, 43% of the world jobs will be associated with the tourism industry by 2010. For example, from 1997 to 2005, sport tourism brought about an annual increase in gross domestic growth (1.3%), which resulted from economic activities with regard to holding big sport competitions, and unemployment declined by 1.9% on annual basis (Kasimati and Dawson, 2009).

The corresponding studies indicate that sport tourism is the most developed sector of the tourism industry (Chalip and Kim, 2004) such that it is regarded as a world multibillion trading element, producing 4.5 trillion dollars for tourism industry and world tour (Tassiopoulou and Haydamb, 2007).

Tourists are a chief source of income and employment for the population of the hosting region (Batyk and Ski, 2009); that is why the world metropolitans consider Olympic games as a unique opportunity for local marketing, because a potential economic advantage of being the host of a big sport event is to attract many spectators and tourists to the hosting city and consequently, it shall bring positive economic consequences (Preuss et al., 2007).

There are two kinds of sport tourism: the first one employs sport for the sake of its tourism development advantages, while the other one is the result of sport based activities (Tassiopoulou and Haydamb, 2007). So the communities should take both types into account (Daniels, 2007) so as to optimally take advantage of their positive results. Since there are various motives for involvement in sport activities, such as competition, recreation and traveling to watch preliminary or premier competitions or sport attractions (Tassiopoulou and Haydamb, 2007), the natural resources of sport and tourism facilities play a significant role in attracting tourists to the host city, region or country.

The host community consists of people who live at or near the event location. This Community is therefore most likely to understand the impact of better events. Studying the impact of sport tourism events on the host community is a way to understand local reactions to the events and the reasons for these reactions (Ntloko & Swart, 2008). Sport events bring several benefits to communities. The most obvious are community Visibility, psychic income, and a better community image. Although publicly Subsidized sport events, however, do not always bring economic benefits. Attracting more tourists to Iran as a travel destination through sporting events could give local communities a share of these benefits. Sport tourism introduces the host community to tourists and decreases the negative social cultural impacts on the environment. These sport events help locals to face the reality of tourists as a modern industry despite other factors that might be involved (Such as: Transportation, Accommodation, food and Beverage). Getz (2007) claim that "Sports events are the actual games or meetings during which sport activity is performed; There are many sport events formats:

- Professional or amateur
- Indoor or outdoor
- Regularly scheduled (league plays, playoffs or championships) or one-time (exhibition or friendly matches).

- Local, regional, national or international events.
- Sport festivals (a celebration of sport, often for youth, involving many sports) single - or multi- sport events” (p. 42). Sport event tourism is unique. (Getz 2003 cited in Ottevanger, 2007, p.16) considers the following special characteristics:
  - “Many sport events are biddable; they can be attracted to a destination.
  - Special events can attract more people than regularly scheduled games.
  - Corporate sponsors love sport events.
  - Major sport events can be catalysts for new facilities and infrastructure.
  - New sport facilities become permanent event venues.
  - There is a potential for various sports events year round.
  - Sport events appeal to everyone, regardless of age, gender or physical ability.
  - Sport events can assist in destination branding.

Studies have claimed that Iran has the potential to be among the top 10 tourism destination countries. Archaeology, cultural heritage, traditions and diversity of nature already draw tourists to Iran. However, country ranks quite low in number of international visitors (120th worldwide in 2008) (Moeinfard, 2010). Nevertheless, Iran’s tourism market has been growing. There is a need to attract more Tourists to Iran. Sports tourism may meet this requirement (Moeinfard, 2010). Lorestan province is regarded as one of the leading tourism centers due to its favorable nature and geographical locations. potential resources in Lorestan , *Zagros* Maintains, various floras and faunas, forests, caves, waterfalls, rivers, spas, springs , lakes bank, spots, waterfalls, protected areas and wild life, preserves and natural-national works, and mineral waters However, it might be a best choice for tourists with various motives.

### **Research Objectives and questions**

The main goal of this study is the investigation and Recognition of sport tourism capacities Lorestan province of Iran.

From the point of view of sport tourism, one of the most important specifications of this province is collection of beautiful aspects of creation in one place. Something such as close bank to *Zagros* Mountains, natural sea (for example: *Gahar* sea), river, lakes, ponds and full water dams and thousands of other attraction ready for any type of sport.

-What are capacities that led to improvement Lorestan province sport tourism of Iran?

- What are sport tourism attractions that led to improvement industry of tourism in Lorestan of Iran?

### **Methods**

The method of this research is descriptive. In this research used from research questionnaire (Kronbach: 80%) and also other complementary information current contexts and resources, the latest result of performed researches on the field in other to collect required information. Statistic population of research



includes the persons in charge, native persons and present tourists at Lorestan providence. Thus 235 persons (58 persons in charge, 68 tourists & 109 native persons) were selected as the statistical sample by random. SPSS17 software was used for analyzing of data along with descriptive analyzing to the data of questionnaire.

### **Results**

About 73.26% of subjects considered the *Gahar* and *Que* Sea, bank if Lorestan providence as the best place for development of water /lake sports (Cano, water ski...).

About 80.19% consider snow covered mountains of Lorestan providence as a suitable place for mountain sports (Grass ski, mountain climbing) and air sport such as Kit and 69% of them considered traditional sports such as *Dalpalon*, *Ghighach* and ... as the important tourism attraction of Lorestan providence.

About 73.76% of subjects considered Lorestan providence as a reach place for tourism development due to its tourism attractions (natural, Religious place of Pilgrimage, commercial & industrial, historical & sporting aspects).

### **Discussion**

Sports Tourism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Successful exploitation requires that the identification of strong tourism destinations and optimal use of these capabilities and are attractive. Cultural attractions, natural and important sports and motor development as three elements have been identified Analysis and evaluation of athletic ability and natural attractions of each region, an important first step in the development And management of sport tourism destinations are. Sports Tourism optimum use of natural attractions for tourists Sports provides sports.

For this purpose, importance and attraction of investments that are more important and are essential in attracting experts Sport tourists. The survey data shows that the natural attractions of sport and sport tourism province have the capability of sustainable development.

Research also shows that the province is one of the purposes is to empower the local events. Findings show that the province's capabilities with the development of tourism there is a significant relationship ( $p < 0/05$ ,  $X^2 = 198/8$ ). The development of tourism attractions in the province with a significant relationship exists ( $p < 0/05$ ,  $X^2 = 208/5$ ). Based on survey data, 26/73 percent of subjects related to water sports capabilities province have the right to develop sports tourism. 19/80 of the subjects' capabilities related to winter sports in the province of high Zagros Mountains And other attractions to have empowered it to develop a variety of winter sports. 69% of subjects related to the capabilities of local sports including Dalplan, Qyqach, Zoran considered suitable for development of sports tourism. Miranda and Andvza (2005) in the study of sports tourism in Spain found that destroyed the country's natural attractions that are important, Water Sports 84/36 percent and walking with a 58/31 percent in the sport tourists are most important. Also noted that the natural

attractions with 78/03 percent in sports attract tourists to Spain, the most important factor to be considered.

Iran's Lorestan province in West also has athletic ability and natural attractions are unparalleled. Sporting events as a major tourist attraction and development capabilities in research have been underlined (choo, 2001- Solberg & Preuss ,2007- Yates, Bob, 2006- Icoz, Gunlu & Oter. 2010).

Lorestan province is also great potential in competitions such as horse racing, mountaineering...

Features and capabilities as a critical component of the tourist destinations in the business of hosting sporting events emphasize with the researchers (Westerbeek et al, 2001) and (Emery. 2010). Identify the capabilities and capacities of sports tourism as one of the four steps is developing sports tourism (Yates, Bob, 2006). In Countries like Turkey Tourism Association Tourism Development Strategy 2023 in 2007 and the Canadian Sport Tourism planning model in 2006 have examined.

The importance of environmental analysis for any planning, identifying and selecting target markets and marketing strategy has been approved (Kamilla Swart and Urmilla Bob, 2007). The review showed that the strength and attraction of sports is right province to develop tourism. Because of the diversity is very much to expand the types of sports.

The capacity and attractions of this province will be affected less than the seasonal phenomenon, and this possible exist that activities and sport tourism are enjoyed in all seasons. Identify phenomena and factors affecting sports tourism can help planners in each country. Due to the features, needs, problems and obstacles that are successful in promoting and prosperity.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In a bid to diversify the economy of the nation through sport tourism given the challenges and prospects of the resources, it is recommended that:

(1)The funding of the campaign to enlighten Iran of the importance of the sport tourism industry to the citizens' socio-economic well being and its contribution to the national economy should be undertaken.

(2)The generation of data for the planning of the industry is vital to its survival hence should be undertaken.

(3)Political will and the need to legislate and regulate the industry should be pursued to keep abreast with the global trends and best practices.

(4)The private Sector should be encouraged in the reform process to make the industry private sector driven.

(5)To ensure security of the resources and the consumers, there should be sport tourism Police in place.

(6)The financial sector i.e. the banking and the insurance sub sectors should be involved in the funding of the industry since investments are capital intensive.

(7)The adoption of a niche marketing approach should be critical to the success of the marketing strategy to be adopted and therefore the success in the developing sport tourism in the country.

(8)The potential market segments to be pursued for development should be leisure (new experience seekers; Iran's Diaspora; special interest; expatriate community; family holidays), conference and meetings, visiting friends and relatives (VFR), religious sports and other events.

(9)The Federal Government Agencies responsible for sport tourism development should be friendlier in approach with regards to enforcing laws which may not be too friendly with the States but should rather dialogue and collaborate to achieve success in developmental endeavors.

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**Table1. Percent of Participant in research**

subjects	F	%F	%CF
tourists	68	28.9	28.9
persons in charge	58	24.7	53.6
native persons	109	46.4	100
Total	235	100	-

**Table2. The attitude of subjects about capabilities of Lorestan province sport tourism**

	tourists	persons in charge	native persons	Total
Very good	22.05	14.80	22.93	19.92
Good	29.48	34.48	32.23	32.06
Moderate	28.97	19.02	29.02	25.67
Bad	14.42	15.18	12.11	13.90
Very bad	4.72	5.43	3.42	4.52

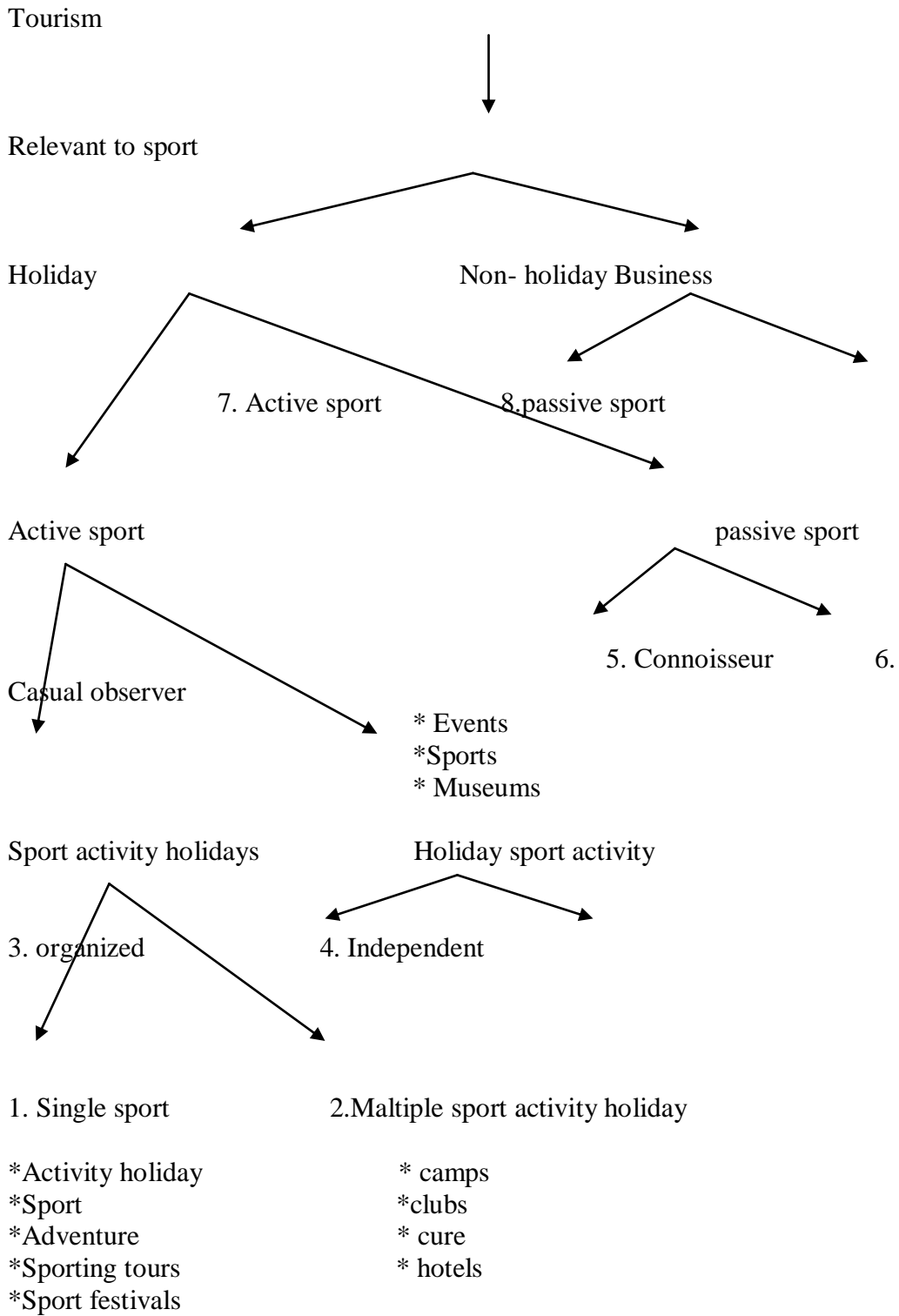
**Table3. The attitude of subjects about attractions of Lorestan province sport tourism**

	tourists	persons in charge	native persons	Total
Very good	16.41	16.36	22.93	18.56
Good	23.76	24.13	27.80	25.23
Moderate	29.38	26.71	30.41	28.83
Bad	20.83	21.56	13.60	27.99
Very bad	9.11	11.21	3.80	7.04

**Table4. The attitude of subjects about situation of sport tourism in Lorestan province**

	tourists	persons in charge	native persons%	Total
Very good	5.6	2.46	4.68	4.24
Good	12.97	15.50	18.17	15.54
Moderate	33.95	29.66	30.60	31.40
Bad	34.01	29.94	28.85	30.93
Very bad	14.97	21.15	17.51	17.087

**Figure 1. Eight types of sport tourism**



Source: De Knop and Standeven 1998