

**INVESTIGATING THE FACTORS HAMPERING THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM
IN TARGET TOURISM RURAL OF WEST AZERBAIJAN PROVINCE, IRAN**

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Abstract

Sustainable development especially in rural areas is faced with various Multidimensional problems such as economic deficits. Nevertheless one of most effective strategies to reduce this problem is help to develop the rural tourism in rural areas. The purpose of this study was to investigate Hampering Factors Affecting the Development of Rural Tourism in Target Tourism Rural of West Azerbaijan Province, Iran. All the related experts in the field of tourism were included in the study. Using of Snowball method, respondents were be asked (n=50). The research design was a Quasi-experimental method. A questionnaire was designed and employed to gather the required data. Cronbach's alpha computed to measure reliability of the questionnaire and its rate was 0.86. Face validity of the instrument was determined by related experts. The findings revealed that many of tourism related experts are agree with the development of rural tourism. Also the findings revealed that economic growth is in the first place of rural tourism development impacts. Also based on the findings of path analysis technique, Infrastructural barriers has had most direct impact and Cold climate variable had most indirect impact on composite index of hampering factor(CI_{HF}) affecting the development of rural tourism in Target Tourism Rural of West Azerbaijan Province.

Keywords: rural tourism, challenges, threats, Target Tourism Rural, West Azarbaijan Province

INTRODUCTION

Since the last decade, rural development has always been one of the major goals of overall developments in Iran and many of developing countries. To this end, various patterns of rural development have been experienced which more of them have had no favorite achievement (Danehkar & Mahmoudi, 2009). "Development" in the word meaning a specified state of growth or advancement (Oxford dictionaries, 2014). Based on this definition, rural development can be defined as a factor improving the living conditions in rural areas (Azkia, 2005). While, development of rural tourism is one of the rural development issues, especially in socio-economic approach (Sharply, 2002). Based on statistics, 28.61 percentages of Iran's population are living in rural areas (statistical center of Iran, 2011) and this testifies the importance of rural development and its strategies in Iran.

Researches show that rural tourism is in unsuitable status in Iran and has many problems and insufficiencies. The results of research conducted by Ghaniyan et al (2010) show that rural tourism has not proper and regular organization. Also local people and participants of tourism activities have not been good and specialized trained. Inappropriate physical and environmental infrastructure such as roads, Inappropriate accommodation and welfare facilities, weak propaganda, Lack of trained staff in the village, Inappropriate facilities and recreational equipment, Conflicts and cultural differences between tourists and rural people, unawareness of rural people about the important role of rural tourism in economic empowerment, lack of governmental planning and investments are some problems of rural tourism development which Bagheri et al(2011) have mentioned in their research. Maleki (1999) acknowledge that rural tourism development facing with some problems such as lack of concrete approach and wrong perception which comes from various reasons like Oil revenue and etc. Sharply (2002), believes that lack of financial support can play an important role in the failure of tourism development in rural areas in long-term.

Moreover Infrastructure problems, marketing, health care, cultural attractions fade, lack of clear understanding of tourism, lack of motivation of local authorities, tribal prejudices, lack of planning, research and monitoring, human resources related problems and problems related to the tourism and handicrafts, including the challenges facing tourism development (Karamidehkordi & Kalantari, 2010). Based on research conducted, barring economic benefits by local elites, increasing the rate of food and land prices, creating a gap between rural communities because of income distribution are some of rural tourism development challenges (Woods, 2000, Fleischer, 2002, Blangya & Mehta, 2006, Arntzen & et al, 2007, Baum & Szivas, 2008).

METHODOLOGY

The study used a survey design for data collection. All the tourism related experts in West Azerbaijan province were included in the study and 50 persons have been chosen by using than Snowball technique. A specific questionnaire was developed to measure the problems of rural tourism development in west Azerbaijan from viewpoints of related experts in the organizations of Agriculture jihad and Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism of West Azerbaijan province, Iran. The Cronbach's alpha for these scales were above 0.7. ata were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as: Eta-test, U-test and Pathanalysis.

Composite Index of Hampering Factors (CI_{HF})

The Composite Index of Hampering Factors was designed to analyze the total hampering Factors. The steps are passed to design this index are following:

1. Calculating the total score of each ten factors (table 1).
2. Making all scores scale free by using the method of division by mean (STX)
3. Weighting the scale freed digits by using the method of McGranahan (WSTX)
4. Summing up of the final scores (WSTX) as Composite Index (jalalzadeh, 2008).

Table 1: Distribution of effective variables in ten factors

Variable	Description
Institutional barriers	
X1	Lack of any cooperation between other organizations with cultural heritage organization
X2	Multiplicity of decision centers in the field of tourism
X3	Weakness of people involved in tourism management
X4	Lack of navigator team
X5	Lack of skilled staff
X6	Holding no training courses for involved personnel
X7	Lack of motivation in local authorities
X8	governmental management of tourism
Climate barriers	
X9	Natural disasters like earthquakes and drought
X10	Less of enough water
X11	Cold climate
Unawareness of rural people	
X12	Unawareness about benefits of rural tourism
X13	Not having enough knowledge and skills for productive activities & services related to tourism
X14	People not familiar with how to deal with tourists

Infrastructural barriers

- X15 Unsuitable roads
- X16 Poor residential centers
- X17 Lack of a police station
- X18 Lack of recreational facilities and services
- X19 Lack of phone line
- X20 Lack of Electricity
- X21 The absence or weakness of the transport system to travel to tourist sites
- X22 Lack of internet
- X23 Lack of Postal Facilities
- X24 Lack of health care services
- X25 Inappropriate signs to guide tourists

Lack of governmental support

- X26 Lack of government attention to the issue of rural tourism
- X27 Lack of support from local investors
- X28 Lack of adequate funding for local stakeholders related to tourism

Cultural barriers

- X29 Tribal prejudices
- X30 Cultural conflicts between local people and tourists
- X31 Unimportant traditional attractions of villages
- X32 Most people have a tendency to use the village atmosphere for personal issue

Sanitary & health barriers

- X33 Poor hygiene of sanitary services
- X34 Lack of clean water
- X35 Health problems in rural areas
- X36 Lack of waste disposal in the villages
- X37 Distribution and bad smell of animal waste in the villages
- X38 The problem of sewage disposal in rural areas

Economic barriers

- X39 People are not willing to invest in tourism sector
- X40 The weakness of the banking system and lack of adequate banking facilities to the tourism sector
- X41 The lack of public investment in rural tourism
- X42 Lack of investment in advertising and information about rural tourism
- X43 Temporary or short-term job opportunities in the tourism sector

Management & Planning barriers

- X44 Not paying attention to potentials of tourism areas
- X45 Getting uncommon entrance fee
- X46 Lack of planning in rural tourism

- X47 Inappropriate packaging of handicrafts and advertising about rural tourism
- X48 Lack of spatial organization of tourism areas
- X49 Lack of Adornment in the target villages
- X50 Not rating tourist centers with international standards.
- X51 Neglect and less activities of media and agencies responsible in informing about tourism
- X52 Disturbing the beautiful landscape of tourist centers with poor projects
- X53 Lack of good distribution of infrastructural facilities in rural areas
- X54 Inadequate recognition of tribal and rural handicrafts

Study barriers

- X55 Lack of statistical information in the field of rural tourism
- X56 No standard method for estimating the number of passengers
- X57 Lack of attention to academic research organizations associated with tourism

Study area

West Azerbaijan province is located at northern west of Iran and has about 3266 villages (Fig1). Based on the statistics, there are 49 villages as Target Tourism Rural in this province (Fig2). Total population of this province is 3080576 persons who about 27 percentages lives in rural areas. While about 44652 persons are living in Target Tourism Rural areas (Statistical center of Iran, 2013).

Figure 1. Geographical position of West Azerbaijan

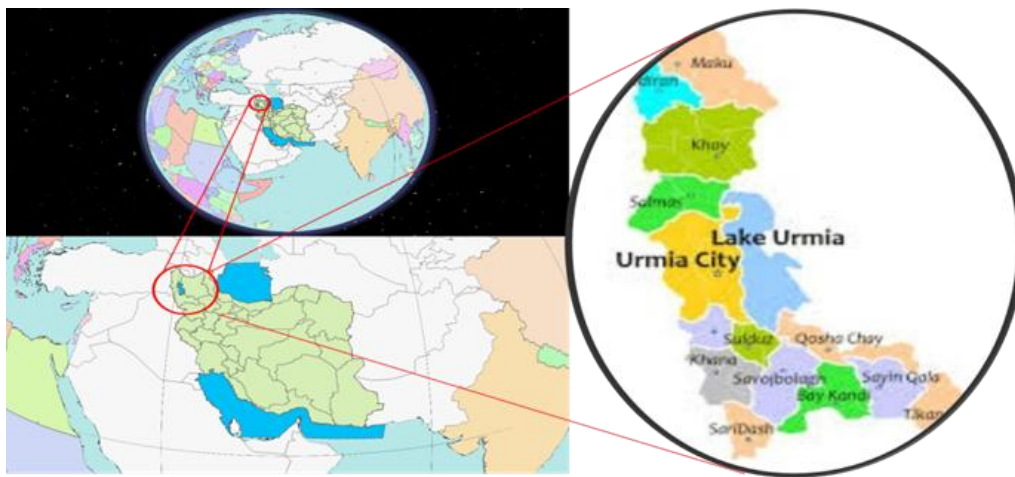
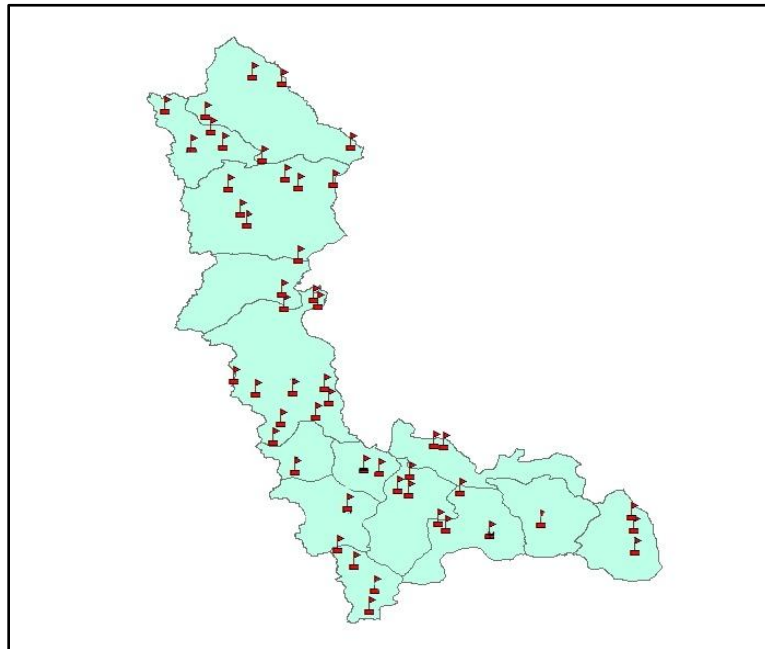


Figure 2. Spatial distribution of Target Tourism Rural of West Azerbaijan Province



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

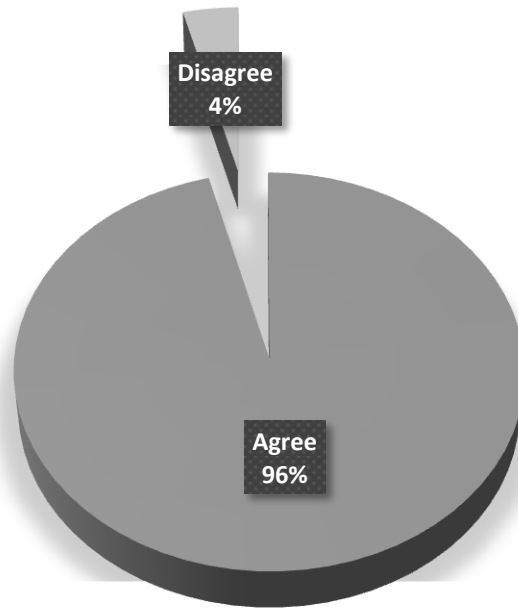
Professional and individual characteristics of the respondents:

In total, 29 persons (58 percent) of the respondents are men and there are 21 (42 percent) female experts. The average age of the respondents is 36 years. Considering the educational level, most of the farmers (60 percent) have Bachelor (table 2). According to the results of this research, most of respondents (96 percent) are agree with developing the rural tourism (Fig 3).

Table 2: The individual and professional characteristics of the respondents, 2014 (n=50)

		Average	Minimum	Maximum	Standard deviation
• Age		36	45	27	5.884
		frequency	percentage	Cumulative percentage	
• Gender	Male	29	58	58	
	Female	21	42	100	
	Bachelor	30	60	60	
• Educational level	MSC	17	34	94	
	PhD	3	6	100	

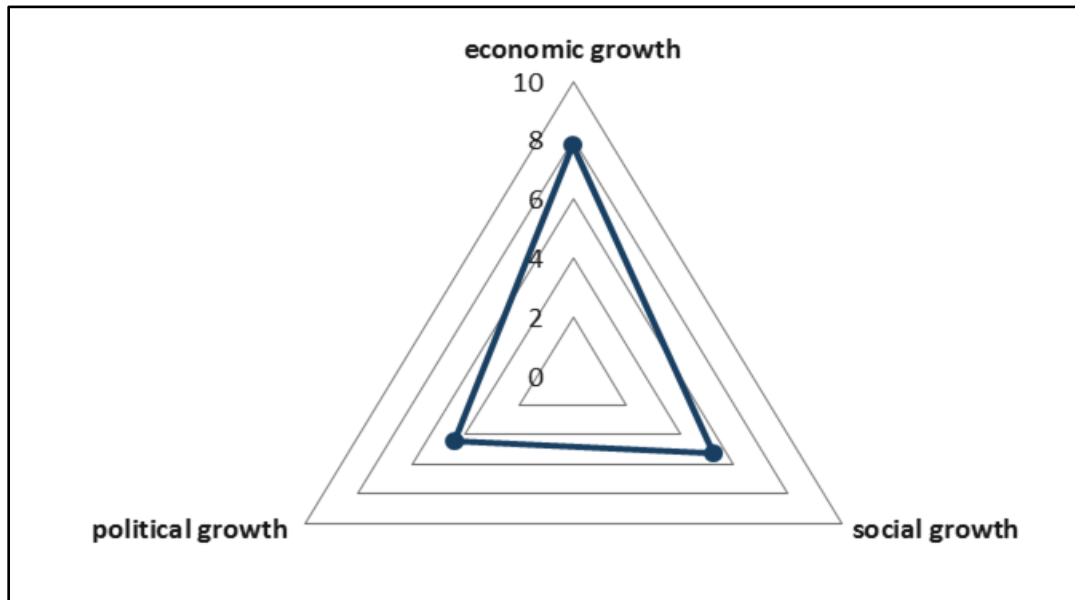
Figure 3. Distribution of respondent's viewpoints about rural tourism development



Multiple impacts of rural tourism development on rural community

Based on the findings, the impacts of rural tourism development are ranked to economic growth (7.84 points from 10), social growth (5.24 points from 10) and political growth (4.38 points from 10).

Figure 4. Situation of multiple impacts of rural tourism development on rural community



Relation among viewpoints about rural tourism development and variables

Eta-test:

Findings showed that Relation among respondent's viewpoints about rural tourism development and age is in the highest and with the level of study is in the lowest state (Table 3).

Table 3: Relation among viewpoints about rural tourism development and criterion variables

Variable1	Variable1	Eta
viewpoints about rural tourism development	Age	0.220
	Gender	0.033
	Level of Study	0.013

2014(n=50)

Comparison of research groups

U-Test:

The results of U-Test imply that there is not a significant difference between males and females in their viewpoint about multiple impacts of rural tourism development and also there is no significant difference between them in CI_{HF} factor (table 4).

Table 4: Comparison of research groups by U-Test, 2014(n=50)

Main variable	Grouping variable	u	W	Z
economic growth	Gender	275	710	-0.604
social growth		299	734	-0.111
political growth		298	733	-0.132
CI_{HF}		261	696	-0.855

Path analysis of hampering factors

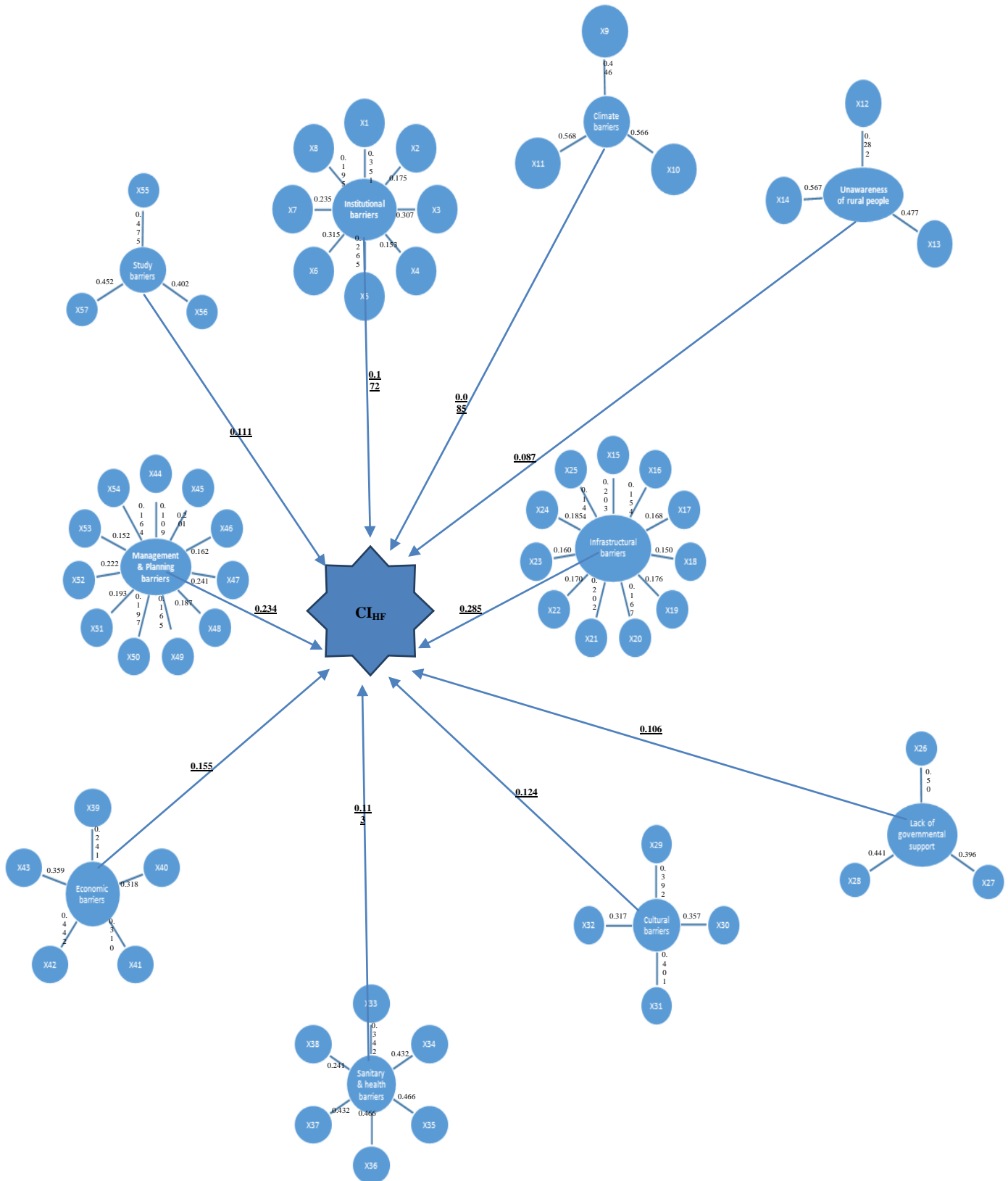
In this regard, 57 variables are classified to ten main factors and entered in regression model to compute Path coefficient (Table 5) and design path diagram.

Based on the findings, Infrastructural barriers(0.285) and Climate barriers (0.085) have respectively most and less direct impact on CI_{HF} , while cold climate (0.568) and Lack of planning in rural tourism (0.109) have respectively most and less direct impact on CI_{HF} (Fig 5).

Table 5: Path coefficient of effective variables on CI_{HF}

Variable	Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Total Impact	Variable	Direct Impact	Indirect Impact	Total Impact
Institutional barriers	0.172	-----	0.172	Cultural barriers	0.124	-----	0.124
X1	-----	0.351	0.351	X29	-----	0.392	0.392
X2	-----	0.175	0.175	X30	-----	0.357	0.357
X3	-----	0.307	0.307	X31	-----	0.401	0.401
X4	-----	0.153	0.153	X32	-----	0.317	0.317
X5	-----	0.265	0.265	Sanitary & health barriers	0.113	-----	0.113
X6	-----	0.315	0.315	X33	-----	0.342	0.342
X7	-----	0.235	0.235	X34	-----	0.241	0.241
X8	-----	0.195	0.195	X35	-----	0.359	0.359
Climate barriers	0.085	-----	0.085	X36	-----	0.460	0.460
X9	-----	0.446	0.446	X37	-----	0.466	0.466
X10	-----	0.566	0.566	X38	-----	0.432	0.432
X11	-----	0.568	0.568	Economic barriers	0.155	-----	0.155
Unawareness of rural people	0.087	-----	0.087	X39	-----	0.241	0.241
X12	-----	0.282	0.282	X40	-----	0.318	0.318
X13	-----	0.567	0.567	X41	-----	0.310	0.310
X14	-----	0.477	0.477	X42	-----	0.442	0.442
Infrastructural barriers	0.285	-----	0.285	X43	-----	0.359	0.359
X15	-----	0.203	0.203	Management & Planning barriers	0.234	-----	0.234
X16	-----	0.154	0.154	X44	-----	0.152	0.152
X17	-----	0.168	0.168	X45	-----	0.164	0.164
X18	-----	0.150	0.150	X46	-----	0.109	0.109
X19	-----	0.176	0.176	X47	-----	0.222	0.222
X20	-----	0.167	0.167	X48	-----	0.193	0.193
X21	-----	0.202	0.202	X49	-----	0.197	0.197
X22	-----	0.170	0.170	X50	-----	0.201	0.201
X23	-----	0.160	0.160	X51	-----	0.162	0.162
X24	-----	0.185	0.185	X52	-----	0.241	0.241
X25	-----	0.144	0.144	X53	-----	0.187	0.187
Lack of governmental support	0.106	-----	0.106	X54	-----	0.165	0.165
X26	-----	0.50	0.50	Study barriers	0.111	-----	0.111
X27	-----	0.396	0.396	X55	-----	0.475	0.475
X28	-----	0.441	0.441	X56	-----	0.402	0.402
				X57	-----	0.452	0.452

Figure5. Path diagram of effective variables on CI_{HF}



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, some conclusions were derived and the following recommendations were made:

- Given to that many of tourism related experts are agree with the development of rural tourism. It appears that rural tourism development projects in the region is essential.
- Since economic growth is in the first place of rural tourism development impacts from viewpoints of tourism related experts, so it is recommended that economic Stimulus offered to rural people living in Target Tourism Rural to convince them to go along with rural tourism development projects.
- Based on the findings, infrastructural barriers has most direct impact on CI_{HF} , therefore Investment in infrastructural facilities such as roads is necessary.
- The respondents have stated that cold climate has had most indirect impact on CI_{HF} , hence precision planning for coordinating tourism programs with weather conditions, is recommended

Finally, it is recommended that, some topics be considered in future related researches:

- Site selection of Target Tourism Rural in West Azerbaijan province
- Investigating economic stimulus to develop the rural tourism in Target Tourism Rural areas.
- Investigating the strategies to reduce weather impacts on rural tourism development in West Azerbaijan province

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