Local Communities Participation in Wetland Ecotourism Development
(Case study: International Kani Barazan Wetland of Mahabad)

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Received date: 2019.10.01
Reception date: 2020.07.13

Abstract
Wetland ecotourism is one of the main branches of the tourism industry that can play an important role in revitalizing villages, creating jobs and increasing income for villagers, protecting natural, historical and cultural heritage. Accordingly, the present study was conducted from 2018 to 2019 to identify the components affecting the local communities' participation to develop the ecotourism in International Kani Barazan Wetland of Mahabad. The statistical population was the local communities of the villages around Kani Barazan wetland in Mahabad. They were 130 people that 97 of them were selected randomly with probability proportionate using the table of Krejcie and Morgan. The required data were collected via questionnaire. The face validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by a panel of experts. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine its reliability. The Cronbach's alpha value for each section of the questionnaire was higher than 7.7. SPSS software was used to analyze the data. Data analysis was performed in both descriptive and inferential sections. In the descriptive section, the demographic characteristics of the studied individuals such as age, gender, education, etc. were studied. In the analytical section, mean comparison methods, t-test and multiple regression analysis were used. Based on the obtained results there was a significant difference (0.1) between men and women in terms of participation in tourism activities. Also, Findings from multiple regression analysis showed that variables such as local norms and culture, access to capital and efficient management, the most important components affecting the participation of local communities in the tourism industry development in international Kani Barazan wetland. Therefore, in formulating comprehensive plans for wetland management, such as the comprehensive tourism plan, these components should always have a special priority.

Keywords: Sustainable development, wetland conservation, participation of local communities, wetland tourism.