

## Investigating the Host Community Support for Rural Tourism Development (Case Study: Central District of Firoozabad County)

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### Abstract

**Purpose-** This survey research was conducted with the aim of assessing the rural residents' support for tourism development and their effective factors in the tourism target villages in the Central District of Firoozabad County.

**Design/methodology/approach-** The statistical population of this study was resident household heads. Using Bartlett Table, 155 households were studied by simple random sampling method. The data gathering tool was a researcher-made questionnaire which its validity and reliability were confirmed.

**Findings-** Based on the findings, the residents were categorized into two groups of committed supporters and passive supporters according to their support for tourism. The results of the logistic regression model showed that the perception of social, economic and environmental impacts is directly (positively) significantly predictive of the residents' support for tourism development. The highest coefficient of the logistic regression model was related to the perception of social impacts (with a coefficient of 10.661) as compared to the economic impacts (with a coefficient of 8.659) and the environmental (with a coefficient of 7.683). In addition, in 95.5% of the cases, the function can correctly measure levels of support for rural tourism. The accuracy of the model was also confirmed through the ROC curve.

**Research limitations/implications-** Difficulties in completing the questionnaires due to the number of the tourist arrivals and people's occupations, the reluctance of some households to respond because of the distrust resulting from the location of the village in the palace privacy, and the problems encountered in this regard, which were resolved by the researchers' frequent visits to the area and acquiring the villagers' trust.

**Practical implications-** In addition to improving the resident's perceptions of environmental impacts, further attention must be paid to improving the residents' perceptions of economic and social impacts.

**Originality/value-** The development of tourism industry is heavily dependent on the participation and support of local residents. Improving the residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism will lead to more residents' support for the industry, thereby, be paid more by tourists in the area, and recommend destinations to others and their desire to return to the area.

**Keywords:** Support, Host community, Rural tourism, Firoozabad County.

**Paper type-** Scientific & Research.

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest, fastest and most promising developing industries in the world (Abdollahzadeh & Sharifzadeh, 2012), which has a significant impact on the economic and social development of countries (Batala, Regmi, & Sharma, 2017) and has the potential to support local communities in the development of economic diversity (Abdollahzadeh & Sharifzadeh, 2012). According to the report of World Tourism Organization (2018), there were over one billion tourists in 2017 with total spending of \$ 1.5 billion (i.e. 10% of the world's GDP) (Al-Rousan, Mustafa, Almasri, & Balaawi, 2019). Tourism created more than 313 million jobs in 2017, accounting for 9.9% of total employment (Ulkhay, Siamiaty, Handoko, Madjid, & Nu, 2019) (creating 1 in 10 jobs) (Kim & Hall, 2019). It also directly supports 118,454,000 jobs (Aung, 2019; Ulkhay et al., 2019), which is expected to increase by 2.2% in 2028 to 150,139,000 jobs, or 4.2% of total employment. In addition, this sector accounts for 6.6% of total world exports and approximately 30% of total world service exports (Ulkhay et al., 2019). The industry has also grown significantly at the rural level, as rural tourism is known as "an alternative strategy for rural development" (Oruonye, 2013, p. 6) and "a key approach to poverty reduction" (Goa & Wu, 2017). In particular, tourism has been formed in areas with diverse resources, attractions and services, and has transformed the capacities of the region into a potential destination (Kastenholz, Marzuki, & Al-Mulali, 2012). Tourism is also explained as "a multidimensional activity that affects all aspects of the life of the host community" (Diniz, Falleiro, & de Barros, 2014, p. 6). As well as providing employment opportunities and direct and indirect income, the industry also provides significant services and facilities to local residents (Carneiro & Eusébio, 2015). However, tourism has the potential to create both positive and negative impacts (Abdollahzadeh & Sharifzadeh, 2012; Carneiro & Eusébio, 2015), affecting the local residents' support on tourism development decisions. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the level of residents' support and determine the factors that influence their level of support (Mohamadzadeh, Panahi & Samadzad, 2017).

Measuring the perception of the host community regarding the positive and negative impacts of tourism development in the region can reduce the negative impacts and increase the positive impacts of tourism. Obviously, if the host community benefits from tourism development, it also supports other tourism development programs (Shafie & Mohammadi, 2014). In fact, the development of tourism destinations requires the full support of local community residents and the development of a satisfactory interaction of tourists and hosts. As a result of these constructive and effective interactions, tourism benefits for the tourists and host communities can be enhanced and provide the basis for national development (Mohamadpor, Rajabzadeh, Azar, & Zargham, 2016). Nowadays, planning to attract tourists is becoming increasingly important in many countries. In particular, rural tourism can be used to promote the countries' macro-development goals. Given that residents of many tourism destinations are an essential part of the tourism "generator", the attitude and behavior of residents has a significant impact on success (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012), and the support of local residents is essential to ensure the long-term success of tourism industry development (Lalith Chandralal, 2010). However, tourism development studies have largely neglected the status of residents although this may affect their understanding of the impacts of tourism and in turn the host community's support for tourism development (Stylidis, Biran, Sit, & Szivas, 2014). The significant potential and capacity of Firoozabad County in Fars Province in terms of attracting tourism has made tourism expansion a necessity for the development of this county (Aliyari, Sharifzadeh, & Ahmadvand, 2019). However, the expansion of tourism without proper planning and management has caused many problems (social, economic and environmental) in this area. Local surveys indicate that the arrival of great numbers of tourists into the tourism target villages of the Central District of Firoozabad County has had many positive and negative impacts for the residents of these villages. Therefore, this study aims to measure the level of local residents' support for rural tourism in Firoozabad County because no study has been carried out in this area yet. However, due to the arrival of tourists, positive and negative economic, social and environmental impacts have occurred;

thus, identifying the factors affecting the level of residents' support leads to present solutions to improve the residents' perception of this industry and enhance their support for tourism. In this regard, the specific objectives of this study included the categorization of rural residents based on the amount of tourism support, the explanation of factors affecting the level of local residents' support for rural tourism, and finally offering strategies to increase the local residents' support for rural tourism.

## 2. Research Theoretical Literature

### 2.1. Theoretical foundations

One of the main issues related to tourism areas is the attitude and perception of local residents, which has been the focus of many researchers. In the 1960s, the focus of these studies was on the positive aspect and in the 1970s the focus was on the negative aspects of tourism impacts. In the 1980s, this approach became more balanced and orderly, while in recent years researchers' attention has shifted from studying the impacts of tourism to the study of residents of the communities (McGehee, & Andereck, 2015). Local residents are "the main beneficiaries of tourism developments" (Mohamadpor et al., 2016) and tourism development is highly dependent on their goodwill (Aligholizadeh Firozjaei, Ghadami, Ramezanzadeh Lasbooyee, 2010; Gabriel Brida, Disegna, & Osti, 2014; Mohamadpor et al., 2016). Local residents are at the center of the decision-making and planning process for this industry (Gabriel Brida et al., 2014; Mohamadpor et al., 2016). Interactions between tourists and residents and the support provided by the host community are known as important factors in the development of successful and sustainable tourism (Gursoy, Boğan, Dedeoğlu, & Çalışkan, 2019). Many researchers believe that the attitude and perception of residents (Khoshkam, Marzuki, & Al-Mulali, 2016; Wang, 2019; Zhuang, Lin, & Li, 2019) and assessing the quality of support provided by host communities can have significant impacts on the success of tourism development programs (Wang, 2019; Zhuang et al., 2019). Numerous studies have been conducted on the residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism and the support of host communities for tourism development. Many theories and conceptual models have been used to study the attitude and behavior of local residents towards tourism (Gursoy et al., 2019). These models

included Community Attachment (Long & Kayat, 2011; Woosnam, 2011); Power Theory, Stakeholder Theory (Gursoy et al., 2019; Long & Kayat, 2011) Growth Machine Theory (GMT), Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Abedtalas, Tobrak, & Sercek, 2016; Long & Kayat, 2011; Gursoy et al., 2019; Woosnam, 2011), Doxey's Irridex Model (1976), Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) (Butler, 1980); Social Representation Theory, Dependency Theory, Identity Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Abedtalas et al., 2016) and Segmentation Approach (Aligholizadeh Firozjaei et al., 2010). The Butler and Doxy Tourism Destination Life Cycle Model is a reflection of residents' perceptions of tourism. According to this framework, residents' attitudes towards tourism will change as tourism develops. Also, according to this model, communities have a certain capacity to attract tourists. Although these frameworks are useful criteria for assessing community attitudes at specific stages of tourism development, they have some drawbacks and ignore facts such as residents' different reactions to tourism development, the effect of different factors on residents' perceptions, as well as residents' heterogeneity in terms of attitude (Long & Kayat, 2011). Most of these frameworks also consider the relationship between tourists and residents cursory, and no agreement has been reached on the severity and direction of the determinants of tourist behavior (Zhang, Ghoochani, Pan, & Crotts, 2016). In the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), an advanced version of the theory of rational action, internal factors such as individual attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are among the determinants of tourism support; however, this theory has not been extensively tested in the context of tourism support (Abedtalas et al., 2016). Social Exchange Theory is the most common theory of residents' reaction to tourism development (Adeyinka-Ojo, Khoo-Lattimore, & Nair, 2013; Aligholizadeh Firozjaei et al., 2010; Rasoolimanesh, Ringle, Jaafar, & Ramayah, 2017; Stylidis et al., 2014). This theory is summarized by Perdue, Long & Allen (1990) as a proper framework (Ap, 1992; Waitt, 2003) for investigating the relationship between the residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism impacts and residents' support for tourism development. This theory is based on the principle that human beings seek reward and avoid

punishment and take action with the expect of gaining profit (Choi, 2013; Proyrungroj, 2017). Therefore, social interaction is considered as the exchange of resources, and people will exchange if its benefits outweigh its costs (Proyrungroj, 2017; Stylidis et al., 2014). Social Exchange Theory from the perspective of tourism development shows that residents' perceptions of tourism development affect their level of support (García, Vázquez, & Macías, 2015; Stylidis et al., 2014; Woo, Kim, & Uysal, 2015). According to this theory, factors affecting residents' perceptions of tourism impacts can be categorized into internal and external dimensions. The external dimension refers to the levels of tourism activities and the internal dimension refers to the characteristics of the host community (Del Chiappa, Lorenzo-Romero, & Gallarza, 2016; Khoshkam et al., 2016). In the internal dimension, tourism has influenced each member of the host community differently, so that personal experiences of the positive and negative impacts of tourism can influence the attitude of residents towards tourism development (Khoshkam et al., 2016). However, this theory also has its own drawbacks. This theory emphasizes the economic impact on the attitude of residents. Nevertheless, according to the results of some studies, despite expecting the neutral attitude of the residents without benefiting tourism advantages, some of them have a positive or negative attitude towards tourism. Therefore, non-economic factors are also important in the social exchange and attitude of residents towards tourism (Maruyama, Keith, & Woosn, 2019). Hence, some scholars have emphasized the importance of combining social exchange theory (SET) with other theoretical frameworks to achieve a broader approach (Abedtalas et al., 2016; Maruyama et al., 2019).

Some scholars have used the social exchange practice model. This model is on the basis of the exchange relationships concept in which understanding the positive impacts of tourism encourages the community to support and participate in tourism activities, while perceiving the negative impacts inhibits residents from supporting tourism development (Choi, 2013; Gursoy et al., 2019; Mcgehee, & Andereck, 2004; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017; Woo et al., 2015; Zaidan, 2016). Some researchers also use social representation theory (SRT) as an alternative or complement to social exchange theory. This

means that despite the dominance of social exchange theory, there is no agreement on it. According to the theory of social representation, attitudes reflect true social representations that are widely used in society. This theory examines the perception of the nature of phenomena and the cause of events. This theory has been used and supported by myriad studies. However, it does not have clear and integrated dimensions (Abedtalas et al., 2016). The importance of paying attention to residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism on sustainable tourism development at destination has led many researchers to study the perceived impacts of tourism on residents (Jani, 2018). Residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism (costs and benefits) are divided into economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions (Abedtalas et al., 2016; Long & Kayat, 2011), which in turn influences the residents' support for tourism development (Long & Kayat, 2011) and reflects the three-dimensional line of sustainable tourism. These three dimensions differ in terms of strength and direction for different residents in the same destination and are usually used to explain the perceived impacts of tourism on residents (Jani, 2018). By reviewing the theoretical foundations of tourism, it can be stated that this research has taken a new approach to the theory of social exchange and investigated the perception of tourism impacts in terms of the costs and benefits of the three economic, social and environmental dimensions and the support due to these perceptions in such a way that the host community will be discouraged or perhaps suppressed of tourism development if they consider its costs and threats, while they will support it if they consider tourism benefits.

## **2.2. Theoretical background of the research**

The phenomenon of tourism and its continuous growth accompanies with its different perceptions of local residents. Numerous research has studied the residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism (Jurowski & Brown, 2001; Lin, Wang, & Yeh, 2019; Mohamadpor et al., 2016; Stylidis et al., 2014). Perceptions of economic benefits (such as income generation through selling rural products, income generation through the sale of food from the supermarkets, increasing purchasing power of local residents and self-employment) were found to be effective on residents' attitudes toward tourism development, while the results of a study by Choi (2013) indicated that negative economic impacts

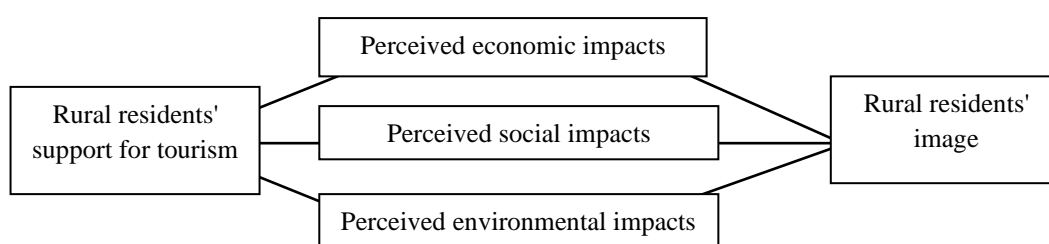
such as income gap and seasonality of income were perceived by residents in tourism areas. Some studies also investigated residents' perceptions of the social impacts of tourism. These studies have highlighted issues such as the sense of pride and cultural honor (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005; Choi, 2013; Mohamadpor et al., 2016; Woo et al., 2015), the sense of place attachment (Andereck et al., 2005), the authenticity of the indigenous culture (Gabriel Brida et al., 2014), the diversity of cultural activities (Mohamadpor et al., 2016), the level of residents' participation, cultural experiences (Pavlic, Portolan, & Puh., 2015) as well as abnormalities such as addiction (Lin et al., 2019; Tichaawa, & Mhlanga, 2015), crime (Jurowski & Brown, 2001; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Mohamadpor et al., 2016; Pavlic et al., 2015; Stylidis et al., 2014; Tichaawa, & Mhlanga, 2015), and local conflicts (Lin et al., 2019; Pavlic et al., 2015). The results of some other studies also indicate the perception of environmental impacts such as pollution (water, soil, sound) (Stylidis et al., 2014; Tichaawa, & Mhlanga, 2015) soil erosion, invasion of protected areas in the village (Tichaawa, & Mhlanga, 2015) scattering rubbish (Amini, Bakhty, & Babajamali., 2015) and causing traffic in the village (Lin et al., 2019; Stylidis et al., 2014). Based on studies, some issues such as rural housing reinforcement (Gabriel Brida et al., 2014; McGehee, & Andereck, 2004), expanding space and public places (Choi, 2013), providing welfare services (Choi, 2013; Gabriel Brida et al., 2014) and creating the incentive to repair traditional houses (Lin et al., 2019) are mentioned by rural residents as favorable environmental impacts.

Various studies have been carried out to investigate local residents' support for tourism development and the factors affecting host community's support. In this regard, the results of AbdolManafi and Azkia's research (2011) highlighted the importance of the involvement of local people and relevant authorities in protecting the global environment, cultural and natural heritage. Stylidis et al. (2014) found that residents' perceptions of the impact of tourism on residents' level of support were significant. The findings of Khoshkam et al. (2016) indicated a positive and direct relationship between the perceptions of development and residents' attitudes towards tourism development in Anzali Wetland.

According to the results of Choi's (2013) research, the economic impacts of tourism are more favorably perceived by those who benefit from its social and cultural conditions. This perception contributes to local residents' support for tourism development, even if they have a negative perception of environmental impacts. Aligholizadeh Firoozjaie and Ghanbarzadeh Ashari (2016) assessed rural residents' support for rural tourism development in the villages of forest regions and their effective factors. According to the results, residents were highly supportive of tourism development. In this study, residents' attitude to the social and economic impacts of tourism had a direct and significant impact, and their attitude to environmental impacts had a negative and significant effect on the level of residents' support for tourism development. In a study of factors affecting rural residents' support for tourism, McGehee and Andereck (2004) found that personal tourism benefiting in the form of positive and negative tourism impacts leads to support and expansion of tourism among Arizona residents. The results of the study by Lin et al. (2019) indicated high support of residents for tourism development when they perceived positive impacts and their low support while perceiving negative impacts of tourism. Abdolahi et al. (2016) found that residents' support for tourism development was above average. In this study, economic and environmental impacts were significant predictors of residents' support for tourism development, whereas socio-cultural impacts were not predictable for residents' support for tourism development. Mohamadpor et al. (2016) studied the role of host communities in supporting the tourism development in Gilan Province. Based on the results, tourism satisfaction and social dimensions are the most important factors affecting the support or lack of support of the host community, respectively. Nevertheless, the quality of tourist-host interactions is reduced if the inhabitants of the tourism target villages perceive the existence of tourists as causing damage to the physical and social environment. In this regard, Aligholizadeh Firoozjaie et al. (2010) stated in their research that the level of support of residents depends on the level of tourism development. The results showed a significant difference in the nature of the villagers' attitude and tendency towards tourism. In addition, coastal villages in which residents had

a stronger perception of the negative impacts of tourism were less supportive of tourism development rather than offshore villages. [Gabriel Brida et al. \(2014\)](#) and [Donny Sita and MohdNor \(2015\)](#) described the residents' perceptions of the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts on their support for local tourism policies. Residents perceiving tourism as positive have a greater tendency to support tourism development policies; on the contrary, residents with a negative perception of tourism costs and benefits were preventing further tourism development. Therefore, it could be stated that those who directly benefited from tourism and were more satisfied with tourism expressed more support for this industry ([Campón-Cerro, Folgado-Fernández, & Hernández-Mogollón, 2017](#); [Jeon, Kang, & Desmarais, 2016](#)). [Andereck et al. \(2005\)](#) also studied the residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism on local communities. Based on the results, local residents benefiting from tourism perceived more positive impacts; however, they did not differ from other residents in terms of their perceptions of the negative impacts of tourism. Furthermore, the results of the research by [Gabriel Brida et al. \(2014\)](#) indicated the negative perceptions of the local residents toward the tourism impacts and consequently their less support for increase in the number of tourists. [Lalith Chandralal \(2010\)](#) also studied the impacts of tourism and community attitude towards

tourism in Sri Lanka and noted that there is considerable support for the development of tourism and the increasing number of trips. [Jurowski and Brown \(2001\)](#) compared the views of involved and uninvolved citizens on the issues of tourism development. The results showed that tourism had both positive and negative benefits for the host community, and there was a statistically significant difference in the support of these two groups. [Tichaawa and Mhlanga \(2015\)](#) found that local residents of Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe supported tourism development. [Woo et al. \(2015\)](#) found that quality of life was an effective predictor of tourism development support. The research results of [Campón-Cerro et al. \(2017\)](#), [Pavlic et al. \(2015\)](#), and [Diniz et al. \(2014\)](#) indicated greater residents' support for tourism development by improving the perceptions of quality of life. Thus, it is clear that a more favorable perception of the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts leads to greater support ([Stylidis et al., 2014](#)) and the negative perceptions of residents will nullify the positive impacts of tourism ([Chili, 2015](#)). Therefore, investigating the residents' attitude towards tourism development can help to improve the management of tourism destination ([Lundberg, 2015](#)). In this regard, the perceived economic, social and environmental impacts and residents' support are illustrated in [Figure 1](#).



**Figure 1. Perceived economic, social and environmental impacts and residents' support**  
(Adapted from [Homsud & Promsaard, 2015](#))

### 3. Research Methodology

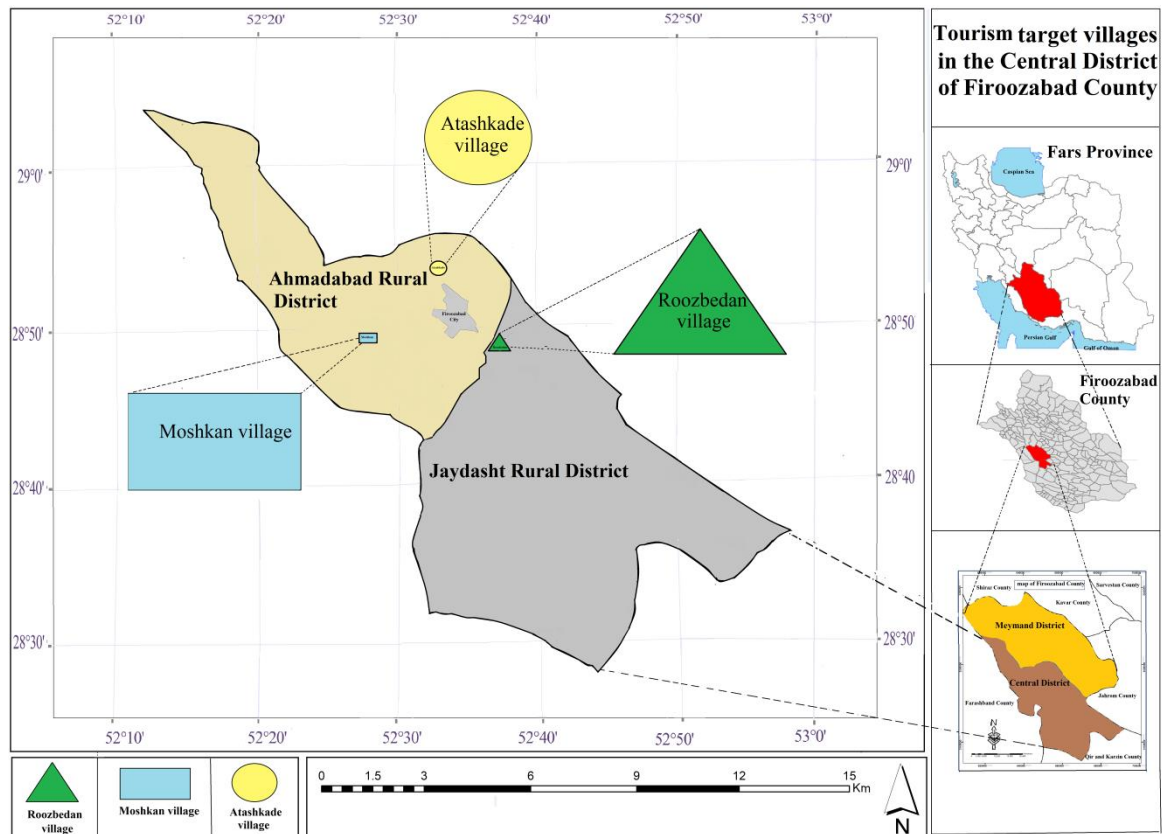
#### 3.1. Geographical Scope of the Research

Firoozabad County has two districts including Central and Meymand and 5 rural districts ([Statistical Center of Iran, 2016](#)). This county has natural, rural, nomadic ([Aliyari et al., 2019](#)) and geotourism attractions. As the first major capital of Sasanian Dynasty, it has many historical and

architectural monuments ([Badri & Shoaei, 2011](#)). In the Central District of this county, there are three tourism target villages (see [Figure 2](#)) which have cultural attractions such as Ardeshir Babakan Palace, Naghshe Pirozi, Qalah-e Dokhtar, Coronation of Ardeshir Babakan, the ancient city of Gur, Minar Monument, Mehr Narseh Bridge and natural attractions such as springs, waterfalls, agricultural fields, Murdestan, Tangab Dam,

Kherqeh, Padena Forbidden Hunting Area, Konar Siah Salt Dome and Hanifghan. According to the statistics of the Cultural Heritage Organization and the statements of the rural managers, about 5,000 local and foreign tourists travel to these villages annually to benefit from the tourist attractions (Aliyari et al., 2019). In these villages, there are tourism facilities and service operations such as cafes, restaurants, accommodation facilities, crafts company, canteens, barbecues and sandwich shops and cultural tourism infrastructure such as tourism festivals, libraries, sport grounds, rural gardens and local clothing stores (Aliyari & Sharifzadeh, 2017), which besides social activities such as traditional and indigenous games, folk dances, traditional and local food offerings, and

handicrafts faires such as *Jouval*, *Baladan*, *Tirdan*, *Chante*, *Mafrash*, *Mahle Sazi*, *two-layer sewing*, *Gabbeh*, *carpet*, *Jajim*, etc. are offered to tourists (Aliyari et al., 2019). However, the distribution of tourism facilities and services among the tourism target villages is not equal, while Atashkade Village has the highest and Roozbedan Village has the least facilities and services (Aliyari & Sharifzadeh, 2017). The three tourism target villages in the central district of the county are shown in Figure 2, which includes the villages of Atashkade and Moshkan from Ahmadabad rural district and the village of Roozbedan from Jaydasht rural district (Statistical Center of Iran, 2016).



**Figure 2. The map of Central District of Firoozabad County**  
(Source: Statistical Center of Iran, 2016)

### 3.2. Methodology

The present study is a descriptive-analytical survey. The purpose of this study was to measure the level of host community's support for rural tourism development in the central district of Firoozabad County. A researcher-made

questionnaire was used for data collection. The residents' perceptions of the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism were considered as independent variables and residents' support for tourism development was considered as the dependent variable. The five-point Likert

scale (from strongly decreased (-2) to strongly increased (+2)) was used to determine the effects of the studied indices. In addition, five-point Likert scale (from very low (1) to very high (5)) was used to determine the dependent variable indices. Each variable is listed in Table (1). The statistical population of this study consisted of rural household heads of tourism target villages in Firoozabad County. Based on the 2011 census, 598 resident household heads (villages including Atashkade, Moshkan and Roozbedan) were identified. Simple random sampling was used to administrate the questionnaire. Using Bartlett's table, one percent error rate and  $t = 2.58$ , the sample size was estimated (155 households

heads), and the participants were interviewed using proportional assignment. In order to determine the conceptual validity of the research instrument, the initial questionnaire was distributed among the specialists and was corrected according to their suggestions. To determine the reliability of the research instrument, a pre-test (38 participants out of the statistical population) was conducted. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated, which showed that the reliability of all constructs was appropriate and acceptable. The operational definitions for the research variables are given in Table (1).

**Table 1. The studied indices and Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the research variables**

(Source: Research findings using: Aligholizadeh Firozjaei, Ghadami, Ramezanzadeh lasbooyee, 2010, p. 37; Jurowski & Brown, 2001; Bagri & Kala, 2016; Choi, 2013; Mcgehee & Andereck, 2004; Pavlic, Portolan, & Puh, 2015, p. 267; Woo, Kim, & Uysal, 2015; Garau-Vadell, Gutierrez, Tano, & Diaz-Armas, 2016; Muresan, Oroian, Harun, Arion, Porutiu, Chiciudean, Todea, & Lile, 2016)

Dimensions	Components	Cronbach's alpha
Perception of Social impacts	Positive attitude of villagers towards the region, the sense of pride and cultural honor, place attachment, return of rural immigrants, village fame, power of social groups and family structure in the village, authenticity of indigenous culture, commodification of host culture, local language and dialect of villagers, increasing crime, cynicism about strangers' culture, local conflicts in the village, conflict between native residents and tourists, social inequalities, women's insecurity, diversity of cultural activities, social security, residents' level of participation, level of public welfare, confidence in villagers, suitable context to introduce village culture to others, cultural identity, interaction with neighboring areas, villagers' cultural experiences, more unity among the villagers, level of education in the village, type of clothing and local clothes, changing food consumption patterns, unauthentic architecture of tourist second homes, consumerism, the performance of rural manager and rural council, rural marriage style, and architectural style.	0.89
Perception of Economic impacts	Income generation by selling rural products, self-employment, income generation by selling food in supermarkets, increasing the purchasing power of local residents, permanent employment, private sector investment, income generation by renting house, rising the prices of land and estate, income generation by construction, reducing unemployment, public sector investment, service sector employment, price of goods and services, food price, land speculation, industry sector employment, agricultural sector employment, false employment, income gap, seasonality of income, and traditional jobs.	0.868
Perception of environmental impacts	Soil pollution in village, scattering rubbish in the village, noise pollution in the village, excessive consumption of natural resources by tourists in the village, soil erosion in the village, water pollution in the village, air pollution, incidence and spread of diseases, disrupting the natural process of living, providing educational services, quality of house building, health services, expanding space and public places, providing welfare services, incentives to repair traditional houses, expanding green spaces in the village, internal passages and communication roads in the village, invasion of protected areas in the village, damage to the historical and natural attractions of the village, overcrowding of recreational facilities in the village, abuse of heritage, traffic in the village, awareness of the residents about the natural and cultural environment of the village, creating illegal construction in the village, changing the use of land and gardens in the village, changing in the combination of the products in the area, and pressure on facilities.	0.853
Support	Tourism attraction support, development support, extensional and promotional support, financial and investment support, and infrastructural support (providing facilities and services for tourists).	0.701



## 4. Research Findings

### 4.1. Measuring residents' support for tourism

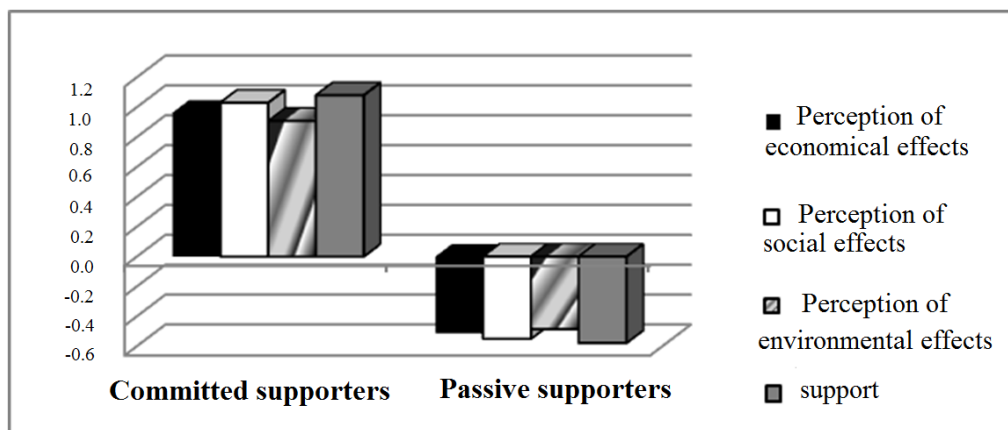
Table 2 shows the average dimensions of the level of residents' support for tourism in the studied area. The results show that residents' support for tourism has a mean score of 4.1 and a standard deviation of 0.549. Therefore, the level of residents' support for tourism is high in the studied area. Regarding components related to tourism perception, social components with a mean score of 0.292 and a standard deviation of 0.433 and economic components with a mean score of 0.28 and a standard deviation of 0.39 were more favorable than environmental constructs with a mean score of -0.088 and a standard deviation of 0.309. Therefore, the residents had a more

favorable assessment of the social and economic impacts of tourism and a less favorable assessment of the environmental impacts of tourism. In order to objectively analyze the level of tourism support, the K-means cluster analysis method was used, which is one of the effective and practical methods to create homogeneous classes in society (Bin Mohamad, & Usman, 2013). Therefore, first, the data became standardized through a scaling free technique (Tanioka & Yadohisa, 2012) to ensure uniform weight for each variable in the development process of the classification system and improve the accuracy of the algorithm cluster (Ismail, Nayan, & Ibrahim, 2016). Accordingly, the residents were divided into two groups of committed and passive supporters (see Figure 3).

**Table 2. Descriptive findings**  
(Source: Research findings, 2018)

Components	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean *	Std. Deviation
Economic	155	-0.57	1.19	0.28	0.39
Social	155	-0.54	1.57	0.29	0.43
Environmental	155	-0.74	1.33	-0.08	0.3
Support	155	3.0	5.00	4.1	0.54

\*The mean score range for the perception of economic, social and environmental impacts is -2+2 and for the support variable is 1-5.



**Figure 3. The classification of the host community based on the degree of tourism support**  
(Source: Research Findings, 2018)

As shown in Figure 3, committed rural tourism supporters consisted of 54 household heads with a positive perception of the triple economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism. Interestingly, they had cognitive, attitude and behavioral support as compared with the passive supporters. Passive supporters of tourism also

included 101 rural household heads with lower mean scores on the above-mentioned characteristics. The results of the mean comparing test in Table 3 also indicate that the members of the two clusters had significantly different perceptions about economic ( $p < 0.01$  and  $t = 12.36$ ), social ( $p < 0.01$  and  $t = 14.25$ ) and environmental

( $p < 0.01$  and  $t = 11.063$ ) impacts of tourism. Passive supporters (with a mean score of 0.078 and a standard deviation of 0.27) have a more unfavorable perspective than committed supporters in terms of economic impacts of tourism (with a mean score of 0.659 and a standard deviation of 0.293). Furthermore, the passive supporters (with a mean score of 0.054 and a standard deviation of 0.272) perceived the social impacts of tourism less favorable than committed supporters (with a mean score of 0.738

and a standard deviation of 0.306). In addition, passive supporters (with a mean score of -0.238 and a standard deviation of 0.221) had more unfavorable attitudes than committed supporters in terms of the environmental impacts of tourism (with a mean score of 0.193 and a standard deviation of 0.264). Therefore, the passive supporters had a more unfavorable view than committed supporters in terms of the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism.

**Table 3. The mean comparison test of perceived utility of tourism impacts in terms of host community support**  
(Source: Research Findings, 2018)

factors	Committed supporters		passive supporters		t statistics	Sig.
	Mean *	SD	Mean *	SD		
Economical	0.659	0.293	0.078	0.27	12.367	0.001
Social	0.738	0.306	0.054	0.272	14.256	0.001
Environmental	0.193	0.264	-0.238	0.211	11.063	0.001

\*The mean score ranged from -2 to +2

In this study, binary logistic regression analysis was used to identify the most important factors affecting support for tourism. This regression is a completely quantitative method that identifies the effect of each independent variable quantitatively

through the coefficients as well as the antilogarithmic coefficients (Arabameri, Shirani, & Tazeh, 2017). Table (4) shows the coefficients of the effective factors in the logistic regression method.

**Table 4. Factors Affecting Tourism Support (Logistic Regression Method)**  
(Source: Research Findings, 2018)

	Symbol	B	S.E	Wald	df	Sig
Economical	$x_1$	8.659	2.542	11.602	1	0.001
Social	$x_2$	10.661	3.13	11.601	1	0.001
Environmental	$x_3$	7.683	2.547	9.098	1	0.003
Constant	$x_4$	-7.065	1.928	13.43	1	0.001
Chi- Square		168.414			3	0.001
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test Chi-square		1.238			8	0.996
Nagelkerke R Square		0.913				

According to the data presented in the above table, Nagelkerke R Squared coefficient of determination value (0.913) indicates the accuracy of the model, which represents that 91.3% of the variability of the dependent variable is explained by independent variables. The probability value of Hosmer-Lemeshow's statistic is 1.238 (higher than the significance level of 0.05), indicating the validity of the model accordingly. Therefore, with 95% confidence, the model is in good agreement with the actual observations (goodness of fit of the model is confirmed). In order to determine the effect of the independent variables on the

dependent variable and the degree of fitting of the whole model, Wald test was used. Accordingly, three variables including the perception of social, economic and environmental impacts (with Wald statistic value less than 0.05) can explain the dependent variable, respectively (Adab, Atabati, Armin, Zabihi, & Dehqani, 2018) and all the three variables affect the level of tourism support.

**Table 5. Classification to determine the accuracy of the level of tourism support among participants**

(Source: Research Findings, 2018)

Predicted based on the amount of support	G1	G2	Total	Percentage correction
	Number of respondents			
Committed supporters	50	4	54	92.6
Passive supporters	3	98	101	97.0
Total percentage				95.5

Based on the results shown in [Table 5](#), 95.5% of the cases are accurately categorized into two groups of committed and passive supporters regarding their level of tourism support. The model accuracy is also confirmed by the ROC curve.

### 5. Discussion and conclusion

Tourism development needs the support of local residents in this way, because the lack of support of the local community will discourage tourists from returning to the area and disposing them to negative advertising as a result. The present study investigated the extent of residents' support for tourism and the effective factors. The results of this study showed that the residents are divided into two groups of committed and passive supporters based on their status of tourism support. The level of the residents' support for tourism development is above average ( $\bar{x}= 4.1$ ). These results are in line with research findings ([Abdolahi et al., 2016](#); [Lalith Chandralal, 2010](#); [Mcgehee & Andereck, 2004](#); [Tichaawa & Mhlanga, 2015](#)) which somehow emphasize the level of residents' support for tourism development. The results of the logistic regression model also showed that the perceptions of social, economic and environmental impacts are directly predictors of residents' support for tourism development. The function derived from this model at 95.5% can classify support levels accurately. Also, in this study, social impact perception (with a coefficient of 10.661) was identified as the most important predictor of residents' support for tourism development. Since this coefficient is positive, it can be stated that rural residents' perception of social impacts has a significant positive impact on their level of support for tourism. These results are consistent with the findings of [Pavlic et al. \(2015\)](#) that somehow highlight the significance of social impacts on the local people's support. On the other hand, the results are inconsistent with the results of the study by [Abdolahi et al. \(2016\)](#) on the

inability of socio-cultural impacts to predict residents' support for tourism development. After social impacts, economic impacts (with a coefficient of 8.659) have a positive and significant effect on the amount of rural residents' support for tourism, which is in accordance with the results of the research by [Andereck et al. \(2005\)](#). Finally, environmental impact perception has a positive and significant effect on the support of residents in the studied area. These results are in line with research by [Stylidis et al. \(2014\)](#), indicating that the residents' perceptions of tourism impacts and residents' level of support are significant.

Based on the results, rural residents in the studied area have mainly perceived positive economic, social and environmental impacts; therefore, high level of tourism support is a function of this positive perception. These results are in accordance with the research by [Gabriel Brida et al. \(2014\)](#), explaining that residents with a positive perception of tourism impacts are more willing to support tourism development policies. It is also consistent with the research results of [Aligholizadeh Firozjaei et al., \(2010\)](#). They discuss that increasing the amount of negative impacts of tourism development as compared with the benefits, will decrease community support. According to research findings by [Donny Sita & MohdNor \(2015\)](#), residents with positive perceptions of tourism will support its further development, while residents with negative perceptions of tourism costs and benefits will prevent tourism development. Based on the results of this research, the following suggestions are recommended:

Given the importance of perceiving the economic impacts on rural residents' support for tourism, it is suggested that more local people be involved to benefit from tourism industry. Entrepreneurship training in this area is also recommended to create a positive viewpoint to tourism through regular meetings to familiarize residents with how other communities are reaping the benefits of tourism in

terms of the potentials in the region. It is also recommended that locals be encouraged to take a spontaneous step in promoting handicrafts and rural products and holding exhibitions and festivals to promote cultural and handicraft products and earn money.

Considering the importance of perceiving the social impacts on the local residents' level of support for tourism, it is suggested that handicraft stands be held for cultural exchange with tourists. It is also recommended that the training and motivational context needed to motivate (transform) passive supporters into committed supporters be provided.

Considering the significance of environmental impact perception on the extent of support provided by local residents, it is suggested that training programs be developed to culturise

tourists in order to reduce negative footprints on the rural landscape. Agricultural tourism can be highlighted to exploit the landscape, farmland and rural gardens, which not only reduces tourism-related pollution and prevents farms destruction, but also it provides a source of income for villagers and more support of local residents for tourism.

Finally, it is also recommended that some programs be developed to support and strengthen tourism businesses through executive agencies and provide not only facilities and services (such as insurance, loans, etc.), but also job security and expand such occupations to those employed in the tourism sector.

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## سنجش میزان حمایت جامعه میزبان از توسعه گردشگری روستایی

### (مطالعه موردی: بخش مرکزی شهرستان فیروزآباد)

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#### چکیده مبسوط

##### ۱. مقدمه

صنعت گردشگری به عنوان بزرگترین و مهم ترین صنایع در جهان چشم انداز بسیار امیدوار کننده ای دارد. توسعه گردشگری به عنوان راه حلی برای احیای اقتصاد یک مقصد، چه روستایی و چه شهری، شناخته شده است. بسیاری از جوامع روستایی گردشگری را عاملی مهم در تأثیرگذاری بر اقتصاد روستایی می دانند. با این حال، صنعت گردشگری به شدت به حسن نیت، مشارکت و پشتیبانی ساکنان محلی وابسته است. چرا که این افراد به عنوان جزء جدایی ناپذیر این صنعت، به طور مستقیم بر رضایت گردشگران، هزینه کرد آنان در مقصد گردشگری، تمایل آنان برای بازگشت در منطقه هزینه و تمایلات برای بازدید دوباره گردشگران و توصیه مقصد به دیگران تأثیر می گذارند. مشارکت و حمایت ساکنان محلی برای رشد گردشگری پایدار در منطقه ضروری است و موفقیت این صنعت در گرو حمایت ساکنان از گردشگری است. از آنجا که نگرش ساکنان برای رضایت بازدیدکنندگان و بازدید تکراری ضروری است، تعیین ادراک ساکنان محلی از توسعه گردشگری و تأثیرات آن در موفقیت آتی یک مقصد حیاتی است.

##### ۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

مطالعات فراوانی پیرامون ادراک ساکنان از اثرات گردشگری و حمایت جوامع میزبان از توسعه گردشگری صورت پذیرفته است. در این مطالعات به منظور بررسی نگرش و رفتار ساکنین محلی نسبت

به گردشگری از نظریه ها و مدل های مفهومی بسیاری استفاده شده است. این مدل ها عبارتند از: نظریه دلبستگی جامعه، نظریه قدرت، نظریه دینفعان، نظریه ماشین رشد (SRT)، نظریه تبادل اجتماعی (SET)، مدل شاخص رنجش داکسی (۱۹۷۶) مدل چرخه حیات مقصد گردشگری (TALC)، نظریه نمایندگی اجتماعی، نظریه وابستگی، نظریه هویت، نظریه رفتار برنامه ریزی شده (TPB). نظریه تبادل اجتماعی رایج ترین تئوری در رابطه با واکنش ساکنان نسبت به توسعه گردشگری است. این نظریه به عنوان چارچوبی مناسب برای بررسی رابطه بین ادراک و نگرش ساکنان نسبت به اثرات گردشگری و حمایت ساکنان از توسعه گردشگری بکار می رود. این نظریه بر این اصل استوار است که انسان ها در جستجوی پاداش و اجتناب از مجازات بوده و به انتظار کسب سود به عمل می پردازند. لذا تعامل اجتماعی را به عنوان تبادل منابع در نظر گرفته و در صورتی به تبادل می پردازند که از مزایای آن بیش از هزینه هایش بهره مند گردند. نظریه تبادل اجتماعی از منظر توسعه گردشگری نشان می دهد که ادراک ساکنان از توسعه گردشگری بر میزان حمایت آن ها اثر گذار است. با این حال این نظریه دارای ضعف هایی نیز می باشد. در این نظریه به تأثیر اقتصادی بر نگرش ساکنان تأکید شده است. لیکن بر مبنای نتایج حاصل از برخی مطالعات، علی رغم انتظار نگرش خنثی از ساکنان بی بهره از مزایای گردشگری، برخی از این افراد دارای نگرشی مثبت یا منفی نسبت به گردشگری می باشند.

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آدرس: گروه مدیریت توسعه روستایی، دانشکده کشاورزی، دانشگاه یاسوج، یاسوج، ایران

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از یافته‌های این مطالعه نتیجه گرفته می‌شود که ادراک تأثیرات اجتماعی (با ضریب ۱۰/۶۶۱) به‌عنوان مهم‌ترین عامل پیش‌بینی‌کننده‌ی میزان حمایت ساکنان از توسعه‌ی گردشگری شناخته شد. بنابراین ادراک مثبت از اثرات اجتماعی نقش مهمی در حمایت ساکنان از توسعه گردشگری ایفا می‌کند و افزایش در اثرات اجتماعی، بیشترین تأثیر را بر ایجاد پشتیبانی محلی خواهد داشت. بنظر می‌رسد که اهمیت اثرات اجتماعی به فرهنگی که از قومیت مردم منطقه نشأت گرفته برمی‌گردد که خود نیز به آن مفتخر بودند. چرا که ساکنان منطقه دارای قومیت ترک قشقایی بوده و اصول اجتماعی را مربوط به فرهنگ و قومیت خود دانسته و به آن پای‌بند بودند. آن‌ها ترویج فرهنگ و حفظ هویت خود را مهون گردشگری دانسته، چرا که فرهنگ در انزوا از رشد بازمانده و با ارئه فرهنگ بومی به گردشگران تقویت می‌گردد. لذا ادراک اثرات اجتماعی در این منطقه در حمایت ساکنان از توسعه گردشگری نقش مهمی دارد. سپس، اثرات اقتصادی (با ضریب ۸/۶۵۹) دارای تأثیر مثبت و معنادار بر میزان حمایت ساکنان روستایی از گردشگری است. در پایان ادراک اثرات زیست محیطی تأثیر مثبت و معناداری بر حمایت ساکنان در منطقه مورد مطالعه دارد. بنابراین ادراک اثرات زیست محیطی با تأخیر بر حمایت ساکنان اثر می‌گذارد و این عامل به نسبت سایر عوامل نمود ناملموس تری بر حمایت ساکنان داشته است. این تحقیق نشان داد که ادراک مثبت از گردشگری معمولاً با سطح بالایی از ساکنان پشتیبانی از توسعه گردشگری همراه است. یافته‌های این تحقیق از نظریه تبادل اجتماعی حمایت می‌کند. بنابراین ضروری است دیدگاه ساکنان روستایی را از توسعه گردشگری افزایش دهیم، چرا که بر حمایت از توسعه گردشگری تأثیرگذار است.

**کلیدواژه‌ها** حمایت، جامعه میزبان، گردشگری روستایی، شهرستان فیروزآباد.

#### تشکر و قدردانی

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

لذا عوامل غیراقتصادی نیز عامل مهمی در مبادلات اجتماعی و نگرش ساکنان نسبت به گردشگری محسوب می‌شود. از این رو، برخی از محققان بر اهمیت ترکیب نظریه تبادل اجتماعی (SET) با دیگر چارچوب‌های نظری جهت دستیابی به رویکردی کلی‌تر تأکید نمودند.

#### ۳. روش تحقیق

این تحقیق پیمایشی با هدف سنجش میزان حمایت ساکنان روستایی از توسعه گردشگری و عوامل مؤثر بر آن در روستاهای هدف گردشگری بخش مرکزی شهرستان فیروزآباد، صورت پذیرفت. جامعه‌ی آماری این تحقیق سرپرستان خانوار ساکن در نظر گرفته شد که با استفاده از جدول بارتلت، ۱۵۵ خانوار به روش نمونه‌گیری تصادفی ساده مورد مطالعه قرار گرفتند. ابزار جمع‌آوری داده‌ها پرسش‌نامه‌ای محقق ساخته بود که روایی و پایایی آن مورد تأیید قرار گرفت. داده‌ها در طی ماه‌های ژانویه تا آوریل ۲۰۱۷ با استفاده از پرسشنامه‌ای محقق ساخته در قالب مقیاس لیکرت جمع‌آوری شد. تمام تجزیه و تحلیل‌ها با استفاده از برنامه SPSS صورت پذیرفت.

#### ۴. یافته‌های تحقیق

نتایج حاصل از این تحقیق نشان داد که ساکنان بر حسب وضعیت حمایت خود از گردشگری به دو گروه حامیان متعهد و حامیان منفعل قابل تقسیم می‌باشند و سطح حمایت ساکنان از توسعه‌ی گردشگری بالای حد متوسط است ( $\bar{x}=4/1$ ). این نتایج با یافته‌های تحقیق عبداللہی، محمودی‌نیا، و محمودی‌نیا (۲۰۱۶)؛ مک‌گهی و اندرک (۲۰۰۴)؛ لالیت‌چاندرا لال (۲۰۱۰) و تیچاوا و لانگا (۲۰۱۵) که به نوعی بر سطح حمایت ساکنان از توسعه‌ی گردشگری تأکید نمودند، همسو است. نتایج حاصل از مدل رگرسیون لجستیک نیز نشان داد که ادراک اثرات اجتماعی، اثرات اقتصادی و زیست محیطی به‌طور مستقیم پیش‌بینی‌کننده‌ی معنادار حمایت ساکنان از توسعه‌ی گردشگری می‌باشند. تابع حاصل از این مدل در ۹۵/۵ درصد می‌تواند سطوح میزان حمایت را بصورت صحیح انجام دهد.

#### ۵. بحث و نتیجه گیری

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