



Future Research for Promoting Tea Tourism in Rural Areas of Guilan Province, Iran

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Abstract

Purpose-This study follows three major purposes including recognizing the input variables in the development of tea tourism in rural areas of Guilan (Gilan) Province, Iran, and identifying the less strategic and dependent variables for promoting tea tourism in the case study of rural areas of Guilan Province .

Design/methodology/approach- Structural analysis in a foresight study was used in this paper. Firstly, the researchers recognized the key variables for promoting tea tourism in destinations with the help of the systematic literature review method and the extraction variables were categorized in two codes as tourism facilities and services with tea theme, and policy-making for promoting tea tourism .

Finding- The results of structural analysis through Micmac software identified the following variables as influence variables for tea tourism facilities and services: being familiar with tea processing, establishing tea tasting centres, holding tea ceremonies and tea cultural events, and being familiar with tea cuisine. Furthermore, visiting tea gardens and sightseeing, presenting tea culture performances, developing tea museums, creating an innovative tea package, establishing a tea shop/tea auction center, participating in picking tea leaves, and establishing tea restaurants, hotels and accommodations are known as dependent variables. Moreover, according to the direct influence graph adding tea tourism to tour packages and visiting tea factories were recognized as less strategic variables for development of tea tourism facilities and services. In addition, organizing top to bottom level training and a comprehensive policy framework for tea tourism have the most impact on the system and were identified as input variables for policy-making for promoting tea tourism .

Practical implications- Analyzing data through Micmac software illustrated that local participation, preserving the environment ecosystem, developing network activities and training tour guides for tea tourism are dependent variables for policy-making for promoting tea tourism. Lastly, accessibility and marketing are excluded as independent variables for policy-making for promoting tea tourism .

Keywords: Micmac software, Structural analysis, Tea, Tea tourism, Guilan

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1. Introduction

Tea is an agricultural product that is closely related to the ancient and modern history of trade. Tea has been transferred from one culture to another as a cultural and natural heritage. Green tea was the first beverage of ancient China. Recently, the emergence of a niche tourism entitled tea tourism illustrated that this beverage can attract tourists to destinations. [Jolliffe \(2007\)](#) in the volume “Tea and Tourism: Tourists, Traditions, and Transformations” noted a growing tourist and academic interest in this new special tourism market

In this regard, tea museums such as Meitan Tea Museum, Guizhou, China; The KDHP Tea Museum, Munnar, India; Fujinokuni Cha-no-miyako Tea Museum, Shizuoka, Japan; Iran National Tea Museum, Lahijan, Iran; Tenfu Tea Museum, Zhangzhou, Fujian, China; West Lake Hangzhou Benshan Longjing Tea Museum, Hangzhou, China; Ceylon Tea Museum, Hantana Rd, Sri Lanka; and Tea Museum, Gorreana, São Miguel, Azores, Portugal, etc. strive to introduce tea brands and tea culture to the public and attract tourists to tea destinations. In addition, tea festivals are one more strategy to attract visitors/tourists to destinations. Furthermore, some tea agricultural landscapes such as Pu'er Traditional Tea Agrosystem (China), Jasmine and Tea Culture System of Fuzhou City (China), Traditional Tea-grass Integrated System in Shizuoka (Japan), and Traditional Hadong Tea Agrosystem in Hwagae-myeon (Republic of Korea) are inscribed in the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems ([GIAHS, 2021](#)) and have been highly regarded by tourists.

Guilan Province is a tea tourist destination in the north of Iran, but till now, Iran's tourism policies and planning have not paid particular attention to this tourism segment. Tea has an inseparable connection with Iranian culture. Tea is not only a popular hot beverage in Iran but also integrated with many aspects of Iranian culture. For example, in a courtship ceremony, the bride and groom meet for the first time with a tray of tea that the bride brings to the groom. Moreover, in Iranian culture, the first beverage in visits and receptions of guests is mostly tea.

The history of the consumption of tea in Iran dates back to the seventeenth century. The tea cultivation industry in Iran is 100 years old.

It is noteworthy that diversification of tourism products, development of tourism products for special

interests and development of new cultural trails according to unique cultural heritage are strategies and policies of tourism development designed to overcome the challenges related to the tourism industry in Iran (National Vision Plan, 2020). Through identification of the key drivers for promoting tea tourism in rural areas of Guilan Province, this study will take a step towards achieving these goals.

2. Research Theoretical Literature

[Jolliffe \(2007\)](#), upon publishing a book entitled “Tea and Tourism: Tourists, Traditions and Transformations”, attracted the academic sector of tourism to this new niche tourism. An integrative literature review method is used in this study to identify the key drivers for promoting tea tourism in a destination. [Cheng et al. \(2010\)](#) stated that tea tourists are interested in activities such as visiting tea gardens, enjoying tea culture performances, and picking tea leaves in the case study of Xinyang, China. [Herath and Munasighe \(2014\)](#) argued that Ella, Bandarawela and Haputhale in Sri Lanka have great potential for tea tourism development. Moreover, these destinations offer a unique experience to tourists based on tea cultures such as tea gardens and estates, tea restaurants and hotels, tea shops and factories. [Herath and Munasighe \(2014\)](#) suggested developing tea museums, establishing tea tasting centres, introducing tea-based medicine, using modern marketing communication tools, developing network activities and local participation and organizing top-to-bottom level training as more activities that can promote tea tourism.

[Datta \(2018\)](#) introduced China, Sri Lanka, Kenya and India as destinations for tea tourism, and highlighted entertainment activities such as sightseeing, visiting tea gardens, tea factories and tea labour cultural performance as tea tourism products. [Lin and Wen \(2018\)](#) illustrated that tea tourism has created opportunities and individual development within the social evolution for females in the regions of Yunnan Province, south-west China. [Su et al., \(2019\)](#) argued that, as a new form of tourism in Hetu Town, Anhui Province, China, tea tourism has enhanced the sustainability of the community's livelihood. They discussed variables such as involving locals with lower levels of livelihood assets, local participation and enhancing local benefits as key factors for promoting sustainable tea tourism. Furthermore, they introduced enjoying the tea landscape, visiting tea shops and tea museums, being familiar with tea

processing, tea ceremonies and tea cultural events, tea tasting, tea cuisine and tea accommodation as tourism products which can be offered to tourists.

Jayasooriya (2019) introduced Hanthana, Sri Lanka, as a destination for promoting tea tourism, which is community-based tourism. Prasath and Wickramaratne (2019) also introduced Nuwara-Eliya Sri Lanka as a destination for tea tourism development, and by using a quantitative method they demonstrated that visiting a tea factory and tea tasting are the most highly demanded activities by visitors. They also illustrated that seasonal fluctuations of travellers and lack of trained labour are weaknesses of the region and suggested local participation as a key factor for promoting tea tourism. Suhindan *et al.* (2019) used a quantitative method to indicate that in the case study of Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka, tea attractions, awareness and accessibility directly increase tourist satisfaction. Wijesundara and Gnanapala (2019) used a mixed method to show that tea tourism in the case study of Sri Lanka can be used for destination branding and can generate income for the local community. Furthermore, they noted that education can play an important role in promoting tea tourism in a destination.

Sarmah (2020) considered the potentials and challenges of tea tourism in Assam, India. Assam has great potential for promoting tea tourism such as tea heritage from the 19th century (British colonial era), the Toklai Tea Research Centre, the Tea Auction Centre, and golf courses in tea gardens. Moreover, the results illustrated that the challenges to the development of tea tourism in Assam, India include deficiencies in infrastructures, a need for human resource development, inadequate quality of service, and marketing, lack of coordination among the tourism sector for promoting tea tourism, inadequate security cover in tea gardens, lack of sufficient local empowerment regarding tea tourism, and a lack of comprehensive policy framework for tea tourism in India. Phukan and Maheshwari (2021) also noted that Assam, India, can be a destination for tea tourism development and different marketing strategies, providing infrastructure and training human resources play an axial role in promoting this new tourism segment.

Solak and Amin (2020) argued that tea tourism should be added to tour packages of India and a variety of entertainment activities should be offered to tourists. Yeap *et al.* (2021) investigated key variables for visiting tea and coffee tourism using a qualitative

method during the Coronavirus disease pandemic period, and the results indicated that tourists' motivations are learning and relaxation. Khaokhrueamuang *et al.*, (2021) introduced Shizuoka, Japan, as a destination for promoting tea tourism and through mixed methods recommended the following activities as key components for tea tourism development in Shizuoka: motivating travellers to visit the destination, targeting potential travellers, differentiating the destination from other sites through innovation activities, communicating the place's meaning, creating an innovative tea package which motivates visitors to buy, and a partnership between Thailand and Japan.

Yoopetch and Kongarchapatara (2021) demonstrated that a sustainable livelihood has a positive effect on the satisfaction of residents with the development of tea tourism. Bohne (2021) looked at East Frisia, Germany, as a destination for tea tourism in Europe and highlighted the East Frisian Tea Ceremony, indicating that the development of tea-related events and products can help the regional economy flourish and increase tourist loyalty. Yan *et al.* (2021) discussed that tea tourism integrated strategic marketing planning, sustainable tourism development, and community - based tourism. Cheng *et al.* (2021a), with an emphasis on Fujian Province, China, noted that relationships and paying particular attention to environmental systems can improve the development of tea tourism. In addition, Chen *et al.* (2021) reviewed and criticized the previous studies, and mentioned that in most of the literature reviews of coffee or tea tourism the views of a single stakeholder such as consumers or producers were considered, while, a few literature reviews studied the interdisciplinary frameworks.

Seyitoğlu and Alphan (2021) investigated the tea and coffee experience of tourists around the world through TripAdvisor, and the results indicated that experiences such as education, authentic and memorable experiences, participation, experience, shopping, atmosphere, facilities, employees, and tour guides, are positive impacts of promoting tea tourism in destinations. Dinis *et al.* (2021) introduced Portugal as a new tea/coffee tourism destination in the world with emphasis on the Coffee Science Centre – Delta, as a well-known brand.

It is noteworthy that tea tourism is a current consideration in Iran and there is some academic work in this regard. Dostar *et al.* (2014) introduced Guilan and Mazandaran Provinces as tea tourism

destinations in Iran and indicated that tea tourism can be a suitable solution to achieve sustainable rural development. Furthermore, Zamani-Farahani (2019) published a book regarding tea tourism in Iran. Amin Tahmasebi *et al.* (2020) used the Topsis method to illustrate that the area under cultivation, the number of hotels, the number of tea factories, and the average number of tourists were selected as the most important criteria for selecting a place for tea tourism. Moreover, they noted that Guilan Province has great potential for promoting tea tourism.

In most of the literature reviews, countries such as China, Sri Lanka, Japan, Kenya, and India were introduced as tea tourism destinations, while the present study, by introducing a new tea tourism destination (Guilan province, Iran), strives to extend the literature. In addition, most of the academic research in Iran places emphasis on introducing Guilan Province as a tea tourism destination, and this research, by identifying the key drivers for promoting tea tourism in Guilan Province, strives to fill this gap. Regarding this, the authors considered fifteen papers through searching in google scholar (Cheng *et al.* (2010); Herath and Munasighe (2014); Datta (2018); Su *et al.* (2019); Sarmah (2020); Seyitoğlu and Alphan (2021); Bohne (2021); Suhindan *et al.* (2019); Wijesundara and Gnanapala (2019); Phukan and

Maheshwari (2021); Yan *et al.* (2021) ; Khaokhrueamuang *et al.* (2021); Solak and Amin (2020); Prasath and Wickramaratne (2019); Amin Tahmasebi *et al.* (2020). Keywords such as tea, tea tourism, tea museum and tea key driver were used to search. Then, researchers recognized the key variables for promoting tea tourism in destinations with the help of the systematic literature review method (Table 1).

In the second step, the extraction variables were categorised according to axial coding (Table 2). In the next step, the researchers used Micmac software as a structural analysis in a foresight study as a means to identify influential, dependent variables and more and less strategic factors for promoting tea tourism.

Therefore, it can be said that the present research used a new method to analyse the data in the case study of Guilan Province and can help to develop the research literature review in the field of tea tourism. Furthermore, introducing the rural areas with great potential for the development of tea tourism in Guilan Province is another objective of the present study. Figure 1 illustrates conceptual framework for promoting tea tourism in rural area of Guilan Province, Iran.

Table 1: The variables required for promoting tea tourism which were obtained from literature review

No	Variables	Researchers
1	Visiting tea gardens and sightseeing (VTG)	Cheng <i>et al.</i> (2010); Herath and Munasighe (2014); Datta (2018); Su <i>et al.</i> (2019); Sarmah (2020)
2	Presenting tea culture performances (TCP)	Cheng <i>et al.</i> (2010); Herath and Munasighe (2014); Datta (2018)
3	Participating in picking tea leaves (PTL)	Cheng <i>et al.</i> (2010); Seyitoğlu and Alphan (2021)
4	Establishing tea restaurants, hotels and accommodations (TRH)	Herath and Munasighe (2014); Su <i>et al.</i> (2019)
5	Establishing tea shop/tea auction centre (TSH)	Herath and Munasighe (2014); Su <i>et al.</i> (2019); Seyitoğlu and Alphan (2021)
6	Visiting tea factories (TF)	Herath and Munasighe (2014); Datta (2018); Prasath and Wickramaratne (2019); Amin Tahmasebi <i>et al.</i> (2020)
7	Establishing tea tasting centres (TTC)	Herath and Munasighe (2014); Su <i>et al.</i> (2019); Prasath and Wickramaratne (2019)
8	Introducing tea-based medicine (TM)	Herath and Munasighe (2014)
9	Local participation (LP)	Herath and Munasighe (2014); Su <i>et al.</i> (2019); Prasath and Wickramaratne (2019); Seyitoğlu and Alphan (2021)
10	Organizing top-to-bottom level training (TBLT)	Herath and Munasighe (2014)
11	Developing network activities (NA)	Herath and Munasighe (2014)
12	Developing tea museums (TMe)	Herath and Munasighe (2014); Su <i>et al.</i> (2019)
13	Being familiar with tea processing (TP)	Su <i>et al.</i> (2019)
14	Holding tea ceremonies and tea cultural events (TCTCE)	Su <i>et al.</i> (2019); Bohne (2021)

No	Variables	Researchers
15	Being familiar with tea cuisine (TC)	Su et al. (2019)
16	Accessibility (A)	Suhindan et al. (2019)
17	Using tea for destination branding (TDB)	Wijesundara and Gnanapala (2019)
18	Local empowerment (LE)	Sarmah (2020)
19	Marketing such as using modern marketing communication tools (MMCT)	Sarmah (2020); Phukan and Maheshwari (2021); Yan et al. (2021); Herath and Munasighe (2014)
20	Comprehensive policy framework for tea tourism (CPFT)	Sarmah (2020)
21	Creating an innovative tea package (CITP)	Khaokhrueamuang et al. (2021)
22	Tea tourism should add to tour packages (TTP)	Solak and Amin (2020)
23	Preserving the environment ecosystem (PEE)	Cheng et al. (2021a)
24	Training tour guide for tea tourism (TTGT)	Scyitoğlu and Alphan (2021)

Table 2: Axial coding the variables required for promoting tea tourism which were obtained from literature review

Axial coding	Open coding (Variables)
Developing tourism facilities and services with tea theme	Visiting tea gardens and sightseeing (VTG)
	Presenting tea culture performances (TCP)
	Participating in picking tea leaves (PTL)
	Establishing tea restaurants, hotels and accommodations (TRH)
	Establishing tea shop/tea auction centre (TSH)
	Visiting tea factories (TF)
	Establishing tea tasting centres (TTC)
	Introducing tea-based medicine (TM)
	Developing tea museums (TMe)
	Being familiar with tea processing (TP)
	Holding tea ceremonies and tea cultural events (TCTCE)
	Being familiar with tea cuisine (TC)
	Creating an innovative tea package (CITP)
	Tea tourism should add to tour packages (TTP)
Policy-making for promoting tea tourism	Organizing top-to-bottom level training (TBLT)
	Training tour guide for tea tourism (TTGT)
	Local empowerment (LE)
	Preserving the environment ecosystem (PEE)
	Marketing such as using modern marketing communication tools (MMCT)
	Accessibility (A)
	Using tea for destination branding (TDB)
	Comprehensive policy framework for tea tourism (CPFT)
Local participation (LP)	
Developing network activities (NE)	

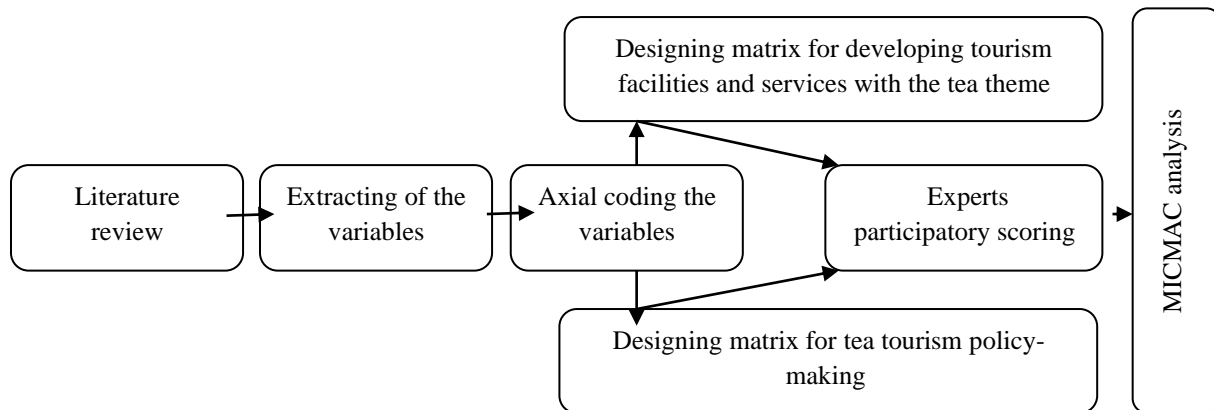


Figure 1: conceptual framework for promoting tea tourism in rural areas of Guilan Province, Iran

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Geographical Scope of the Research

This study was conducted in Guilan Province, located in the north of Iran near the Caspian Sea. According to field observation and some authors (Dostar *et al.*, 2014; Zamani-Farahani, 2019; Amin Tahmasebi *et al.*, 2020), Guilan Province can be said to have great potential for promoting tea tourism.

It is noteworthy that Rasht, which is the capital city of Guilan Province, Iran, was inscribed in the UNESCO Creative City Network (UCCN) in the field of gastronomy in 2015 (UCCN, 2021). Hence, it can be said that being a member of UCCN in the field of gastronomy can create an opportunity for the development of tea tourism in this territory. Figure 2 illustrates the tea landscape of Guilan Province.

Tea is planted in the west of Guilan Province in the counties of Fuman and Shaft. Furthermore, Sowme'eh Sara, Masaland and the Hashtpar foothills have a high potential for tea sightseeing (Figure 2). One of the best tourism routes and tea trails to enjoy tea gardens in the west of Guilan Province is the Masouleh route, in which tourists can have accommodation in Moein Hotel (hotel.moein.ir) (Figure 3) located in a tea garden. In addition, villages such as Zideh-ye Bala, Rudkhan Castle and Heydar Alat are rural areas

with beautiful tea garden landscapes which can present tea culture performances to tourists, and travellers can participate in picking tea leaves. Moreover, visiting the Heshmat Tea Factory and the Foumanat Tea Factory can be part of the offer to tourists in this region (Eslah Arbani, 2001).

Lahijan, Langarud, Amlash, and Rudsar counties – located in the east of Guilan Province – are other tea tourism destinations in the north of Iran. It is noteworthy that rural areas of Vajargah in the county of Rudsar have a fantastic landscape with the blooms of *Citrus aurantium* and tea gardens. Tourists can be accommodated in the Respina Hotel (hotelrespina.com) (Figure 3) which is located on the Lahijan route and enjoy beautiful, agricultural tea landscapes.

It is worth mentioning that the length of the leaf harvest period in the gardens of Guilan Province is a maximum of six months a year, from the first half of May to the first half of November (Eslah Arbani, 2001).

Kashef ol-Saltaneh's tomb and Iran's National Tea Museum are also located in the city of Lahijan. The museum opened in 1992 and focuses on Kashef ol-Saltaneh's activities in the tea trade and tea cultivation equipment. Mohammad Mirza Khashef Al Saltaneh (1862–1929) was an Iranian politician in the Qajar dynasty who introduced tea cultivation to Iran.



Figure 2: Tea agricultural landscapes, Guilan Province, Iran (source: photo by authors)



Figure 3: Tea hotels located in tea agricultural landscapes, Guilan Province, Iran: (a) Moein Hotel (source: hotel.moein.ir) and (b) Respina Hotel (source: hotelrespina.com)

3.2. Methodology

Guilan Province was selected as a case study in this research and the research of some authors (Dostar *et al.*, 2014; Zamani-Farahani, 2019; Amin Tahmasebi *et al.*, 2020) demonstrates that this province has great potential for promoting tea tourism. This paper examines the issue of the identification of key drivers for promoting tea tourism in rural areas of Guilan Province. In order to attain the main objective, the following sub-objectives were designed.

- To recognize the input variables (direct influence and indirect influence) in the development of tea tourism in rural areas of Guilan Province
- To identify the less strategic variables for promoting tea tourism in the case study of rural areas of Guilan Province

- To identify dependent variables for promoting tea tourism in rural areas of Guilan Province

Regarding this, we used structural analysis via Micmac software as a cutting-edge research method (Kumar and Shekhar, 2020; Nematpour *et al.*, 2020; Dadazade-Silabi, and Ahmadifard, 2019).

In the first step, all the variables which characterise the system of tea tourism obtained from literature reviews (Table 1) were listed and coded. It is worth mentioning that in order to determine reliability of coding, the list of variables was given to the two experts and they reached a consensus (90% agreement) on 14 variables in the developing tourism facilities and services with the tea theme group and 10 variables in the policy-making for promoting tea tourism

category. Then, the matrix of direct influence (MDI) was designed for each group to discover the relationships between the variables. 25 experts in the field of agriculture, tourism, museum, gastronomy, and culture who know tea tourism and Guilan Province well scored the MDI matrix on a 5-point scale (0: No influence; 1: Weak influence; 2: Moderate influence; 3: Strong influence; P: Potential influences). As the tea tourism is a new niche tourism and the experts in this field were rare to find in Iran we used the

snowball sampling technique for collecting data. In the next step, the input matrix of the software, which is the average of the score matrices of experts, was calculated and entered into the Micmac software, which was used to analyse the data. It is noteworthy that the direct influence map can be interpreted according to Figure 4 (Godet, 1994; Taleshi *et al.*, 2017; Nematpour *et al.*, 2020). The empirical part of this study was conducted from September 2021 to December 2021.

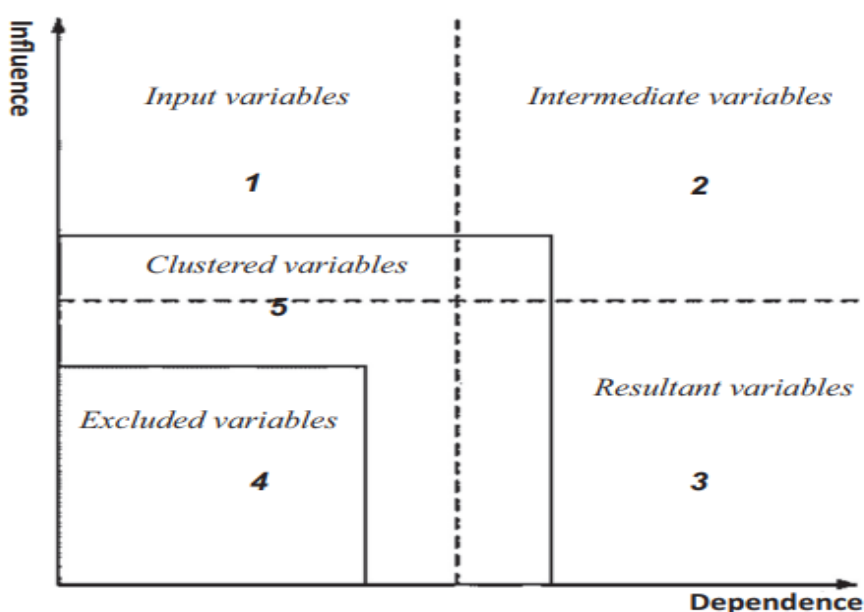


Figure 4: Micmac influence-dependence map (adapted from Nematpour *et al.*, 2020; Godet, 1994)

4. Research Findings

4.1. Micmac analysis for determining key drivers of developing tea tourism facilities and services

In the first step, 14 variables were listed according to a review of the literature on tea tourism destinations. In the second step, the MDI was designed to identify the most effective driver for developing tea tourism facilities and services in Guilan Province. The next phase is to recognize the type of each variable, observed via the intensity of its strength in influencing other variables or depending on other variables through visualization of the interrelation graph. Regarding

this, the elites in the fields of tourism, museum, culture, and agriculture scored the MDI matrix on a 5-point scale (0: No influence; 1: Weak; 2: Moderate influence; 3: Strong influence; P: Potential influences). It is noteworthy that Micmac software was used to analyse the data. According to Table 3, if the total number of rows is more than the total number of columns, it can be said that the degree of influence of the corresponding variable in the system is higher. Otherwise, the degree of dependence of that variable in the system is higher.

Table 3: MDI (matrix of direct influence) and the characteristics of the MDI matrix for tea tourism facilities and services calculated by Micmac software

No	Variable	Total number of rows	Total number of columns	Situation of the variable	Indicator	Value
1	VTG	18	24	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Matrix size	14
2	TCP	19	55	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Number of iterations	2
3	PTL	16	36	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Number of zeros	41
4	TRH	11	43	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Number of ones	32
5	TSH	13	50	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Number of twos	34
6	TF	20	38	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Number of threes	65
7	TTC	28	36	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Number of P	24
8	TM	27	50	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Total	155
9	TMe	19	36	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Fill rate	79.08163%
10	TP	44	50	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher		
11	TCTCE	46	43	The degree of influence of this variable in the system is higher		
12	TC	29	40	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher		
13	CITP	47	40	The degree of influence of this variable in the system is higher		
14	TTP	41	46	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher		

The direct influence graph designed by Micmac software (Figure 5) illustrates that Being familiar with tea processing (TP), Establishing tea tasting centres (TTC), Holding tea ceremonies and tea cultural events (TCTCE), and Being familiar with tea cuisine (TC) are influence variables which are named input variables.

Furthermore, Visiting tea gardens and sightseeing (VTG), Presenting tea culture performances (TCP), Developing tea museums (TMe), Creating an innovative tea package (CITP), Establishing a tea shop/tea auction centre (TSH), Participating in

picking tea leaves (PTL) and Establishing tea restaurants, hotels and accommodations (TRH) are dependent variables. When the input variables change, the dependent variables will change.

According to the direct influence graph Tea tourism should be added to tour packages (TTP) and Visiting tea factories (TF) are excluded (independent) variables. These variables do not cause the system to stop or evolve, and they are less strategic. It is noteworthy that Introducing tea-based medicine (TM) is an intermediate variable.

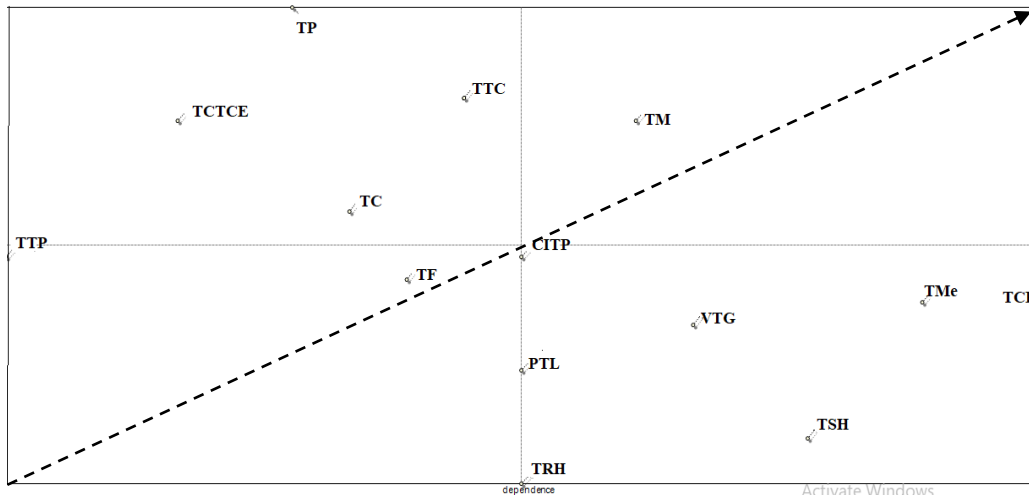


Figure 5: Direct influence graph designed by Micmac software for tea tourism facilities and services in Guilan

4.2. Micmac analysis for determining key drivers of policy-making for promoting tea tourism in Guilan

Firstly, 10 variables were listed according to a review of the literature on tea tourism destinations for policy-making. After experts scored in the designed matrix and analysed data through Micmac software the direct influence graph (Figure 6) illustrated that Organizing top to bottom level training (TBLT) and a Comprehensive policy framework for tea tourism (CPFT) have the most impact on the system and are input variables.

According to the direct influence graph, Local participation (LP), Preserving the environment ecosystem (PEE), Developing network activities

(NE) and Training tour guides for tea tourism (TTGT) are dependent variables. In addition, Accessibility (A) and Marketing such as using modern marketing communication tools (MMCT) are excluded (independent) variables. These variables do not cause the system to stop or evolve, and they are less strategic.

Using tea for destination branding (TDB) and Local empowerment (LE) are intermediate variables and among the intermediate variables, LE is the objective variable which can be a key driver for promoting tea tourism in Guilan. Table 4 demonstrates MDI (matrix of direct influence) and the characteristics of the MDI matrix for tea tourism policy-making.

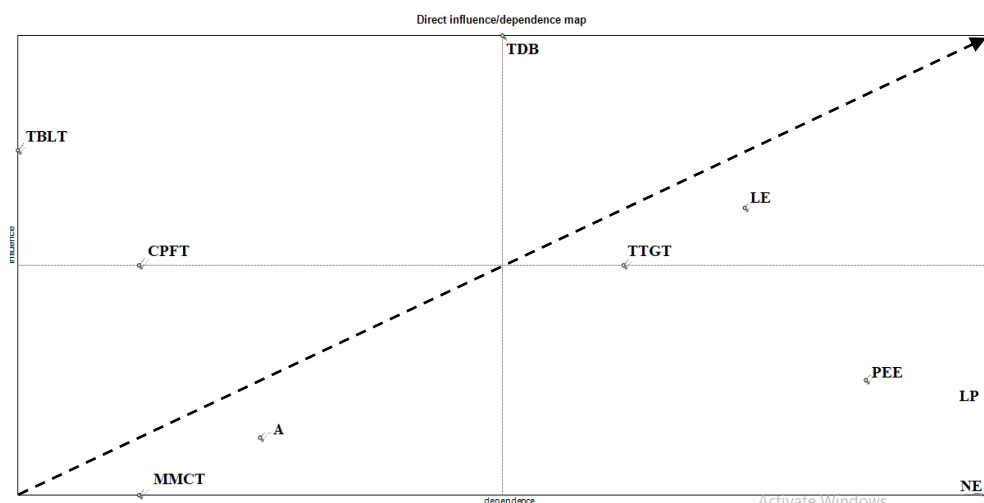


Figure 6: Direct influence graph designed by Micmac software for tea tourism policy-making in Guilan

Table 4: MDI (matrix of direct influence) and the characteristics of the MDI matrix for tea tourism policy-making in Guilan calculated by Micmac software

No	Variable	Total number of rows	Total number of columns	Situation of the variable	Indicator	Value
1	MMCT	10	10	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is the same as its influence	Matrix size	10
2	LP	12	17	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Number of iterations	2
3	TBLT	16	9	The degree of influence of this variable in the system is higher	Number of zeros	25
4	NE	10	17	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Number of ones	30
5	A	11	11	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is the same as its influence	Number of twos	24
6	TDB	18	13	The degree of influence of this variable in the system is higher	Number of threes	18
7	LE	15	15	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is the same as its influence	Number of P	3
8	CPFT	14	10	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Total	75
9	PEE	12	16	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is higher	Fill rate	75%
10	TTGT	14	14	The degree of dependence of this variable in the system is the same as its influence	Matrix size	10

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Guilan Province, which is located in the north of Iran, has great potential (tea hotels, tea museum, tea landscapes, etc.) for promoting tea tourism, and this niche tourism can be a strategy for preserving intangible and tangible tea heritage. It is noteworthy that this research, using a structural analysis method with Micmac software as a future research method strived to identify key driver variables for promoting sustainable tea tourism, which can open a window to let tourism planners develop this tourism segment. Furthermore, this research can fulfill the gap which [Chen et al., \(2021\)](#) noted in their study.

The results of Micmac software illustrated that among variables known for tea tourism facilities and services, Being familiar with tea processing (TP), Establishing tea tasting centres (TTC), and Holding tea ceremonies and tea cultural events (TCTCE) have the most direct influences on the system. Moreover, Organizing top to bottom level training (TBLT) and a Comprehensive policy

framework for tea tourism (CPFT) are known as influence variables for tea tourism policy-making in Guilan province. It is noteworthy that these variables are input variables which planners should pay particular attention to for promoting tea tourism and organizing tea tours in Guilan Province.

Moreover, Tea tourism should be added to tour packages (TTP), Visiting tea factories (TF), Accessibility (A), and Marketing such as using modern marketing communication tools (MMCT) are less strategic variables. Planners should consider these variables independently to develop tea tourism in the case study. Visiting tea factories can offer a new experience to tourists and let them be familiar with agritourism and industrial tourism and learn about tea cultivation, the harvesting process, steps of tea manufacturing, withering of green leaf, and process of rolling, roll breaking, fermentation, black tea drying, sifting and grading.

At present, the Iran National Tea Museum, Lahijan, Iran is an object-oriented museum;

however, according to the data analysis through Micmac software, developing tea museums (TMe) is a dependent variable. According to the ICOM Statutes (2007), adopted by the 22nd General Assembly in Vienna, Austria:

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches communicates, and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

Therefore, Iran National Tea Museum should pay more attention to intangible tea heritage, events, and educational programmes. These results provide some support for the research of Herath and Munasighe (2014) and Su *et al.*, (2019). In addition, the museum needs a tea tasting centre for tea processing and serving in each part of the country. This centre should display the materials and objects which the local communities in each part of Iran use for making tea. Furthermore, in Iran, tea is mixed with herbal medicine which can be served in this tasting centre and can offer a new experience to tourists.

Our analyses revealed that local empowerment (LE) as the objective variable is a key driver for promoting tea tourism in Guilan Province and these results reinforce the study of Sarmah (2020).

In addition, in the tea tourism facilities and services group, Visiting tea gardens and

sightseeing (VTG), Presenting tea culture performances (TCP), Developing tea museums (TMe), Creating an innovative tea package (CITP), Establishing a tea shop/tea auction centre (TSH), Participating in picking tea leaves (PTL) and Establishing tea restaurants, hotels and accommodations (TRH) are identified as dependent variables. Furthermore, in the tea tourism policy-making group, Local participation (LP), Preserving the environment ecosystem (PEE), Developing network activities (NE), and Training tour guides for tea tourism (TTGT) are determined as dependent variables.

Analysing the target market for marketing tea tourism in Iran; designing an event/festival calendar for the Iran National Tea Museum; identifying marketing strategies for attracting international tourists to Guilan Province as a tea tourism destination, and studying tea processing methods based on manuscripts and old books are the subjects recommended by authors for future researches.

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Authors' contributions

The authors equally contributed to the preparation of this article.

Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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آینده پژوهی برای ترویج گردشگری چای در مناطق روستایی استان گیلان، ایران

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چکیده مبسوط

۱. مقدمه

چای یکی از محصولات کشاورزی است که ارتباط نزدیکی با تاریخ تجارت کهن و مدرن دارد. چای به عنوان یک میراث فرهنگی و طبیعی، از فرهنگی به فرهنگ دیگر منتقل شده است. چای سبز اولین نوشیدنی چین باستان بود. اخیراً پیدایش بازار با علایق ویژه گردشگری چای نشان می‌دهد که این نوشیدنی می‌تواند گردشگران را به مقاصد جذب کند. در راستای رونق گردشگری چای و حفظ میراث ملموس و ناملموس آن، موزه‌های چای در کشورهای چین، ژاپن، سریلانکا، پرتغال و ایران احداث شده است. این موزه‌ها تلاش دارند که برندهای چای و فرهنگ چای را به مردم معرفی کنند و گردشگران را به مقاصد چای جذب کنند. علاوه بر این، برگزاری جشنواره‌های چای یک استراتژی دیگر برای جذب بازدیدکنندگان/گردشگران به مقاصد هستند. برخی از کشورها مانند چین، ژاپن و کره جنوبی چشم‌اندازهای کشاورزی چای خود را در شبکه سیستم‌های میراث کشاورزی مهم جهان در فائو ثبت کرده‌اند و امروزه این مناظر و چشم‌اندازهای چای بسیار مورد توجه گردشگران قرار گرفته‌اند. استان گیلان یک مقصد گردشگری چای در شمال ایران است، اما تاکنون سیاست‌ها و برنامه‌ریزی‌های گردشگری ایران توجه خاصی به این بخش گردشگری نداشته است.

۲. مبانی نظری تحقیق

چین، سریلانکا، کنیا و هند به عنوان مقاصد گردشگری چای معرفی شده‌اند و فعالیت‌های سرگرمی مانند گشت‌وگذار، بازدید از باغ‌های چای، کارخانه‌های چای و برگزاری رویدادهای فرهنگی چای به عنوان محصولات این بازار گردشگری چای برجسته شده است.

لین و ون (۲۰۱۸) نشان دادند که گردشگری چای فرصت‌ها، توسعه فردی و تکامل اجتماعی برای زنان در مناطق جنوب غربی چین ایجاد کرده است. سو و همکاران (۲۰۱۹) استدلال کردند که گردشگری چای به عنوان شکل جدیدی از گردشگری در شهر چین، پایداری معیشت جامعه را افزایش داده است. سریلانکا نیز به عنوان مقصدی برای ترویج گردشگری چای، که شکلی از گردشگری مبتنی بر جامعه است معرفی شد. ساراما (۲۰۲۰) پتانسیل‌ها و چالش‌های گردشگری چای را در آسام هند بررسی کرد. آسام پتانسیل زیادی برای ترویج گردشگری چای مانند میراث چای از قرن ۱۹ (دوران استعمار بریتانیا)، مرکز تحقیقات چای توکلای، مرکز حراج چای و زمین‌های گلف در باغ‌های چای دارد. علاوه بر این، نتایج نشان داد که چالش‌های توسعه گردشگری چای در آسام هند شامل کمبود زیرساخت‌ها، نیاز به توسعه منابع انسانی، کیفیت نامناسب خدمات و بازاریابی، عدم هماهنگی بین بخش گردشگری برای ترویج گردشگری چای، پوشش امنیتی ناکافی در باغ‌های چای، فقدان توانمندی محلی کافی در مورد گردشگری چای، و فقدان چارچوب سیاست جامع برای گردشگری چای در هند است.

۳. روش تحقیق

استان گیلان به عنوان مطالعه موردی در این پژوهش انتخاب شد و تحقیقات برخی از نویسندگان نشان می‌دهد که این استان دارای پتانسیل بالایی برای ترویج گردشگری چای است. این مقاله به بررسی موضوع شناسایی عوامل کلیدی برای ترویج گردشگری چای در روستاهای استان گیلان می‌پردازد.

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چای‌فروشی/مرکز حراج چای، شرکت در چیدن برگ‌های چای و ایجاد رستوران‌های، هتل‌ها و اقامتگاه‌ها با موضوع چای به‌عنوان متغیرهای وابسته شناخته شدند.

همچنین، با توجه به نمودار تأثیر مستقیم، افزودن تورهای چای به بسته‌های تور و بازدید از کارخانه‌های چای به‌عنوان متغیرهای کمتر استراتژیک برای توسعه تسهیلات و خدمات گردشگری چای معرفی شدند. به‌علاوه، سازمان‌دهی آموزش از بالا به پایین و چارچوب سیاست‌گذاری جامع برای گردشگری چای به‌عنوان متغیرهای ورودی برای سیاست‌گذاری برای ترویج گردشگری چای شناسایی شدند. تجزیه‌وتحلیل داده‌ها از طریق نرم‌افزار Micmac نشان داد که مشارکت محلی، حفظ اکوسیستم‌ها و منظرهای چای، توسعه فعالیت‌های شبکه و آموزش راهنمایان تور برای گردشگری چای، متغیرهای وابسته سیاست‌گذاری برای ترویج گردشگری چای هستند. درنهایت، متغیرهای دسترسی و بازاریابی به‌عنوان متغیرهای مستقل برای سیاست‌گذاری برای ترویج گردشگری شناخته شدند.

۵. بحث و نتیجه‌گیری

استان گیلان که در شمال ایران قرار دارد، دارای ظرفیت‌های فراوانی (هتل‌های چای، موزه چای، مناظر چای و ...) برای رونق گردشگری چای است و این بازار نوین گردشگری می‌تواند راهبردی برای حفظ میراث ناملموس و ملموس چای باشد. شایان‌ذکر است که این تحقیق با استفاده از روش تحلیل ساختاری به شناسایی متغیرهای محرک کلیدی برای ترویج گردشگری چای پرداخت و درپچه‌ای را برای برنامه ریزان گردشگری باز کرد تا این بخش گردشگری را توسعه دهند. به‌علاوه، این تحقیق می‌تواند شکافی را که چن و همکاران، (۲۰۲۱) در مطالعه خود به آن اشاره کردند، برطرف کند.

کلیدواژه‌ها: نرم‌افزار میک‌مک، تحلیل ساختاری، چای، گردشگری چای، گیلان.

تشکر و قدردانی

پژوهش حامی مالی نداشته و حاصل فعالیت علمی نویسنده‌گان بوده است.

در این راستا، از تحلیل ساختاری به کمک نرم‌افزار Micmac به‌عنوان یک روش آینده‌پژوهی استفاده گردید. در گام اول، محققین با استفاده از روش مرور سیستماتیک پیشینه پژوهش، متغیرهای کلیدی برای ترویج گردشگری چای در مقاصد را شناسایی و متغیرهای استخراج‌شده را در دو مضمون اصلی تسهیلات و خدمات گردشگری با موضوع چای و سیاست‌گذاری برای ترویج با تکنیک کدگذاری دسته‌بندی کردند. سپس به‌منظور تعیین پایایی کدگذاری انجام‌شده از روش توافق درون موضوعی استفاده شد و کدها در اختیار دو کدگذار قرار گرفت که کدگذاری انجام‌شده با درصد توافق ۹۰ درصد مورد اجماع آن‌ها قرار گرفت و آن‌ها بر روی ۱۴ متغیر در توسعه تسهیلات و خدمات گردشگری با موضوع چای و ۱۰ متغیر در سیاست‌گذاری در مقوله ترویج گردشگری چای به اجماع رسیدند. سپس ماتریس تأثیر مستقیم (MDI) برای هر گروه طراحی شد تا روابط بین متغیرها کشف شود. ۲۵ نفر از کارشناسان حوزه گردشگری، موزه، کشاورزی، غذا و فرهنگ که گردشگری چای و استان گیلان را به خوبی می‌شناختند، ماتریس‌های تأثیر مستقیم را در مقیاس ۵ درجه‌ای (۰: بدون تأثیر؛ ۱: تأثیر ضعیف؛ ۲: تأثیر متوسط؛ ۳: نفوذ قوی؛ ۴: تأثیرات بالقوه) امتیازدهی کردند. برای جمع‌آوری داده‌ها از روش نمونه‌گیری گلوله برفی استفاده شد. در مرحله بعد، میانگین امتیازدهی خبرگان به‌صورت جداگانه یک‌بار برای متغیرهای توسعه تسهیلات و خدمات گردشگری با موضوع چای و یک‌بار برای متغیرهای مربوط به موضوع چای و سیاست‌گذاری وارد نرم‌افزار Micmac شد که برای تجزیه‌وتحلیل داده‌ها استفاده گردید.

۴. یافته‌های تحقیق

نتایج تحلیل ساختاری با استفاده از نرم‌افزار Micmac متغیرهای زیر را به‌عنوان متغیرهای تأثیرگذار بر تسهیلات و خدمات گردشگری چای شناسایی کرد: آشنایی با فرآوری چای، ایجاد مراکز برای چشیدن چای، برگزاری مناسبت‌های مربوط به چای و رویدادهای فرهنگی چای و آشنایی با آداب‌ورسوم تهیه چای. علاوه بر این، بازدید از باغ‌ها و چشم‌اندازهای چای و گشت‌وگذار در آن‌ها، ارائه نمایش‌های مربوط به فرهنگ چای، توسعه موزه‌های چای، ایجاد یک بسته تور نوآورانه در خصوص چای، ایجاد



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