

Identification and Analysis of Obstacles to the Revitalization and the Use of Agricultural Rituals in the Development of Tourism in Iran

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: In order to develop agritourism, agricultural rituals are considered as one of the main potentials. for this purpose, the present study was aimed to identify and analyze the barriers to revitalization and application of agricultural rituals in the development of tourism in Iran.

Research Method: This study consists of two main sections. In the first section, the obstacles to the revitalization and application of rituals in the development of tourism have been examined using a qualitative research method. In this section, theoretical saturation was achieved by using the grounded theory and performing interviews with 104 experts. and in the second part, in order to investigate and evaluate the obstacles and challenges identified in the first part, a questionnaire with a Likert spectrum scale in four dimensions (economic, social and cultural, environmental, physical and institutional) was prepared by the research team and given to 130 people. It was selected from the experts and finally after scoring (1 to 5) by them, it was analyzed in SPSS environment with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.982% and using binomial, correlation and Friedman tests.

Findings: The results show that 11 core categories (management and planning, research and education, social, cultural, economic, marketing and advertising, tourism, agriculture, services and infrastructure, environment and rules and regulations) are the most important obstacles to the revitalization and application of agricultural rituals in the development of tourism in Iran..

Originality/ Value: This research has been conducted for the first time in Iran, and until the time of compiling this research, a similar issue was not observed. This research has been compiled using mixed research method and problem solving approach. and for the first time, he brings up the discussion of agricultural rituals as an approach in the development of tourism and on the axis of agricultural tourism, which is unique in its kind. Also, the findings of the project have been provided to an Iranian government institution, which is very important from this point of view.

Keywords: Agritourism obstacles, Agricultural culture, Agricultural heritage, Agritourism development, Heritage tourism, Agricultural heritage of Iran.

INTRODUCTION

Today, tourism activities are an important part of economic and manufacturing activities in developed and developing countries (Barati and Mojarrad, 2021) and governments have different policies to develop rural tourism in various scales, from local to the national level. In the past decades, especially since the 1990s, due to the agricultural sector recession and the

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problems of rural communities, experts and planners have always emphasized the importance of rural tourism development (Hajinejad *et al.*, 2014). Due to the decrease in the potential of agricultural activities to generate adequate income, many farmers have to seek alternative economic strategies and new sources of income and diversify local economy to maintain their farms (Amiri *et al.*, 2016). These strategies include farm size development, specialized production, non-agricultural employment, or farm diversification via entrepreneurship and the development of rural and agricultural businesses (Bowler *et al.*, 2014). Agricultural activities are of crucial importance due to their special effect on employment generation, poverty reduction and increase in income, food security and self-sufficiency of human societies (Shayan *et al.*, 2010). Today, diversification of agricultural activities via the combination of tourism and agriculture in the form of agritourism and the use of agricultural rituals as one of the components of rural tourism. It has an effective role in improving the living conditions of rural areas and suburban communities around the world.

Agritourism is one of the most important and suitable forms of rural tourism (Hatley, 2009) which can be presented consistent with the theory of sustainable tourism and a new strategy for the development of rural areas (Fakhimzadeh and Khatibi, 2016) and as a factor for sustainable development of agriculture and rural areas (Rezvani *et al.*, 2016). In this type of tourism, rural cultures, rituals and traditions have received much attention. Considering the agricultural culture and namely rituals due to historical memory and civil background can attract many travelers and tourists who provide the ground for economic prosperity for rural areas. This issue can be important according to the social, cultural and historical structure of rural areas (Mahmoodichenari *et al.*, 2020). By attracting tourists besides helping to create employment, increase income and improve the living standards of dwellers in these areas. Furthermore, agritourism helps to maintain the traditional fabric of the village and also prevents

the migration and uncontrolled migration of natives to context of villages (Imani, 2017). Rapid changes in technology in today's world, followed by changes in other aspects of life, lead to having a better understanding of future changes for governments, businesses, organizations and people. Thus, this can be considered as an opportunity for tourism development in the context of customs, cultural heritage and agricultural festivals, especially its rituals and traditions (Pourian, 2016).

In this regard, this study attempts to examine the obstacles and challenges of not considering the agricultural rituals, when developing key solutions, compatible with Iran's rural ecosystem, to consider the possibility of rural tourism development with a focus on agricultural rituals and traditions. Thus, the main question of the research, which is also explorative, can be raised as follows: What are the mainly important obstacles and challenges in the revitalization and application of agricultural rituals in the development of rural tourism in Iran? How is the role of each of them explained?

Over different time periods, the agricultural sector has experienced different contemporary and historical civilizations (Harlan, 1998). The agricultural perspective has always been a key factor in the livelihood of human civilization (Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld, 2012). Over the last century, agricultural production systems, especially agricultural heritage, had a considerable potential to contribute to sustainable livelihoods of local people, attracting tourists and performing scientific researches.

In recent years, the agricultural sector has added a new concept to the cultural heritage literature called "agricultural heritage". Agricultural heritage is defined as a specific type of heritage that consists mainly of farmers' lifestyles, production and agricultural activities (Nahuelhual *et al.*, 2014). Some researchers also define agricultural heritage as the cultural heritage of the villagers' lifestyle (Swinton *et al.*, 2007). The concept of cultural heritage is interrelated with the environment. In 2002,

the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) launched the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) to conserve and support agricultural culture systems around the world. This initiative seeks to maintain the dynamism of all agricultural heritage systems and many of their goods and services with the aim of achieving food security and sustainable livelihoods for present and future generations (Kouhafken, 2014; Daugstad *et al.*, 2006). Agriculture also includes tangible and intangible aspects of heritage in the agricultural sector. In the tangible aspect of agricultural heritage, we consider the natural landscapes of agricultural and rural environments, indigenous buildings and habitats, traditional agricultural tools used and local water supply systems. In the intangible or spiritual aspect of agricultural heritage, we can refer to the customs, traditions, festivals related to agriculture, art, indigenous knowledge used for agricultural activities, etc. (Wall and Nuryanti, 1997). Heritage is used as a tourist attraction factor, and tourism has the potential to conserve heritage: with proper planning, government and financial support (Su and Wall, 2014; Peters, 2005) it.

For thousands of years, farmers' communities have developed complex, diverse, and (locally) compatible farming systems. Important world agricultural heritage systems have emerged via a significant participatory process in the evolution of human being, nature and based on the interaction and cooperation of cultural and biological efforts over many centuries, which reflects the collected experience of rural individuals around the world (Imani, 2017).

Agricultural activities gradually influence the identity of the environment and induce landscape elements in the environment. This landscaping can eventually lead to agricultural heritage (Augustine, 2008). Watching natural landscapes (visual and visual stimuli) and being exposed to natural elements (tactile, smelling and auditory stimuli) can decrease psychological stressors and increase biological welfare (Nili *et al.*, 2012). Thus, the construction of garden or farms can have several reasons including,

the creation of beautiful landscapes and the production of products. Therefore, the landscape has an important and crucial role in the formation of cultural, ecological, social and environmental contexts (Mansoori and Habibi, 2010). Apart from the role that the agricultural landscape plays as a unifying element in social systems, it also shapes the construction traditions and creating a physical environment (Jamali, 2014). Agricultural culture and rituals from traditional agricultural systems in the world is one of the most effective factors in attracting and directing tourists and citizens to revitalize and recreate memories and the nature of rural and agricultural life.

Rituals, as one of the best methods to understand the culture of communities are the external manifestations of the beliefs that originate from the society culture. The beliefs find meaning over time in the form of special rituals and ceremonies and form a part of the life of the people of the society (Ghazanfari and Javadi, 2009). Rituals and religious or ethnic ceremonies are created via socio-cultural methods including traditions, customs, popular knowledge and beliefs, ethics and persistent values (Parsi, 2002). These rituals in fact create a kind of relationship between man, space, structure and history (Aminzadeh, 2000). Like language, ritual is the use of tools, symbolism and music is one of the constituent elements of human beings. Ritual, in turn, is widely recognized in theories as a communicative act whose movements, actions and words are often a method to send non-linguistic messages, or we can say, ritual is a form of speech (Rezapour, 2018).

Ritual tourism is one of the branches of cultural tourism that includes spiritual and intangible cultural heritage. What exists in ritual tourism is the beliefs that have continued to the current period (Beygi, 2019). Ritual activities, especially in the agricultural sector, form part of rural. According to Holden (2010), tourism is introduced as a social ritual that leads to the semantic recreation and departure of mankind from routine life (Kim *et al.*, 2013). Tourism is a ritual in such a way that in many cases tourism includes

time spent, far from the ordinary and routine life (Beygi, 2019). Iranian ritual beliefs are divided into two main groups. The first group refers to the annual cycle of seasonal festivals in the four seasons, that is, the general relationship of man with the ecology. The second group of rituals is like diseases and controlling possible events that do not have a definite time. Rain ritual is the second group that is performed during drought (Aref and Raufi, 2010). Rituals are generally related to the change of seasons and are based on the pattern of birth, growth, maturity, death and rebirth (Brackett, 2005). Many rituals are related to the climatic conditions of Iran and successive droughts (Kouhafken, 2014). Besides observing the harvest of crops directly, the tourists can also observe presence in residences, purchase of agricultural products, direct market, products and handicrafts, souvenirs and other activities and agricultural products. In order to be able to play a crucial role in the development process, the agriculture sector should produce more than the consumption required by farmers in order to have commercial nature and be able to provide savings for reinvestment in its own sector or in the industrial sector (Shakoori and Hosseini, 2009)

Although in relation to the central topic of this research, “the role of agricultural rituals in the development of tourism”, no similar researches were seen at the time of writing this article, but in some regions of the world, researches were studied and evaluated as follows:

An Offering of Grain: The Agricultural and Spiritual Cycle of a Food System in the Kailash Sacred Land scape, Darchula, Far Western Nepal (Castagnetti *et al.*, 2021). Paddy cultivation rituals in South Acèh, Indonesia: An ethnographic study in West Labuhan Haji (Manan *et al.*, 2022). Sustainable or Not? Tourism Development in Agricultural Heritage Sites. Reflections on Agricultural Heritage Systems and Tourism in China (Yehong *et al.*, 2021).

Agricultural Heritage Systems Tourism: definition, characteristics and development framework (Tian., *et al.*2016). Agricultural

heritage tourism development and heritage conservation: a case study of the Samaba Rice Terraces, Yunnan, China (Zhang *et al.* 2021). A Community Livelihood Approach to Agricultural Heritage System Conservation and Tourism Development: Xuanhua Grape Garden Urban Agricultural Heritage Site, Hebei Province of China (Su *et al.*, 2018). Comparing cultural world heritage sites and globally important agricultural heritage systems and their potential for tourism (Yotsumoto and Vafadari, 2021). A value-based analysis of the tourism use of agricultural heritage systems: Duotian Agrosystem, Jiangsu Province, China (Su *et al.*, 2020). Intangible Cultural Heritage in Tourism: Research Review and Investigation of Future Agenda (Qiu *et al.*, 2022), the effects of agricultural rituals on tourism development in Iran (Hesam and Mahmoodichenari, 2022).

MATERILAS AND METHODS

This study is consisted of two main parts. In the first part, the obstacles to the revitalization and application of rituals in the development of tourism were described using the grounded theory. In the second part, the barriers extracted from the previous section were investigated and analyzed using inferential statistical tests. First, in order to discover the reasons for the destruction of agricultural rituals that can be as obstacles to the use and revitalization of these rituals in the development of tourism, the grounded theory method was used with MAXQDA software. In this study, according to the research problem, the interview technique (face-to-face, virtual and telephone) had been used for data collection. The statistical population consisted of specialists in various fields including social sciences, geography, agriculture, etc. The studied samples were selected by snowball sampling method, which is one of the types of purposeful sampling methods, and theoretical saturation was obtained during interviews with 104 experts, that is, the interview process continued to the point where no new opinion was mentioned by the experts, or if there was one, it was repeated and similar.

In the second part, the barriers extracted from the previous part were investigated and analyzed using inferential statistical tests. For this purpose, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used. In the questionnaire, questions were designed in 6 sections as cultural and identity, social, economic, educational and research, institutional and environmental and infrastructure, which are included in each section according to the questions related to each index. The information obtained from these questionnaires was quantitatively entered the SPSS software to initially examine the Cronbach's alpha value to verify the accuracy of the questionnaire. The coefficient with a value of 0.94 indicates a good and reliable internal validity of the responses. The findings were then analyzed using binomial and Friedman tests. The statistical population in this section was the same as the experts of the previous stage and the experts who were identified during the research. The individuals in this section were 130 who tried to identify people who are experts by snowball method and were invited to participate in the research (After the completion of the interview process, a list of people who were available in the previous stage, i.e. the stage of conducting interviews, in this stage and after creating the questionnaire, for 130 people from They were

sent. This list of people was prepared by snowball method and at the interview stage, it reached the limit of 104 people.). According to the Covid-19 epidemic and in order to use new survey tools, an online questionnaire was used in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned in the research method section, with the purpose of extracting barriers to revitalization and application of rituals in tourism development, the collected data were analyzed in the form of three stages of open, axial and selective coding. In open coding, sentences or concepts related to barriers were extracted and coded in the form of 617 items, which, after combining the same codes, a total of 319 codes with different frequencies were identified. Thus, similar concepts were coded in the form of the same codes. The results of examining the relevant data in the form of open coding and the results of open coding, based on thematic classification and broad classes were developed and presented in the form of axial coding in Table 01.

Table 01: Dimensions, components and indicators (variables) of the research.

Dimensions	Components	index or variables	Frequency
Tourism	Agritourism	Low awareness of villagers on how to make money from agricultural tourism, neglect of agricultural tourism in Iran in general, weakness in human resources of agricultural tourism, lack of economic and entrepreneurial view of this type of tourism among local communities of agricultural tourism	24
	Tourism	Insignificance of tourism in general among authorities, lack of tourism awareness among the local tourism community	14
	Composition	Weaknesses in the combined presentation of tourism products along with rituals	6
Services and infrastructure	Infrastructure	Weakness of facilities and infrastructure for tourists in rural areas	16
	Services and facilities	Weakness in rural health facilities, weakness in accommodation services such as ecological-lodges, weakness in existing facilities in villages, weakness in providing welfare facilities for tourists	9

Research and education	Documentation	Lack of database of agricultural rituals, weakness in collecting and introducing rituals, weakness in recording and documenting rituals	13
	Education	Weakness in cultivating promoting agents related to customs and rituals, weak education of local people, inadequate education for tourists,, weakness of education officials	31
	Research	Weakness in the production of educational content about agricultural rituals, lack of production of sufficient content in the media for sufficient recognition by the community, weakness in research related to rituals	11
	Recognition of rituals	Many rituals are unfamiliar to the villagers, weak familiarity of tourists with agricultural rituals, weak planning of organizations to identify rituals, poor knowledge of managers and planners about rituals and demand for them, poor knowledge of rituals by tourism activists	39
Marketing and advertising	Rituals time	Weakness in informing the time of rituals, lack of having time-place calendar of agricultural rituals	11
	Introduction	Weaknesses in the performance of radio and television in introducing and recognizing rituals, weaknesses in introducing suitable rituals	7
	Marketing	Weakness in identifying target markets, weakness in marketing planning and marketing advertising	6
	Advertising	Ignoring media attachments in the process of changing the country, weakness in advertising of rituals on radio and television, weakness of advertising in attractions of rituals	22
	Creativity	Weakness in creativity to do rituals	4
	Modeling	Weaknesses of modeling successful countries in this field, weakness in showing successful modeling	5
	Branding	Weakness in symbolizing rituals, neglect branding and presenting it in order to attract tourists	3
Agriculture	Change land use	Expansion of second houses and destruction of agricultural fields	6
	Agriculture	Low productivity of agricultural products and lack of motive for holding rituals, decline of agricultural livelihood in rural areas, decline of social status of some agricultural activities such as animal husbandry, deviation from the main purpose of agriculture, degradation of agriculture in the country's economy, diminishing role of agriculture in the country, the weakness of agricultural support in general, the decline of traditional agriculture, the decline of agricultural jobs, changes in agricultural practices, the employment of non-native workers in agricultural work, more attention to importing agricultural products instead of production in the country, the existence of various problems in agricultural sector and lack of priority for holding rituals, less productivity of agricultural work compared to other non-agricultural activities	28
	Agriculture land	Destruction of agricultural farms, small size of lands under the influence of inheritance law, reduction of land productivity And as a result, reduction of people's desire to work in this field	3
	Cultivation pattern	Cultivation of new crops without coordination with indigenous culture and knowledge of the people, increase greenhouse cultivation	5

	Local selection	Weaknesses in the selection of local methods, non-consideration of indigenous knowledge in general national agricultural policies, ignoring indigenous technical knowledge and the ancient heritage of ancestors	3
	NGOs	Not using the capacities of non-governmental organizations, weakness in non-governmental organizations related to NGOs	2
	Global trade	Weaknesses in using the experiences of successful countries experience	2
	Coordination	Weaknesses in the structural coordination of relevant institutions	4
	Holding rituals	The display of many rituals and lack of originality, weak planning in the rituals field, incorrect and biased supervision in holding rituals.	11
	Political problems	Some cultural policies of the political system, the dominance of political issues over the cultural issues	2
	Comprehensive view	Weaknesses in comprehensive rural management, lack of comprehensive plan of agricultural rituals, lack of comprehensive plan for agricultural tourism development, lack of comprehensive document for tourism development of the country	7
Planning and management	Macro policies	Growth of the geography of the center - suburb, little importance to rural areas, lack of clear instructions for the implementation of the use of rituals, lack of attention to rituals at high levels of government, the existence of sectional view, the weakness of macro-agricultural policies	9
	Management	Functional weakness of councils and villages in revitalizing and maintaining rituals, not turning religious resources into attractions and products, weakness of tourism management generally	13
	Government support	Weakness in administrative and legal support, lack of attention to the agricultural sector in general in Iran by the government, weakness in government support	12
	Institutes	Weakness of responsible institutions, lack of attention of relevant institutions	3
	Authorities	Poor management and weak attitude of the authorities involved, weakness in the expertise of managers, weakness in managers' familiarity with rituals, lack of sense of need to revitalize rituals among authorities, lack of priority of rituals for authorities	15
	Planning	Centralized planning and ignore the role of local people, lack of adequate experts to plan for the use of rituals, lack of planning for the use of rituals in tourism, lack of a written plan for the revitalization and development of rituals, lack of long-term plan, lack of the planning priority at the macro level of the country, weakness in the planning system and the lack of a serious view at the development of this type of tourism	14
	Environment	Climate	Global climate change, crop cultivation regardless of climate
Drought		Consecutive droughts, water scarcity, low crop yields due to drought in recent decades	16

Social	Urbanization	Dissociative experience of rapid urbanization, the disappearance of villages as the origin of rituals, the growth of urbanization and the disappearance of villages, the expansion of urbanization	9
	Change generation	The inclination of the young labor force to non-agricultural jobs, the lack of awareness of the new generation of farmers about rituals, the thinking of backwardness of agricultural rituals among rural youth, the generation gap between farmers and their children, the low interest of new generation to traditional rituals	9
	Aging	Changes in population structure and loss of agricultural labor, aging rural communities	7
	Migration	Escaping rural areas, migration of elites and educated people from villages, migration of villagers to cities and departure of labor from villages	15
	Awareness of local people	Weaknesses in empowering local communities, weak awareness of rituals among villagers	4
	Social values	Change of social relations, change in social values, loss of value of the farmer before the employee	4
	Trust	Decrease in social capital among local individuals, decrease in local people's trust in each other and others, decrease in public trust in government	5
	Collaboration	The dominance of capitalist relations before the revolution and forgetting cooperation, land reform and shrinking of lands and the reduction of cooperation between farmers, the growth of individualism and the reduction of group cooperation of villagers in agriculture.	13
	Participation	Lack of attention to the local people and the main inhabitants in holding some rituals, weak participation of tourists in ritual and agricultural activities, reduction of women's participation in agricultural activities	12
	Social relations	Reduction of mass communication centers in villages, reduction of local social relations	4
Cultural	Modernism	The occurrence of imperfect modernity, The evolutionary view of the new age towards the tradition era, the rapid development of communication technologies	17
	Function	Lack of the need for rituals, weakness in adapting rituals to modern needs and new functions	13
	Mocking	Negative evaluations and disrespect for some rituals by people	7
	Globalization	Globalization and the weakening of subcultures Globalization	4
	Nature-based	Dominance of economic thought on holding the rituals, materialistic approach of farmers, reducing the relationship with nature in modern agriculture, breaking the spiritual relationship with the earth	5
	Assimilation	The role of governments in cultural assimilation throughout the history	3
	Updating	Not being attractive or not actually performing rituals for current generation, not changing rituals with new elements of current life, not imagining the adaptation of agricultural rituals to modern life	11
	Lack of cultural priority	view of cultural issues such as rituals	1
Life style	The decline of these rituals due to changes in lifestyle, the tendency of rural families to urban culture lifestyle	9	

Cultural	Narrow-mindedness	Elimination of some attractive elements of rituals due to the conditions of society, the existence of narrow-minded views on some rituals.	3
	Sense of belonging	Decreased sense of belonging to the village	1
	Ethnic identity	Loss of ethnic identity in some groups	1
	Individual freedom	Weaknesses in some individual freedoms in the society	2
Economic	Industrialization	Reduce the time of agricultural activities in modern agriculture, industrialization and mechanization of agriculture in rural areas Economic	29
	Benefit	Not knowing the role of rituals in the economic productivity of local people, non-commercial agricultural rituals, lack of economic benefit of holding rituals for farmers	12
	Financial support	Weakness in financial support of retaining and developing rituals	2
	Poverty	Non-priority of the rituals for the local community, economic poverty of the villagers	12
	Budget	Weaknesses in budget allocation	9
	Economic problems	Existence of many economic problems	5
	Investment	Weaknesses in establishing rural tourism businesses, weaknesses in allocating credit to investors in rural areas for the development of tourism	4
Rules and regulations	Government-based	Government interference in rituals	1
	Administrative problems	Administrative-executive barriers	2
	Rules	Land reform and its social effects and the destruction of the master-slave structure, environmental health program to prevent holding livestock in the villages	3

Source: Research Findings, 2022: Taken from the opinions of experts in the interview process

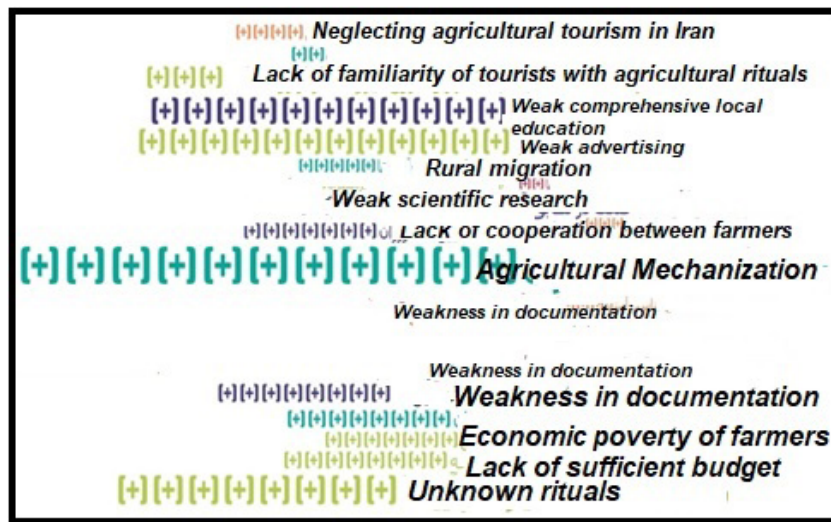
The Story Trends

One of the most important dimensions discovered in the research process related to agricultural rituals and tourism development from the perspective of the experts participating in the interview process is the economic topics that have broad categories such as industrialization, investment, budget, economic challenges, poverty, support Finance and profit. In this regard, agricultural mechanization had a high frequency of repetition by experts as it has been mentioned 25 times directly. According to agricultural mechanization experts, by reducing the time of agricultural activities, the need for human resources cooperation is very low. For this reason, issues related to cooperation in the agriculture industrialization are less observed. Mechanization has played a role in weakening rituals due to reduced working time, individualism and the lack of need to teamwork, materialism and increased productivity by technology, as well as increasing the economic benefit of farmers

without the need for transcendental issues. This issue can also be seen in the Figure below, which is the high-frequency code of experts.

The important point here is that in order to revitalize agricultural rituals, these rituals should play a role in the economic productivity of local people. It means, by holding these rituals, the local community and farmers can benefit. One of these cases can be the expansion of tourism in general and agricultural tourism in particular.

Besides these cases, as agricultural rituals are dependent on agricultural products, the cultivation of new crops without adaptation with the local culture and knowledge of the people and the prosperity of greenhouse cultivation, has destroyed the rituals. For example, the ritual related to wheat cultivation has been eliminated by changing the cultivation to rapeseed. Generally, the existence of many problems in the agricultural sector has made holding rituals not a priority for local people.



Source: Output of Max QDA software, 2022

Figure 01: The main codes obtained from the interview with the expert.

In recent years, important issues of climate change and drought have been added to these problems. In fact, the main reason for the destruction of many villages in the country has been the drought, which has created very problematic conditions for farmers due to the strong dependence of agriculture on water. On the other hand, the villages that were able to cope with this situation are encountering low yields of agricultural products due to drought and have no incentive to hold rituals. Indeed, growing crops regardless of climate has also caused problems. For example: watermelon or rice cultivation in low water areas.

Another issue raised by experts is the social core category, which is categorized into 10 broad categories. Preventing youth migration from rural areas as a factor mentioned by 15 experts is at the highest frequency of the group. Due to the problems in the villages, the most important of which is the lack of employment due to population growth and poor facilities. On the other hand, the people living in the villages are mostly elderly individuals who cannot be considered as agents of agricultural work and related rituals. The reasons for the tendency to non-agricultural work are the low efficiency of agricultural work compared to other jobs, including brokerage. The inter-generation gap between farmers and their children has also reduced the interest of

the new generation in agriculture due to the development of information and communication technology and familiarity with other cultures. In fact, the expansion of urbanization has also resulted into such situation. It can be seen that many villages that are in fact the origin of agricultural rituals have disappeared in recent years and their inhabitants have become urban dwellers who do not have agricultural jobs and on the other hand have experienced dissociation due to rapid urbanization. Along with this issue, there is also the debate of the weakness of social capital. There is a serious weakness in the area of cooperation between local people. In recent years, we have witnessed the individualism of the villagers and the decrease in trust between people, which can influence the holding of rituals based on the cooperation and participation of local individuals. This decrease in cooperation is often due to the dominance of capitalist relations before the revolution, in which the situation has been exacerbated by land reform and land size shrinkage. Of course, the other dimension of social capital, apart from cooperation and trust, that is, awareness, also has many weaknesses in the discussion of agricultural rituals. Unfortunately, there is a severe lack of awareness about rituals among the villagers, especially the younger generation, who often do not know about their rituals and philosophy. The decline in public participation and the decrease in social

relations have also been the main causes. It can be seen that in many villages, the main square of the village, which is usually the gathering place of men in their leisure time (in the evening), and shows a pretty manifestation of social relations of the people (many important decisions of the village and the problems of the village are solved in these places), has been disappeared, and the spatial dimension of social relations has been disturbed.

In the cultural dimension, which has 13 broad categories, one of the most important debates is the modernization of society and new technologies, which were referred by 14 experts. The fact is that the development of communication technologies has made people familiar with the world around them and new cultures, and has formed a certain life style that does not consider the traditional traditions and rituals. This is the evolutionary view of the new age compared to the age of tradition, which believes in the persistent renewal of human being and his life, and abandons everything that is related to the past and attempts to design a new plan. One of the weaknesses of rituals is their adaptation to today's needs and new functions that individuals think are not modern and therefore there is no need to maintain them. However, it is worth to mention that rituals are part of the identity of any society and are a powerful medium for transmitting concepts within and between generations. What is considered today as a return to originality and self, and nostalgic tourism is also a part of it, also considers the issue of human identities. Here, globalization and the weakening of subcultures have also been effective, but it is believed that if there is planning, as globalization is a threat to subcultures, with the development of communication technologies, there is an opportunity for subcultures which are introduced and even developed in these opportunities provided by the global communication space.

Hence, in this regard, we need a comprehensive plan for the development of agricultural tourism, which we currently don't have it. In this program, a comprehensive and long-term view of agricultural rituals should be considered.

One of the basics of this program should be a comparative study of agricultural tourism policies, especially the category of rituals in the experience of successful countries.

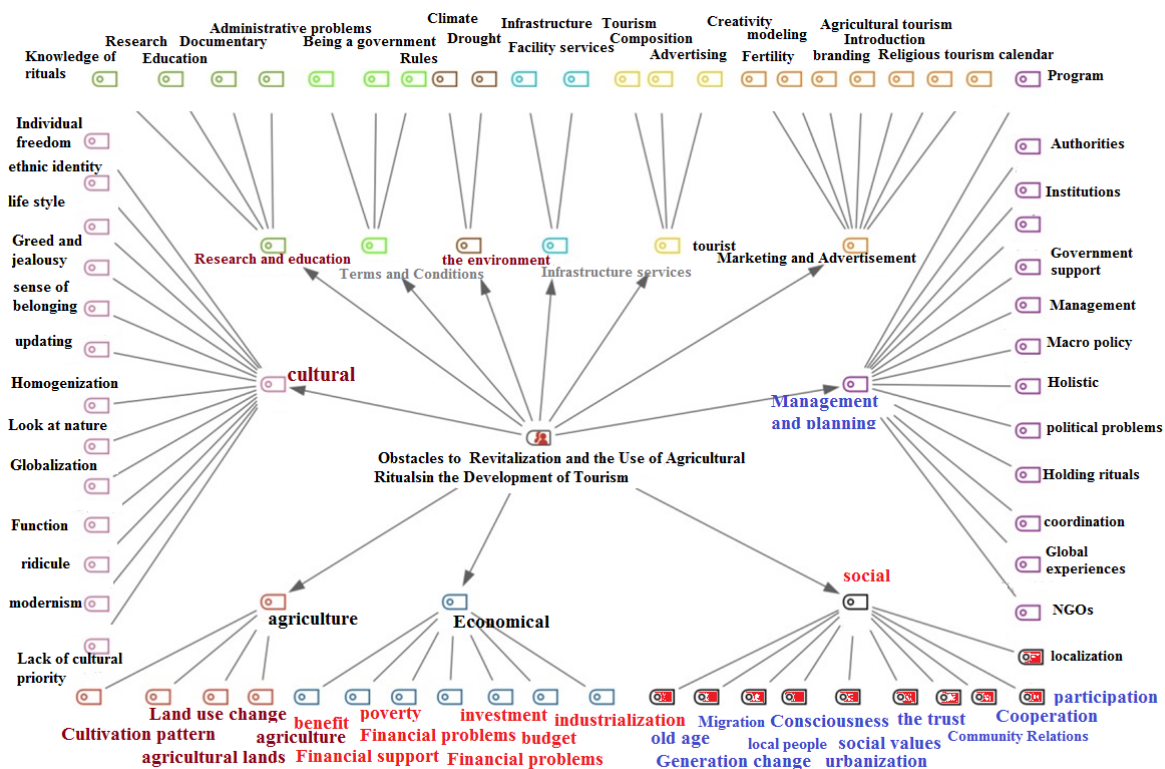
In the meantime, most of the villages in the country are the place for holding agricultural rituals, and these settlements also have many problems. Poor infrastructural facility is a barrier to the development of agricultural rituals in villages. However, because tourists are the main audience of many agricultural rituals and one of the basic principles of sustainable tourism is tourist satisfaction, so, suitable facilities should be provided for tourists, both in the villages and in the agricultural fields. Indeed, we generally have a problem called the insignificance of tourism item among the authorities or the weakness in the attitude towards tourism in the country at the macro level, which has made it impossible for us to use this strong economic sector in the country at a broad level. This issue has been widely neglected in the field of agricultural tourism. Despite all these barriers, it is necessary to have a full knowledge of the rituals to be used as a basis for planning. This issue is also one of the weaknesses of the revitalization and development of agricultural rituals. Unfortunately, there is no database of agricultural rituals in the country and there is a serious weakness in recording and documenting rituals, which was mentioned by 13 experts. In fact, apart from the fact that rituals are not documented, there is also the weakness of the fact that many rituals are not familiar to farmers and villagers. Many rituals have been forgotten in the transmission process due to the oral culture that dominates the history of our country. Thus, the unfamiliarity of many rituals for local people, authorities, tourism activists and tourists is a case that has been pointed out by 37 experts, which shows the importance of recognizing the rituals, the main basis of which is to collect and create a database. In the next stage, the education of local people, tourists, authorities, tourism activists and even tourists in the field of agricultural tourism should be taken into attention. One of the major weaknesses in the discussion of the revitalization and development of rituals is the lack of education, which has been emphasized by

31 experts. Hence, the core category of research and education is one of the major barriers to the revitalization and development of agricultural rituals in Iran.

According to the findings and the frequency of the codes mentioned by the experts, the following ranking can be presented based on the frequencies, which in fact shows the importance of core categories. According to the following Table, it can be said that the category of management and planning, according to experts, is the most important category in terms of barriers to the revitalization and application of agricultural rituals.

Then, in order to provide a deeper analysis of the situation of the studied obstacles, a binominal test was used. The test results at the level of these components show that in the cultural and identity component, 83% of experts believe that this component is higher than average as an effective barrier to the revitalization of rituals. In the economic component, it is 88% higher than the average, i.e. 3 emphasizes on the barrier nature of these components. In the education and research

component, in general, 95% of experts agree with the above-average limit for this component. In the social issue, the agreement value reaches 87%. The institutional and managerial component also has the highest agreement of 96% compared to the other components. Finally, 74% of experts agree with the barrier in the environmental and infrastructural component. The results of Friedman test also show that at the level of components, institutional and managerial components with an average rank of 4.56, the first rank is important in the barriers to the revitalization and application of agricultural rituals in tourism development. In the second rank, we have education and research with an average rank of 4.37. In the third rank, we have economic factors with an average rank of 3.82, in the fourth rank, we have social factors with an average rank of 3.32, in the fifth rank, we have cultural factors with an average rank of 2.53 and in the sixth rank, we have environmental and infrastructure components with an average rank of 2.4. Finally, the correlation test was used to assess the condition of the relationship between the components.



Source: Output of Max QDA software, 2022

Figure 02: Relationship between dimensions and component

Table 02: The most important obstacles to the revival and application of agricultural rituals according to experts.

Core categories	F	Rank
Management and planning	95	1
Research and education	92	2
Social	83	3
Cultural	77	4
Economic	73	5
Marketing and advertising	58	6
Tourism	44	7
Agriculture	42	8
Services and infrastructure	25	9
Environment	23	10
Rules and regulations	5	11
Total	617	-

Source: Extracted from the opinion of experts in the interview process, 2022

CONCLUSIONS

Today, due to various problems of the agricultural sector, many villagers and farmers are looking for alternative economic strategies and new sources of income and diversification of the local economy. One of the most common strategies here is the development of tourism, especially agricultural tourism. In the meantime, agricultural rituals are considered as one of the main sources of tourism development. Iran is also very rich in agricultural rituals field due to its old background, cultural and natural diversity, etc. However, there are barriers that have made it impossible to use agricultural rituals to develop tourism. Among the most important of these barriers are management and planning, research and education, social, cultural, economic, marketing and advertising, tourism, agriculture, services and infrastructure, environment and rules and regulations. One of the most important topics in the barriers to the revitalization of rituals is the lack of attention to cultural issues such as rituals, which is a problem at the macro, medium and even micro level of society because of other problems and priorities such as economic problems. Unfortunately, the lack of an economic view of tourism in rural areas in general is a general problem in this area that has not been able to develop tourism businesses, especially in agricultural tourism in

rural areas. If rituals can be a platform for tourism development and, commercializing rituals with the development of businesses at the beginning, it can be expected to revive and use them in rural development. On the other hand, the severe poverty in the society, especially in the rural society, has prevented the farmer from thinking mostly about things other than making money. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, it can also be explained that until man satisfies his basic needs, he cannot think of the higher stages of needs that include rituals in our debate.

There are other barriers related to the agricultural sector. As mentioned, the economic problems of farmers have caused agriculture to suffer a lot of damage among the economic sectors of Iran. In recent years, the sale of agricultural land for the second tourism houses has become very much due to the higher profits in Iran. On the other hand, the low productivity of the farmer's products deprives the farmers of the desire to hold rituals. Besides low productivity, poor sales of products, often offered to brokers at low prices, decreased farmers' motivation for agricultural work as a whole. In all these cases, the two issues are of great importance. One is the lack of the cultural priorities in society and the insignificant view of cultural issues such as rituals among authorities and people, and the

other is the change in the life style of people in society, especially in rural areas that have been turned into cities. In the first case, the reason may be the economic problems in the society, but in the second case, the neglect of the management and planning of the society's transition from tradition to modernity, or incomplete modernity, is the main cause. However, at the top of all the barriers mentioned, there is the barrier to management and planning, which has been the concern of many experts, and a large number of codes and broad categories are placed in this core category. Inappropriate management and planning at the macro and micro cultural level has been highly emphasized by experts. In particular, the issue of proper planning in the long-term, mid-term and short term is important which we lack in the field of rituals. In addition, there is no comprehensive plan in terms of the fact that the category of rituals is not a planning priority at the macro level of Iran. The reasons for this are the lack of awareness about rituals among managers, inadequate specialists to plan for the implementation of rituals, the lack of a sense of need to revitalize rituals among authorities, etc. In all these cases, there centralized planning and lack of participation of local people can be observed. As long as the plans in the capital of the country are dictated to other areas, the real understanding and cognition that is the basis of planning is not formed and is determined based on a superficial cognition. This growth of central-peripheral geography, which is increasing over time, prevents the capacity of the peripheral areas from being observed and creates a development flow for the benefit of the central areas. In this regard, the following strategies are proposed to

revitalize and apply agricultural rituals in the development of tourism in Iran.

- Educate local communities, authorities and tourists about agricultural rituals and the need to preserve them
- Prevent the change of agricultural fields use and their destroying process
- Development of ecotourism as a transcendent aspect of tourism in rural areas
- Establishment of a database and documentation of agricultural rituals
- Preparing an atlas of the Iran's agricultural rituals
- Development of infrastructure required for tourism in rural areas
- Introduction and effective and creative advertising in the field of agricultural rituals

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