The Impact of Public and Private Sectors' Strategic Alliance on Improvement of Guilan Province's Tourism Industry Competitiveness Indexes

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An increasing trend has been witnessed in the establishment of strategic alliances in recent years. Presently, industries perceive alliances as a strategic component and an offensive competitive weapon because strategic alliances have changed the essential competitive paradigm traditional competition to alliance-based and network competition in most domestic and foreign markets. One industry that needs this competition tool is tourism – the industry that is global and is considered a big business. Nowadays, the development of tourism is welcomed by all countries owing to its crucial role in their economic, cultural and political development. On the other hand, the role of provinces in the improvement of overall tourism indices of the country should not be underestimated because provinces and regions play a key role in the balanced, sustainable development of the country's tourism. Guilan Province is one of the provinces located on the north-south corridor and is neighbor to the countries in Central Asia. It enjoys diverse tourist attractions of different types including rural tourism, ecotourism, and ethical, nomadic, cultural, historical, religious, and health tourism. This gives the province a privilege to be important both for its own holistic development and for the economic, cultural, and social development of the country. However, the governmental sector cannot by itself handle the development of tourism industry and many researchers have asserted the importance of strategic alliance between private and public sectors to make the tourism development possible. Thus, the objective of the present study was to explore the impact of the strategic alliance between private and public sectors on the improvement of tourism indices in Guilan Province. Following a review of literature

and theoretical inferences, a conceptual model was presented reflecting the most important aspects of strategic alliance that can significantly influence tourism indices. A questionnaire was designed with 42 questions and was administered to public and private sectors engaged in tourism in the province by non-probability quota sampling technique. After the content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed, its reliability was estimated at 0.7 using Cronbach's alpha. The model and research hypotheses were tested by structural equations modeling using Amos Software Package. It was found that the general fitting of the model was satisfactory, proving the adequate validity of the model. In addition, all five hypotheses were confirmed, showing that the strategic alliance between public and private sectors would improve environment, activities and policy-makings, infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources significantly. Therefore, the claimed importance of strategic alliance was accepted.