



Examining the challenges and analyzing the relationship between barriers to health tourism using Fuzzy DEMATEL Method in Iran

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Abstract:

As a subcategory of tourism industry in the globe, health tourism has been increasingly growing recently. Therefore, the organizations which are involved in tourism as well as the countries which are interested in tourism development have focused on health tourism and have developed appropriate planning, accordingly. Industrial lifestyle has created a number of requirements in many countries. It has also imposed some necessities for the people in various societies. The main purpose of the present study is to determine the barriers to health tourism using Fuzzy DEMATEL method based on the evidence from Iran. This study is applied in nature and is regarded as a descriptive-exploratory study in terms of the topic and research questions. The data were collected using a questionnaire. The statistical population of the present study included the experts and practitioners in the field of health tourism who were selected based on snowball sampling method. The researchers aimed to identify the barriers to health tourism in Iran and to determine the relationship between these barriers through DEMATEL method which can help identify the causal variables. DEMATEL method can lead to identification of the barriers and can also facilitate resolving the causal barriers. The findings of the ultimate DEMATEL model indicated the following barriers to the development of health tourism in Iran: the lack of proper implementation of ecology, mental image of the destination, as well as the lack of research and development. Moreover, the lack of infrastructures, improper policies, and the lack of social responsibilities can also lead to such barriers. It is noteworthy that the lack of infrastructures is regarded as the most effective factor which significantly correlates with the other variables of the present study.

Keywords: Medical Tourism, Fuzzy DEMATEL method, Iran