

# Research Paper: Comparative Analysis of Tourism Supply Chains in Corona Epidemic in Ahmedava Kurdistan, Iraq; and Hajij Village, Kermanshah Province, Iran

Didar Aswad Ali<sup>1</sup>, Aeizh Azmi<sup>2\*</sup>, Jafar Tavakkoli<sup>2</sup>

1. MSc., Department of Geography, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.

2. Associate Professor, Department of Geography, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.



**Citation:** Aswad Ali, D., Azmi, A., & Tavakkoli, J. (2024). Comparative Analysis of Tourism Supply Chains in Corona Epidemic in Ahmedava Kurdistan, Iraq; and Hajij Village, Kermanshah Province, Iran. *Journal of Sustainable Rural Development*, 8(1), 79-88. <https://doi.org/10.22034/jsrd.2024.425659.1167>

**doi:** <https://doi.org/10.22034/jsrd.2024.425659.1167>

## Article info:

Received: 01 Oct. 2023

Accepted: 22 Feb. 2024

## Keywords:

Rural tourism, Tourism supply chain, Hajij, Ahmadava, Corona Virus

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This epidemic has affected many aspects of tourism supply chains. On the demand side, it has affected both local and international tourism. It is necessary to pay attention to rural tourism and look for methods to mitigate the effects of the corona.

**Methods:** The study was descriptive, analytical, and qualitative. The statistical population includes local activists and stakeholders in the tourism area in Hajij and Ahmadava. A targeted sampling method was used (including 60 people). The results demonstrated that the main effects of Corona on tourism were economic. There have also been psychological and cultural consequences of the restrictions, such as fear of tourists in local communities, reduced interaction between groups, and isolation of villagers.

**Results:** Many people employed in tourism are on the verge of bankruptcy. Despite the negative impact of coronavirus on tourism, this epidemic has led to a reduction in pollution, the strengthening of virtual tourism, and the use of information tools. Based on the results, several practical recommendations were made, including supporting businesses in the tourism industry through sponsorship and facilitation incentives, strengthening the communication infrastructure, and holding cultural festivals according to the proposed guidelines.

**Conclusion:** This research showed that the weakness of the tourism chain in Iran compared to Iraqi Kurdistan caused the coronavirus disease to cause more damage to the region's rural tourism economy.

## \* Corresponding Author:

*Aeizh Azmi, PhD*

*Address: Department of Geography, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.*

*Tel: +98 (912) 3143354*

*E-mail: a.azmi@razi.ac.ir*

## 1. Introduction

**T**ypes of tourism include different methods, methods, and purposes that tourists use to travel from one point to another. Accurate knowledge of various types of tourism is essential for planning in tourism management and tourism industry. Tourists and tourism is one of the most attractive topics that can be classified into different types. Knowing these categories has an essential place in the better management of the tourism industry. There have been several crises that have affected tourism over time (Alwani, 2015: 86). The hazards (their occurrence and absence) have the most significant impact on tourism, contributing to an increase or decrease in the willingness to travel (Correia, 2008: 169). In other words, any event that threatens the usual tourism activities leads to a reduction in travel and affects the tourism chain (Zare et al., 2013: 93). COVID-19 is one of these threats that have negatively affected tourism today.

Moreover, tourism supply, especially in developing countries, was affected as their incomes decreased due to the economic challenges caused by Corona, making it more difficult for them to offer services such as visas, hotels, transportation, and so on. to tourists. As a result, only a limited number of tourists were available for the services, leading to dissatisfaction and further risks to the tourism industry (Abu Bakr & Rosbi, 2020:191).

## 2. Literature Review

Zir Ryan (2017), in his doctoral thesis, entitled "Contribution of Tourism Marketing to the Development of Tourism in the Arab World, A Comparative Study of Algeria, Tunisia and the UAE," has stated that tourism marketing is one of the main factors in the development of the tourism in these countries. Its importance lies in making tourism a competitive arena for all stakeholders. Different countries can develop tourism by creating a positive image and consolidating it by creating tourist export markets.

Sultana et al. (2020) documented in an article entitled "The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Tourism Destinations in the World" that many tourism destinations suffered economic losses. Even though the financial recovery of tourism will take a long time, many countries have recently started to allow tourists to visit and advertise broadly. Tourism and destination management organizations must promote preventive measures and cautiously work together to preserve tourism.

According to experts Ziyai et al. (2016), in "Prioritizing factors influencing the implementation of green supply chain management in the tourism industry," believe that the implementation of green supply chain management in the tourism industry is more influenced by external than internal factors. In addition, the legal structure is the most critical factor.

Abbas Khadir Abbas (2016) published a paper entitled "Impact of Tourism Activity on the Economic Development of Iraq," noting that tourism can stimulate the movement of the gross national product by including a chain of diverse economic activities. However, limited revenues and low tourism sector growth have not yet boosted the Iraqi economy.

## 3. Methodology

The interpretive paradigm was applied in the research methodology. This is a qualitative study based on a fundamental theory and practical in terms of purpose.

Two data collection methods were used to collect information and identify the research villages: documentary and field. The former method was used for the problem statement, theoretical basis, and background. A semi-structured interview was used to collect data about the villages studied. The interviewees were selected according to the snowball method.

In this study, the statistical population in Iran included Hajj villages (106 households) and Paveh County (Statistical Center of Iran, 2020). In Kurdistan, the statistical population was Ahmadava village (50 households).

The sampling method used in this study was situational sampling to saturation. The survey continues until it no longer provides new information with new cases.

Samples for the two villages of Ahmedabad and Hajj were drawn as follows:

Sampling from activists and local village officials.

Sampling from travel-services centers.

Rampling among local officials in the region

## 4. Findings

This study analyzed and comparatively evaluated images from Iran and Iraq Kurdistan. As can be seen from the photos of the study area in Iran, this region can attract

many tourists due to its natural features, spatial identity, and rural structure. On the other hand, due to the ethnic and cultural similarities between the studied areas in Iran and Iraq, exchanging tourists and vacationers can be considered an opportunity, and the concept of ecotourism can be regarded more (Figure 1).

The pictures of Ahmedawa, the study area of Iraq Kurdistan, display that this region could attract many tourists, and there are many cultural and social similarities between these two areas. In other words, it can be argued that the images of the Kermanshah region highlight its natural dimension and identity as an attraction for tourists. Moreover, the Ahmedawa region attracts many tourists because of its natural and cultural attractions. So, by bringing in the capacities and capabilities of these two regions, it is possible to strengthen the cultural foundations and exchange tourists (Figure 2).

At this point, we analyzed the data line by line, identified their processes, and assigned a code to each sentence. In this study, we extracted and assigned the most crucial sentence codes. The regions of Iran were coded "IR," and Kurdistan was coded "K" (Table 1). The data were coded using open coding, assigning a code to each outcome. Finally, 44 codes were extracted.

Axial coding aims to create a relationship between the generated categories (in the open coding phase). For this step, a paradigm model is typically used to facilitate

theorizing. Communication in coding is based on the expansion of one of the categories. Main categories (such as central ideas or events) are described as phenomena, and others are related. The causal conditions are the events and cases that lead to the emergence and development of the phenomenon. Context refers to a particular set of conditions, and intervening conditions refer to a broader set of conditions in which the phenomenon is situated. Action or confrontational strategies refer to the measures and reactions due to the phenomenon. Finally, these measures' desired or undesired outcomes and reactions refer to the consequences. Based on the results of the interviews with the concerned persons on the consequences of the spread of Corona on tourism, an axial coding was made according to the two regions of Iran and Iraq (Tables 2 and 3).

The negative consequences of the coronavirus on rural tourism included the components of health and safety, production, cost, and psychological culture. For health safety, disease transmission in tourist areas, destruction of resorts, decrease in tourist numbers, and fear of safety were the main influencing factors (Table 1). For production, on the other hand, the decrease in tourism activities, the increase in unemployment, and the loss of jobs were the main negative consequences of Corona. The rise in welfare service costs and food prices by service providers in the tourism sector is one of the most important consequences of this sector.

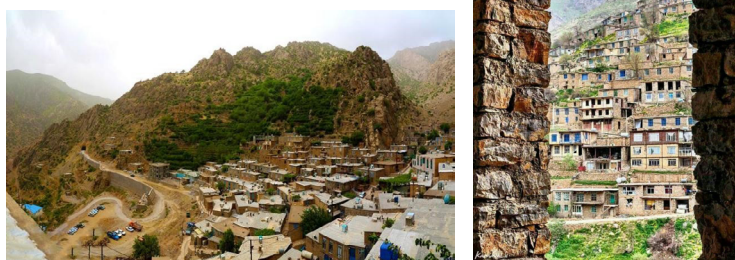


Figure 1. Ahmadava village

JSRD

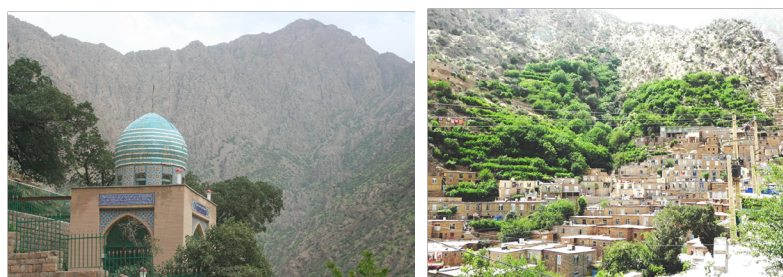


Figure 2. Hajij village

JSRD

**Table 1.** Primary coding extracted from interviews

Corona's effects on rural tourism	Extract code
Fewer crowds in tourist spots due to fear of Corona	IR
Spoilage of food in many supermarkets during the first year of the outbreak	IR
Destruction of tourist sites and historical monuments due to fewer guards during the Corona period	IR
Decreased security at tourist sites due to the presence of singles instead of families during the Corona period	IR
Increased transmission and spread of the disease	IR
Reduction in the number of people participating in tourist trips	IR
Increased unemployment in the host community	IR
Creation of fake jobs, such as selling masks and alcohol in tourist resorts instead of selling them in pharmacies	IR
Decrease in the activity of ecotourism resorts	IR
Decrease in production (due to lack of labor in case of infection or death from coronavirus)	IR
Loss of tourism-related jobs, such as those selling handicrafts	IR
Increase in prices by the host community after lifting the ban on visiting tourist places to compensate for damages	IR
Price increases in food	IR
Affect on global GDP	IR
Reduced the number of rural festivals held locally	IR
Reduced social interaction	IR
Isolation of host communities	IR
Increased stress and anxiety due to the intrusion of unknown people into the village	IR
Reduction of noise pollution in the host communities	IR
Reduction in pollution and waste production in host communities	IR
Reduced fossil fuel consumption and carbon production (by defaulting to nearby tourist destinations and traveling less far)	IR
Selection of suitable ecotourism accommodations and operating permits for resorts with suitable infrastructure (improving the quality of ecotourism accommodations)	IR
Providing information and communication technology infrastructure in villages	IR
The rise of virtual businesses, such as the sale of household goods and traditional rural products	IR
Eliminating intermediaries in the sale of traditional rural products in tourist villages	IR
Increasing creativity in virtual tourism	IR
Improving access to health care for host communities	IR
Building and equipping health care facilities in host villages	IR
Promotion of sports and activities of villagers at home	IR
Inadequate infrastructure for the presence of tourists	K
Reduction of services offered to tourists	K
Reduction of access to sanitary facilities for residents	K
Reduction in the quality level of health services	K
Blaming tourists for the spread of coronavirus	K
Non-compliance with health principles by most tourists	K
Imposing more costs on interests in the local community	K
Increasing the cost of tourist tours to compensate for the fewer tourists on the trip	K
Increasing livelihood problems with the continuation of the red situation	K
Increasing psychological pressure and anxiety for residents	K
Concerned about the consequences of the presence of tourists	K
Lack of hospitality on the part of the local community	K
Reduction of environmental problems, such as leaving trash in tourist sites during the coronavirus	K
Reduction of noise pollution in host communities	K
Reduction of environmental pollution and waste production in host communities	K



Table 2. Axial coding of Hajij interviewees

Components	Effects of Corona on rural tourism in Iran
Health security	Fewer crowds in tourist spots due to fear of Corona
	Spoilage of food in many supermarkets during the first year of the outbreak
	Destruction of tourist sites and historical monuments due to fewer guards during the Corona period
	Decreased security at tourist sites due to the presence of singles instead of families during the Corona period
Productive	Increased transmission and spread of the disease
	Reduction in the number of people participating in tourist trips
	Increased unemployment in the host community
	Creation of fake jobs, such as selling masks and alcohol in tourist resorts instead of selling them in pharmacies
	Decrease in the activity of ecotourism resorts.
Expenditure	Decrease in production (due to lack of labor in case of infection or death from coronavirus)
	Loss of tourism-related jobs, such as the sale of handicrafts
	Increase in prices by the host community after the lifting of the ban on tourists visiting the area to compensate for damages
Cultural psychology	Increase in food prices
	Impact on global GDP
	Reducing the establishment of local rural festivals
	Decreasing social interactions
Environmental	Social isolation of host communities
	Increased stress and anxiety due to the intrusion of an unknown person into the village
	Reducing noise pollution in host communities
	Reduction in pollution and waste production in host communities
	Reduced fossil fuel consumption and carbon production (due to commitment to choose nearby destinations and travel less far)
Communication infrastructure	Screening of suitable ecotourism accommodations and operating permits for resorts that have suitable infrastructure (improving the quality of ecotourism accommodations)
	Providing information and communication technology infrastructure in villages
	The rise of virtual businesses, such as the sale of household goods and traditional rural products
	Eliminating intermediaries in the sale of traditional rural products in tourist villages
Health	Increasing creativity in virtual tourism
	Improving access to health care for host communities
	Building and equipping health care facilities in host villages
	Promoting sports and activities for villagers at home



Table 3. Axial coding of Ahmadova interviewees

Components	Effects of Corona on rural tourism in Iraq
Service	Inadequate infrastructure for the presence of tourists
	Restriction of services for tourists
Service	Restricting residents' access to sanitary facilities
	Lowering the quality level of health services
	Blaming tourists for the spread of coronavirus
	Non-observance of health principles by most tourists
Economic	Imposing further costs on local community interests
	Increasing the cost of tourist travel to compensate for the fewer tourists on the trip
	Increasing livelihood problems with the continuation of the red situation

**Table 3.** Axial coding of Ahmadova interviewees

Components	Effects of Corona on rural tourism in Iraq
psychological	Increasing psychological pressure and anxiety for natives
	Concern about the consequences of the presence of tourists
	Lack of hospitality on the part of the local community
Environmental	Reduction of environmental problems, such as leaving garbage at tourist sites during the coronavirus
	Reducing noise pollution in host communities
	Reducing environmental pollution and waste production in host communities



The coronavirus epidemic was studied in the villages of Iraq Kurdistan, as shown in Table 10-4. The results revealed that one of the most critical health challenges of tourism during Corona was the increase of diseases in tourist areas, limited access to health services, and increased psychological pressure on local communities.

On the other hand, the reduction of social services and the increasing cost of services are different challenges of the spread of Corona in the tourist target villages of Iraqi Kurdistan (Tables 4 and 5).

**Table 4.** Selective coding of Iran’s tourism consequences of the Corona outbreak

Components	Effects of Corona on rural tourism in Iran	Frequency	Subcomponents number
Sanitary security	Fewer crowds in tourist spots due to fear of Corona	34	5
	The spoilage of food in many supermarkets during the first year of the outbreak	16	
	Destruction of tourist sites and historical monuments due to fewer guards during the Corona period	26	
	Decreased security at tourist sites due to the presence of singles instead of families during the Corona period	12	
	Increased transmission and spread of the disease	28	
Negative effects	Reduction in the number of people participating in tourist trips	6	6
	Increased unemployment in the host community	26	
	Creation of fake jobs, such as selling masks and alcohol in tourist resorts instead of selling them in pharmacies	14	
	Decrease in the activity of ecotourism resorts	36	
	Decrease in production (due to lack of labor in case of infection or death from Corona)	24	
	Loss of tourism-related jobs, such as the sale of handicrafts	18	
Expenditure	Increase in prices by the host community after the lifting of the ban on tourists visiting the area to compensate for damages	14	3
	Increase in food prices	30	
	Impact on global GDP	8	
Cultural psychology	Reduced establishment of local rural festivals	20	4
	Decreasing social interactions	6	
	Social isolation of host communities	10	
	Increased stress and anxiety due to the intrusion of an unknown person into the village	16	

**Table 4.** Selective coding of Iran’s tourism consequences of the Corona outbreak

Components		Effects of Corona on rural tourism in Iran	Frequency	Subcomponents number
Positive effects	Environmental	Reduced noise pollution in host communities	12	4
		Reduction in pollution and waste production in host communities	26	
		Reduced fossil fuel consumption and carbon production (due to commitment to choose nearby destinations and travel less far)	118	
		Screening of suitable ecotourism accommodations and operating permits for accommodations that have suitable infrastructure (improving the quality of ecotourism accommodations)	20	
	Communication infrastructure	Providing information and communication technology infrastructure in villages	12	4
		The rise of virtual businesses, such as the sale of household goods and traditional rural products	6	
		Eliminating intermediaries in the sale of traditional rural products in tourist villages	6	
	Health	Increasing creativity in virtual tourism	4	3
		Improving access to health care for host communities	24	
		Building and equipping health care facilities in host villages	18	
		Promoting sports and activities for villagers at home	10	



**Table 5.** Selective coding of the consequences of Corona on Iraqi tourism

Components	Effects of Corona on rural tourism in Iraq	Frequency	Subcomponents number
Service	Inadequate infrastructure for the presence of tourists	8	2
	Restriction of services for tourists	22	
Service	Restricting residents’ access to sanitary facilities	30	4
	Lowering the quality level of health services	10	
	Blaming tourists for the spread of coronavirus	6	
	Non-observance of health principles by most tourists	30	
Economical	Imposing further costs on local community interests	6	3
	Increasing the cost of tourist travel to compensate for the lack of tourists on the trip	22	
	Increasing livelihood problems with the continuation of the red situation	14	
Psychological	Increasing psychological pressure and anxiety for residents	28	3
	Concern about the consequences of the presence of tourists	6	
	Lack of hospitality on the part of the local community	10	
Environmental	Reduction of environmental problems, such as leaving garbage at tourist sites during the coronavirus	18	3
	Reducing noise pollution in host communities	12	
	Reducing environmental pollution and waste production in host communities	16	



According to the results of interviews conducted with local activists and tourism managers, coronavirus has led to a dramatic decline in tourists in the rural areas of Iran and Iraqi Kurdistan. This factor has led to many problems in the service areas of ecotourism resorts and

caused unemployment. In other words, it can be argued that the most critical consequences of Corona for tourism are focused on economic aspects (spending, unemployment, and a decrease in production activities). On the other hand, psychological and cultural consequences,

such as the fear of the presence of tourists in local communities, the decrease in interactions between groups, and the isolation of villagers, as well as restrictions, have led to many people involved in the tourism industry being on the verge of bankruptcy. Respondents indicated that Corona caused tourism authorities and trustees to consider innovation and creativity. Consequently, the virtual space has been used to showcase areas, sell products, and improve the communication and service infrastructure.

Table 6 compares the impact of Corona on tourism from the perspective of respondents in both regions:

### 5. Discussion

Positive and negative impacts were identified by coding the consequences of rural tourism during the coronavirus era. Table 4-1 shows that the Coronavirus negatively affected rural tourism regarding safety, health, production, costs, and cultural psychology. The main influencing factors were health safety, disease transmission in tourist areas, destruction of resorts and places, and decreased tourist numbers. In the productive sector, the decrease in tourism activities, the increase in unemployment, and the loss of employment opportunities are the main negative consequences of Corona in this area of tourism. The increase in the cost of welfare services and food prices by the service providers in the field of tourism is one of the most important consequences in this sector. Corona's psychological and cultural impact on the rural tourism industry is also a decrease in festivals and fear of strangers, which are associated with the possibility of spreading diseases.

Corona also has positive environmental effects during this period, such as reducing production waste, forest destruction, and pollution. Overall, it can be concluded that there is no clear timetable for how long the Corona epidemic will last. So, we should focus on creativity and expanding service infrastructure while reducing negative impacts.

### Acknowledgements

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

### References

Abu Bakar, N., Rosbi, S. (2020). Effect of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on the tourism industry, *International Journal of Advanced Engineering Research and Science (IJAERS)*, Vol:7, Issue4:189-173.

Ali Hussein Zainal Al-Shabki. (2020). The Impact of the Covid-19 Virus on the Global and Iraqi Economy, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, pp. 28-23

Alwani, M., Pirouz Bakht, M. (2006). *Tourism Management Process*. Cultural Re-search Office.

Table 6. Comparison of two rural areas

Variable	Hajjih	Ahmadova
Decrease in tourism entrance.	High	High
Government restrictions on tourists entering the region	High	Low
The length of time tourist centers have been closed by order of government institutions.	High	Low
Susceptibility of tourists to corona disease	High	Medium
Government subsidies to tourism institutions	Medium	Low
The amount of loans granted to regional tourism institutions	Medium	Low
Job changes at tourism facilities due to coronavirus	Medium	Low
Closure of tourism centers	High	Low
Decrease in the sale of tourist products and handicrafts	High	High
The presence of indigenous peoples in the region as tourism	Low	Medium
The presence of foreign tourists in the region	Low	Low

- Azevedo, S. G., & Carvalho, H. (2010). The influence of agile and resilient practices on supply chain performance: an innovative conceptual model proposal. Hamburg International Conference of Logistics (pp. 273-281). Hamburg, Germany.
- Boone, T., Jayaraman, V., & Ganeshan, R. (2012) Sustainable Supply Chains: models methods and public policy implications, Springer, New York.
- Carvalho, H., & Machado, V. C. V. C. (2009). Lean, agile, resilient and green supply chain: a review. Third International Conference on Management Science and Engineering Management (pp. 3-14). Bangkok, Thailand.
- Carvalho, H., Azevedo, S.G., & Machado, V.C. (2010). Supply chain performance management: lean and green paradigms. International Journal of Business Performance and Supply Chain Modelling, 2 (3/4), 304-333.
- Correia, A., Pimpao, A., & Crouch, R. (2008). Portuguese charter tourists to long-haul destinations: A travel motive segmentation. Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 32(2), 169-186.
- Dangelmaier, W., Blecken, A., Delius, R., & Klopfer, S. (2010). Advanced Manufacturing And Sustainable Logistics, Springer, Germany
- Halldorsson, A., Kotzab, H., & Skøtt -Larsen, T. (2003). Inter-organizational theories behind supply chain management-discussion and applications. p:31-43.
- Qadiri Masoum, M., Hatami Far, P., Tabatabai, S. M. (2015). Tourism Management Studies. Volume 11, Number 35, pp. 41-62.
- Srivastava, S.K. (2007). Green supply-chain management: a state-of-the-art literature review, International Journal of Management Reviews, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 53-80.
- Sultana, Sh., Islam, T., Islam, M. (2020). Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Top Tourist Destinations in the World, Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Sports, Vol.50, 41-50.
- Yaori Gohar, F., Mansouri Moaed, F. (2019). Analysis of the advertising role on customers' behavioral intentions in the post-corona era in the tourism industry. Tourism Management Studies (Tourism Studies), Volume 19, Special Issue, pp. 1-32.
- Zair, R. (2017). The contribution of tourism marketing to the development of tourism in the Arab world, a comparative study of Algeria, Tunisia, UAE, in commercial sciences (LMD), a thesis submitted to obtain a doctorate, third phase, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.
- Zarrabi, A., Mohammadi, J., Babakhanzadeh, I. (2010). An analysis of the tourist attractions and facilities of the Oramanat region. Journal of Geography and Environmental Planning, year 22, serial number 43, 3, pp. 35-52.

