

Research Paper: Factors Influencing Economic Development in Surrounding Villages (Case Study: Ramshar New City, Southeast Iran)

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This research was conducted to identify the factors influencing the economic development of surrounding villages, with emphasis on the particular region in the southeast of Iran (Case Study: the new city of Ramshar, Sistan).

Methods: the current research, in terms of the goal, is applied and has an interpretive and analytical nature, and in terms of method, it is in the group of qualitative and quantitative research. In order to analyze the data, grounded theory, the Delphi method, and combined models (F-ARAS + F-COPRAS) have been used.

Results: From the results of Grounded Theory, categories (development of innovation in businesses related to the region, attention to financial resources and village people's access to information and benefits of the particular region) as causal factors, categories (existence of infrastructure, social empowerment) villagers, environmental-economic factors) as contextual factors, categories (integrated management, decentralized approach and attention to the capacities and capabilities of villages in the particular area of the new city of Ramshar), as influential intervening factors in economic development Surrounding villages were identified with emphasis on the specific area of the new town of Ramshar, among them; Environmental-economic factors with a weight of 72.54 and attention to financial resources with a weight of 72.00 have respectively assigned the most and the most minor importance in the economic development of the surrounding villages with an emphasis on the particular area of the new city of Ramshar.

Conclusion: The particular area of the new city of Ramshar has been created to support economic activities, establish international trade relations, and promote mobility in the regional economy, as well as the production and processing of goods, etc., and because of its proximity to the border areas, it is more attractive for Afghan businessmen. At the same time, it has created many opportunities for rural areas, but what is essential is that there are factors that can guarantee the economic development of the villages around the new city of Ramsar.

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1. Introduction

Today, special economic zones are considered as a comprehensive phenomenon and a tool for realizing development strategies (Karimian Bostani et al., 2021: 129); and they have a unique role and position in regional economic development (Pashaei, 2022: 1). The creation of special economic zones with the aim of increasing and developing exports, creating employment, attracting investment and transferring technology and increasing public income and other things is done and the economic consequences, It brings with it a broad political, social and cultural impact (Solati, 2021: 71), so that according to the statistics and figures inside and outside the country, these areas in economic development and in the form of various indicators such as income of people, employment, stabilization and permanence of people in their place of residence and preventing migration to the city, creating communication infrastructure and life services, etc. have a significant effect (Shahbakhsh Majboor et al., 2022: 105; Darban astaneh et al., 2016: 111). Creating special economic zones is one of the essential policies to promote the economic growth of surrounding areas (Li, 2021: 8). Special economic zones are carried out in order to increase and develop exports, create employment, attract investment, and transfer technology and increase public income and other things (Liu et al., 2018: 23), the implementation of these programs always requires economic, political, social and cultural consequences. Is. The impact of development in areas adjacent to special economic zones: Economic growth in the long term, like related dishes, causes the creation of new activities, especially in the cities and villages around the free zone. The creation of employment and new incomes, with its multiplying effect, can push the stagnant economy of more deprived areas to new efforts and raise the level of economic activities in these areas (Alidoste Masouleh et al., 2024: 866).

In Iran, in the development plans, the creation of free and special zones is considered one of the ways of rapid industrial development and expansion of exports (Aqeli Kohne Shahri & Imamgholipour, 2015: 5). One of these areas is of particular importance due to the special conditions of the southeast region of Iran, is the special economic zone of the new city of Ramshar in Sistan, in the north of Sistan and Baluchistan province. In fact, Sistan and Baluchistan are valuable provinces of the country, and we need to pay attention to the capacities and potentials hidden in them. The Ramshar Sistan Special Economic Zone was formed with the aim of develop-

ing and emphasizing the use of the region's capacities, and its other goals are the settlement of the population and reducing the process of migration and job creation with regard to the performance of industry and services. Another important goal of this special economic zone is to play a role in the industrial, economic, and housing fields. For this reason, construction has been booming for a few years. This area has a customs exemption. Investment opportunities in the Sistan or Ramshar special economic zone include participation in the establishment of the special economic zone, involvement in the construction of the goods transit terminal in the complex, etc. The special economic zone of the new city of Ramshar Sistan has been created to provide access to the markets of neighboring countries and local development. The activity of this area, due to its proximity and connection with the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, can be a point of hope for the people with proper targeting because sanctions do not interfere in this case. Finally, it should be said that considering the current conditions of the border areas of the country, especially the most deprived border cities of Sistan and Baluchistan province, addressing the consequences of special economic zones on the surrounding villages can provide a platform for comprehensive development. Therefore, the current research was carried out with the aim of identifying the influential factors in the economic development of the surrounding villages with emphasis on the particular region in the southeast of Iran (Case study: the new city of Ramshar, Sistan).

2. Literature Review

As the smallest social unit in any society, villages are of particular importance. Undoubtedly, trying to reduce the issues and problems of these social units and their proper establishment in the development cycle requires special attention (Ghadermazi, 2019: 188). Iranian villages are often involved in different issues, the most important of which is the economic performance of the town. Meanwhile, the existence and presence of the special economic zone are one of the solutions that can attract domestic and foreign capital and, following that, economic, social, and cultural development in human societies follows (Alidoste Masouleh et al., 2024: 865). Today, their special economic zone is one of the essential policies to promote the economic growth of the surrounding areas (Li et al., 2021: 8); one of the goals of such areas is to develop the national economy and attract foreign capital directly (Yeung et al., 2009: 227). Is. These areas are not only designed and created with economic goals and economic growth. Still, they are also considered a tool for

economic development (Rohne, 2013: 12). Special economic zones have two primary and essential advantages. One is the direct economic benefits, such as improving skills, laying the groundwork and testing for more comprehensive economic reforms, technology transfer, diversification of exports, and enhancing the productivity of domestic companies, and the other is indirect benefits, such as foreign currency income, investment Foreign direct investment, job creation, government income, and export growth (Latifi & Ghaempour, 2016: 46).

Regarding the subject of the research, internal and external studies have been conducted, which will be mentioned below: Allameh et al. (2024), in research, have studied the pathology of investment attraction in the Special Economic Zones of Mineral Industries Organization-IMIDRO. The findings of the research indicate that from the point of view of attracting foreign and domestic investment, the special economic zones active in the field of energy, such as the metal and mineral industries of the Persian Gulf and Parsian, have acted more effectively and successfully than the two regions of Kashan and Lamard. However, reasons such as the sanctions system, neglect of production, preference for local demand over accurate location and infrastructure assessment, and neglect of banking and insurance reforms to encourage investment have been among the reasons for the failure of these regions. In research, Shahbakhsh Majboor et al. (2022) analyzed the dimensions of the sustainability of the surrounding villages of the special economic zones (case: the special economic zone of the new city of Ramshar, Sistan). The results of Spearman's correlation test showed that the relationship between Ramshar Special Economic Zone and dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, physical, environmental) is significant and positive. Pashaei (2022), in research, investigated the role of free and special economic zones in the development of rural areas of Qasrshirin city. The data analysis results show that the existence of free and special economic zones in Qasrshirin City has increased the price of land and increased income (warehousing, unloading, etc.). It has also, to some extent, caused reverse migration and stabilization of the population to a very low to low extent. Also, the relationship between the amount of export and investment in construction activities (transportation, road development, etc.) and the relationship between the existence of a free and special economic zone and the increase in employment in the region was measured, which according to the Spearman correlation coefficient at the 95% level has There was a significant relationship. Solati (2021), in research, investigated the role of special economic zones in the level of employment and

welfare. The results showed that special economic zones have a positive and significant role in the amount of employment in northern coastal cities. Still, no significant relationship was found between special economic zones and the level of well-being of residents of northern coastal cities. Eskandari Sani & Sadat Kohaki (2019) in research, they have discussed the feasibility of creating a special economic zone in Kashmir as a solution for the development of industrial and business clusters in line with the sustainable development of the Tarshiz region. The results show that the special economic zone of Kashmir, due to its geographical location, acts as a special logistic zone for other special economic zones and border markets of eastern Iran. On the other hand, considering the local, regional, and international potentials, the formation of a special economic zone based on dry fruit clusters based on the green economy, especially with regard to strategic and export products as well as the Afghan market, can be the most important factors in the region. Kashmir's special economy. Tavakoli Naghmeh et al. (2017), in a research on the economic study of special regions, the role of evaluation and assessment in the development region with an emphasis on land preparation (case example: Salafchegan district of Qom province). The results show that the special economic zone does not affect the development of the Salafchegan sector and the provision of spatial and geographical justice in the region. Bazrafshan & Mohammad Niya (2013), in a research study, analyzed the consequences of the creation of special economic zones on the economic development of the villages of the Asalouye sector of Kangan City. The results showed that the Pars Energy Special Economic Zone has been successful in creating employment, increasing job opportunities, and maintaining the population in its surrounding villages. Still, it has not been successful in increasing the provision of inputs and welfare services in the villages. Zheng's (2021) research has identified the impact of China's special economic zones on local employment and industrial agglomeration. The results show that special economic zones significantly increase employment in urban and rural areas due to the creation of new companies and the expansion of existing large companies. Other results showed that special economic zones tend to reduce local industrial concentration in the eastern and central regions. Li et al. (2021), in research entitled "Effect of special economic zones on the performance of companies," reached these results: the results show that companies in special economic zones perform better on average than companies outside the special economic zones. One of the reasons for the effect of productivity is the selection of companies with higher productivity to enter the region and

companies with lower productivity to leave the region. In a study, [Singh and Rakesh \(2011\)](#) investigated the effect of special economic zones on poverty and gender discrimination in India. The findings show that special economic zones have caused some inequalities in land appropriation and discrimination against women, and the people of India have made efforts to eliminate some laws.

3. Methodology

The present research, in terms of purpose, is practical, interpretive, and analytical in nature, and in terms of method, it is in the group of qualitative and quantitative research. In order to analyze the data, grounded theory (Ground Theory), the Delphi method, and combined models (F-ARAS + F-COPRAS) have been used. The process of collecting information was done in two ways (documentary and library studies) and (interview and questionnaire). In this regard, the main categories were identified. Then, each of the obtained categories was reflected in the form of a questionnaire, and by using the Delphi method, the level of agreement of the experts regarding each of the factors was discussed, and finally, the rank Classification and their importance were discussed. The statistical population in the present study also includes specialists in the field of (geography and urban and regional planning, Land use planning), which were determined by taking into account the purposeful sampling of 30 people.

The new city of Ramshar is located 35 km from Zabol city and on the road from Zabol to Zahedan in the south-east of Iran. Its geographic coordinates are 30 degrees 40 minutes north latitude and 61 degrees 25 minutes east longitude, and located at an average height of 495 meters

above sea level. The lands of the new city of Ramshar, with an area of 120,035 land, are adjacent to the Lotak plain on the north side, Rostam Castle plain on the south side, and Hamon Lake shores on the west side. In choosing the name of the new city of Ramshar, what reflects the identity of this land has been considered (Sistan and Baluchistan Governorate Statistical Yearbook, 2022).

4. Findings

In order to identify the influential factors in the economic development of the surrounding villages, with emphasis on the particular area of the new city of Ramshar, a total of 30 in-depth interviews were conducted. Interviews between (60 to 90 minutes) were recorded and recorded and immediately implemented so that by reviewing the conversations several times, a more detailed analysis and review of the views of experts and specialists can be done. It should be mentioned that the factors were investigated in three parts (causal, contextual, and intervening). The results are described in [Table 1](#).

According to [Table 1](#), from the results of grounded theory, categories (development of innovation in businesses related to the region, attention to financial resources, and access of village people to information and benefits of the particular region) as causal factors, categories (existence of infrastructures, social empowerment of villagers, environmental-economic factors) as contextual factors, categories (integrated management, decentralized approach and attention to the capacities and abilities of villages and the particular region of the new city of Ramshar) as influential intervening factors in development The economy of the surrounding villages was identified with emphasis on the specific area of the new town of Ramshar.

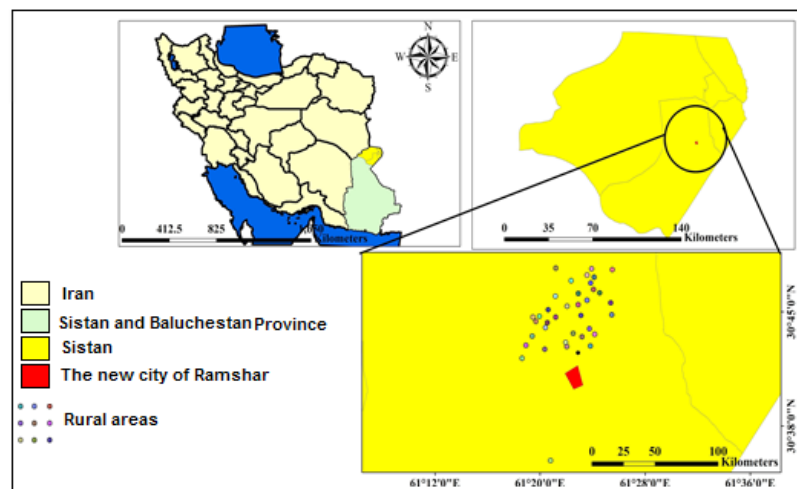


Figure 1. Location of the studied area

Table 1. Causal factors affecting the economic development of the surrounding villages, focusing on the particular area of the new city of Ramshar

Axial coding	categories (classes)	concepts
Causal factors	Development of innovation in businesses related to the region	Holding educational and consulting classes in the field of business
		Encouraging young people to learn about new and local businesses in the region
		Paying attention to the changes in life in the surrounding villages and the new city of Ramshar
		Participation of villagers in creating incomes from logic, especially for the new city of Ramshar
	Attention to financial resources	Ease of obtaining loans in the context of any economic activity
		Government and private financial incentives
		The presence of solid financial institutions in the field of businesses related to the particular area of the new city of Ramshar
	Village people's access to information and benefits of the particular zone	Having information about the economic situation of the region
		Identify the sales market for products.
		Information about the economic situation of the region
Contextual factors	The existence of infrastructure	Reflecting all the events and activities of the region to the villagers
		Suitable physical infrastructures between the villagers and the particular area of the new city of Ramshar
		Suitable infrastructures for the village, such as water and electricity, and...
	Social empowerment of villagers	A vehicle for transporting goods from the market to the village and nearby towns
		The presence of skilled, literate, and experienced human resources in the village.
		Participation of rural women and girls in activities related to the particular region
	Environmental-economic factors	Activities of villagers and village Islamic councils to introduce the advantages of the region to the villagers
		Creating suitable job opportunities according to the environmental conditions of the region
		Balanced development of economic activities in villages
		Providing the necessary background for the growth of small industries in the neighborhood
Intervening factors	Integrated Management	Development of local and Indigenous industries and establishment of industrial service centers in rural centers
		Coherence and cooperation between rural organizations and village people
		Holding regular and continuous meetings by the officials of the relevant organizations regarding the businesses arising from the particular area in the villages
	Decentralized approach	Using the opinions of rural managers in employment programs in villages
		Cooperation between relevant organizations
		Change in development approach (bottom-up)
		Attention to rural areas by creating business development for economic development
	Paying attention to the capacities and abilities of villages in the particular area of the new city of Ramshar	Paying attention to the strengths of surrounding villages with emphasis on the particular region
		Paying attention to the capabilities of the particular region of the new city of Ramshar directly and indirectly in creating sustainable employment in the villages
		Identifying the opportunities and threats of the particular region in the economic development of villages
		Adopting new and appropriate solutions in line with the economic development of villages, focusing on the region

Reference: Research findings, 2023

Then, each of the mentioned factors was reflected in a questionnaire and distributed among the sample community. The Delphi method was used to determine the level of agreement of the experts regarding each of the factors. The results were presented as described in Table 2.

According to the comments presented (Table 2) and Figure 2, In the first stage and compared with the results of the second stage, if the difference of the de-fuzzified average in the two stages is less than the threshold of 0.1, the survey process is stopped. As seen, The de-fuzzified average difference between the experts' opinions in the two stages is less than the threshold limit, so the respondents reached a consensus regarding the mentioned factors. The survey was completed at this stage, and there is no need to continue this method. Then, in order to investigate the most critical factor in the economic development of villages, emphasizing the role of the particular region, the combined models (F-ARAS + F- COPRAS) were used. The results are described in Table 3.

As can be seen in Table 3 and Figure 3, respectively: environmental-economic factors with a weight of 72.54, attention to capacities and capabilities with a weight of 72.50, decentralized approach with a value of 35.72, the existence of infrastructure with a value of 30.72, the access of the village people to the information and benefits of the particular zone with a value of 21.72, the development of innovation in businesses related to the region with a value of 16.72, Rural social capability with a weight of 72.10, integrated management with a weight of 72.05, attention to financial resources with a weight of 72.00, respectively the most and least important in the economic development of the surrounding villages with emphasis on the particular area of the new city of Ramshar are assigned to themselves. Finally, based on the qualitative and quantitative results of the research, a paradigmatic model (Figure 4) was drawn.

Table 2. The average opinions of the experts from the first and second stage surveys on the mentioned factors

Causal, contextual, and intervening factors	The crisp value of the first step	The crisp value of the second stage	The difference in the amount of crisp
Development of innovation in businesses related to the region	0.587	0.595	0.008
Attention to financial resources	0.564	0.576	0.012
Village people's access to information and benefits of the particular zone	0.575	0.589	0.014
The existence of infrastructure	0.611	0.623	0.012
Rural social empowerment	0.580	0.594	0.014
Environmental-economic factors	0.604	0.615	0.011
Integrated Management	0.610	0.619	0.009
Decentralized approach	0.594	0.611	0.017
Paying attention to the capacities and abilities of villages in the particular area of the new city of Ramshar	0.604	0.613	0.009

Reference: Research findings, 2023

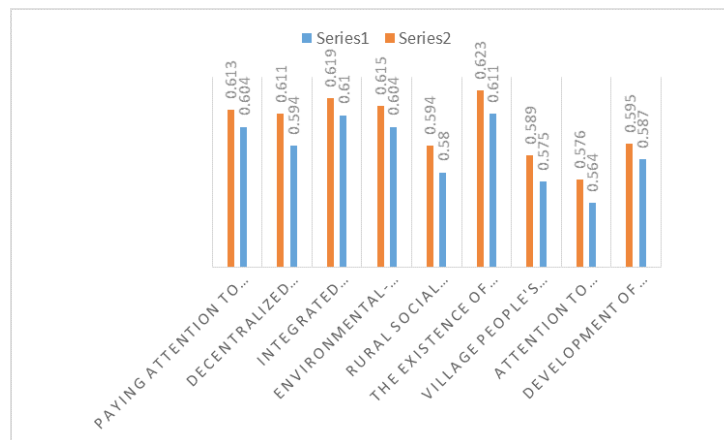


Figure 2. The crisp value of the first and second stages of each of the mentioned factors. Reference: Research findings, 2023



Table 3. Ranking results of each of the causal, background and intervening factors

Score out of 100	Distance between QMIN and QMAX	Minimum score (QMIN)	Maximum score (QMAX)	Points Earned (QL)	Agents
72/16	1/847	13/343	15/190	14/188	Development of innovation in businesses related to the region
72/00	1/709	13/400	15/109	14/14	Attention to financial resources
72/21	1/966	13/200	15/166	14/213	Village people's access to information and benefits of the special zone
72/30	2/145	13/13	15/276	14/233	The existence of infrastructure
72/10	1/901	13/312	15/213	14/109	Rural social empowerment
72/54	2/443	13/00	15/443	14/345	Environmental-economic factors
72/05	1/797	13/379	15/176	14/156	Integrated Management
72/35	1/930	13/214	15/144	14/211	Decentralized approach
72/50	2/432	13/00	15/432	14/334	Paying attention to the capacities and abilities of villages in the particular area of the new city of Ramshar

Reference: Research findings, 2023

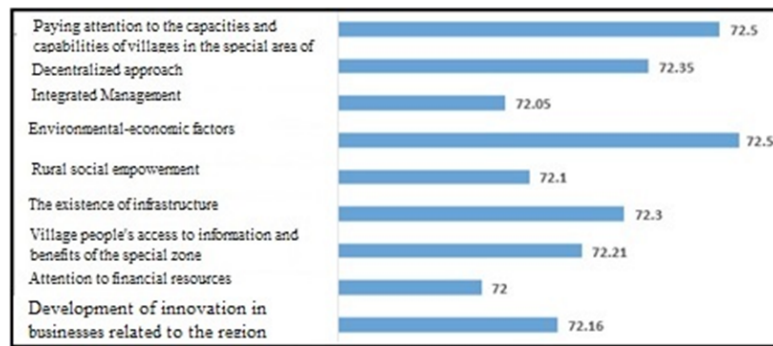


Figure 3. Ranking results of each of the causal, background, and intervening factors. Reference: Research findings, 2022

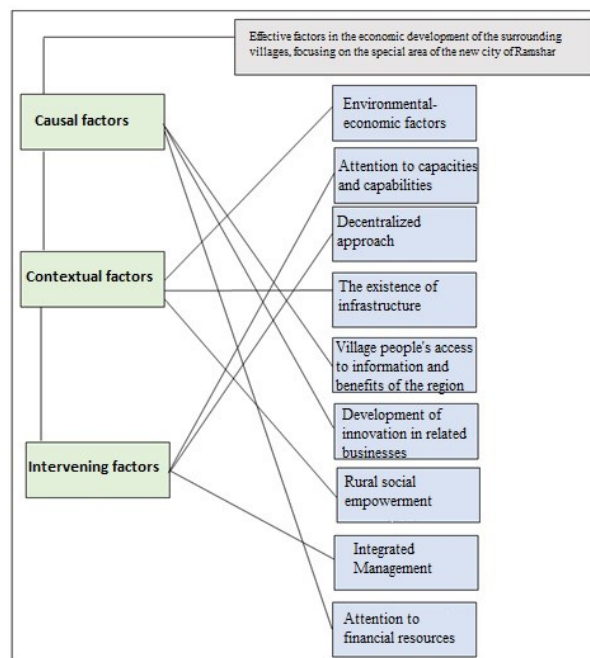


Figure 4. The paradigmatic model of factors influencing the economic development of surrounding villages with an emphasis on the particular area of the new city of Ramshar, Sistan. Reference: Research findings, 2023



5. Discussion

The current research has been conducted with the aim of identifying the influential factors in the economic development of surrounding villages with an emphasis on the particular region in the southeast of Iran (case study: the new city of Ramshar, Sistan). According to the obtained results, the categories (development of innovation in businesses related to the region, attention to financial resources and access of the villagers to the information and benefits of the particular region) as causal factors, categories (existence of infrastructure, social capability of villagers, factors environmental-economic) as contextual factors, categories (integrated management, decentralized approach and attention to the capacities and abilities of villages and the particular region of the new city of Ramshar) as influential intervening factors in the economic development of the surrounding villages with emphasis They were identified in the specific area of the new town of Ramshar, among them; Environmental-economic factors with a weight of 72.54 and attention to financial resources with a weight of 72.00 have respectively assigned the most and the most minor importance in the economic development of the surrounding villages with emphasis on the particular area of the new city of Ramshar. The economic development of the towns around the specific area of the new city of Ramshar is facing many obstacles due to various reasons, which has caused a decrease in the economic power of people in the villages and an increase in their migration to the cities, and subsequently caused social, economic and cultural damage in the surrounding towns. Therefore, in today's world, economic development in rural areas has become a severe and vital need, as well as the importance of rural development and progress in order to achieve food security, assistance to the industry sector, and the role of rural non-oil exports in the country's gross product and creating opportunities. Job adds to the importance and keyness of the economic development of villages. Therefore, it is essential to examine the set of factors that can be effective in the economic development of villages.

The special economic zone of the new city of Ramshar will support economic activities and establish international trade relations and mobility in the regional economy, as well as the production and processing of goods, technology transfer, and non-oil exports, creating productive employment and attracting investment. Domestic and foreign investment has been established, and it is more attractive for Afghan business people due to the proximity of the border. At the same time, it has created many opportunities for rural areas, but what is es-

sential is that there are a series of factors that can guarantee the economic development of the villages around the new city of Ramsar. In the meantime, the development of innovation in businesses related to the region can be done by holding educational and consulting classes in the field of business, encouraging young people to learn about new companies, and paying attention to the changes in life in the villages around the name. Win. Then, the villagers must have the necessary participation in creating diverse incomes from the region. On the other hand, government and private financial incentives should be provided for any economic activity in rural areas, and solid financial institutions should also be offered to businesses from the region. Support the economic special of the new city of Ramshar in rural areas. In addition, it should be mentioned that the villagers should have sufficient information and knowledge about the economic situation of the region, the sales market, and all the events and activities of the region. In the meantime, it was emphasized that the infrastructure of rural areas should be provided, including suitable physical infrastructure between the villagers and the particular area, water infrastructure, electricity, vehicles, and skilled and literate human resources.

Then, the factor of social empowerment of villagers with the concepts of participation of rural women and girls and the activity of villagers and village Islamic councils to familiarize the villagers with the advantages of the region is one of the factors that are effective in economic development, which is very important. Job opportunities in rural areas should be provided in accordance with the environmental conditions of the region. Also, according to the role of the particular region, the necessary ground for the growth of small local industries and the development of Indigenous local sectors in rural areas should be provided. In addition to causal and contextual factors, intervening factors such as integrated management, decentralized approach, and paying attention to the capacities and capabilities of villages and the particular region of the new city of Ramshar are of great importance. Based on this, it is necessary to make changes in the development approach (bottom-up) in the economic development of the surrounding villages and to pay special attention to the rural areas by creating business development and also by identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The economic development of the villages was achieved by investigating the creation of sustainable employment in the region and towns.

The results of the present study are in line with the results of the research of [Shahbakhsh Majboor et al.](#)

(2022), Pashaei (2022), Bazrafshan & Mohammad Niya (2013), and Zheng (2021).

Finally, according to the results, the following suggestions were presented:

- Special government support for investment in small and conversion industries at the level of the Special Zone;

- Paying attention to and investing in tourism activities based on the capabilities and talents of the villages in the region;

- Creating the grounds for using the potential of the labor force in the villages around the Sistan Free Zone.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

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