Developing a Model for Empowering Educational System Managers to Enhance Social Security in Tourism Areas

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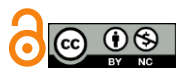
Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article type: *Original Research* **How to cite this article:** Solouki, K., Sadoughi, M., & Pali, S. (2025). Developing a Model for Empowering Educational System Managers to Enhance Social Security in Tourism Areas. *International Journal of Innovation Management and Organizational Behavior, 5*(5), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.ijimob.5.5.9 	**Objective:** The aim of the present study was to develop a model for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas. **Methodology:** This study employed an exploratory research method with a qualitative approach. Using grounded theory and conducting interviews, the components of the empowerment model for educational system managers aimed at enhancing social security in tourism areas were identified. The research population included executive officials from the Ministry of Education (with at least seven years of experience in various administrative and executive positions from the ministry level to schools), directors of the Mazandaran Province Department of Education involved in planning and empowering educational system managers, and tourism managers of Mazandaran Province active during 2023–2024. The sampling method was purposive, and based on theoretical saturation, 12 participants were included in the qualitative phase of this study. **Findings:** The findings revealed that the causal conditions for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas included psychological-emotional empowerment, ethical empowerment, professional empowerment, social empowerment, and cultural empowerment. Contextual conditions encompassed economic infrastructure, supportive infrastructure, educational infrastructure, and cultural infrastructure. Intervening conditions involved organizational barriers, human barriers, socio-cultural barriers, and economic barriers. Outcomes included academic-educational outcomes, social outcomes, and cultural outcomes. Strategies were categorized into educational strategies, social strategies, ethical strategies, and motivational strategies. The results of the fuzzy Delphi method indicated that all the concepts related to the paradigm model for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas had an acceptance threshold above 0.7, confirming the identified components of the paradigm model. **Conclusion:** Implementation of this empowerment model can promote effective managerial performance, secure tourism development, and reinforce the education

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1   Introduction

One of the key social factors contributing to the advancement of a society and nation is the tourism industry (Seyfi et al., 2025; Silva et al., 2025; Swadhi et al., 2025). Tourism refers to a series of trips made between an origin and a destination for purposes such as leisure, recreation, sightseeing, sports, visiting, business, cultural exploration, or spending free time, during which the tourist does not engage in permanent employment or residence at the destination (Shir-Mohammadi et al., 2024; Song, 2024). To achieve a balance between the needs of local communities, environmental conservation, and enhancing the quality of life and tourism experience, tourism requires a robust management system. This system should focus on tourism productivity in regions through a systemic approach that emphasizes dynamism within the framework of supply and demand while adhering to sustainable development principles (Lukoseviciute et al., 2022).

In this context, empowering educational system managers in the tourism sector—through in-service training, continuous professional development, and planned programs tailored to tourism-related topics to utilize potential capabilities and improve managerial performance competencies—serves as a valuable tool for enhancing managerial quality and increasing organizational effectiveness in promoting secure tourism (Bahcelerli, 2023).

Given the significance of tourism as a cornerstone of sustainable development in recent years and its substantial cultural, social, and economic impacts on a country and society, short-term and superficial management approaches in the tourism industry are insufficient. Establishing necessary infrastructures alongside short- and long-term planning can foster the growth of this industry (Widianingsih et al., 2023). Moreover, education, as the most influential tool for preparing societies to address future challenges, can bring profound and effective changes to the tourism industry (Hang et al., 2021).

In such circumstances, one of the most logical and effective approaches to enhancing the performance of human resources in educational organizations is the proper implementation of factors and variables that foster empowerment. Empowering human resources significantly contributes to improving the performance of organizational resources (Lee et al., 2021).

Given that empowered, committed, motivated, and responsible managers are the most critical source of competitive advantage in organizations today, empowering educational system managers has become increasingly important (Bose et al., 2021). Empowerment among managers is a crucial strategy for developing organizations to adapt to external changes. It enhances managerial autonomy, decision-making power, and accountability (Han et al., 2022). By empowering educational system managers in tourism-related knowledge, students can be equipped with tourism-related insights and skills, fostering awareness of tourism, ensuring social security in tourist areas, and promoting environmental and natural resource conservation across society (Lee et al., 2021).

The sustainable growth and success of tourism depend on the proper and coordinated performance of various interconnected factors, with social security being one of the most critical elements. Security is now considered the most fundamental principle in developing global tourism strategies (Cruz-Ruiz et al., 2022), as the sustainability of this industry in tourist destinations relies on the presence of social security. Disruptions in this mechanism lead to destination insecurity (Tachir & Alali, 2022).

In reality, security and tourism are interrelated components of an equation. Security is a key driver of tourism development, and tourism growth in a region enhances its security. The success or failure of tourist destinations hinges on their ability to provide a safe and secure environment for tourists. Any destination neglecting this responsibility will lose in the competitive race for modern development (Mu et al., 2022).

Social security can increase tourist numbers, ensuring the success of tourism development plans and attracting domestic and foreign investments. Tourists often arrive in communities with unique values and lifestyles, differing from those of the local population. If the cultural and lifestyle gaps between tourists and host communities are not adequately addressed, both tourist and host community security could be jeopardized (Anbari et al., 2023).

Understanding the factors influencing security development in tourism regions is crucial in the 21st century for capitalizing on valuable business opportunities. Statistics reveal that the global tourism industry's financial turnover will surpass that of the industrial sector in this century, reaching at least $2 trillion in the coming years. Countries

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with extensive tourist attractions stand to gain significant revenues, potentially impacting all economic activities (Hosseinian Rad et al., 2023).

Despite its rich history, diverse heritage, and abundant natural resources, Iran has not yet reaped the benefits of its tourism industry commensurate with its potential. While recent strategic development plans emphasize diversifying revenue sources beyond oil exports, practical achievements in this regard remain limited. Expanding Iran's tourism industry is a viable strategy to reduce economic dependence on oil, requiring focused attention from policymakers and administrators (Modoodi Arkhodi & Ferdowsi, 2023).

Contrary to traditional mindsets prevailing in developing countries, human resource training in tourism activities is a critical prerequisite for advancing the tourism sector, particularly within the education system (Kallou & Kikilia, 2021). Achieving social security in tourism areas demands a foundational focus on the education system, especially primary education, which has not progressed at the same rate as professional tourism development in Iran over recent decades (Soleimani et al., 2022).

Tourism education is an integral component of the broader tourism ecosystem, influencing various elements, such as enhancing knowledge and understanding of safe tourism principles, attractions, and the importance of protecting tourist areas. This education can profoundly shape students' perceptions (Khajavand Ahmadi, 2022). Consequently, promoting tourism literacy within education systems and fostering citizenship roles in tourism requires capable managers knowledgeable in tourism (Zargham Boroujeni et al., 2023).

Several studies have explored the relationship between tourism development and education. For example, Gholamrezaei and Haghpour Kenaresi (2024) examined the outcomes of sustainable tourism development in education, including environmental conservation, social structures, and cultural preservation (Gholamrezaei & Haqparast Kanarsari, 2024). Jahan Shahi (2023) highlighted the role of school programs such as scientific excursions and group tours in cultivating tourism culture (Jahanshahi, 2023).

This study seeks to address the research gap by identifying factors influencing the empowerment of educational system managers to enhance social security in tourist areas, using a grounded theory approach to develop a comprehensive model.

2 Methods and Materials

This research is classified as exploratory in nature and follows a qualitative approach. In exploratory designs, the researcher aims to deeply investigate an uncertain situation. To identify the components of the model for empowering educational system managers aimed at enhancing social security in tourism areas—an uncertain situation—grounded theory was employed. This involved a three-stage process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to extract the various dimensions of this process.

The study population consisted of executive officials from the Ministry of Education (with at least seven years of experience in various administrative and executive roles from the ministry level to schools), directors from the Mazandaran Province Department of Education who are involved in planning and empowering educational system managers, and tourism managers from Mazandaran Province active during 2023–2024. Given the unpredictable nature of qualitative research designs, the sampling method used in this study was purposive sampling. Ultimately, based on theoretical saturation, 12 participants were included in the qualitative phase of the study.

For data collection, semi-structured interviews were conducted, each lasting between 60 to 90 minutes. During the interviews, sufficient explanations regarding the research problem and the components derived from theoretical foundations were provided to the participants. Their feedback was recorded for reviewing and validating the components. Through structured interviews with experts and obtaining necessary consensus, the dimensions, components, and final indicators of empowering educational system managers aimed at enhancing social security in tourism areas were identified and determined.

Finally, to reach a consensus among experts on the categories and concepts of the model for factors influencing the empowerment of educational system managers aimed at enhancing social security in tourism areas, the fuzzy Delphi method was utilized.

3 Findings and Results

To address the research question, the causal conditions, outcomes, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, and strategies concerning the model for empowering educational system managers aimed at enhancing social security in tourism areas were analyzed.

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Table 1

Causal Conditions for Empowering Educational System Managers to Enhance Social Security in Tourism Areas

Subcategory	Subcomponents	Concepts
Psychological-Emotional Empowerment	Sense of Competence	Specialized managerial competence, perceptual competence, personal competence, knowledge competence
	Sense of Autonomy	Risk-taking, authority, influence
	Emotional Intelligence	Enhancing human emotions, emotional self-awareness
	Sense of Meaningfulness	Valuable job objectives, sense of belonging
	Motivation	Intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation
Ethical Empowerment	Ethical Awareness	Awareness of the tourist rights charter, attention to tourists' ethical values
	Ethical Responsibility	Compliance with societal obligations, respect for tourists
	Promotion of Tourism Ethics	Managers' ethical beliefs and values, development of specific ethical charters
Professional Empowerment	Educational Empowerment	General knowledge and foundational competencies, professional knowledge and management skills in tourism, support for tourism teaching processes, balanced integration of theoretical and practical training
	Technological Empowerment	Information access capabilities, information management
	Leadership Skills Empowerment	Authority, innovation, dynamic cultural modeling, commitment, planning, financial management, strategic thinking
Social Empowerment	Communication Skills	Behavioral security development, fostering participation, communication literacy
	Teamwork	Trust-building, feedback exchange, effective time management, efficiency
	Social Awareness	Awareness of social values and norms, social challenges, social security
Cultural Empowerment	Awareness of National Attractions	Cultural-historical attractions, natural attractions, man-made attractions
	Cultural Security Development	Culturally secure environment, promotion of cultural exchange

The findings in Table 1 indicate that the causal conditions of the empowerment model for educational system managers aimed at enhancing social security in tourism areas include the subcategories of psychological-emotional empowerment, ethical empowerment, professional empowerment, social empowerment, and cultural empowerment.

Table 2

Contextual Conditions of the Empowerment Model for Educational System Managers to Enhance Social Security in Tourism Areas

Subcategory	Subcomponents	Concepts
Economic Infrastructure	Financial Resources Provision	Ensuring resources for facilities, providing welfare for managers, sufficient funding for the education system
	Resource Utilization	Efficient use of modern educational technologies, learning new skills
Supportive Infrastructure	Organizational Support	Support and collaboration from tourism-related organizations
	Social Support	Public support
Educational Infrastructure	Practical Education Infrastructure	Training in applied knowledge, fostering connections with academic centers, enabling practical research
	Operational Infrastructure	Providing conditions to appoint competent managers, fostering alignment in operational systems, enabling participation and collaboration among key stakeholders
	Educational Programs	Management development programs tailored to tourism challenges, education on recognizing tourism resources
Cultural Infrastructure	Family Culture	Enhancing families' awareness of safe tourism principles, family cultural models
	Media Culture	Aligning media programs with educational needs for tourism culture development, media advertising

The findings above indicate that the contextual conditions of the empowerment model for educational system managers aimed at enhancing social security in tourism areas include the subcategories of economic infrastructure, supportive infrastructure, educational infrastructure, and cultural infrastructure.

Table 3

Intervening Conditions for Empowering Educational System Managers to Enhance Social Security in Tourism Areas

Subcategory	Subcomponents	Concepts
Organizational Barriers	Internal Barriers	Operational challenges, lack of defined position for tourism in the education system, limitations in education, absence of an adequate research system
	External Barriers	Infrastructure issues, lack of coordination among external organizations
Human Barriers	Educational Managers' Traits	Fatigued and overburdened managers, lack of commitment, low motivation, lack of interpersonal skills
	External Human Barriers	Interference by non-experts in tourism, lack of scientific perspectives on tourism
Socio-Cultural Barriers	Social Barriers	Weak position of the education system in society, lack of proper community cooperation
	Cultural Barriers	Mismatch between family culture and schools, lack of family awareness, absence of tourism knowledge in society
	Media Barriers	Negative portrayal of the country by foreign media, weak domestic media advertising
Economic Barriers	Financial Constraints	Inadequate budget allocation, lack of investment interest in tourism
	Economic Inequality	Disparity in salaries and wages

The findings in Table 3 demonstrate that the intervening conditions of the empowerment model for educational system managers aimed at enhancing social security in tourism areas include the subcategories of organizational barriers, human barriers, socio-cultural barriers, and economic barriers.

Table 4

Strategies for the Empowerment Model of Educational System Managers to Enhance Social Security in Tourism Areas

Subcategory	Subcomponents	Concepts
Educational Strategies	Developing Tourism Education Skills	Expanding virtual training, enhancing in-service training, conducting tourism educational programs, designing education tailored to societal needs
	Developing Tourism Research Skills	Advancing tourism-related research, collaborating with academic-research centers, participating in academic-research tourism processes
Ethical Strategies	Establishing Ethical Regulations	Setting ethical standards and criteria for project implementation, drafting an ethical charter for respecting tourists tailored to the education system
	Professional Ethics-Based Strategies	Enhancing ethical sensitivity, fostering respect and credibility for managers
Social Strategies	Social Participation Programs	Designing programs to establish tourism institutions and associations, collaboration between organizations and the education system, cooperation between local residents and the education system
	Social Security Planning	Planning for tourism environment security, planning for tourism communication security
Motivational Strategies	Meritocracy Focus	Utilizing competent managers in schools
	Job Incentives	Financial rewards, career advancement opportunities

The findings in Table 4 indicate that the strategies for the empowerment model of educational system managers aimed at enhancing social security in tourism areas include educational, ethical, social, and motivational strategies.

Table 5

Outcomes of the Empowerment Model for Educational System Managers to Enhance Social Security in Tourism Areas

Subcategory	Subcomponents	Concepts
Academic-Educational Outcomes	Enhancing the Quality of Tourism Academic Activities	Promoting scientific-research spirit, optimal use of modern technology, improving academic relationships
	Enhancing the Quality of Tourism Education	Improving students' education quality, increasing managerial efficiency
Social Outcomes	Social-Psychological Security	Health and hygiene security, compliance with social laws, personal and financial security, psychological security, communication security
	Improving Social Skills	Enhancing social justice, fostering social participation, promoting social health
Cultural Outcomes	Developing Communication Culture	Cultural security, fostering cultural exchange and understanding
	Developing Conservation Culture	Preserving natural resources, safeguarding cultural heritage

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The findings in Table 6 reveal that the outcomes of the empowerment model for educational system managers aimed at enhancing social security in tourism areas include academic-educational, social, and cultural outcomes.

The paradigm model was developed as an outcome of this study. To reach consensus among experts on the components of the paradigm model for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas, the fuzzy Delphi method was employed. A total of 12 experts reviewed and validated the identified components.

The fuzzy Delphi results indicated that all concepts related to this model exceeded the acceptance threshold of 0.7, confirming the identified components of the paradigm model.

Figure 1

Paradigm Model for Empowering Educational System Managers to Enhance Social Security in Tourism Areas
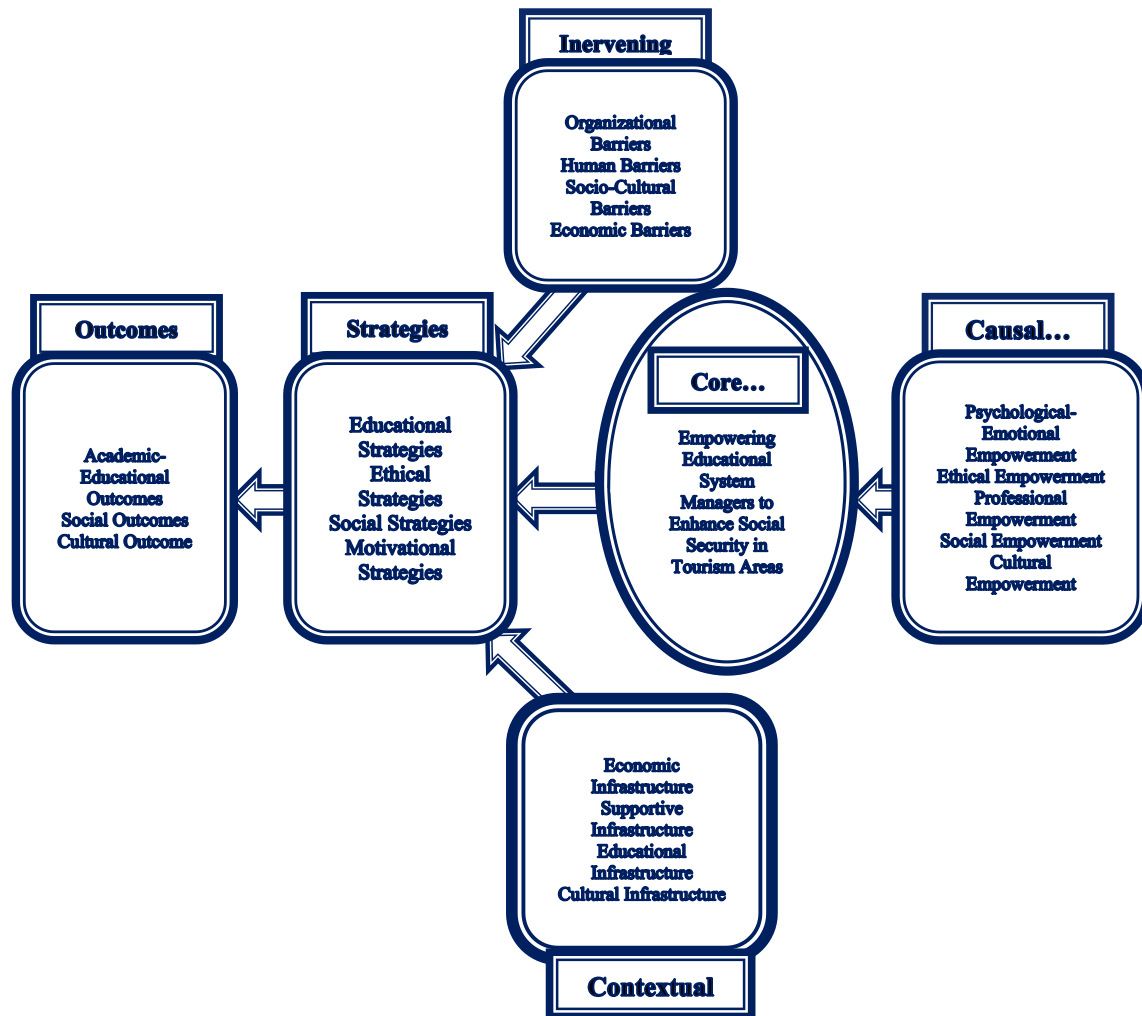
4   Discussion and Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the aim of developing a model for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas. The findings indicated that the causal conditions for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas include psychological-emotional empowerment, ethical empowerment, professional empowerment, social empowerment, and cultural empowerment. In some respects, and based on certain identified components, these findings align with the results of the study by Jahanshahi (2023) regarding the impact of school programs such as scientific and group excursions and the use of extracurricular educators on cultivating tourism culture (Jahanshahi, 2023); the results of Khajavand Ahmadi (2022) on the impact of the role and position of the education system on tourism development (Khajavand Ahmadi, 2022); the study by Pazoki et al. (2021) on the effect of social (life,

gender, and spatial), political (police presence, maintaining peace and security against theft and fraud), cultural (behavioral, racial, and mental), economic (investment and welfare), and environmental (ecological sustainability and landscape sustainability) components on tourism security (Pazoki et al., 2021); research by Choe and Kim (2024) on the effect of experimental and live tourism laboratories on competency in professional tourism development (Choe & Kim, 2022); the study by Phillips (2023) regarding the influence of innovative and creative trainings for human resources in the education system on dynamic tourism development (Philips, 2023); research by Bahusleri (2023) on the impact of modern technologies on enhancing professional tourism knowledge and insights (Bahcelerli, 2023); the study by Habimana et al. (2023) emphasizing the role of artificial intelligence, communication skills, social media management, and cybersecurity related to tourism in designing tourism-related curricula in the education system, the efforts of educational system managers to establish communication and collaboration with the private tourism sector, and holding health and IT courses in tourism as the most important factors in promoting sustainable tourism (Habimana et al., 2023); and the research by Chen et al. (2022) on the impact of developing collaborative and interdisciplinary learning skills, systemic thinking skills, experiential learning skills, and techniques to increase environmental awareness on enhancing sustainability in tourism education (Chen et al., 2022).

Investigating the factors influencing progress and development in advanced societies shows that, in addition to suitable infrastructures and significant tourism potentials, these countries also possess capable and efficient educational, professional, and training institutions. Educational managers play a crucial role in the growth and development of tourism within a country and society because capable human resources are more productive and creative, delivering higher-quality services than less capable human resources. When human resources in tourism are empowered, public awareness and understanding of tourism increase, and tourism destinations become more efficient.

- **Psychological-Emotional Empowerment**: Empowering educational managers is of special importance and is regarded as one of the key factors for the success and growth of the education system. Educational managers, not only as administrators but also as behavioral and psychological role models for the educational community, benefit from psychological-emotional empowerment to support their mental health and character development. This factor can influence their culture and perspective regarding tourism. Moreover, emotional empowerment and feelings are so influential that empowering emotions and sentiments occupies a high position in people's activities, behaviors, and personalities. Therefore, achieving psychological-emotional empowerment requires educational managers to attain specialized managerial competence, perceptual competence, personal competence, and knowledge competence.

- **Ethical Empowerment**: Ethics comprises a set of human spiritual and inner qualities. Ethical empowerment of educational managers involves the internalization of ethical principles and values such that they accept moral and legal responsibilities in their profession. Hence, ethical empowerment can form a communicative mechanism between society and management, leading to managerial commitment and collective responsibility for promoting secure tourism. Essentially, the ethical empowerment of managers is a cultural norm, attributing positive moral value to doing the right thing for society and the country, leading to the belief that acting correctly has intrinsic worth. Accordingly, ethical and value-oriented variables influence managers' attitudes toward different phenomena, which in turn guide their behaviors related to the importance of the tourism sector.

- **Professional Empowerment**: Professional empowerment enables managers to take initiative, make decisions, and solve problems effectively. Its objective is for managers to have control over their work environment and to use their skills and talents in a way that benefits the organization. Therefore, empowered educational managers functioning within the framework and goals of the Ministry of Education do not have to constantly wait for feedback; they can enhance their job productivity and effectiveness, make independent decisions, foster swifter and more effective decision-making processes, and increase innovation and creativity in their activities and throughout the organization.

- **Social Empowerment**: Social empowerment encompasses improving communication skills, creating motivation for discussion, introducing new forms of collaboration, and emphasizing teamwork,

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participation, and communication abilities. Thus, social empowerment focuses on increasing social awareness and developing professional and social networks for managers. In other words, lacking social awareness, communication skills, and collaborative teamwork among educational managers may prevent mutual trust, improvement of the educational community's view of management and tourism issues, and the expansion of organizational efficiency or effectiveness. In general, no manager works in isolation, and one of the most important competencies of successful managers is their communication and social skills. Therefore, all managers must possess interpersonal and social skills to succeed in their roles, enabling them to interact, cooperate, and communicate with others and thus enhance staff motivation within the organization.

- **Cultural Empowerment**: Achieving secure tourism development in society requires integrating safe tourism culture into the education system and realizing the concept of cultural empowerment among managers. Behaviors, attitudes, and expected norms become institutionalized when they are broadly taught, continuous, and accepted by society as a form of cultural practice. In the initial phases, securing broader participation from the public in safe tourism development necessitates extensive systemic coordination, education, sharing, and utilization of tourism data. Given the nature of human communities and to create tourism value within society's cultural domain, this objective depends on the cultural empowerment of educational system managers.

In addition, the present study's findings indicated that the contextual conditions for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas include economic infrastructure, supportive infrastructure, educational infrastructure, and cultural infrastructure. In some respects, and considering certain identified components, these results align with the findings of Phillips (2023) concerning the impact of creating conditions for interaction among the education system, the tourism industry, and governmental stakeholders to meet the needs of a dynamic and evolving tourism sector, as well as with the results of Bahusleri (2023) regarding the impact of establishing conditions for multicultural education aimed at

enhancing social awareness and fostering effective communication in tourism development.

Contextual conditions are specific factors that influence strategies. Sometimes highly relevant variables are categorized under causal conditions, while less-related variables are classified as contextual conditions. An established pattern of contextual conditions is essential for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas, functioning as the foundation of the empowerment process. It makes the activities across different components of the education and training system more purposeful and cohesive, facilitating the ultimate goal. Put differently, providing contextual conditions for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas acts as the main driving mechanism, motivating educational managers to maximally fulfill educational and training objectives in the tourism sector. Overall, tourism education infrastructure is among the effective factors that can directly lead to service provision, and having such infrastructures can strengthen a country's capacity for tourism development. Therefore, the contextual conditions identified in this study for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas are as follows:

- **Economic Infrastructure**: Infrastructure encompasses all foundational and superstructural developments of a country in the relevant field, namely tourism education aimed at enhancing tourism area security. Thus, economic infrastructure for developing safe tourism education comprises a system of interconnected elements continuously interacting with each other. Provision of facilities, equipment, and sufficient funding for tourism education by the government is one of the primary facilitators supporting tourism education in the education system. Effective utilization of equipment and resources can establish the economic infrastructure necessary for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas.

- **Supportive Infrastructure**: Planning and executing supportive, guiding, and supervisory programs by institutions and organizations involved in tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, contribute to designing and developing educational programs and fostering capable educational managers in tourism. Comprehensive supportive strategies and plans

aimed at reforming, improving, developing, and enhancing the quantity and quality of tourism education in the education system, along with mobilizing public cooperation and support for tourism development, constitute the supportive infrastructure required for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas. In addition to careful planning, actions by the government, the education sector, and other relevant entities are needed to create complete conditions for establishing social security in tourism areas.

- **Educational Infrastructure**: Neglecting tourism within the education system can cause severe damage to a country's tourism industry. As long as educational infrastructures for empowering educational system managers in tourism areas are not provided, issues in this sector will persist. Hence, all executive institutions must help strengthen these infrastructures within the education system.

- **Cultural Infrastructure**: Tourism is closely tied to humans, their motivations, desires, and aspirations—derived from their society's culture—to such an extent that one could say the primary driver of tourism development is the existence of cultural infrastructure. Cultural infrastructure for tourism includes services and facilities in the cultural realm that ensure the welfare and security of tourist destinations and visitors. Adequate access to these elements significantly influences attracting tourists and increasing their length of stay. In fact, culture is a vital resource for tourism development, and those responsible for tourism education must adopt a cultural perspective to develop these infrastructures and advance tourism.

The findings also showed that the intervening conditions of the empowerment model for educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas include organizational barriers, human barriers, socio-cultural barriers, and economic barriers. From certain perspectives and given some of the identified components, the results of the third sub-question align with the findings of Isako et al. (2023) on educational system barriers to tourism development, including lack of suitable equipment, insufficient budget allocation by the Ministry of Education for tourism education, shortage of teachers trained in tourism (especially geography teachers), the unappealing nature of

curricular content and textbooks on tourism (such as geography), and the lack of scientific and group excursions and field trips.

Intervening conditions are broad and overarching factors that may emerge as obstacles and limitations to implementing strategies for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas. These conditions may delay the execution of strategies. Additionally, intervening conditions inherently arise in a contingent and unpredictable manner; hence, the response to such conditions is situational and context-dependent. Today, educational organizations, especially schools, face growing challenges. On one hand, schools must cope with the rapid expansion of knowledge, information, and technology, as well as increasingly complex political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. On the other hand, they strive to achieve the core goals of education—teaching, learning, and holistic student development—ultimately contributing to societal advancement. Consequently, educational organizations and managers can no longer rely on previous training alone to survive and improve; they require new training focused on various dimensions. Thus, guaranteeing quality and success in tourism within the education system and empowering educational system managers for secure tourism can be realized by identifying and eliminating barriers to empowering these managers for enhanced social security in tourism areas.

- **Organizational Barriers**: Transforming the current education system into an efficient and effective structure is as significant as it is challenging. Indeed, there may be numerous challenges and obstacles on the path to advancing the Ministry of Education, limiting the goal of empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas. Many such barriers are linked to administrative, managerial, and educational issues within the Ministry of Education and other tourism-related organizations. Different societies, based on their cultural philosophies and expectations, set various objectives for tourism education and empowering educational managers. However, these trainings in the country have not sufficiently met the extensive needs of the tourism industry or aligned with the lofty goals and aspirations of the education system.

- **Human Barriers**: Achieving sustainable and impactful development in any society requires preservation and protection, and the primary social

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institution capable of producing, consuming, and safeguarding such development is the education system. Human resources within this system are the key to success. Indeed, advancements in teachers, managers, and students lead to success in education, which in turn contributes to long-term development across society. Therefore, characteristics of educational managers—such as fatigue and burnout, low scientific literacy, lack of motivation and interest in professional development, inability to establish positive and effective interactions, and lack of commitment—are among the human barriers to empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas. Consequently, focusing on human resources within the education system, especially educational managers, is central to discussions on effective education in the tourism sector.

- **Socio-Cultural Barriers**: Humans are inherently social beings, and to achieve self-fulfillment through society, one must recognize and plan for fundamental concepts and challenges. Otherwise, the link between development strategies and sustainability of safe tourism activities remains unestablished. Additionally, unfamiliarity with tourism culture in families, schools, and society as a whole leads to a clash of tradition and modernity, undermining secure tourism.

- **Economic Barriers**: Nowadays, financing the education system poses a serious global crisis, particularly in developing countries. Several factors contribute to this predicament, including the growing demand for education due to rapid population growth, families' desire to educate their children, relatively higher incomes for the educated compared to others, and the emphasis on the right to social welfare. Furthermore, globalization, the rapid expansion of information technology, its daily use, and most importantly limited financial resources and structural budget deficits in educational systems have exacerbated this challenge. Iran's education system also faces severe financial shortages and inefficient use of scarce funds while dealing with increasing public demand for adequate and high-quality education.

Another set of findings from the present study indicated that the strategies for the empowerment model of educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas include educational, social, ethical, and motivational strategies.

After a comprehensive assessment of the causes, contextual factors, and intervening conditions for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas, practical measures need to be explored. These include educational strategies, such as developing tourism education skills for managers and cultivating tourism research skills; ethical strategies, such as establishing ethical regulations and implementing professional ethics-based strategies; social strategies, such as designing programs for social participation and planning to enhance social security; and motivational strategies, such as emphasizing meritocracy and providing job incentives.

Finally, the present study's findings revealed that the outcomes of empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas include academic-educational, social, and cultural outcomes. In certain respects and considering some of the identified components, these results align with the findings of Gholamrezaei and Haghparast Kenarseri (2024) regarding the outcomes of sustainable tourism development in the education system, including training for environmental preservation, safeguarding social structures, and protecting the cultures and customs of local communities.

Outcomes refer to the results produced by implementing the strategies and represent the influence of those strategies on empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas. Based on the interviews, if the model for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas is well executed, it can yield numerous positive outcomes, categorized as follows:

- **Academic-Educational Outcomes**: Teaching and learning are the most critical processes within the education system and form the foundation for all other activities. Thus, educating and empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas facilitates tourism-related instruction and helps establish security in tourist destinations. By utilizing the empowered capacities of educational system managers in the tourism domain, the quality of academic activities related to tourism can improve, and managers can move beyond their routine and traditional functions to help students achieve deeper, more sustainable learning in tourism. In fact, empowering

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educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas broadens and deepens high-quality scholarly activities, fosters research-oriented thinking, creativity, innovation, and scientific perspectives in tourism.

- **Social Outcomes**: Empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas leads to the realization of various communication abilities and, consequently, encourages the growth, learning, and professional development of all staff within the education system based on social values and standards. Empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas subsequently enables managers, once empowered in the tourism sector, to transfer social values across generations, cultivating citizens aligned with societal norms who are also forward-thinking, progressive, and rich in social values within tourism. This shift modifies public attitudes toward tourist destinations and tourists themselves.

- **Cultural Outcomes**: The cultural dimension is one of the most significant aspects of tourism, and promoting security in tourism areas leaves cultural impacts on both the host community and travelers. In the host community, it can revive local traditions, protect and restore natural resources, and preserve cultural heritage. Furthermore, increasing secure tourism fosters positive cultural interaction between various ethnic groups, thereby boosting knowledge, awareness, and understanding of different cultures. Indeed, the positive effects of dialogue, social interaction, and cultural exchange can enhance public awareness and reduce isolation and bias. Respect for religious beliefs, faith, and tourists' values by local residents—along with appropriate interactions with tourists—are outcomes of empowering educational system managers in enhancing social security within tourism areas.

Like any other research, the present study faced certain limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. Since the model for empowering educational system managers to enhance social security in tourism areas was examined and assessed, applying these findings to managers in other organizations requires caution. Additionally, because educational system managers encompass a wide range in all organizations, and given the importance of the target population and the relevance to the researcher's specialty area, the managers of the Ministry of Education were the focus here. Therefore, to increase the generalizability of the findings, it is recommended that future research investigate this model among educational managers outside the Ministry of Education. The following practical suggestions are offered for optimal application of the study results in the education system:

- It is recommended that policymakers and cultural and economic planners in the country adopt a realistic and valuable perspective on the role of the education system and its managers in developing national tourism.

- It is recommended that, when selecting and appointing educational system managers, their emotional and psychological empowerment be evaluated and considered. Managers with higher scores should be placed in more senior managerial positions.

- It is recommended that, to instill a tourism ethics culture within the education system, all educational organizations, social institutions, cultural agents, radio and television, and other media coordinate and collaborate to embed tourism-related ethical values, refraining from discord in this area.

- Establishing ethical standards and criteria for implementing educational programs related to tourism for educational system managers can foster the institutionalization of ethical benchmarks in tourism education.

- Allocating part of in-service training time for educational system managers to enhance knowledge of and familiarity with emerging tourism technologies and tourism management can help empower them in this domain.

- It is recommended that the Ministry of Education collaborate with organizations involved in tourism security to develop cohesive programs aimed at ensuring social security in tourism areas.

- Holding training courses to provide comprehensive knowledge of cultural-historical and natural attractions, as well as the unique features of tourist destinations, can assist in culturally empowering educational managers to promote secure tourism in the country.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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