

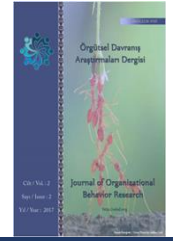


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DETERMINING AND RANKING EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (CASE STUDY: ACHAEMENID SITES OF PERSEPOLIS AND PASARGAD, FARS PROVINCE, IRAN)

Leila ELAHI^{1*}

^{1*}Department of Business Administration, University of Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania.

***Corresponding Author**

Email: Elahileyla@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, tourism development is important in various countries because it is the essential source of revenue and creating career opportunities in the world. This study aims to comprehensively analyze and prioritize the most effective approach for the development of sustainable tourism. The statistical population consists of 10 experts, and tourism specialists of Fars province, and the data analysis method was carried out in a hierarchical manner in three stages. The results show that the government's support for the development of tourism investment funds ranks first.

Keywords: Strategic management, Sustainable tourism, SWOT analysis, Hierarchical analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is journey for pleasure or occupation. Besides, it considers the supposition, and approach of tourism, the business of attraction, accommodation, and entertainment of tourists, and the trade of operational excursions for this purpose. World Tourism Organization defines tourism as the act of individuals traveling to destinations outside of their habitual environment for a duration of more than one year, during their leisure time, with the inclusion of at least 24 hours of employment and other objectives. Tourism can be domestic (in the journey's own country) or global, and worldwide tourism has input and output effects on a country's balance of payments. The outcomes of the severe economic downturn (recession of the late 2000s) between the second half of 2008 and the end of 2009, and as a result of the outburst of the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus, tourism numbers declined, and then slowly recovered until the corona pandemic abruptly ended the growth. UN World Tourism Organization has evaluated that global international tourist advents could reduce by 58-78% in 2020, resulting in a potential loss of US\$0.9-1.2 trillion in international tourism earnings.

On the other hand, tourism is one of the most dynamic industries in the world, which is rapidly growing. This sector has been acknowledged by the UN as one of the primary engines for job creation, economic growth, and revenue generation. In emerging nations, tourism leads to economic integration and revenue diversification. It also opens up opportunities for exports using speedier ways than those used in the past. Based on the report of World Tourism

Organization in 2018, the number of 1 billion and 326 million people around the world were engaged in tourism, which has increased by 91 million people (7%) compared to last year, and its value is about 1-6 trillion dollars, and equivalent is 7% of world exports (Botterill & Platenkamp, 2012; Song & Han, 2016). Based on 2018 report of World Economic Forum, with the arrival of 5.2 million international tourists to Iran and about 3.5 million dollars of expenses paid by them, Iran's average income per tourist was about 1600 dollars, which is about 10 billion a dollar for Iran (David, 2011; Evans et al., 2002; Khan & Huda, 2018).

On the other hand, in the discussions of sustainable development, development planning should be considered long-term. In this regard, taking a strategic approach to the issues is necessary. The primary issue with this study is how to rank the most successful techniques for growing sustainable tourism. However, there are alternative approaches to creating strategies, and SWOT analysis is one of them. So, using this technique, strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities are determined first, and then strategies are determined. Since ambiguous decision-making environment, linguistic variables are used for better decision-making. Furthermore, to determine the weight of criteria (strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities), a hierarchical technique is used, which can greatly help improve the results and solve the research problem better.

Theoretical foundations of research

In understanding the tourist, various definitions were provided by different organizations and people, and a part of it is mentioned. The word "tourism" mentions to the set of excursions that are made among the origin, and the destination with the motives of rest, entertainment, pleasure, sports, business, culture, or spending leisure time, and in which the tourist is employed and resides in the destination. It is not permanent.

Based on the definition of United Nations that was presented at the proposal of international tourism conference of that organization in Rome, "a tourist or a temporary visitor is a person who goes to a foreign country for recreation, rest, vacation, visiting sightseeing spots, doing medical, treatment and treatment, business, sports, pilgrimage, visiting family, mission and participating in conferences travels from his country; provided that the minimum stay period is not less than 24 hours and not more than 3 hours, and he is not considering getting a job or profession."

Tourism can be examined, and studied from different perspectives: historical, organizational, products, management, economics, sociology, geography, and interdisciplinary and systemic approaches, in which we briefly describe the geographical approach.

A form of tourism known as "nature tourism" involves the visitation of pristine and natural environments, including natural landscapes. In numerous sources and references, pastoral tourism is classified as including natural tourism. Nature tourism is regarded the best part of tourism in the direction of sustainable tourism. Since the best natural tourism attractions, such as national parks, wildlife areas, mountains, lakes, and many cultural places, especially in developing countries, are generally located in rural areas, tourism in these areas plays a prominent role, especially in the economy of rural communities, and for this reason, it seems logical to classify this kind of tourism as the part of the variety of rural tourism.



In addition to mentioned types of tourism, special business trips, visiting friends and relatives, traveling to attend gatherings, incentive trips, visiting a special exhibition, and participating in some councils can be considered a type of tourism. Currently, tourism includes a combination of types of tourism. For instance, a visitor may have objectives such as familiarizing themselves with the culture of the host town during their travels. In addition to this objective, they may also contemplate using health and wellness amenities, seeing unspoiled natural landscapes, and so on. The tourism industry is a consolidation of several activities that are carried out in a chain to serve tourists. Tourism comprise all the phenomena, and communication causing from the reciprocation of tourists, suppliers, and sellers of tourism products, governments, and host communities in attraction and acceptance. Industrialized countries illustrate that the development of tourism industry causes the diversification of revenues and the depletion of disharmony in the economy, and in developing countries, it creates an export opportunity so that its growth rate is higher than the traditional forms of export in the 21st century. Take advantage of valuable business opportunities in service sectors, especially tourism. The term sustainable development was used in the early 1970s at the time of Kokovik Declaration on environment and development. Since then, the sustainable development strategy has given the international organizations that aimed to create a beneficial and appropriate environment a unique identity and set of features. Using the term sustainable development after 1992 Rio de Janeiro conference became widespread in scientific circles. Perhaps the best definition of sustainable development is presented in Bratland report titled "Our Common Future" in 1987. This definition is as follows: a development that meets the requires of the present without affecting the potential of future generations to satisfy their demands (Horobin & Jonathan, 2008: 20; Seyfi & Hall, 2018; J. R. Walker & J. T. Walker, 2010).



MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is practical in terms of purpose because it is a set of valid (reliable) and systematic rules and tools to examine facts, discovering unknowns, and reaching solutions to problems. These solutions are designed to mitigate conflicts among project parts, providing project management decision-makers with a clear understanding of the reasons of time delays and enabling them to effectively address those causes using the proposed solutions. Since this research studies the current situation, it is in the field of descriptive research. Descriptive because it provides a proper description of sustainable tourism strategies, and their prioritization, and because it examines people's opinions and preferences via a questionnaire, it is a survey research. These opinions are collected in questionnaires related to the analysis of hierarchical process. To use this method in the research field, after library studies, a questionnaire is prepared and distributed among experts, and SWOT and AHP theories, techniques, and techniques are used to solve the problems.

The community is all the elements of study that belong to a defined group which is a sample of the set of sizes of the community collected during the research. Despite the fact that studying a society may be impossible at times due to its immense size, studying every aspect of the society provides comprehensive and accurate information. The statistical population and, consequently, the statistical sample are not defined (regarding multi-criteria decision-making techniques). The decision expert group in sustainable tourism was used to determine the effectiveness of criteria,

the weight of characteristics, and the ranking of options. Therefore, based on the research done in this field, the number of people in the expert group should be from 5 to 15 people or 5 to 30 people, and in this thesis, the number of this group is considered to be 10 people. The group of experts has appropriate characteristics that make their opinions collected as influential people in the field of sustainable tourism.

This study's information and data were gathered using fieldwork and library methods. The researcher used a field approach, distributing a questionnaire in the study area, and a library technique to gather information for compiling the research literature, organizing the second chapter, and gathering the necessary data. The data has been processed.

The required data related to 1. Determining the weight of strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities, 2. Determining the weight, and ranking of strategies were obtained with the help of expert questionnaires from the departments related to sustainable tourism. Interviews were used to determine strengths, weaknesses, threats, opportunities, and strategies.

Data analysis

Determination of strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities and their weight

Determining the weight of points

At this stage, by distributing the questionnaire among the managers, they were asked to use pairwise comparisons to determine the preference of each of the criteria shown in the rows compared to the columns. Consequently, the experts only need to finish the numbers above the pairwise comparison matrix's main diameter. The bottom of the main diameter is then constructed by reversing the numbers, as shown in Tables 1 through 4 of the pairwise comparison matrices.

Table 1. Pairwise comparison matrix of the strengths.

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7
S1	1	3	1	2	4	2	5
S2	0.333333	1	0.333	0.5	1	0.25	2
S3	1	3.003003	1	2	2	1	3
S4	0.5	2	0.5	1	0.5	2	1
S5	0.25	1	0.5	2	1	2	3
S6	0.5	4	1	0.5	0.5	1	5
S7	0.2	0.5	0.333333	1	0.333333	0.2	1

Table 2. Pairwise comparison matrix of the weaknesses.

	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7
W1	1	0.5	1	0.2	3	2	2
W2	2	1	2	1	3	4	4

W3	1	0.5	1	0.5	2	2	3
W4	5	1	2	1	3	2	3
W5	0.333333	0.333333	0.5	0.333333	1	2	2
W6	0.5	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	2
W7	0.5	0.25	0.333333	0.333333	0.5	0.5	1

Table 3. Pairwise comparison matrix of the opportunity points.

	O1	O2	O3	O4	O5	O6	O7
O1	1	3	4	2	3	4	3
O2	0.333333	1	1	3	0.333	2	2
O3	0.25	1	1	0.5	0.25	2	1
O4	0.5	0.333333	2	1	0.5	2	1
O5	0.333333	3.003003	4	2	1	3	3
O6	0.25	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.333333	1	0.5
O7	0.333333	0.5	1	1	0.333333	2	1

Table 4. Pairwise comparison matrix of the threat points.

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7
T1	1	0.333	0.5	4	3	0.5	3
T2	3.003003	1	0.5	3	2	2	3
T3	2	2	1	3	2	2	3
T4	0.25	0.333333	0.333333	1	0.5	0.25	0.333
T5	0.333333	0.5	0.5	2	1	2	3
T6	2	0.5	0.5	4	0.5	1	2
T7	0.333333	0.333333	0.333333	3.003003	0.333333	0.5	1

At this stage, the weight of each of the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities is determined using the geometric mean of each column, which can be seen in Table 5. For the results of paired comparisons to have an acceptable value, the compatibility rate should be less than a certain value, as shown in Table 6 of the result of incompatibility rate. Based on Table 6, the formed pairwise comparison matrices have sufficient validity.

Table 5. The weight of each point.

Strengths weight		Weight of weaknesses		Threat point weight		Weight of opportunity points	
S1	0.260422	W1	0.130266	T1	0.156106	O1	0.311942
S2	0.074386	W2	0.249732	T2	0.21077	O2	0.135589



S3	0.198647	W3	0.138764	T3	0.24276	O3	0.081422
S4	0.118369	W4	0.261639	T4	0.048742	O4	0.107062
S5	0.13689	W5	0.088046	T5	0.131278	O5	0.221621
S6	0.157105	W6	0.077326	T6	0.137969	O6	0.055411
S7	0.054181	W7	0.054227	T7	0.072374	O7	0.086953

Table 6. Examining the incompatibility rate of the formed pairwise comparison matrix.

Compatibility of strengths		Compatibility of weaknesses		Compatibility of threat points		Compatibility of opportunity points	
CI	0.119367	CI	0.063306	CI	0.117948	CI	0.075033
CR	0.090429	CR	0.047959	CR	0.089354	CR	0.056843
Standard compatibility rate for square matrix 7	0.1	Standard compatibility rate for square matrix 7	0.1	Standard compatibility rate for square matrix 7	0.1	Standard compatibility rate for square matrix 7	0.1
Compatibility status	Acceptable	Compatibility status	Acceptable	Compatibility status	Acceptable	Compatibility status	Acceptable

Determining the weight of strategies

Considering each of the strategies was proposed in line with several points, at this stage, by distributing questionnaires among the experts, they were asked to determine the degree of the effect of strategy on each of the points, the average opinions of the experts in Tables 7-10 is shown.

Table 7. The average opinion of experts about the effectiveness of SO strategies.

Development of historical tourism resources, and attractions	Development of combined tourism (historical and cultural	Planning to attract as many tourists as possible from Iran's allied countries	Planning for the development of historical tourism resources and attractions, development of combined tourism (historical, cultural, medical) planning to attract as many tourists as possible from Iran's allied countries, planning for the development	Conversion of old houses and developing nomadic ecotourism into a place for tourists to stay in the
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				medicine)	handi crafts	of tourism by- products, including handicrafts, development of cultural and welfare activities in tourist attractions Especially the Achaemenians Persepolis and Pasargad	tourist areas of Fars, includin g the Achaeme nid sites. Persepoli s and Pasargad
The presence of old tourist attractions	S1	1	0.6	0.4		1	1
Proximity to Shiraz as a privileged city in Iran	S2		0.6		0.4		
The fame of attractions, and the recognition of the historical monuments of Fars province in the world	S3	0.8		0.2		0.8	
Climate diversity and the presence of 4 seasons in the region	S4	0.2					0.8
The presence of nomadic and local attractions, along with historical attractions	S5			0.6	1	0.6	1
Facilitating the issuance of visas for foreign tourists	S6		0.8	1			
Ecotourism	S7						
Low tourism costs in Iran compared to the world and regional countries	O1	0.6	0.8	0.4		0.6	1
Understanding the importance of tourists in economic development and foreign exchange in the country	O2	0.6		0.4	0.4		
Emphasis on the development of sustainable tourism in the country's development plans	O3	0.4					
The elimination of coronavirus epidemic for the development of tourism	O4				0.4	0.6	0.8
Adequate capacity for other tourism, including medical tourism in nearby cities (Shiraz)	O5		1				
The possibility of creating tourism-free zones in Fars province	O6	0.8		0.6	0.8		



The presence of high capacities and potential for human resource development in Iran's tourism industry in terms of its high historical history, including the Achaemenid sites of Persepolis and Pasargad. O7

Table 8. The average opinion of experts about the effectiveness of ST strategies.

		Conducting advertisement to introduce the Fars tourism region to the world	Paying more attention to the protection of the historical places of Fars	Government support for the development of tourism investment funds	Attention and follow-up of innovations in the tourism industry
The presence of old tourist attractions	S1	0.6	1	0.8	0.2
Proximity to Shiraz as a privileged city in Iran	S2				0.4
The fame of attractions, and the recognition of the historical monuments of Fars province in the world	S3	1	0.8	0.8	
Climate diversity, and the presence of 4 seasons in the region	S4	0.2			0.2
The presence of nomadic, and local attractions, along with historical attractions	S5	0.4	0.4	0.8	0.4
Facilitating the issuance of visas for foreign tourists	S6	0.6		0.2	
Ecotourism	S7				
The presence of negative propaganda about Iran in many countries	T1	0.8	0.6		
Lack of bank credit facilities in the investment sector	T2			1	0.4
Unwillingness of the private sector to invest in tourism	T3			1	
Policies of the Ministry of Energy in dam construction in Fars region	T4		0.6		

Loss of traditional and local culture in Fars province	T5	0.4
Lack of economic stability and inflation to attract foreign investors	T6	0.4
Cultural and religious restrictions	T7	

Table 9. The average opinion of experts about the effectiveness of WO strategies.

		The development of the transportation infrastructure of Fars region from the side of the government	Holding conferences and advertisements to introduce the historical places of Fars in the world	Development of foreign investment and outsourcing of activities to foreign companies	Development of tourism-related training for tourism service providers	Development of physical infrastructure	Developing relations between domestic and foreign tourism agencies in creating joint tours for cultural exchanges
Lack of proper advertising in the world about Iranian tourism	W1		1		0.4		0.6
Lack of investment in Iran for tourism	W2	0.4		1			
Lack of infrastructure (software and manpower) at the international level in Fars province	W3	0.2		0.4	1		
Lack of management plan for tourism development in Iran	W4						0.4
Weakness in local and transportation industries, including air transportation	W5	1					
The presence of unsafe roads between the provincial capital (Shiraz) and Achaemenian tourist attractions	W6	1		0.2			
The lack of amenities and hotels in tourist places	W7					1	



Low tourism costs in Iran compared to the world and regional countries	O1	0.4	0.4	0.8		0.4
Understanding the importance of tourists in economic development and foreign exchange in the country	O2	0.8	0.6		0.6	0.4
Emphasis on the development of sustainable tourism in the country's development plans	O3	0.8	0.2		0.6	0.6
The elimination of coronavirus epidemic for the development of tourism	O4		0.8	0.8		
Adequate capacity for other tourism, including medical tourism in nearby cities (Shiraz)	O5					
The possibility of creating tourism-free zones in Fars province	O6			0.4		0.4
The presence of high capacities and existing potential for the development of human resources in Iran's tourism industry in terms of its high historical history, including the Achaemenid sites of Persepolis and Pasargad	O7					0.8

Table 10. The average opinion of experts about the effectiveness of WT strategies.

Advertisin g in other important historical places in the world, including China	Removing the obstacles of the private sector, and encouragin g it to invest in	Developme nt of cultural and social centers to promote tourist services
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Fars province			
Lack of proper advertising in the world about Iranian tourism	W1	1	0.6
Lack of investment in Iran for tourism	W2		0.6
Lack of infrastructure (software and manpower) at the international level in Fars province	W3		0.2
Lack of management plan for tourism development in Iran	W4		0.8
Weakness in local and transportation industries, including air transportation	W5		0.2
The presence of unsafe roads between the provincial capital (Shiraz) and Achaemenian tourist attractions	W6		0.2
Lack of amenities and hotels in tourist places	W7		
The presence of negative propaganda about Iran in many countries	T1	0.8	0.8
Lack of bank credit facilities in the investment sector	T2		0.6
Unwillingness of the private sector to invest in tourism	T3		0.8
Policies of the Ministry of Energy in dam construction in Fars region	T4		0.2
Loss of traditional and local culture in Fars province	T5		0.8
Lack of economic stability and inflation to attract foreign investors	T6		
Cultural and religious restrictions	T7		

Finally, to determine the weight of the strategies, by multiplying the importance of the covering points and the degree of its effectiveness, the weight of each strategy and the rank of each strategy are obtained, as shown in Table 11.

Table 11. Weight and ranking of strategies.

Strategy	Weight	Rank	Rank in the district
Development of historical tourism resources and attractions	0.788429	4	3
Development of combined tourism (historical and cultural medicine)	0.797743	3	2



Planning to attract as many tourists as possible from Iran's allied countries	0.595396	9	5
Planning for the development of tourism by-products, including handicrafts	0.308034	17	6
The development of cultural and welfare activities in tourist attractions, especially Achaemenian Persepolis and Pasargad	0.752876	5	4
Converting old houses and developing nomadic ecotourism into a place for tourists to stay in the tourist areas of Fars, including the Achaemenid sites	0.889599	2	1
Conducting advertisements to introduce the Fars tourism region to the world	0.652478	7	2
Paying more attention to the protection of the historical places of Fars	0.597004	8	3
Government support for the development of tourism investment funds	0.961719	1	1
Attention and follow-up of innovations in the tourism industry	0.352276	15	4
The development of the transportation infrastructure of Fars region from the side of the government	0.591403	10	2
Holding conferences and advertisements to introduce the historical places of Fars in the world	0.43833	13	4
The development of foreign investment and outsourcing of activities to foreign companies	0.678071	6	1
The development of tourism-related training for tourism service providers	0.321077	16	5
The development of physical infrastructure	0.17948	19	6
Developing relations between domestic and foreign tourism agencies in creating joint tours for cultural exchanges	0.377154	14	3
Advertising in other important historical places in the world, including China	0.255151	18	3
Removing the obstacles of the private sector and encouraging it to invest in Fars province	0.541085	11	1
The development of cultural and social centers to promote tourist services	0.517379	12	2

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Nowadays, sustainability is universally used as a basic advance towards for any advancement, including Tourism development. In the political and environmental arguments, sustainable tourism is a new concept to deal with the destructive agents of tourism growth. Tourism is the

main and perhaps the only way of development in many countries. Therefore, tourism is developed so that its contribution to the sustainable development of destination is optimal. The goal of sustainable tourism development is to maximize the long-term advantages of visitors, the local community, and the destination environment. Generally, the local community owns and controls the tourism development process. The sustainable development of tourism is a process that meets the requirement of tourists, and the host community supports future opportunities, and involves the management of all resources to meet all kinds of economic and social needs. In other words, the main role of tourism development is to help the destination's wider economic, environmental and social development. Therefore, sustainable tourism development should be considered achieving sustainable development via tourism. This means that not only tourism itself must be sustainable; rather, it should contribute to the broader policies and goals of sustainable development. Examining the development of tourism in developed countries indicates that a special mechanism is needed to achieve progress, and development based on the fundamental principles of those societies. Consequently, although it is important to learn from the valuable experiences of other countries and make rational use of them, the cultural, value-based, and belief-based differences between countries prevent the direct application of their specific mechanisms, which are based on their own unique principles of value and knowledge, for the sustainable development of tourism in Iran. Thus, Sharples and Telfer believe that "one of the weaknesses of the notion of sustainable tourism development is that the principles, and goals of this concept are expressed in a set of guidelines, which are generally relatively inflexible, and it shows the western axis of tourism development. All models of sustainable development of non-native tourism focus on the four common dimensions (economic, environmental, cultural, social, and political), and they are less focused on presenting the issues based on the structure of the destinations. In other words, they have presented a coordinated approach to tourism development, usually based on governing the limits of acceptable environmental and social changes, and cannot justify unlimited types of tourism development situations. In the sense that the locations vary with respect to a number of aspects, such as the local planning and development requirements, the level of economic maturity and variety, etc. Therefore, Iran, as a destination, cannot take advantage of some opportunities in terms of the development of non-native tourism. Hence, developing a localized model in line with the sustainable development of Iran's tourism becomes necessary. Nevertheless, the acquired indicators may coincide with the sustainable development indicators of well recognized global tourism. In a nation such as Iran, which has favorable tourist sectors, the potential for expanding tourism may be maximized via the implementation of judicious judgments and policies in this domain. There are various tourist attractions in Iran; one of the most prominent historical tourist places is related to the historical monuments of the Achaemenid period, which is about 4500 years old, and neither Fars province nor the country of Iran can make good use of these historical monuments. In this research, with a comprehensive and strategic view of this work, the determination and prioritization of sustainable tourism development strategies were done. The analysis of the distribution of strategies shows that the number of strategies is higher in the SO and WO areas, which can be concluded that the Achaemenian historical monuments of Persepolis and Pasargad have a good position in terms of strength and opportunity, and in terms of the rank and position of the strategies. Furthermore, it may be inferred that the tactics used in the SO and WO domains have superior positions. According to the acquired findings, the government's prioritization of



supporting the establishment of tourist investment funds indicates that the financial situation in the tourism sector is unfavorable. Furthermore, the private sector investments may be unable to help it properly. Therefore, from the point of view of experts, this strategy was ranked first. In ranking strategies, the strategy of converting old houses and developing nomadic ecotourism into a place for tourists to stay in Fars tourism areas, including the Achaemenid sites of Persepolis, and Pasargad, is ranked second. The positioning of this approach in the second rank indicates that policies targeting the efficient use of amenities for the advancement of tourist-related areas and the incorporation of supplementary facilities for tourism development have proven ineffective. Therefore, this strategy was placed in the second place. Using the development of ecotourism, sustainable tourism should be developed. The third rank of strategies is related to the development of combined tourism (historical, cultural, and medical), which is somewhat in line with the second strategy, which shows using all the capacities of Fars province not only as a historical tourism hub, but as a cultural tourism hub and medicine can be helpful. Finally, other strategies are important, and decision-makers in this field are suggested to implement and develop each one as much as possible.

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