Assessing Pedestrian-Oriented Aspect Focusing on the New Urbanism Approach on Sajjad Boulevard, Mashhad

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Walking is one of the most basic means of moving throughout cities. Since the emergence of modernist urbanism, there has been an emphasis on developing cities to facilitate automobile rides which has led to paying little attention to providing suitable urban spaces for walking. However, such an approach has changed during the recent decades and streets are taken into consideration once more as a public urban space. New urbanism is one of the common approaches to modernize the cities. Given the transition from vehicle-oriented to human-oriented approach, it is of substantial importance to promote the pedestrian-oriented streets.

The general purpose of the present study is to investigate, assess, and improve the pedestrian-oriented approach on Sajjad Boulevard, Mashhad, in light of the new urbanism approach. This district was selected with respect to its demographic attraction along with its functions as a place for spending leisure time. The present study seeks to provide answers to the following questions: What are the main indices in assessing urban routes with respect to the new urbanism approach? What are the problems regarding the pedestrian-orientation approach on Sajjad Boulevard?

What strategies can be proposed to improve the pedestrian-oriented aspect on Sajjad Boulevard?

The following hypotheses guided the present investigation.

First- The effective indices on the pedestrian-oriented aspect are in compliance with the entire ten-fold principles of the new urbanism approach.

Second- Due to a set of obstacles such as the absence of walking facilities, inaccessibility to the public transport, etc., the pedestrian-oriented features of Sajjad Boulevard have been weakened.

2. Methology

The present study was conducted through the descriptive-analytical approach using case samples. Given the purpose of the study, this inquiry consists of two main parts:

Introducing indices and criteria of assessing the pedestrian-oriented aspect with respect to the new urbanism approach using library studies and assessing the indices using questionnaires, documentary studies, observations, analyzing the present maps, and softwares including GIS and SPSS.

3. Results

In this study, the pedestrian-oriented indices were assessed with respect to the new
urbanism approach on Sajjad Boulevard, Mashhad. Using tools such as observations, questionnaires, documentary studies, and map analysis, the following results were reached regarding each principle:

1. **Walkability**: Only the two indices sidewalk width and lighting have been positive, while flooring quality, urban furniture, W.Cs, and facilities for the disabled were considered as negative.

2. **Connectivity**: Both of the indices in this principle were positive.

3. **Mixed use (land use system)**: As the indices including the presence of mixed use, attractive urban applications, and the block size index have been relatively positive, the principle was taken as positive.

4. **Presence of valuable elements (attraction)**: As the indices including human scale and visual attractions were observed as relatively negative and positive, respectively, the principle is assessed as average.

5. **Conventional structure**: Depending on the maps regarding the historical process of the physical development of Mashhad’s metropolitan area, there is no particular historical or architectural element representative of the special identity of this district. Consequently, the principle is assessed as relatively negative.

6. **Diversity**: While the first index was relatively negative, the two indices including diversity in bodies and diversity in buildings were observed as moderately positive, thus, the diversity principle on Sajjad Boulevard was taken as positive.

7. **Density**: The density principle was assessed as relatively positive as it was the case for the indices of residential and commercial densities.

8. **Green transportation**: The principle was assessed as average, given the fact that three indices were relatively positive, one index was relatively negative, and the other was negative.

9. **Environmental sustainability principle**: With two relatively positive indices and a relatively negative index, the principle is considered as relatively negative.

10. **Quality of life (Social)**: As the number of pedestrians and safety were positive, and the walking culture was average, the principle is assessed as relatively positive.

Evaluating the pedestrian-oriented aspect of Sajjad Boulevard, the connectivity principle was assessed as positive indicating a more desirable status among the ten principles of the new urbanism approach. As the area of study was devoid of historical texture as well as special identity, the principle of historical structure can be considered as being in the most undesirable condition compared to the other principles of the new urbanism approach revealing that the district requires identity empowerment.

### 4. Conclusion

In order to improve the pedestrian-oriented aspect on Sajjad Boulevard, Mashhad, 17 strategies were laid out, among which six were offensive, four were adaptive, three were contingent, and four were defensive. As the pedestrian-oriented aspects on Sajjad Boulevard were assessed as relatively positive, the route happened to be at an offensive state; consequently, priorities must be given to the strategies that can exploit the positive aspects. Six offensive strategies among the total of 17 are listed below in order of priorities:

1. Continuity in assigning purposeful roles for the route concerning urban applications
2. Attempts to promote investments and participations from Astan Quds Razavi
3. Strengthening and restoring social and physical values to conserve the identity of the route
4. Planning and designing walking spaces in order to strengthen social interactions as well as the pedestrian-oriented aspects
5. Organizing marginal green environments to provide urban spaces
6. Employing encouraging policies to establish applications with no time limits

Keywords: New urbanism approach, Pedestrian orientation, Urban routes, Assessment indices, Sajjad Boulevard, Mashhad.

References (In Persian)


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