Assessing the Indices of City Development Strategies (CDS) in Kermanshah Metropolitan Area

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction
Given the sectional and focused approach (top down) of the Iranian planning system and the absolute domination of the central government’s policies, city development strategies have attracted the attention of scientific communities as a participatory approach. First presented by the city coalition organization in 1999, the new approach of city development strategy is based on four indices including good governance, competitiveness, livability, and being based on banks. In the area of urban policies, the planning system for Kermanshah metropolitan area still entails conventional thoughts based on comprehensive plans at local levels as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran’s 2025 vision, national documents for the development of Kermanshah province, the basic theory for the development of Kermanshah province, and five-year development plans as upper schemes at local and national levels, all of which have a main feature, that is, being centralized. Consequently, it is essential more than ever to change conventional urban approaches and employ newer, more efficient methods such as city development strategies (CDS), so as to alter the current process of development in Kermanshah city. To this end, the present study seeks to provide answers to this question: What is the status of Kermanshah metropolitan area in terms of CDS indices?

2. Methodology
In terms of purpose and method, the present inquiry is an applied, descriptive-analytical study. The total population of the study includes the citizens of Kermanshah city, out of which, 383 citizens were selected as the sample population according to Cochran’s sampling method. In order to collect the required data and information, document-library examinations, as well as field studies, were employed. Ultimately, the LISREL and SPSS20 software along with one-sample t-test were used to analyze the findings. In this study, four indices of city development strategy (CDS) were examined in Kermanshah metropolitan area, which included good urban governance with 7 indicators, being based on banks with 7 indicators, livability with 7 indicators, and competitiveness with 6 indicators.

3. Results
Given an average of 1.71 in total in the index of good urban governance, Kermanshah metropolitan area is not at a desirable state, though such undesirability is not the same among governance variables. In this index, variables including law abidance, effectiveness, and efficiency with averages of 2.22 and 2.19 involved the highest extent of desirability; however, variables such as responsiveness (1.26), participation (1.45), transparency (1.48), accountability (1.60), and justice (1.77) were the least desirable, respectively. With an average of 2.38, the index of being based on banks involves a relatively more favorable state.

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Nonetheless, the extent of the citizens’ satisfaction toward the variables of this index is lower than average as well. In this regard, the highest extent of desirability belongs to the citizens’ satisfaction of being informed about banking facilities with an average of 3.38; following this variable, others include a sufficient number of ATMs (2.89), satisfaction toward banking services (2.32), and being informed of electronic banking (2.27), showing relative satisfaction. The highest extents of undesirability belong to the variables such as trusting banks (1.89), sufficiency in the number of branches (1.98) and the expertise of banks’ staff (1.99). Similar to good urban governance, the index of livability with an average of 1.72 does not involve a favorable state. In this index, only the single variable of job availability is at a better state with an average of 2.43. This is followed by other variables including proper physique and furnishing of the city (1.52), educational and recreational facilities (1.53), satisfaction toward the public transport system (1.54), city’s security (1.63), health facilities (1.68) and sufficient income (1.73), which are all at a highly unfavorable state. With an average of 2.12, the index of competitiveness is also undesirable in Kermanshah city, while it is relatively more favorable compared to the indices of good urban governance and livability. In this index, two variables including the natural features and position of Kermanshah metropolitan area (3.83) and the availability of urban development contexts (3.19) involve a relatively more favorable state in terms of the citizens’ satisfaction. Nevertheless, other variables including sociocultural potentials (1.25), public and private investments (1.40), the expertise of urban managers (1.43), and the presence of expert human resources (1.65) are at an undesirable state.

4. Conclusion
The structure of Iranian planning system in the processes of provision, editing, implementation, and monitoring does not involve the necessary efficiency, which has resulted in a number of major issues, such as regional and urban imbalances, marginalization challenges, traffic, and environmental problems. To this end, plans such as city development strategies (CDS) are put forth with the purpose of enhancing the status of the citizens’ participation along with urban development; the implementation of such plans in the Iranian urbanism system relies on numerous factors that require further research. However, the findings of the present study demonstrate the fact that even though the Iranian planning system is moving towards employing novel approaches for urban development, a centralized planning system and lack of the citizens’ participation in these plans still persist. The indices of city development strategy of Kermanshah (good governance, competitiveness, being base on banks, and livability) are interdependent, which means that the provision of banking infrastructure would improve the competitive position of the cities, and increase the livability of Kermanshah city. Ultimately, their results will be demonstrated in a good urban governance and maximum participation of the citizens in urban plans and projects.

Keywords: Urban development strategy, Kermanshah metropolitan, CDS index.

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