

Regeneration of Historical Textures in line with Tourism Development using the Foresight Approach (The Case of Zone One of Ahwaz Municipality)

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

As an integrated, dynamic, and living whole, cities are considered an enormous revolution in human culture. The industrial revolution in the eighteenth century provided the means for growth, expansion, and congestion of cities more than ever. Subsequently, demands arose for the provision of infrastructure which resulted in marginal growths and overlooking the initial core of the cities, i.e. the historical textures. During the past centuries, these textures have been the basis for numerous conventions, the present culture, and economic prosperity of the city and the region, representing the constant flow of past to present and present to future. Accordingly, these textures are considered as historical treasures of cities; in addition to the restoration of their identities, they can facilitate their own development via new functions such as urban regeneration with focus on tourism. As the capital of Khuzestan Province, Ahwaz is one of the most populated cities of south-western Iran that has witnessed numerous developments and growth throughout history; yet now, the city faces isolation. Adopting the foresight approach, the present study seeks to examine the status of

regeneration of worn-out urban textures in line with tourism development; moreover, by extracting various scenarios, it also attempts to draw the forthcoming situation to be employed in correct planning and policy-making.

2. Theoretical Framework

Regeneration refers to restoring social, economic, and environmental life to an area; such a movement would transform places, enhance its social image, and create lively and attractive places that encourage internal sustainable investments. The regeneration approach with focus on tourism involves paying attention to the preservation of cultural values and conservation of local and historical treasures to bring back identity and dynamism to historical textures. Focusing on tourists' preferences in their search for unique locations, the necessity of protecting cultural and historical monuments, and paying attention to the positive impacts of tourism economic prosperity can facilitate tourism enhancement. Results of previous research point to the role of tourism in protecting valuable heritages, expanding international relations, and improving the residents' level of social welfare.

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3. Method

The present research is an applied study where data were collected using the descriptive approach. Data collection was carried out via document and library studies. To analyze urban regeneration in line with tourism development in this study, 44 indices in 7 components (social, economic, cultural, political, physical, infrastructural, policies) were employed. MicMac software was used to evaluate the relations between variables; next, the key motives were extracted and then analyzed in Scenario Wizard software. Their compatibility status were examined and strong, believable scenarios were extracted. Finally, scenarios including golden, disaster, and specific in-between, were identified and a set of recommendations were presented to improve the integrated management of Ahwaz City.

4. Results and Discussion

The experts' examination of the 44 initial indices in urban regeneration with focus on tourism suggest unsustainable distribution; accordingly, 5 components included controller, two-sided as risk and target, result, output as independent titles, axis and adjuster. Examination into the performance of indices represented 8 factors as the key indices in regeneration of historical texture in Ahwaz city with focus on tourism; these factors included social security, residents' interest in regeneration, adjacency to the main core of the city, access to public transportation, reducing oil export, lack of attention to historical

applications, supervising regeneration suitable for tourism, and compliance with riverbed limits.

5. Conclusion

The area examined in this study with the purpose of assessing historical textures in line with tourism improvement had 14 possible scenarios with 112 conditions. 75, 25 and 13 conditions were assessed as desirable, static, and undesirable with coefficient values of 0.66%, 0.21%, and 0.11%, respectively. Realization coefficients of scenarios suggest 10 desirable ones out of 14; accordingly, scenarios 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7 had the highest probabilities with 100%; conversely, scenarios 14 and 11 with values of -0.5 and -0.6, respectively, had the highest critical conditions. Realization coefficients of scenarios represent the probability of scenarios with desirable conditions that involve features including: paying attention to historical applications at city center and considering residents' tastes and interest along with accurate supervision over regeneration in line with indicating river limits, boundaries, and improvement of public transportation. The following recommendations are necessary for achieving desirable scenarios quickly: improving security and increasing residents' interest in regeneration, improving access to public transportation, consideration of beneficiaries of historical texture regeneration

Keywords: Regeneration, Historical Texture, Tourism Development, Foresight, Zone One of Municipality.

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