

Evaluating and Prioritizing the Social Capital in Urban Areas using Topsis and AHP Techniques (Case Study: Ardabil, District 3)

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

One of the important aspects of sustainable social development is the use of the concept of social capital in its social term. In fact, social capital is a key to the establishment of civil society and civic life. Disruption of social relations in the city, urbanization, increase in the migration from rural to urban areas and cultural, social and economic diversity, decrease in the cooperation of citizens, lack of social support from urban development, the necessity of social security, unemployment, and to sum up urban problems and the lack of citizen's participation in the economic, social and cultural development planning have caused to waste the material and spiritual capital while leading to the intensification of urban problems, in most of Iran's cities. Because of the particular characteristics of urban problems, Ardabil is not of exception. In this regard, current research tries to evaluate and prioritize the level of social capital in region 3 of Ardabil using multi-criteria analysis model within the framework of TOPSIS and AHP models.

2. Theoretical Framework

The term social capital was introduced by Hani van from West Virginia University, prior to 1916. But, it was used for the first time in the classic work of Jane Jacobs death and life of American great cities (1960). This concept gradually is developed from 1990 onwards in academic works and articles by James Coleman, Pierre Bourdieu, Robert Putnam, and Francis Fukuyama. Today, social capital has more important roles than physical and human capital in organizations and communities, and includes networks of collective and individual relations and cohesion between the individuals and also between individuals and organizations to increase the effectiveness of development activities. Thus, social capital is a key factor behind

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the development and productivity of production factors. The structural forms of social capital emphasizes on the relationship between people and institutions, which includes issues such as legislation, social networks, associations, institutions, roles, procedures, etc. that are completed by supervision and governance, values, trust, norms, etc. which have cognitive aspects.

3. Methodology

The research uses descriptive-analytic and applied methods. Data gathering procedure is based on library and field findings. The statistical sample includes all persons living in the 11 areas of region 3. The number of statistical sample is 382 using simple random sampling method and Cochran formula. Finally, the results of the questionnaire based on AHP and TOPSIS models are used to evaluate the social capital in various areas of region 3.

4. Results and Discussion

TOPSIS results based on the calculated weights show that in Region 3, areas 1, 2, and 11 are respectively ranked in number one, two, and three for the social capital and area 4 is ranked in the lowest place. Area 2 is at the highest place with the coefficient of .7289, and area 4 is placed in the lowest place with the coefficient of .1508. In these areas, security and confidence is low, and this issue has had a negative impact on the performance of city managers. In addition, facilities and utilities in the region are distributed unevenly and heterogeneously. Social satisfaction has a meaningful relation with the level of social capital. And areas 1, 2, 9, and 11 which are settled with higher socioeconomic classes are ranked higher than other areas, such as 4, 6, and 7.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Today, social capital is one of the most important variables and is used to explain the development level and prosperity of communities and local development at various levels which has received special attention by the policy makers and planners. The results show that areas with high economic status are ranked highly in social capital. In such, social capital has been distributed unevenly across the areas. The following suggestions would be useful to coordinate the relevant agencies in order to promote the social capital.

- Using cultural and religious spirit in the areas such as mosques, holding meetings and public meetings in order to promote social capital.
- Providing security plans and expanding surveillance, propaganda, and promoting culture in order to promote the public confidence and participation in the areas 4 and 6.
- Boosting the authorities honesty with the public, devolution of the responsibilities to the public and development of the NGOs, the creation of the spirit of inquiry and accountability in the public and authorities to promote

Islamic culture in the context of development of communication and confidence.

Keywords: social capital, Topsis technique, Hierarchy analysis process, District 3 of Ardabil.

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