

Assessing the Quality of Life Indicators in Urban Neighborhoods (Case Study: Haji Abad, Fars)

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The quality of life can be considered as an operational tool to measure the overall health and welfare. In general, the concept quality of life is affected by various factors constituting the foundation of the life dynamics. Since the concept quality of urban life is multidimensional and complex, it could be used in urban planning when an appropriate and reliable framework is adopted to measure it. Hence, the first step to measure the quality of urban life and is selecting its dimensions and then choosing indicators which can be used to measure the quality of urban life. The central city of Zarin Dasht named Haji Abad has 20,000 inhabitants and seven urban neighborhoods (Azizabad, Imamzadeh, Hossein Abad, Farhangian, Imam Reza, Nureddin, & Chahar Rah). Spatial equity in planning and purposeful planning to improve the quality of life for the citizens necessitate investigations on the quality of urban life in this city and measurements of citizens' quality of life based on four dimensions of quality of life. The selected criteria in this study include four economic, social, service, and physical indicators. These indicators are investigated for Haji Abad City in the form of three questions:

- In what neighborhoods are the residents' quality of life and welfare higher?
- What factors affect the satisfaction of urban life?
- Which indicators have the highest effect on the quality of life at Haji Abad?

2. Theoretical Framework

One of the main and basic characteristics of the quality of life is its multi-dimensionality. Despite some controversies, experts mostly agree that the quality of life has physical, social, psychological, environmental, and economic

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dimensions. School of conflict considers the quality of life as the result of social, economic, and cultural structures in class society. Since 1970s, as a result of the negative effects emerged from economic growth on the one hand, and the emergence of sustainable development theories on the other hand, the quality of life has further been conceived as a social construct. In 1990s, discussions on the quality of social life by an emphasis on social structures including social capital, social cohesion, and social justice were also put forth. Evaluating the quality of urban life, Lynch proposed an operational model consisting of seven main foundations (namely vitality, significance of form and space, being fit and consistent with behavioral patterns, access, control and discretion, efficiency and equity). He claims that they form the major foundations of the quality of a city.

3. Methodology

This study is descriptive-analytic. Data collection was carried out by survey and document investigations. The sample consisted of 377 subjects (with regard to the population size 20,000 and based on the Cochran formula). The questionnaires were randomly distributed in all seven neighborhoods of Haji Abad. In order to measure the quality of life, various indicators were assessed. These indicators were classified into four groups (economic, social, service, and physical – environmental ones). In order to analyze the findings, the statistical methods including Pearson's correlation and multiple regressions, Shannon entropy, and Promethee techniques were used. The Promethee technique is appropriate to solve multi-attribute problems.

4. Discussion

The results showed that the residents' satisfactions with the quality of life in neighborhoods of Haji Abad are not at the same level. Farhangian neighborhood enjoys high levels of quality and welfare; however, Hossein Abad neighborhood is of low quality. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between economic, social, environmental, and service indicators of quality of life in Haji Abad. The results of the study revealed that there is a direct and significant positive correlation between all the studied dimensions, indicating that satisfaction with one dimension is subject to satisfaction with other dimensions. The regression equation was used to investigate the influence of economic, social, environmental, and the service indicators in explaining the ultimate satisfaction with the quality of life in Haji Abad. The results suggest that all independent variables (economic, social, environmental, service dimensions) have an effect on the dependent variable (satisfaction with the quality of life). The correlation coefficient between the studied dimensions and the ultimate satisfaction of the quality of life is equal to 70%, indicating a strong and direct correlation, and the total explanatory power is 48 %. Besides, about 52 percent of changes in this variable can be explained by other factors. Among the indicators of the quality of

life, the economic and the environmental indicators have the greatest and the least impact on the quality of neighborhoods in Haji Abad.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

The results of this study showed that the orientation of development programs towards the economical improvements can be an important step to increase the quality of life in this region. In addition, the following recommendations are presented to improve the quality of life in Haji Abad:

- Improving the levels of urban services in the neighborhood
- Organizing the old textures in the neighborhoods
- Considering health facilities and making efforts to improve the health per capita in all neighborhoods
- Encouraging residents to participate in neighborhood affairs
- Developing strategies to strengthen the sense of belonging to the neighborhood among their residents
- Directing the development planning towards economic transformation, resolving unemployment problems, and providing new job opportunities in the neighborhood

Keywords: Quality of life, Haji Abad, neighborhood, ranking, indicator.

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