

Structural Equation Modeling of the Dimensions of Place with a Cross-cultural Approach (Case study: Isfahan Naghsh-e-Jahan Square)

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Extended abstract

Introduction

The issues of place and culture can be studied within the context of human and social geography. The cultural characteristics of society (like a soul) manifest and influence the body of “place”. The city as a substrate is a cultural-physical collection formed by the needs, activities and behaviors of inhabitants. The most desirable structure of a good city should facilitate the connection between different cultures. The aim of this research is to make structural model of place dimensions in Isfahan Naghsh-e-Jahan Square with cross-cultural approach. The necessity of conducting this research is to investigate several main categories which include place, cross-cultural dimensions and the position of Naghsh-e-Jahan Square. In the category of place, the attention is focused on empirical, behavioral and practical dimensions of place in urban areas with emphasis on Iranian context and its features; in the category of cross-cultural dimension, the attention is focused on the explanation of multi-dimensional look at spatial and space categories; and in the category of Naghsh-e-Jahan Square, the attention is focused on the importance of surveying to identify the capacities of cultural/historical places for international exploitation and cultural-social and economic strategies.

Methodology

This study has been designed in survey method, with the aim of structural relation modeling between place variables with cross-cultural approach. The model and hypothetical relationships were tested by the information gathered from visitors of Isfahan Naghsh-e-Jahan Square in nowruz holidays. In selecting people for interview; we tried to consider different characteristics such as gender, age and education. The selection of samples was done systematically and the interviews were conducted with passengers and visitors in four sides of the square and during two morning and afternoon shifts. We gathered information via researcher made questionnaire. All questions were asked on a scale of 5 options. In this study, statistical population is all the people with the age of more than 18 years old in Naghsh-e-Jahan Square and in the period of data collection. Cronbach's alpha coefficients and factor loadings derived from confirmatory factor analysis indicate the appropriate validity and reliability of research tools. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the research hypotheses. This model includes two

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parts: measurement model and structural model. In order to assess the goodness of fit of the model, various fit tests such as NFI, PGFI, GFI, RMSEA, Chi-Square and PNFI have been used; the figures of all indicators show the goodness of fit of the model.

Results and discussion

The study of statistical distribution of four dimensional locations with cross-cultural approach indicates the criterion of power-attractive capacity with the average of 51.07 and standard deviation of 7.07 as the best situation among all criteria. This criterion was considered by respondents as a very favorable. Other criteria with favorable average values and higher indicate that Naghsh-e-Jahan Square with special location characteristics and cross-cultural approach can be considered as a favorable place. The results of correlation tests indicate that all place dimensions with cross-cultural approach have positive and meaningful relationships with each other. This shows that in terms of semantics, the quadruple dimensions of place model with cross-cultural approach have a relatively good relationship with each other; they can interact with each other in a common conceptual space. Using confirmatory factor analysis, test of the first hypothesis indicated that a place with cross-cultural approach of the raised quadruple dimensions is combined with the theoretical model of the research and the criteria of the goodness of fit based on appropriateness of confirmatory factor analysis model with research observations. The second hypothesis of this research indicates causality relationship between the factors of power persistence capacity and power- interactive and evolutionary capacity; the standardized path coefficients associated with this path express the positive and significant impact of the factor of power-persistence capacity on power-interactive and evolutionary capacity. The third hypothesis of this research indicates causality relationship between the factors of power- persistence capacity and power-event capacity; the standardized path coefficients associated with this path express the positive and significant impact of the factor of power-persistence capacity on power-event capacity. The fourth hypothesis of this research indicates causality relationship between the factors of power- attractive capacity and power-event capacity; the standardized path coefficients associated with this path express the positive and significant impact of the factor of power-attractive capacity on power-event capacity. The fifth hypothesis of this research indicates causality relationship between the factors of power-interactive and evolutionary capacity and power- event capacity. The standardized path coefficients associated with this path express the positive and significant impacts of the factor of power-interactive and evolutionary capacity on power-event capacity. All goodness of fit indicators on the structural part of the model is as acceptable as the measurement model.

Conclusion

The place approach of this research is a new approach that has not been investigated directly. Therefore, the present research can be regarded as an innovative and creative perspective on the concept of place. This study indicates that the place with cross-cultural approach has a complex concept with different dimensions. In the current research, the four-dimensional model derived from the previous studies was tested in the format of the grounded theory. The findings of the present study express that in assessment of the respondents, the factor of power- persistence capacity is declined in score compared with other place dimensions with cross-cultural approach. This shows that special facilities should be provided for power- persistence capacity to convert Naghsh-e-Jahan Square to a place with cross-cultural approach. The findings indicate that among all factors of a place with cross-cultural approach, the respondents allocated the highest score to the factor of power-attractive capacity. Therefore, it can be concluded that if Isfahan Naghsh-e-Jahan square is considered as a place with cross-cultural approach, it is possible that the power-attractive capacity will be more useful. The findings indicate that the places with more possibility of interaction will probably provide better opportunity for conversion and also play the role as a place with cross-cultural approach.

Keywords: cross-cultural approach, dimensions of place, Isfahan Naghsh-e-Jahan Square, structural equation modeling.

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