

Evaluation of social sustainability in new towns (A Case Study of Mehregan, Mashhad)

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Abstract

Social sustainability is one of the main pillars of sustainable development and one of the key tools in urban planning and policy making. Lack of attention to social sustainability, endangers various development programs and projects, as well as causing irreparable damage to neighborhoods and their inhabitants. Due to the importance of social dimension of sustainability, the present study aimed to investigate social sustainability in Mehregan Town of Mashhad. This study was applied in term of its purpose and it's based on the survey method. In this method a questionnaire was used which its validity was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha test (0.79). The statistical population consisted of inhabitants of Mehregan Town (16745) and the sample size was determined 375. Friedman test and T-Hoteling test were used for data analysis and path analysis was used to represent the conceptual model. Respectively, social capital, housing satisfaction and spatial equality had the most effect and in the next priority sense of belonging, social participation and identity had less effect on social sustainability of Mehregan Town, according to the results of Friedman test, t-hoteling and path analysis. Also

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the results of Friedman and T-Hotelling tests show that three indices of sense of belonging, social participation and identity are lower than the mean and three indices of social capital, housing satisfaction and spatial equality are higher than the mean. In general, social sustainability is not desirable in the area of study.

Introduction

The main purpose of social sustainability is for future generations to have equal or more access to social resources than the current generation. It can be said that the lack of attention to the social dimension in sustainable development endangers various development programs and projects; because social sustainability means equity in the distribution of social services adequately. In other words, the issue that is remarkable after sustainability is the optimal distribution of facilities in a way that is beneficial to all social strata of society and provides social and spatial equality. And because of irregular migration, the Mashhad metropolis has been plagued by increasing population growth, which has led to the formation of Towns around Mashhad to attract additional population, but these Towns (including Mehregan Town of Mashhad) have had problems in social sustainability. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate social sustainability in Mehregan town of Mashhad.

Materials and Methods

This research is applied-developmental in term of its type, the method of research is descriptive-analytical and carried out in survey method (questionnaire). The statistical population consisted of inhabitants of Mehregan Town of Mashhad. Based on Census 1395 the population was 16745 and the sample size was 375 which selected by Cochran method. The questionnaire consisted of 46 items which divided into 6 indices: social capital, housing satisfaction, spatial equality, sense of belonging, social participation and identity. To analyze the data, T-Hoteling, Friedman test and path analysis were used. Formal validity was used to validate the items used in measuring social sustainability. Cronbach's alpha test was used for reliability of the measuring tools and its value in the total index was 0.789 with 46 items.

Results and Discussion

Based on Friedman test it was found that social capital index is in rank one and first priority (5.09) had the most effect on neighborhood social sustainability. Housing Satisfaction (5.03) in second priority, spatial equality (4.81) in third priority, sense of belonging (2.45) in fourth priority, social participation (2.41) in fifth, and identity (1.21) is in sixth priority. And their impact is based on the priority of each of them in social sustainability of Mehregan Town. The three indices of sense of belonging, social participation

and identity were lower than the mean (5.3) and the three indices of social capital, housing satisfaction and spatial equality were higher than the mean. Based on the T-Test, it was found that the mean is 19.87, the three indices, spatial equality, social capital and housing satisfaction are higher than the mean. In fact, these three indices have more effect on social sustainability, but the three indices of social participation, sense of belonging and identity are less than the mean. And based on the path analysis model, it was found that social capital index (0.361) had the most effect on social sustainability, followed by spatial equality (0.229), housing satisfaction (0.224), Social participation (0.194) and sense of belonging (0.144), respectively. Therefore, identity (0.079) had the least effect on social sustainability at this stage.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and the discussions, it can be stated that social sustainability in this area is not in a desirable condition. Identity in Mehrgan Town, whether individual or human or physical, etc. is very low. Inhabitants of Mehrgan town declare insecurity and low sense of belonging, which indicates a decrease in the level of social sustainability in the area of study. The results of the two tests of Friedman and T. Test show that three indices of sense of belonging, social participation and identity are lower than the mean and three indices of social capital, housing satisfaction and spatial equality are higher than the mean.

Keywords: sustainable development, social stability, Town Mehrgan, Mashhad

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