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Investigating the Influential Factors on Creating Vitality in Urban Spaces (Case Study: Taq-e Bostan Boulevard, Kermanshah)

Hamidreza Ameri Siahoui*, PhD in Architecture and Urban Planning, Faculty Member, Payame Noor University, Bandar Abbas Branch, Hormozgan, Iran

Sedigheh Moradi, M.Sc. Student of Architecture, Payame Noor University, Assaluyeh Branch, Bushehr, Iran

Introduction

- In today's world, humans spend most of their time in the outside environment of their house. Therefore, urban spaces have a significant effect on human life (Jamei et al., 2016). Also, these spaces play a considerable role in the social relationships between the residents, providing the proper culture, healthy society and creating vitality in the city (Sazgazi et al., 2015). In a study, Golkar considered the vitality among the determining factors of the quality of urban space (Golkar, 2007). According to the previous studies, vitality is a significant factor in improving the quality of the urban environment, citizens' mental and physical health, and optimal use of the urban architecture (Lennard et al., 1998). Hence, the current study addressed the factors creating vitality in Beheshti Street (Taq-e Bostan Boulevard), located in Kermanshah, to assess the vitality in the urban environment. The important research questions were as follows:
 - What factors affect the vitality and sense of belonging to the place in the study area?
 - How are the natural elements (trees, bushes, and water ponds) influential on the vitality of the urban space?
 - What is the role of the various land uses in a space in creating its vitality and dynamicity?

Materials and Methods

The current research method included library study, survey stud (filling a questionnaire), and software analysis. Since the number of users of this boulevard was indefinite, Cochran's formula was used to calculate the sample size of the unlimited statistical population. In this regard, with a confidence level of 95%, the sample size was determined at 384. 400 questionnaires were filled by the pedestrian to realize this purpose and reduce the error. Out of these questionnaires, 381 questionnaires were filled properly and can be cited. The results of the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS software. The Smirnov-Kolmogorov test addresses the normality of abnormality of the

data. The significance level of the Smirnov-Kolmogorov test indicated that the research variables enjoyed the normal distribution as their significance level was more than 0.05, indicating the normality of the distribution of the data. Therefore, Pearson's correlation coefficient, which is related to the parametric tests, was used in this analysis.

Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis in this research included two parts of descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. In the descriptive analysis, the demographic characteristics, and in the inferential analysis part, the relationships between the variables were addressed using proper statistical tests. As presented in Figure 2, 57% of the respondents were female, 41% were male, and 2% did not respond.

Investigating the age of the respondents showed that 17.6% of the respondents were less than 18 years old. 43.5% were between 19-30 years old. 18.3% were between 31-45 years old, 5.7% between 46-60 years old, and 14.6% were over 61 years old. The maximum number of the respondents had a diploma and lower than that (51.5%), and 11% had an associate degree. 20% had a bachelor's degree, and 14% had a master's degree and higher education. Meanwhile, 3% did not respond to this question. 23% of the respondents passed this boulevard every day, 46% every other day, and 31% for the first time. 75% considered the boulevard vital, and 82% had a sense of belonging to this place.

According to the analyses, vitality has a significant and inverse relationship with the amount of time that person uses this space. The lower the times that person uses this street, the more vital they will feel. It seems that the reason for this phenomenon is the space being routine and ordinary due to the frequent uses. Also, there was a significant and positive relationship between the green space and vitality. The more the green space, the more vitality is in the urban space based on the users' opinions. Among the other factors that had a positive and significant relationship with vitality were: the existence of the water ponds, the people's feeling at the moment, the people's satisfaction with the environment, the place in which the person is, the variety of the land uses, the color of the environment, and the existence of the playground for the children. Those who filled the questionnaire in the playground of the children, beside the water ponds, in the green space, adjacent to the commercial land use and stores and space with bright colors, felt happier and more satisfied, and 92% believed that the environment was vital. Also, there was a significant and direct relationship between the sense of belonging to space and vitality. The people who had more sense of belonging to this boulevard considered it vital. However, there was a significant and inverse relationship between the vehicle traffic axes on the two sides of the boulevard and the vitality. Among people who were close to the vehicle axes, only 17% stated that they were satisfied with the environment, and 22% considered the environment vital.

According to these analyses, it can be concluded that people feel more vital in the playgrounds, green places, and beside the stores and water ponds, and the more the environment tends to the auto-oriented and vehicle-oriented, the lower the sense of vitality becomes.

In responding to the question of reducing factors of the vitality in Taq-e Bostan Boulevard, 48% selected the existence of the vehicle band on the two sides of the boulevard. 16% selected the existence of trash, 5% the inappropriate flooring in the pedestrian, 11% the inappropriate façade of the neighboring buildings, 15% the disrupting noises in the environment, and 5% selected the improper land uses around the boulevard.

The percentages that could increase the vitality in the space of the boulevard based on the users' opinions were as follows: the existence of the shopping centers and malls close to the boulevard with 5%, using trees with 35%, using flowers with various colors with 20%, the use of water ponds with 8%, designing places for gathering and interacting with each other with 12%, using playground equipment with 8%, the sports facilities for children, teenagers, and adults with 2%, using wall paintings and various facades in the walls of the street with 6%, the use of different lighting with happy colors in the environment with 4%.

The greenness in the environment and the existence of the trees and flowers are the priority regarding the vitality in the urban space. Then, the most important priorities are as follows, respectively: the diversity of the land uses, the existence of the vehicle axes and auto-oriented axes, the person's satisfaction with the environment, the amount of people's usage of the mentioned street, the existence of the water surfaces, such as pool, the spaces for a collective relationship, the place for children to play, using happy colors in the environment, using lighting and lack of disrupting noises. According to the findings, it is recommended to use various, flexible, and variable urban elements to increase the vitality and people's presence in the space of this street, thus, the routine and inducing cheerfulness to space. The reduction in the role of the vehicle and increase in the pedestrian and bicycle axes along the boulevard are among other approaches. Also, various land uses, such as shopping centers, retail stores, and recreational centers, can make the boulevard more vital. Using the collective communication space, which is both a place for the children to play and for the adults to interact socially, is among the recommended approaches to increase the vitality in this urban space.

Keywords: Vitality, Urban Space, Social Interaction, Taq-e Bostan Boulevard, Kermanshah

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