

Rereading the Criteria of Vitality in Historical Places with Emphasis on the Approach of Heritage Tourism

Abstract

Historical tourism is known as one of the most primitive types of tourism in the world, which is rooted in human nature since human beings are continuously interested in knowing innovative matters and recognition of accurate knowledge of the past and history of their ancestors and others. Unfortunately, this is much less important in contemporary Iran despite its numerous historical monuments and attractions, than in other developed countries. One of the ways to develop heritage tourism is to restore the lost urban life in places that have been remembered for us in the past, which is possible through the correct application and claim of vitality indicators. In fact, the present study has been conducted with the aim of recognizing the criteria and indicators of vitality in historical sites in order to develop the level of heritage tourism. This research is descriptive-analytical according to the type of purpose and also developmental-applicational according to the method and its data collection has been based on the study of library resources and content analysis. After analyzing and reviewing the opinions of recent experts on the components of vitality, the most significant criteria for promoting vitality in public urban areas as well as historical contexts were identified, including 1. People's presence, 2. Diversity and attractiveness, 3. Comfort and tranquility, 4. Permeability, 5. Flexibility, 6. Security, 7. Transparency, 8. Readability, 9. Beauty, 10. Activity and diversity, Access, comfort, safety and security. Considering that the physical characteristics of historical places are different from the historical areas and textures of the city, therefore, among all the proposed indicators, six main indicators, including (1. Diversity and Attractiveness, 2. Flexibility, 3. Beauty, 4. Accessibility, 5. Comfort 6. Security) were explained as criteria for promoting vitality in historical places.

Research aims:

1. Recognition of the vitality criteria in historical contexts.
2. Recognition of the possibility of developing heritage tourism according to the knowledge of vitality criteria.

Research questions:

1. What are the criteria for reviving historical textures?
2. What connection can be made between vitality in historical contexts and heritage tourism?

Keywords: vitality criteria, historical sites, heritage tourism.

Introduction

The historical areas of cities are a valuable architectural and physical heritage left over from our past that have always played a significant role in the identity-part of urban life over time. This part of the city is a manifestation of the cultural, economic and social dimensions of the people who have spent time in this period and have verified its cultural identity. It is no exaggeration to say that the historical area of cities can be so-called as an identity card. Therefore, preserving, reviving and recreating such features are one of the necessities that can provide life for these areas. The lack of urban life in historical and valuable places, despite all their enduring characteristics, is a clear reason for the abandonment of such places. However, in spite of the least attention and service in these valuable historical treasures, which are still unknown to many of us, such places welcome tourism, by following an approach that requires more awareness of such mysteries and necessitates a return to the essence of what they were (identity) such cultural and historical treasures can be valued. Highlighting historical sites is a broad category that addresses an emerging phenomenon called urban vitality. Urban vitality is the result of the interaction between the city and the citizen. As long as human beings and social intentions are ignored, the city will wholly misplace its role as a factor that ensures the health of human relations. The formation of this interaction is not a one-time action but requires planning and consideration of urban management measures. Unfortunately, today, the lack of breadth and comprehensiveness in the planning and design of urban spaces, especially historical places, has caused such urban spaces to lack a sense of vitality, liveliness and freshness. Providing vitality in historical places for recuperation and the development of historical tourism necessitates distinguishing factors that promote vitality in mentioned places. Therefore, the present study seeks to identify the parameters and indicators affecting the vitality of historical sites and to restore the lost urban life to such sites.

Regarding the background of the present study, it should be said that no independent work with this title has been written so far. In the meantime, several works have examined living in historical places. An article entitled "Study of Factors Affecting the Decline of Liveliness and Vitality in Historical and Dilapidated Contexts; (Case study: Shiraz Black Stone Neighborhood)", written by Davood Habibi (2013), in this work, the author believes that if the historical contexts consume a safe atmosphere, the active presence of people and, consequently, vitality and liveliness will increase. Another article entitled "The Role of Urban Furniture on the Vitality of Historical Contexts" written by Eskani and Hajian (2016); in this article, the authors believe that the body of a lively space and the urban splendor in accordance with the space of the historical context can be effective in creating a sense of vitality. In general, among the resources in hand regarding the topic of this paper, tourism and its role in creating vitality is not mentioned.

The research method used in the present study is descriptive-analytical and this has been accomplished with the aim of re-reading the criteria of vitality in historical sites in order to develop heritage tourism. In order to achieve this goal, firstly, the opinions of recent experts on the criteria of vitality in urban areas were examined and the most frequent components of vitality in urban spaces were extracted. Then, citing research on the factors affecting urban life in historical contexts, the criteria of vitality in historical contexts were also expressed. Finally, by classifying the obtained data and analyzing their content, parameters and components of vitality in historical places were identified and explained. In total, the research process is done in four stages: 1. First stage: a review of the research literature on the categories of vitality, tourism, and heritage tourism; 2. Second stage: extraction of vitality criteria in urban public spaces and historical contexts based on the views of later theorists; 3. Third stage: classification and organization of information and data obtained and their content analysis; 4. Fourth stage: extraction and identification of vitality criteria completed in historical places.

Conclusion

Urban spaces, especially historical spaces, are significant tourist destinations due to their nostalgic, architectural, cultural and valuable constructions, which are a symbol of the economic, religious and social conditions of the time. Attentiveness to historical features and old places of cities can attract cultural and historical tourism and ultimately employment, currency exchange, economic prosperity and revitalization of inefficient places. Unfortunately, despite the large number of remaining historical sites in Iran, the proper protection of these monuments has been neglected and mistreated. Moreover, the entire future of a city is to preserve its historical values. Due to the identity role of historical sites; strategies and methods should be contemplated to protect such treasured urban sites. The most imperative approach proposed for the preservation and restoration of historical sites is to ensure vitality and dynamism since vitality is one of the factors that breathes life into the body of a space and protects from transferring into an abandoned space. In the present study, citing the constructive components of vitality in public arenas as well as historical contexts proposed by recent experts is the most significant criteria for promoting vitality in historical sites. Such criteria include: diversity, flexibility, beauty, accessibility, comfort and security). It should be noted that each of the above criteria has its own divisions and subdivisions, which are shown separately in the following diagram. It is hoped that by properly applying the standards of promoting vitality in historical sites, while reviving and revitalizing these valuable sites, a favorable atmosphere can be provided to attract and fascinate historical tourists.

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