



Evaluation of the factors affecting the desirability of urban appearance and landscape (Case study: Entrances to the city of Ardabil)¹

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Abstract

Background and Objective: City entrances are among the important elements of the city's appearance and landscape. But now we are witnessing cities that do not have any trace of an entrance space with the desirable characteristics that it should have. Ardabil is one of the historical cities with a prominent urban identity and history as one of the main tourist destinations. But despite its outstanding features in terms of cultural and historical burden and its prominent location, the city's entrances are among the most problematic urban spaces that are struggling with numerous and diverse disorders. The city's entrance should be a symbol of the city's face and personality. This can be achieved if effective indicators in this field are identified and the desired entrances are measured based on them. Accordingly, the purpose of the present study is to evaluate the components that affect the desirability of the city's appearance and landscape of the city's entrances

Methodology: The present study is applied in terms of its purpose and descriptive-analytical in terms of its method, which is classified as a dependency study conducted by survey method. The statistical population of the study consists of 20 experts who were selected by snowball method. In order to evaluate the components affecting the desirability of urban landscape and cityscape, 4 components (physical, aesthetic, functional, and identity representation) were used. LISREL and SPSS software were also used to analyze the data.

Findings and Conclusion: The results of the one-sample T-test showed that all the components under study are effective factors of urban landscape desirability because the test results of all variables were positive and scored higher than the median (3). The significance level of the variables was also observed to be less than 0.05, so the research hypothesis was confirmed at a 95% level. Considering that all the components under study had a factor loading of more than 0.4, the results of the path coefficient (β) indicate positive relationships between the research variables. Also, the RMSEA coefficient was equal to (0.074) and the chi-square coefficient was (42.36), so it can be claimed that the research model shows a good and desirable fit.

Keywords: Landscape, City Entrance, LISREL, Ardabil City.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction:

Sign of the city and a representative of the culture, customs and traditions, urban planning and architecture of the people of that city. And on the other hand, it is a space through which the observer establishes the first visual and perceptual connection with the city, therefore, the quality of this space has a significant impact on the observer's perceptual experience. As a result, it is considered one of the most important urban spaces and the field of action of urban planners and designers. This is while the entrances of contemporary cities, apart from the structure of the city and the way urban spaces are arranged, have become dead urban fabric and have distanced themselves from their systematic structure in old cities. In this regard, inappropriate use of the lands surrounding the city has caused the appearance of the entrances to act merely as an element to determine the city limits. Regardless of its cognitive context, the entrances of cities are built with similar forms and shapes that do not carry a specific meaning, and it can be said that the entrances lack identity. Today, the identity of each city is known based on the quality of its urban spaces. Because the man-made environment of cities is the product and result of the thoughts and hands of the people of that city. In general, there are different disorders in the study of urban spaces today, and most of these urban spaces show a lack of identity in terms of their inappropriate performance and urban appearance. Therefore, it is necessary to take action using various mechanisms to resolve these problems meanwhile, the city of Ardabil is also one of the historical cities with a prominent urban identity and history as one of the main tourist destinations. However, despite its outstanding features in terms of its cultural and historical load and prominent location, the entrances of this city are among the most problematic urban spaces that are struggling with numerous and diverse disorders. In this regard, considering the selection of Ardabil as the tourism capital of ECO member countries for 2023, the continuation of the unorganized and undesirable state of the city's entrances can be associated with negative impacts on the social, cultural and economic status of this city. This issue determines the position of the present study to help urban planners, urban designers and city builders in the correct planning of the entrances of the city of Ardabil. For this purpose, the main goal of this study is to evaluate the components affecting the urban landscape and appearance in the city of Ardabil. In order to overcome the problem posed by identifying the components affecting the urban landscape and appearance. Therefore, the present study seeks to answer the following question and hypothesis.

- What is the impact of each of the components (physical, functional, aesthetic, identity representation) on the desirability of the landscape and appearance of the entrances of the city of Ardabil?

-It is assumed that the components (physical, functional, aesthetic, identity representation) affect the desirability of the appearance and landscape of the entrances to the city of Ardabil.

Methodology:

The present study is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-analytical in terms of method and is classified as a dependency study. Library, field and survey studies were used to collect data. The statistical population of the study included 20 experts who were selected using the snowball method. Of the 20 experts, 4 had a bachelor's degree, 6 had a master's degree and 10 had a doctorate in terms of education, and 8 had 3 to 10 years of experience, 7 had 10 to 15 years and 5 had 15 to 30 years of experience. In fact, experts were selected who both had sufficient scientific experience and were directly or indirectly related to the subject of the study mode. A five-option Likert scale (1 = very little, 2 = little, 3 = medium, 4 = much, 5 = very much) was used to evaluate the questions. In order to analyze the components affecting the urban landscape and landscape, the components (physical, functional, aesthetic, identity representation) which themselves include the relevant items were used. To determine the validity of the questionnaire, the opinions of experts were used, and to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used. The results of calculating the Cronbach's alpha test for the questionnaire were 0.785, which indicates the high reliability of the research tool. LISREL and SPSS software were also used to analyze the data.

Results and Discussion:

The spatial analysis conducted in this study resulted in a comprehensive suitability map for The results of the inferential statistics in the table above show that the T-statistic of a community (one-sided) is positive and significant for all research variables, and the level of significance for all these variables is observed as $0.05 > 0.000$, 0.002 , and 0.001 Sig = 0.001 . Therefore, due to the smallness of the significance level of the test, it can be claimed with a probability of 95% that the means of these variables are unequal to the critical mean (i.e., score 3). Considering that the T-statistic for all variables is positive, it can be claimed that all the studied components are among the factors affecting the desirability of the appearance and landscape of the entrances of Ardabil city.

To examine the research hypothesis, the accuracy of the scale used must first be confirmed; therefore, confirmatory factor analysis was used to measure the relationships between the latent variables and their measurement items. Confirmatory factor analysis examines the relationship between items (questions in the questionnaire) and constructs. In fact, unless the questionnaire questions are proven to measure the latent variables well, research hypotheses based on the questionnaire data cannot be used; therefore, confirmatory factor analysis is used to prove that the data are measured correctly. The strength of the relationship between the factor (latent variable) and the observable variable is shown by the factor loading. The factor loading is a value between zero and one. The observation factor loading in all cases has a value greater than 0.4, which indicates that the correlation between the latent variables (dimensions of the main constructs) and the observable variables is acceptable. After the correlation of the variables is identified, a significance test must be performed. The T-value statistic is used to examine the significance of the relationship between the variables. Since significance is examined at the 0.05 error level, therefore, if the T-value test statistic is greater than the critical value of 1.96, the relationship is significant. Based on the results of the measured indicators, each of the scales used at the 5% confidence level, the T-value statistic is greater than 1.96, which indicates that the observed correlations are significant. The output of the confirmatory factor analysis in the form of the LISREL software is the path coefficients (β) or in other words, the factor loadings of the study. The size of the path coefficient indicates the strength and power of the relationship between two latent variables. Researchers believe that the path coefficients should be calculated to be greater than 0.4 in order to be considered effective in the model. As is clear, all variables have a factor loading greater than 0.4 and the relationships between the researches variables are positive. Also, the RMSEA coefficient value is equal to (0.74) and the chi-square coefficient is (42.36) and is in the acceptable range, so it can be claimed that the research model shows a good and desirable fit and no variable or factor will be removed from the model. In the following, the significance of the model and the relationships between the variables have been examined through the T-value of significance. By comparing the values of this test for each path, it is possible to confirm or disconfirm the significance of the model paths and analyze and infer its effectiveness. In this regard, if the T-value of significance is higher than the absolute value of 1.96, then at a confidence level of 95%, that variable is effective and confirmed. The T-value of significance of the above model indicates that all coefficients are greater than 1.96. Therefore, all research components are effective components on the desirability of the appearance and landscape of the entrances of Ardabil city. According to the confirmatory factor analysis model, in the case of significant T-Value test, its value is effective for each of the studied factors because the significant T-Value number is greater than 1.96 and the factor loadings, i.e. the path coefficients, are greater than 0.4.

Conclusion:

The results of the one-sample T-test showed that all the components under study are effective factors of urban landscape desirability because the test results of all variables were positive and scored more than the median (3). The significance level of the variables was also observed to be less than 0.05, so the research hypothesis was confirmed at a level of 95%. Considering that all the components under study had a factor load of more than 0.4, the results of the path coefficient (β) indicate positive relationships between the research variables. Also, the RMSEA coefficient was equal to (0.074) and the chi-square coefficient was (42.36), so it can be claimed that the research model shows good and desirable fit.

Declarations

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