



A comprehensive review approach to renovation and improvement of the historical districts for tourism industry; case sample: Qebla, Lahij and Khinaligh cities

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Abstract

The historical heritage of each country is a tangible capital that despite preserving the identity and culture of that region, causes improvement in the tourism industry and consequently moves the economic cycle. As tourism industry potentially affects the economy of each country, it is a concept that attracts attention. The main goal of this article is benefiting the recreation strategies of historical districts as a valuable capital for renovation and improvement of these historical districts in a way that the tourism industry improves. In this regard, the historical cities of Qebla, Lahij and Khinaligh in Azerbaijan have valuable historical districts with tourism potential that need repair, preservation and renovation for improvement of tourism industry in these cities. Given these goals, these regions will be investigated in this research. Research mythology in this research is descriptive-analytical. Likewise, using analytical methods of the hieratical model of AHP, each criterion will be weighed. To know the value of each criterion “expert choice” software is used. Finding shows that by creation of a desirable environment for welfare of the residents and tourists to keep unity between tourism potential and historical identity, the life and development of historical cities will be guaranteed.

Keyword: *historical districts, renovation and improvement, Azerbaijan, Qebla, Lahij and Khinaligh, tourism industry*

1.Introduction

The basic motivation of tourism is familiarity with different culture, specially the cultures of the past and their physical representation in the form of cultural heritage, and historical districts and buildings. This issue turned tourism to a thriving industry in the area of monuments and historical districts (Chen, C.F. & Chen, 2010). Because of the value of historical places, the boom of tourism in the preserved historical regions is important. Likewise, as tourism industry has boomed rapidly in the world, tourists show interest in cultural heritage. Nowadays, cultural heritage and tourism is a familiar issue for people and day by day they express curiosity toward it (Kargar, 2007:2). Actually, historical regions and old districts can attract tourists because of their valuable historical spaces. During different periods, human beings have traveled and tolerated the difficulties of the paths to see natural attractions, discover economic opportunities, benefiting from more proper living facilities, and acquiring knowledge about ethnic and cultural diversities. Therefore, tourism is as ancient as history (Zahedi, 2006). Nevertheless, we are witness that historical cities despite their historical value are ruined. This issue caused the residents to quit the region and settlement in these regions is restricted. While ignoring this valuable heritage, in addition to

destroying the identity of the region, will also destroy national wealth. Therefore, protection of these historical places and renovation and improvement of them, in addition to preservation of national-regional identity, can attract tourists too. Therefore, most countries of the world, to preserve their historical places, repair and renovate these places and develop tourism industry in these regions. Nowadays, tourism industry is accounted an important industry for economic growth. Tourism industry is beyond an industry and this industry, as a global social dynamic phenomenon, has its own complexity. This industry also is one of the most important factors in development of the region. This is an activity that increases foreign exchange and balances economic-social development at regional level and makes income distribution fair. Furthermore, this industry plays an essential role in creating jobs and complementary resources and income and balancing wealth and transforming the economic activities (Omidvar, et al., 2008). Therefore, as mentioned, the goal of this article is benefiting the strategies for renovation of historical districts as a valuable capital in a way that tourism industry develops in these regions. So, previous researches that are related to this goal will be reviewed. Researches denote that protection of historical places contributes to local economy. In the following paragraphs, we refer to some researches regarding this goal.

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2. Reviewing the history of the research

Rypikma (2008) in his article “heritage protection and native economy” with the goal of expression of economic value of cultural heritage emphasis that protection of heritage is not an issue with a single value, but it has several values including cultural, aesthetic, educational, social and historical values. The last item that is added to these value is economic value of heritage protection. Rypikma suggests that the heritage values should enter the field of market economic values. Janson in his article “tourism as a cultural heritage and the big house of Ireland” reviews the historical tourism and its historical courses and its relation with national identity. In this regard, he has chosen the tourists’ desirable historical choice, the Ireland house. Ultimately, he explored that the spatial imagination of the native people and its connection with the national, regional and international geographical area caused popularity of this historical building. Mark, A, Bonn and et.al (2014) in their research on “cultural and historical heritage, creation of a proper environment for visitors of historical and cultural heritage”, review the effect of some environmental elements on the visitors’ attitude and found that these factors have a tremendous effect on tourist attraction. Gulnara Ismagilova and et al investigate the use of historical heritage as a factor that develops tourism. Their results show that in many regions including Russia, using historical and cultural heritage create an opportunity for improvement of economic, social and cultural conditions. They also investigate east Europe countries in respect of historical heritage for social and economic development.

3. Understanding the studied areas (Qibla, Khinalyq and Lahij)

Architecture and urbanism of Azerbaijan is old and culturally rich and includes primitive structures such as underground wholes and modern urban spaces (house, market, main streets, and religious buildings). Therefore, protection of historical monuments in Azerbaijan is very important and several programs are introduced to protect these rich heritages. The importance of protection of these historical- cultural heritages is justifiable in many respects. One of them is preservation of the community identity and representation of the traditions and the way of ethnic groups’ life. In other hand, familiarity with different cultures, especially the culture of ancient people and the embodiment of their representation in form of cultural heritage, building and historical districts, is an essential motivation in tourism area. This issue turned tourism to a thriving industry in the area of monuments and historical districts (Chen, C.F.& Chen, 2010). the framework of the recent research is the thematic territories of the 3 protected regions (Qebla, Lahij and Khinaligh) that are located in mountainous northern part of Azerbaijan. So, their structures and particulars are investigated and the possibility of joining these regions

to international system of tourism is studied. In the scope of this study, structural particulars and the rich works that are located in these regions and cause protection of the mountainous cities of Qebla, Lahij and Khinaligh, will be defined as functions variables that effect on development, promotion and identification of opportunities to international tourism. The ancient regions of Qebla, Lahij and Khinaligh are among 27 protected regions in northern part of Lahijan that are registered for their cultural, historical, architectural and ethnographical features and are important for their rich history and heritage. These cities are mountainous and have special constructional features that turn them to historical works and are tremendously different from what are find in other regions. The principle of development and improvement of historical building should be in direction of stability of important parts (public centers, main street, the valuable building and ...) and protection of historical building in Azerbaijan region. It is noteworthy that, in recent years, we are witness of the protection and improvement of private works, but improvement and innovation of public environments are ignored. However, the analysis shows that renovation of the protected area and public centers of the cities and protection of their traditional works as tourism center are important (Saei and Nayiji, 2011). So, in renovation and improvement of these parts, paying attention to architectural strategies, construction material and art techniques from cultural-historical view can be a good representation of historical building perspective. To prepare the primary program of renovation and improvement of the 3 protected sites, 2 principles are considered:

1. Maintenance and repair of traditional form of historical buildings
2. If during maintenance and renovation, it is necessary to rebuild, the main building should not be damaged and the authorities should have coordinated about the status. Lahij and Khinaligh buildings are the same in their environment structure and their urbanism idea and their architectural structure of their main form will be evaluated commonly. Therefore, the value of these works is affected by environmental factors (culture, religion, social role, and ...). These ancient works that have particular properties can be economic impetus in future (Khumalo et al. 2014).

Renovation of historical works that is the base of many unstandardized but artistic plans can be done by the chosen transformation to upgrade artistic expression of internal space of other social objects. For example, in some regions, the symbol of mosque, bathrooms, and different kinds of springs is a narrow circle. In other cases, a completely different situation for direction of Tejarat Street or its separation is created. In this case, the size of the monument is drawn by a red line. This means that, in the result of correct dedication of elements with new asset value, the visual appearance should be correct to express art in its composition, even

if the street structure is intact. Several suggestions for protection of historical work indicate that the protection methods should be the result of comprehensive and analytic research and an integrated approach should be used for solving the problem in which the effect of biological environment will be considered in protection process as much as its renovation. It is advisable to renovate the building in several respects:

1. Keeping the form and architecture of the buildings volume for their protection
2. Creating minimal change in volumetric aspect of the buildings such as connections of design of the facing, upgrading recreational region design ascetically, conformity of input elements with the street facing, conformity of the building balcony with the streets rotation and improvement of its landscape.
3. Change or substitution of the building performance, by internal design for their renovation (The city reader, 2000: 608).

According to the priority of repair and renovation of the protected regions (Qebla, Khinaligh and Lahij), and considering the goal of this research, some criteria are considered. These criteria are shown in the following table. At the beginning of the twentieth century, large hotels were built in Moscow and Baku (Grand Hotel, Metropolis and ...). Therefore, the hotel industry was revived in the 1960s and 1930s in Europe and other countries of the world and reached a new face of evolution. In these years, new hotels were built in Azerbaijan, especially in Baku. In addition, construction of hotels in recent year (Qebla, Shaghayegh, and others) has an important role in organizing winter holidays in Azerbaijan. Therefore, different facilities are provided that without harming the historical values of monuments, maintain the tourism industry. Among suggestions for construction of the favorable hotels, we can refer to the followings:

1. Construction of hotels and family residences;
2. Renovation of rural houses as residences;
3. Building new hotels in the surrounding area, with larger size and area.

In addition to the construction of hotels, attention to effective factors on the hotel industry and organizing these factors is important. Therefore, tourism is not possible without creating the infrastructures. In this respect, the protected regions in mountainous regions are important. Figures 5 shows some of the suggested facilities for upgrading the international tourism in the protected historical regions.

4. Data and methodology

The methodology of this research is descriptive-analytic. To gather the data, library study, field study, interview with experts, identification of proper criteria for renovation of old districts according to the studied regions and distribution of questionnaire among the professional related to the subject of the research are used. In addition, to define the degree of importance of

the effective criteria in location of the statistic population questionnaires are distributed among all tourism experts. After extraction of the indicators according to the view of the experts, the data is analyzed in a hieratical analysis. The analysis method in this research is AHP. The foundation of AHP method is comparison of pairs of decision criteria and alternatives. It is noteworthy that for such a comparison, it is needed to gather the data from the decision makers. Doing so, the decision makers can focus only on comparison of two criteria without any influence and disturbance of outsider factors. In addition, in pairs comparison, as respondents only weigh two actions, and don't pay attention to other factors, provide valuable information for the problem and make the decision-making process more reasonable (Lee & Kim, 2001: 112). To respond the questions by 9 points scoring pattern, the criteria will be scored two by two. After collection of the questionnaires, Expert Choice software will be used to define the priorities and compute. As mentioned, the statistical population include all tourism experts according to the features defined for the society. 40 persons were qualified for being present in the society. Among them 36 persons were chosen by Cochran formula with confidence level of 95 percent and a percentage error of 0.05. So, confidence level of 95 percent with z-score of 1.645 is considered.

5. Discussion

In this section, the questionnaires, goals and assumptions are reviewed by AHP analysis. The final weighs of sub-indicators in the questionnaires were defined in pairs' comparison table. Each sub-indicator was compared with another sub-indicators and then were scored. The result will be shown in tables and charts. According to the analysis in the hieratical method, the coefficient of importance of each criterion of the research is defined that include: the criterion of protection and reviving ancient physical value with weigh of 0.061, the criterion of reviving public places with weigh of 0.100, the criterion of creating a desirable environment for the residents and tourists with weigh of 0.285, the criterion of attraction of people participation with weigh of 0.176, the criterion of enforcement of infrastructures with weigh of 0.045 and the criterion of enrichment of local occupation with weigh of 0.109. As the chart 1-4 shows, the criterion of creating a desirable environment for the residents and tourist dedicated to itself the most share which is 28.5 percent of the whole. According to the analysis, the criterion for development of recreational and tourism spaces has a share of 23.4 percent, other shares are including attraction of people participation 17.6%, enrichment of local occupation, 10.9%, reviving public places 10%, protection and reviving ancient physical values 6.1% and enforcement of infrastructures 4.5 %. Likewise, after weighing each criterion, the integration of weighs is done according to

the following chart Adjustment coefficient of this analysis is 0.08. Given that the adjustment coefficient is

calculating less than 0.1, it can be concluded that the comparisons are adjusted.



Figure 1. The situation of the three protected area of Qebla, Lahij and Khinaligh that are located in Azerbaijan

	<p>Figure 2. Development of life space and biological elements in 3 cities of interest</p>
<p>The protected city of Lahij</p>	
<p>The protected city of Khinaligh</p>	
<p>The protected city of Qebla</p>	

Figure 2. repairing and improvement of the protected regions (Qebla, Khinaligh and Qebla)

Table1: Repair and renovation of the protected regions (Qebla, Lahij and Khinaligh) for development of tourism industry

Table1: Repair and renovation of the protected regions (Qebla, Lahij and Khinaligh) for development of tourism industry	Subject	criteria
	- Maintenance and renovation of ancient physical value - renovation of public spaces	Keeping national- regional identity
	- attracting social participation -creating a desirable environment for the residents and tourists' welfare	Enforcement of social life
- enforcement of infrastructures - enrichment of local occupations - development of recreational and tourism spaces	Development of tourism industry	

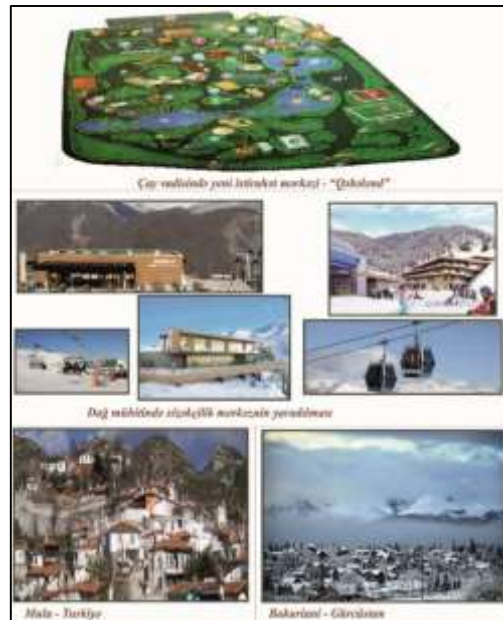


Figure 3: suggestion of recreational facilities and hotel in historical protected regions

Chart1: The chart of weighing each criterion

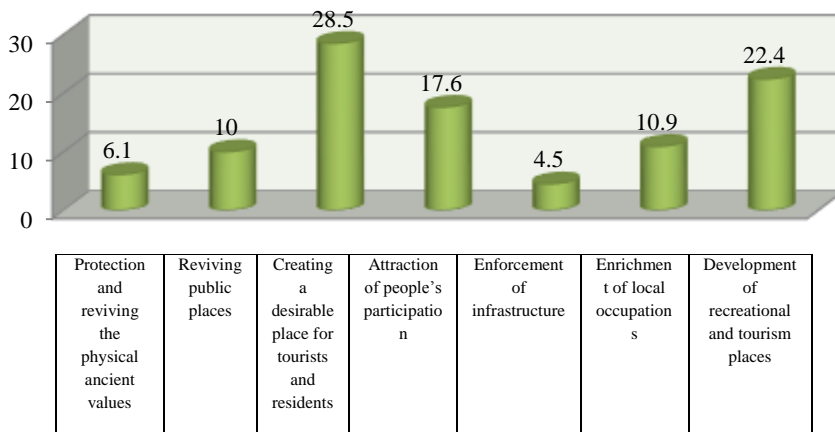


Table 2: matrix of comparison of the pairs' criteria

	Protection and reviving ancient physical values	Reviving public spaces	Creating a desirable environment for the residents and tourists	Attraction of people participation	Enforcement of infrastructures	Enrichment of local occupations	Development of recreational and tourist spaces	Final weigh
Protection and reviving ancient physical values		1.23	2.83	2.17	1.06	2.76	4.15	0.061
Reviving public spaces			3.15	1.14	3.29	1.01	1.66	0.100
Creating a desirable environment for the residents and tourists				4.42	5.31	1.49	1.01	0.285
Attraction of people participation					9.39 ^۹ ,۳۹	2.11	1.07	0.176
Enforcement of infrastructures						2.87	2.68	0.045
Enrichment of local occupations							4.36	0.109
Development of recreational and tourist spaces								0.324

Chart 3

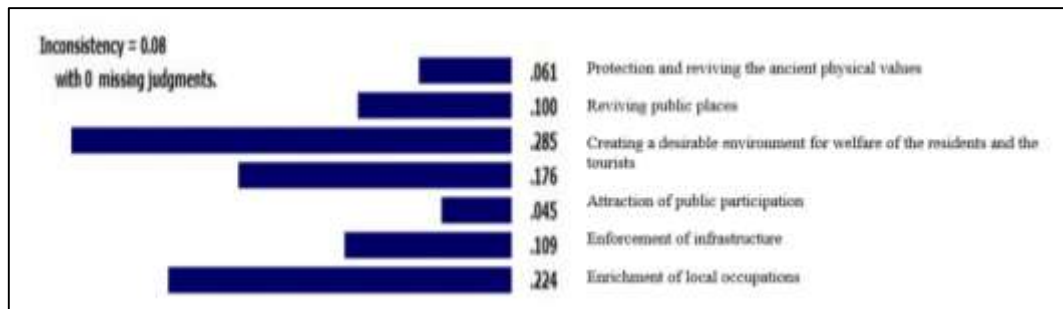


Figure 4- historical city of Lahij

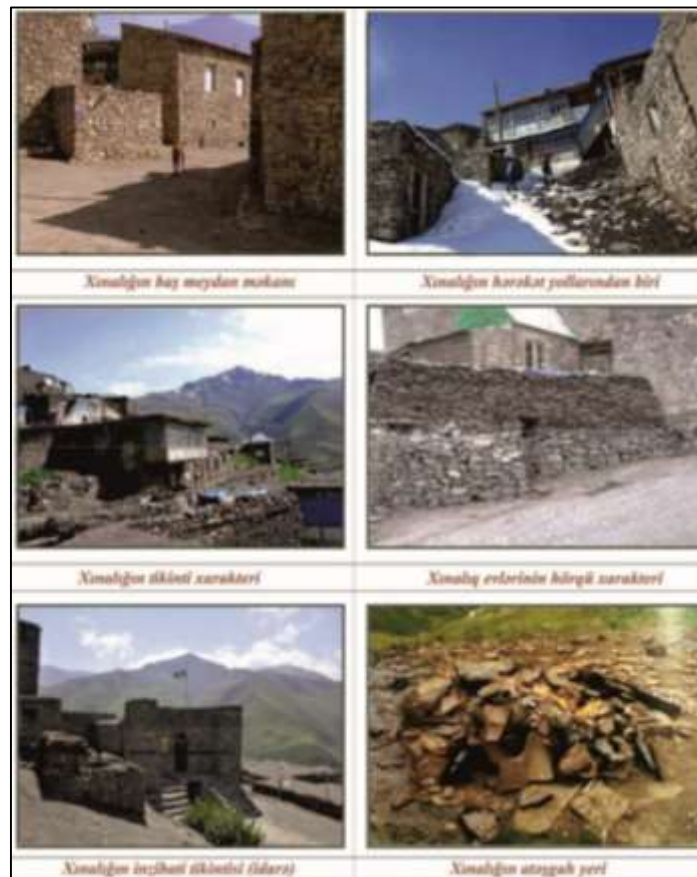


Figure 5. Historical city of Lahij

6. Conclusion

The goal of the recent research is a comprehensive review of renovation and improvement of historical districts for improvement of tourism in the 3 protected regions in Azerbaijan (cities of Qebla, Lahij and Khinaligh) to describe and conform the effective features and improve principles and renovation of historical districts. As mentioned before, protection of works that have historical value and improvement and renovation of them can attract tourists despite maintaining national- regional identity. Tourism industry is one of the important industries for economic growth that can sustain local society by enrichment of local economy. For this purpose, regions of Qebla, Lahij and Khinaligh that are historically, culturally and architecturally valuable are investigated. To do so, according to the goal of this research, the interesting criteria for repair and maintenance of this regions for development of tourism were extracted and after analysis and consensus opinion of the statistical population, the results were extracted. These results show that creating a desirable place for the residents and tourist for unifying the tourism potential and historical identity, can contribute to sustainability and development of the historical cities and enrich the

economy that is affected by tourism industry. Other results show the importance of the criterion of development of recreational and tourism spaces. So, construction of recreational and residential places including construction of hotels and recreational places are necessary. To apply these criteria, attraction of people participation is important. Local people can improve tourism industry in their local community by participation and cooperation with each other. Consequently, by development of tourism industry, local occupation will also improve. These goals will not be achievable unless historical districts that are valuable in the protected areas would be revived. Ancient resident of Qebla, Lahij, and Khenaligh that are among 27 protected regions, are important cities in the north of Azerbaijan because of their rich heritage, history, and urbanism. These cities have special building characteristics that turned them into historical cities. These cities are significantly different from cities of other regions. They are recently protected for their local, cultural and historical heritage:

1. Lahij settlement is a cultural and historical heritage located in Esmaaeili region that includes the protected region (figure 3)

2. The historical- architectural protected region and ethnography of Khinaligh located in Gooya region (figure 4)

3. The natural and historical heritage of Qebla tribe that recently is located in the region of Qebla as Charkhoor Qebla. The city of Qebla had been a part of a big country in the past.

It is noteworthy that the favorable natural and continental condition of these regions, plenty lands for development of different agricultural species, the existence of rare plant and animals and monuments, caused that their bio-environments are rich. Presence of several waterfalls near these cities, being surrounded by forests and the unique architectural works caused that the residents of these regions convert their living activities to advanced activities. In another hand, using building material has differentiated the local architecture. This study shows that the local structure essentially is affected by villagers/ agriculture and home traditions. Maybe, mountain lifestyle has created a special rule that a structure affected by it has been necessary. Nowadays, we are witness that the unique nature, the climate conditions, differentiated architectural works, boundaries of the country, street structure, works that create identity and solutions that are used for public, religious and residency structures define the conditions of these cities. Therefore, the criteria for values and the mentioned features were considered in the process of urbanism in medieval ages.

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