

# Boosting the Tourism Role of Koohsangi Axis in Order to Achieve Sustainable Urban Development

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**Abstract:** The tourism industry is a structure that consists of variety of factors and components. Because of the multifaceted nature of the tourism industry, it can be examined from different perspectives. Development of attractive urban spaces is one of the tourism impacts on the body of urban spaces. Due to historical and cultural attractions, urban areas are often aimed at tourism destinations. Koohsangi urban park as an indicator of the performance of tourism in the city of Mashhad, affected the future prospects of the area. Therefore paying attention to the promotion of tourism oriented towards sustainable development is the goal of this study. In the present study we have analyzed the different orders and finally, the systems were assessed using SWOT tables. The three alternatives are recommended based on the research objectives and with AHP and TOPSIS method all alternatives are assessed. The best option is determined and by considering the axis potentials, some suggestions are offered to improve the tourism role of the axis.

**Keywords:** Tourism, SWOT, AHP, TOPSIS, Sustainable Develop

## 1. Introduction

Urban areas are the most important tourism destinations and many tourists are attracted to them. Development of tourism infrastructure has an important role in structural and functional changes in urban areas and the image of the city are affected by it. One of the oldest, most popular and least expensive ways of leisure is roaming in the streets, markets and squares.

Due to the presence of the Koohsangi Park, for a long time Koohsangi axis was one of the oldest leisure axis in Mashhad. But recently this role has been subjected to large fluctuations and its prosperity has been reduced and as a leisure axis not enough attention to it is made. Therefore this axis has functional problems. The purpose of this study is to strengthen and improve the tourism-leisure role of the area under study and also create visual values and identity of the organization through beautification and organizing urban furniture for sustainable development.

This study seeks to answer these questions:

- What are the ways to increase the tourism-leisure role of the area under study?

- How to beautify and enhance the visual values in the study area?

In this paper, the definition of tourism and its different aspects have been addressed at first, afterwards the indicators are presented for the improvement of tourism role and Finally, the principles and guidelines for the promotion of tourism role of the axis is recommended.

## 2. The Concept of Tourism and Sustainable Tourism

Tourism is a phenomenon rooted in the moving and relocation. It can be said that the tourism industry is perhaps as old as the history of mankind's activities with only different in shapes and objects. Tourism is an economic, social and cultural phenomenon that if planned properly, can lead to increased production, Social Justice, Improve living standards, social welfare and employment. (Lesan, 2007)

Development of tourism infrastructure, has contributed to changes in form and function of urban areas (PapoliYazdi and Saghayi, 2006) so tourism can be used as a tool to enhance the physical, functional, economic and social role in urban areas.

In places where attention is to invite people to use public spaces, life in the city is growing. This is influenced by the fact that residents of the city, even in modern society, are very interested to walk in the city and public spaces (Gehl, 2007).

From The socio-cultural perspective, Social and cultural environment, is the context of tourism activity. Thus, culture and tourism community, interacting with each other and each of them effects on the others (swarbrook, 1999). From an economist's point of view, Tourism is one of the fastest ways to return the investment. (Masoomi, 2006)

Tourism Industry that is one of the largest industries in today's world, provides very exciting and competitive job opportunities, so in the last decade in the United States, the rate of growth of employment in this industry has doubled in comparison with other industries(Goeldner& Richie,2003).

Mtison and wall (1891) believe that tourism has a tremendous impact on the economy. Tourism helps to create

new jobs and boom the other business (Shahabiyan,2010).

Regarding the relationship between tourism and sustainable development, Inskip (1994) mentions "The underlying approach that is currently used in the planning of the tourism industry is to achieve sustainable development. Based on sustainable development, natural resources, cultural and tourism resources should be kept for future use and at the same time be useful for the present society (Niknam and Hosaini, 2010).

According to Asvarbrvk definition, Sustainable tourism is a kind of tourism that is economically successful, but will not destroy the resources that future of tourism depends on them, particularly the environment and the physical and social fabric of the host society."

The table below based on different theories related to tourism as socio-cultural, economic and geographical states:

*Table 1. Some theorists' views on various aspects of tourism.*

Criterion	Theories related to tourism	Theorist
Social, cultural	Tourism is a social activity that involves human behaviour, use of resources, interacting with people, economy and the environment. Tourism is a tool to create empathy, compromise, international understanding and world peace	Holden 2000 Brawn 2000
Economic	Tourism has different economic impacts such as foreign exchange earnings, increased gross national production, creating a source of income for the government and the nation, a source of employment and improve social services	Das 2009
Geographic	Geographically, Tourism as a leisure time or leisure activities requiring overnight absences from the place of ordinary residence	Skinner1999

### 3. Research Methodology

Since the tourism is defined and studied from various aspects, there is a wide range of effective measures to strengthen it. To find the appropriate indicators, we studied some case study from Iranian city, like, Chaharbagh Street in Isfahan, Keshavarz Boulevard in Tehran and Janat axis in Mashhad and also some foreign case study like Istiklal Street in Istanbul city and Rambla Street in Barcelona have been

studied.

According to the above examples, among the objectives of the organization of tourism axis, we can note some of them like: creating the right environment to move, thriving nightlife, encouraged to walk, enhance the efficiency and beauty of the axis, increased social interaction and appropriate maintenance and increase legibility.

Table 2, briefly shows objectives and strategies outlined in organizing this axis.

*Table 2. Dimension, goals and strategies to organizing tourism axis according to domestic and external case study.*

Strategies to organizing tourism axis	Purposes for organizing tourism axis	Indicators for organizing truism axis
Establishing appropriate pavement	Improve the moving space	Physical
Creating perfect lighting	Thriving nightlife	Physical
Widen sidewalks	Encourage people to walk	Functional
Providing the right condition to walk	More efficiency of Koohsangi complex	Functional
Introduce crafts and culture of the residents	Free movement of pedestrian	Functional
Separate walking path from the stand space for Shopping and Sitting area	Beautification of the axis The exchange of an axis	Physical
Business development	Changing Koohsangi axis as a place for social interaction	Social, cultural
Organizing Urban furniture	Preventing damage to the floors and durability Creating attraction all over the axis	Physical Functional
Creating a significant beginning and end points	Creating more legibility all over the axis	Social, cultural Aesthetic

To sum up, studies can conclude that, tourism role of an axis in one side impact quantity indicators like Physical and Functional and on the other side impact quality indicators like Social, cultural and aesthetic indicators.

The following chart summarizes the theoretical framework and states the necessary procedures for recognizing the Physical and, Functional, Social, cultural and aesthetic indicators.

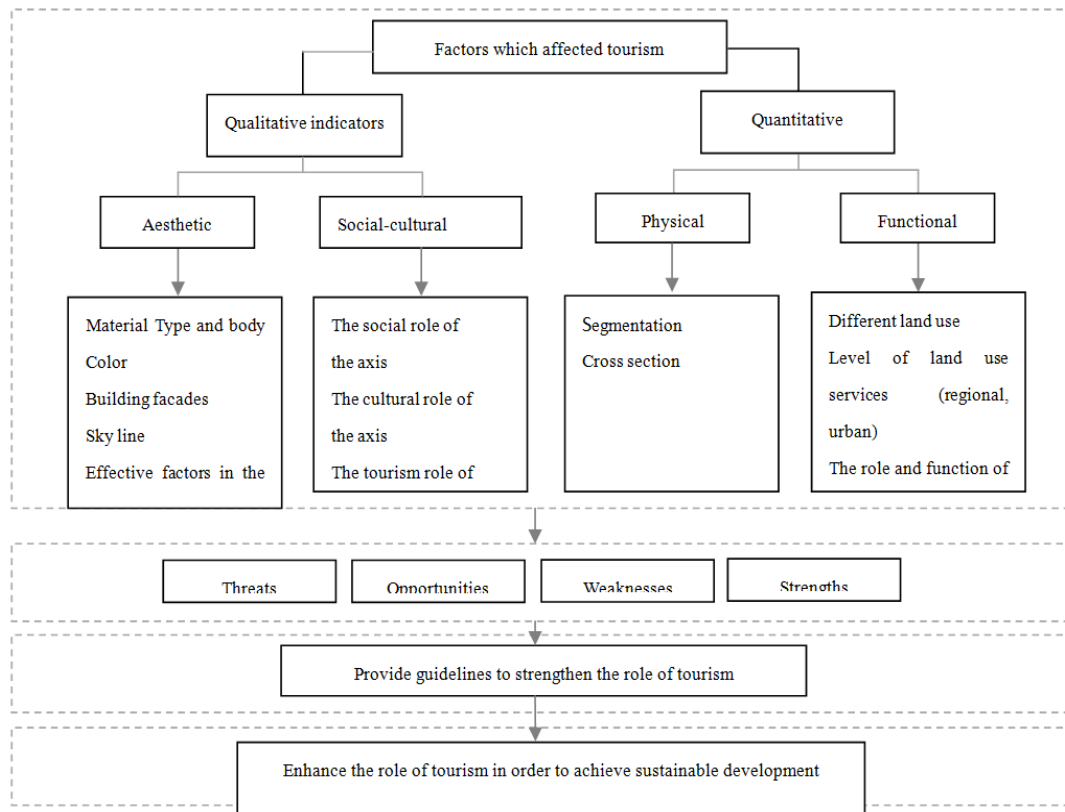


Diagram 1. Conceptual framework.

In this part, at first, we try to study the quantitative and qualitative indicators that are effective to improve tourism role in the Koohsangi axis and then assessing indicators with SWOT table.

### 3.1. Studying the Social and Cultural Indicators

According to the medical-official land use in Koohsangi Street, this street doesn't have a high social role, except for the initial and final points of the street in which this role is highlighted and also in Koohsangi square because of the Koohsangi tourist complex, the social role is highlighted.

But this role, due to its inconsistent application, not spread all over the street.

Placing the different applications near each other may cause environment that increase the social role of the street spontaneously; For example, commercial and retail centers in one side of the street and the Koohsangi park as an urban park on the other side, can cause a spontaneous connection between the two sides of the street.

There are scattered training centers all over the axis and on the Shariati's square, creates a cultural role in axis; but this role is not a highlighted role, but we can say Koohsangi Street have the potential to increase cultural role, according to position and antiquity.

### 3.2. Studying the Aesthetic Indicators

The study area is one of the most important streets in Mashhad city; this street has diversity in Visual characteristics. Koohsangi Street is a unique street in compare with other

streets of the city and has its own identity. Planting rows of trees causes this street an appeal space for walking. There are different disorders in this street, one of the important one is the inconsistency of the facades and discontinuity of the skyline. A building height, color and dimension, mismatch. Blocking the sidewalk with buildings under construction materials. However, Koohsangi has an acceptable image due to the large number of trees all over the street.

Images of visual disorders of Koohsangi Street are displayed on figure 1.



Figure 1. There are three figures illustrated here.

### 3.3. Studying the Functional Indicators

Land uses in this area, at the edge of the Shariati square is more medical, educational, cultural and commercial land uses and also in the middle of the street there is a vast space like hotel, garden and some office and industrial spaces and the remaining tissue is dedicated to residential land use.

Residential uses in the body of the street are often mixed with the service land use and the majority of land uses are residential in the center of the tissue.

In Koohsangi Street 60.8 percent of land uses are urban land use and the second one is regional land use with 29percent. The most popular land use, located between Taghiabad square and Alandasht square, at the beginning of the axis.

**3.4. Studying the Physical Indicators**

Generally the parcels in the side of Shariati square are

coarse grain like hospital and court and the closer to the Koohsangi park the smaller grain we saw like residential houses. Instead of the middle of the axis that there is still great parcel, the other parcels are small one. The smallest grains are residential that are located at the end of the axis and near to Koohsangi Park.

*Table 3. SWOT table.*

Threats	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Strengths	
Inconsistency of materials used in the walls and create a visual disturbance Disrupt the integrity of the sky Line due to non-coordinated building blocks	Inconsistency of rhythm and colour of walls and pavement dark Sidewalks in some part of axis Inconsistency of flooring materials In some part of axis	The opportunity to improve exterior facades in Koohsangi street as a tourism axis Use horizontal lines to induce floating movement in exterior facades Indicator elements in scale of city There is a big piece of land (Alandasht garden) as an opportunity for locating different applications Ability to strengthen the business edge of the city Possibility to enhance the brightness of sidewalks for more security	appropriate view to Koohsangi View and right view of the trees that cause the strong edge Interaction of horizontal and vertical lines on the exterior façade Coordination built furniture	Aesthetic
Interfere with the movement of pedestrian and cars in places of assembly operations Interfere with the movement Of foot and cars in places with different activity	The incompatible applications with the role defined for the street The crowd, gathered in front of the Court The lack of public parking Creating a traffic jam in front of hospital	There are parcel with low density and high antiquity The presence of big parcel Possibility to Improve the quality of the exterior facade by restructuring and restoration of facades	The establishment of a Zistkhavar commercial complex and Cinema Africa as a tourist attraction adjacent to each other Placement of Zistkhavar parking  Placement of bike path in sidewalk of the street existence of wide sidewalk on side lines of the street The designed and properly Cross section in Koohsangi street interaction of horizontal and vertical lines on the exterior facades High social level The public atmosphere of Koohsangi park Koohsangi belonging to all classes of society Koohsangi position as an important cultural- tourism centre in the city	Functional
Motor park on sidewalks The inadequate width of the koohsangi street while becoming a tourism axis Lack of width slope in pavement that it cause inability to collect rainwater Inappropriate flooring in some areas and the risk for pedestrian movement	the lack of gutter and kennel in minor roads No active parts of the body in the street Unfavourable pavements in sidewalks			Physical
Overpopulation in front of the Court incompatible land use Happening some Social abnormalities that caused by incompatible land use like the court in koohsangi street	There are administrative land uses that reduce social prosperity of texture Aggregation of land uses that are part time and reduce the social role of the street	The presence of wide sidewalks Population increase through the establishment of appropriate facilities		Social-cultural

According to the survey of the axis status in different orders and also study internal and external case studies in tourism axis and according to Koohsangi oriented role as a center of tourism and cultural services at the urban level and also with respect to the principles of sustainable development, three alternatives for organizing the Koohsangi will be recommended.

**4. Reviewing the Alternatives**

**4.1. The Proposed Alternative A**

Alternative A is trying to change the allowed applications to be considered with respect to the role of street. Just shift in land uses.

In alternative A organizing land uses and their compatibility with each other is considered and have tried all the potential to

be used, as of the end of the axis and near the Koohsangi complex, according to the axis potential the land uses will be changed to commercial and commercial-residential land uses.

And also the last part of the street that leading to Koohsangi, because of the traffic jam, especially on holidays, considered one-way in order to control the traffic. In the middle of the axis Instead of some land uses like commercial and educational land uses that consider changing according to the master plan, we don't have any special change. And other changes can be considered, taking into account, is the reinforcement of cultural and commercial edge of the street. At the beginning of the axis due to the strong and consistent texture. Changes are just in the Alandasht garden and relocation of office and commercial use is considered.

#### 4.2. Reviewing the Proposed Alternative B

In alternative B the Overall changes are not considered in the street, but given the minimal destruction and create related applications appropriate to the role of the street and create lively street and increase social mobility is considered. At the end of the axis there are mixed use of commercial-residential land use and strengthen the commercial edge. In the middle of the axis reinforced edges and changes based on project applications and at the beginning of the axis there are not any special changes, except turning the Alandasht garden into green and recreation space

#### 4.3. A review of the Proposed Alternative C

In alternative C the application of detailed plan has considered. The surfaces are changed so at the end of axis only commercial edges is reinforced. There aren't any special changes in the middle of the axis except in commercial applications and landscape. At the beginning of the axis, Alandasht garden considered as a place with residential, commercial and recreational land use.

### 5. Alternative Assessment

At this stage we will assess the alternatives with AHP model. For this purpose, at first must set of criteria and sub-criteria. The criteria extracting of our 4 orders. These orders are functional, aesthetic, social and physical. That each of these criteria divided to sub-criteria. We have 4 criteria and 18 sub-criteria which include the following:

**Aesthetic:** Create important applications in places with appropriate view along the street, Improve the aesthetic quality, the combination of mass and space to appropriateness, create Continuity in the street, the combination of mass and space to appropriateness, Indexing important elements along the street, create significant points at the beginning and the end of the access.

**Social and cultural:** Enhance the social role of the street, existence of recreational and cultural uses appropriate to the role of the street, enhance economic prosperity, reinforced business edge

**Functional:** Compatibility between land uses, the application incompatibility with the role of the street, the distribution of mass in the body, creates mixed uses that caused lively street, considering the determined goals in the street.

**Physical:** Create permeability in roadside, anticipate retreat and create enough space for public land use.

In the final stage of AHP based on the factors in the creation of tourist axis by 25 experts, these experts evaluate the criteria and sub-criteria. According to evolution the priority of criteria are functional, social, aesthetic, and physical, also sub-criteria were identified according to their importance. Then with Specifying the weight of the sub-criteria, the last stage of AHP is over. For determining the best choice entered the TOPSIS method (Option that has farthest distance from the negative factors and has closest distance from positive factors is the

best choice). The TOPSIS method has 6 stages and finally, the best alternative is chosen among three alternatives by calculating CL for each option. The amount of CL for A1 is 0.687 that this number is the closest one among the other numbers to the number 1. As a result, our superior alternative is alternative 1 and alternatives 2 and 3 are in next places.

### 6. Discussion and Recommendations

Due to the above mentioned objectives, strategies to strengthen the role of sustainable tourism in the Koohsangi axis within the studied parameters include:

#### 6.1. Aesthetic

- Beautifying and organizing urban furniture and attractive visual elements that plays an important role in enhancing the quality of space.
- supplying appropriate lighting in Koohsangi's sidewalk
- Improving the aesthetic quality and appropriateness of the composition of space and harmony of views and coordinating the height of buildings.
- Providing solutions in architecture and urban structure on the one hand and creating a harmonious urban landscape on the other hand
- Planting rows of trees
- Creating a sequence in the street
- Providing an index of attractive elements at certain points along the way so as to encourage the movement all around the axis
- Ability in creating a visual interaction between the track and the body
- Creating a significant beginning and end point.

#### 6.2. Social and Cultural

- Broadening cultural and social activities for this axis
- Answering to service needs and welfare of residents in present and future
- Improving the social and cultural environment through the development of cultural activities such as tourism and cultural centers in the local and regional level

#### 6.3. Functional

- creating and strengthening public open spaces as places of formation of civil life
- Designing the axis with the goal of cultural tourism
- creating attractive land uses
- creating flexibility in the environment

#### 6.4. Physical

- creating permeability in roadsides
- Increasing the activity level at the edge of the public space, thus creating enhanced permeability
- Setting the standard to unite the façades
- Using bricks or cement flooring for the entire space in order to consolidate the space

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