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## Evaluation of Effective Factors in Revitalizing the Historical Context of the Historical Bazaars. Case Study: Historical Bazaar of Dezful<sup>1</sup>

## Ocena efektywnych czynników w rewitalizacji historycznego kontekstu historycznych bazarów. Studium przypadku: historyczny bazar w Dezfulu

**Keywords:** historic bazaars, revitalization, Dezful, heritage, Iran

**Słowa kluczowe:** historyczne bazy, rewitalizacja, Dezful, dziedzictwo, Iran

### Introduction

The Achaemenians<sup>2</sup> were the first to establish bazaars in Iranian cities, driven by extensive trade with the West and East [Soraei 2010]. During the Sassanid era,<sup>3</sup> enhanced commerce with China, India, and Eastern Rome contributed to more structured bazaars in Iranian cities [Behzadfar et al. 2009]. Bazaars became essential urban landmarks, central to economic and social life [Soltanzadeh 2001; Kermani, Luiten 2009]. Throughout history, particularly during the Mongol, Timurid,<sup>4</sup> and Safavid<sup>5</sup> periods,

they played crucial political, economic, and social roles [Mohammadianmansoor, Faramarzi 2013; Sattari Sarbangholi, Jodayee 2011]. Centrally located, they connected different parts of cities and supported socio-economic activities [Pourjafar et al. 2014; Hanachi, Yadollahi 2011].

Bazaars have historically served as vital centers of commerce and social interaction in Islamic culture, reflecting the community's values and traditions. These marketplaces not only facilitated trade but also acted as cultural hubs where art, music, and social practices flourished, thus reinforcing community ties and Is-

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lamic identity [Hutagalung et al. 2022]. Bazaars have historically served as pivotal centers of commerce, culture, and social interaction in both Islamic and Christian contexts, particularly during the Romanesque period. In Islamic culture, bazaars were integral to urban development, acting as economic hubs that facilitated trade and cultural exchange. They were often situated near mosques and public spaces, reflecting their importance in daily life and community identity [Bozdağ et al. 2022; Drançolli 2023; Akar 2024]. The architectural layout of bazaars, characterized by covered streets and specialized sections for different trades, contributed to their role as vibrant marketplaces that fostered social interactions and cultural practices [Albayati 2023; Krstikj, Koura 2013]. In contrast, Christian culture during the Romanesque period saw the emergence of marketplaces that, while also serving economic functions, were often influenced by ecclesiastical authority and community gatherings. These markets were typically located near cathedrals, emphasizing their role in the social fabric of towns [Farjami 2024; BADEL 2023]. While both Islamic and Christian bazaars served as commercial centers, the Islamic bazaars were more diverse in their architectural forms and social functions, often reflecting a blend of cultural influences and trade networks that spanned vast regions [Hoogervorst, Chia 2021; Erami, Keshavarzian 2015]. Despite these differences, both types of bazaars shared commonalities, such as fostering community ties and serving as venues for cultural exchange. However, the Islamic bazaars often maintained a more pronounced role in the political and social dynamics of their cities, whereas Christian marketplaces were more closely tied to local governance and religious practices [Trematerra, Mirra 2022; EILAEI 2023]. Thus, bazaars in both cultures highlight the intricate relationship between commerce, culture, and community identity.

Modernization in the late twentieth century led to industrial expansion and urban centralization in Iran, with new grid-like streets in cities such as Tehran, Tabriz, and Isfahan disrupting historical bazaars and fragmenting their functions [Hanachi, Yadollahi 2011]. This transformation has created challenges in preserving their spatial integrity and historical continuity [Afsar 1974]. Urban planning in Iran has historically prioritized bazaars and mosques, recognizing them as central to city identity [Kermani, Luiten 2009]. The Dezful bazaar, featuring a linear layout between the main square and the Grand Mosque, once formed a connected urban entity but is now separated by Imam Khomeini Street. It remains a vital pedestrian and commercial hub, supporting handicrafts and agricultural trade, reinforcing its role as Dezful's economic heart [Taban, Pourjafari 2009]. Given the risks of physical and functional decline, revitalizing Iran's historic bazaars, including Dezful, is essential. However, this issue has not been thoroughly addressed. This research aims to identify, evaluate, and rank the factors influencing bazaar revitalization, using Dezful as a case study. The study's primary contribution is to propose strate-

gies for strengthening key revitalization factors in Iranian historic bazaars.

## Materials and methods

This study employs a descriptive-analytical research approach to evaluate factors influencing the revitalization of the historical bazaar. It examines relationships between key variables and proposes applicable solutions. The research variables were assessed through a survey and semi-structured interviews using a researcher-developed questionnaire, designed on a four-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was validated through a pilot study, refined based on expert feedback, and tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The statistical population included pedestrians, storekeepers, residents of Dezful's historic district, and urban planning experts, ensuring a diverse stakeholder representation. A stratified random sampling technique was used, with simple random sampling within each stratum. The sample size was 250 respondents, determined using Cochran's formula (95% confidence level, 5% margin of error). A total of 245 completed questionnaires were returned (98% response rate). To ensure reliability, a pre-test was conducted among 10% of the target population, followed by modifications. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient confirmed reliability, while factor analysis validated construct relevance. Indicators were categorized into five groups: physical, economic, religious, cultural, and social factors. Their weights were determined using the entropy weighting method, which assigns weights based on data dispersion while preserving all indicators. Expert opinions were incorporated using a Delphi method, refining weights iteratively based on consensus. A *t*-test assessed mean differences across factors, preceded by normality tests (Shapiro-Wilk test) to confirm parametric assumptions. If normality was violated, a Mann-Whitney *U* test was applied. Pearson's correlation coefficient analyzed variable interdependencies, while the TOPSIS (Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution) technique ranked indicators based on entropy-derived weights and expert judgments. Findings were discussed with policymakers, urban planners, and community stakeholders to ensure practical feasibility. Urban planning policies, economic shifts, and government initiatives, were also considered. By integrating statistical rigor, expert validation, and stakeholder engagement, this study provides a comprehensive methodological framework for revitalizing Dezful's historic bazaar.

## Research process

- In the research process, the research purpose is first determined. Then, three parallel steps are followed:
- research background,
- theoretical framework and literature review, and
- questions and hypotheses.

Next, according to the research scope, theoretical framework, and literature review, the possible effective

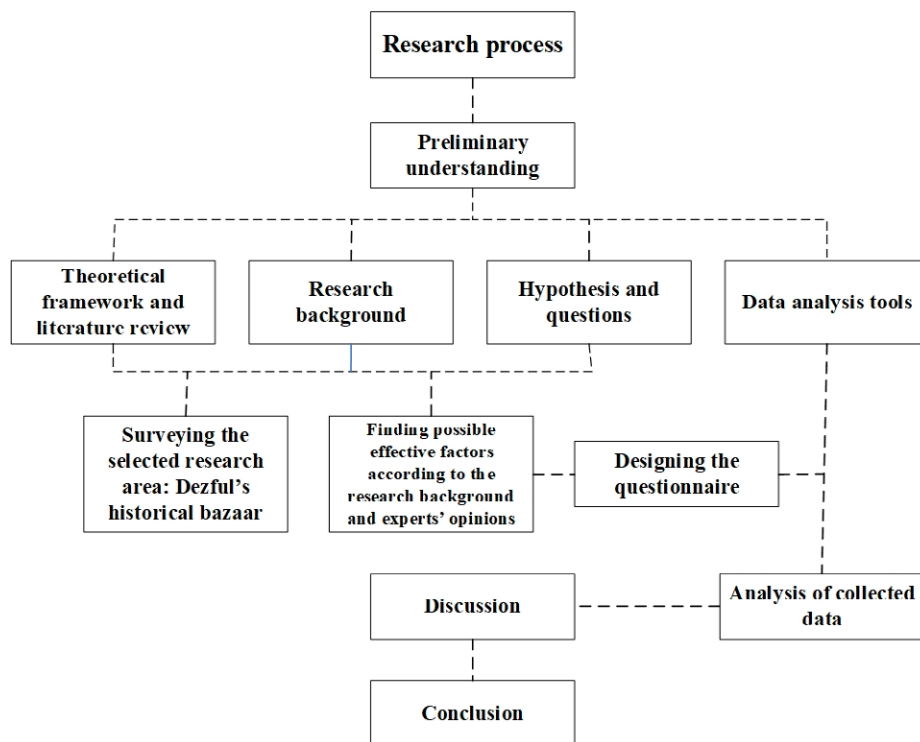


Fig. 1. Research process; all figures by the authors

Ryc. 1. Proces badawczy; wszystkie ryciny przygotowane przez autorów

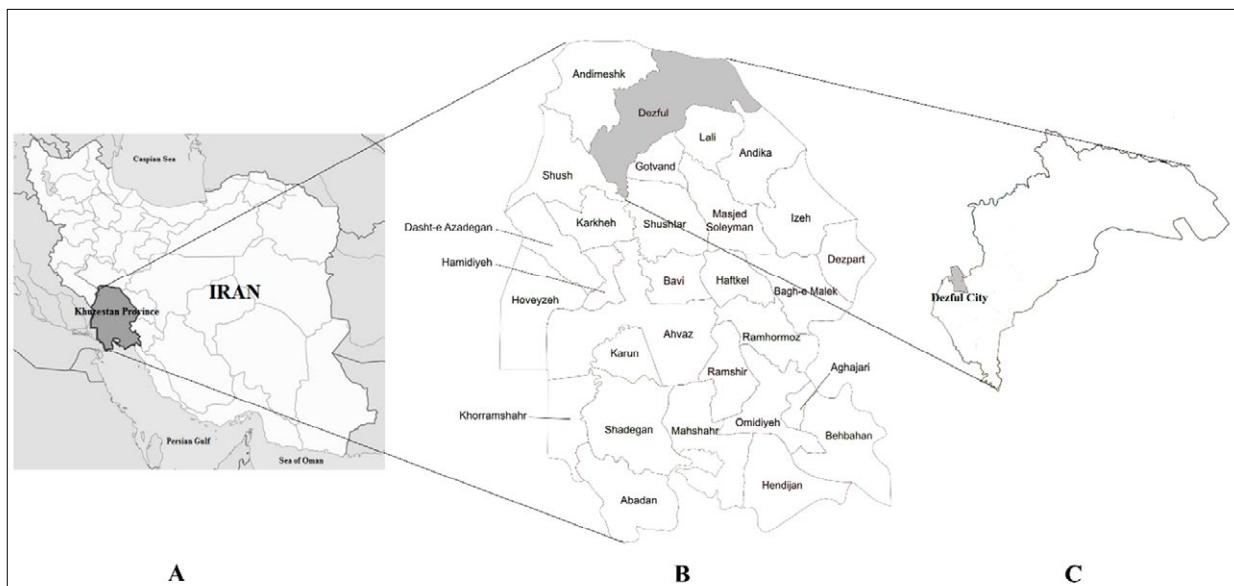


Fig. 2. A – Khuzestan Province in the southwest of Iran; B – Dezful County in the northeast of Khuzestan Province; and C – Dezful in the southwest of Dezful County

Ryc. 2. A – prowincja Chuzestan w południowo-zachodnim Iranie, B – powiat Dezful w północno-wschodniej części prowincji Chuzestan, C – Dezful w południowo-zachodniej części powiatu Dezful

factors are extracted from different research in this area. In addition, data analysis tools are specified to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the factors.

### Study area

Dezful was chosen for this research due to its twenty-seven historical neighborhoods, each with distinct accents, cultures, and lifestyles from various ethnic

groups. The focus is on the historical bazaar in the Bazaar neighborhood, a key business area, celebrated for its unique culture and architecture.

The historical bazaar of Dezful, located near one of the busiest gates, developed over time alongside the Qala neighborhood. Originally, forge shops were established next to the old city's main gates, leading to the construction of various architectural elements like shops and

caravanserais, creating an interconnected complex [Rahaei et al. 2013]. The bazaar's core consists of parallel retail shops, surrounded by manufacturing workshops for nickel silver etching, felting, and other crafts, which connected the bazaar to residential areas over time [Masoudi Nezhad 2016]. Situated on the highest slope of the city, the bazaar's layout reflects the topography, with neighborhood centers leading into it [Taban 2017].

### Statistical population

Data were analyzed using descriptive and analytical statistics to ensure representation across key stakeholder groups.

Respondents: 245 (53% male, 47% female).

Age: 18–24 (17.5%), 25–44 (47%), 45–65 (35.5%).

Education: Diploma (39%), Associate (20%), Bachelor's (23%), Master's+ (18%).

Occupation: Storekeepers (35%), Residents (33%), Visitors (22%), Experts (10%).

Work Experience: 0–5 years (29%), 6–10 (27%), 11–20 (24.5%), 20+ (19.5%).

Justification: Stratified random sampling ensured balanced representation across demographics, preventing bias.

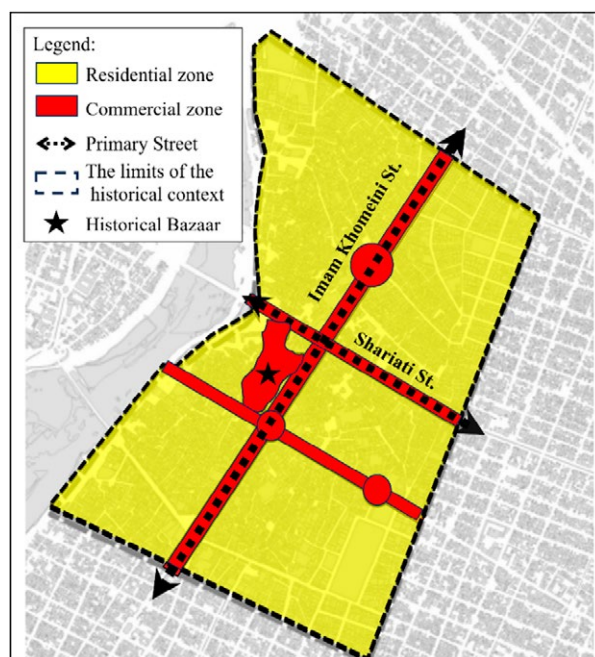


Fig. 3. The location of the bazaar in Dezful

Ryc. 3. Lokalizacja bazaru w Dezful

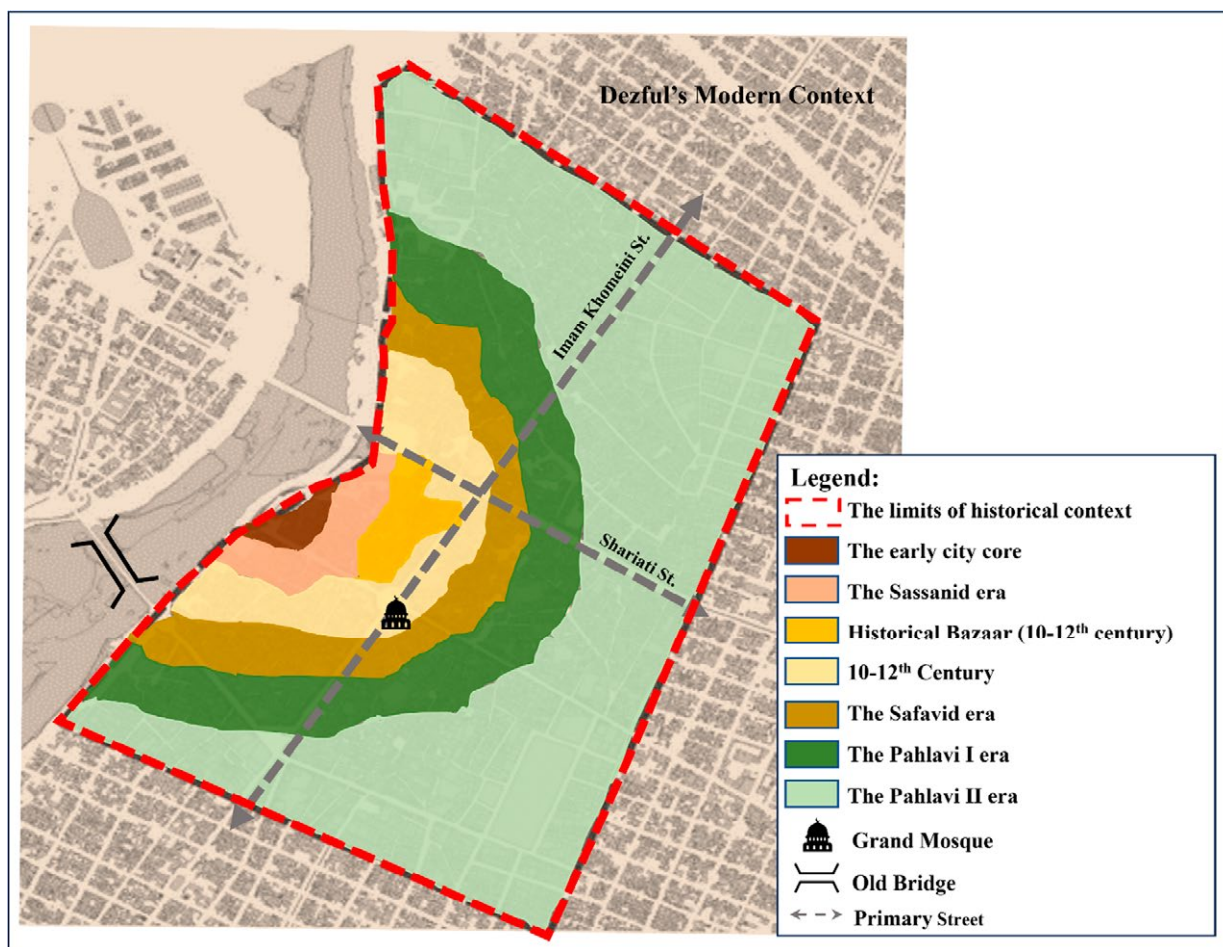


Fig. 4. The zoning and the formation process of the historical context of Dezful over time

Ryc. 4. Podział na strefy i proces kształtowania się historycznego kontekstu Dezful



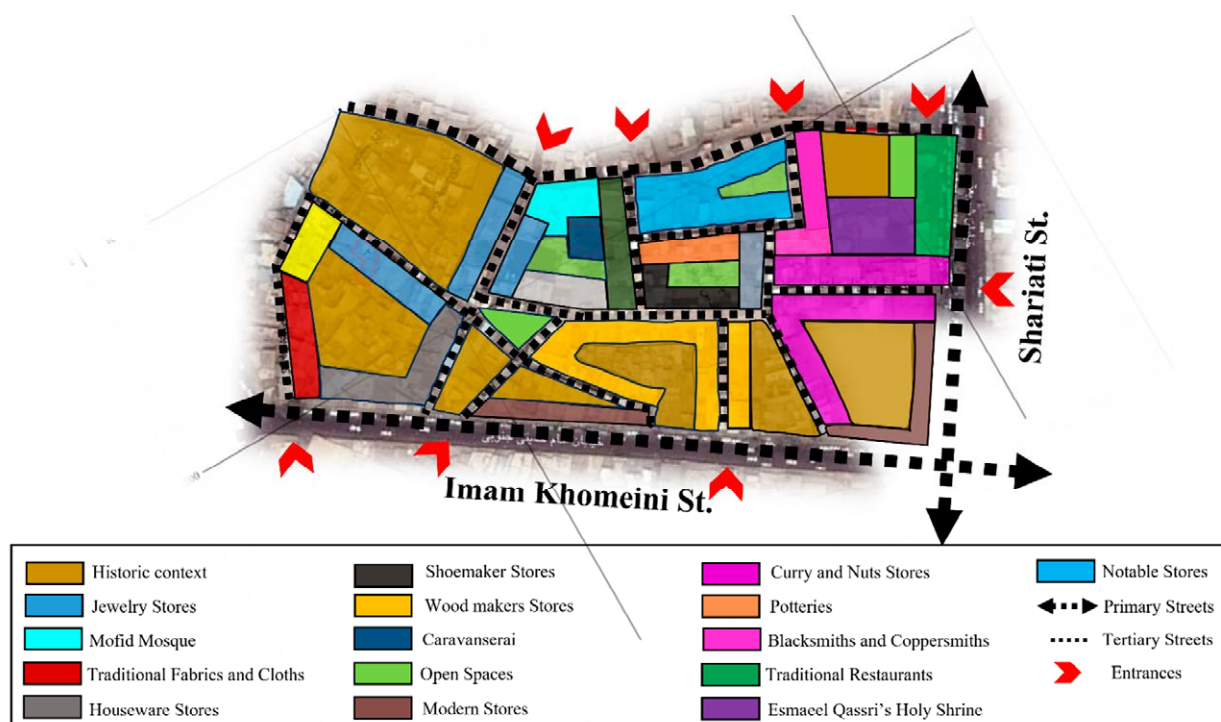


Fig. 5. Various uses in the Bazaar of Dezful

Ryc. 5. Różne przeznaczenie gruntów na bazarze w Dezful

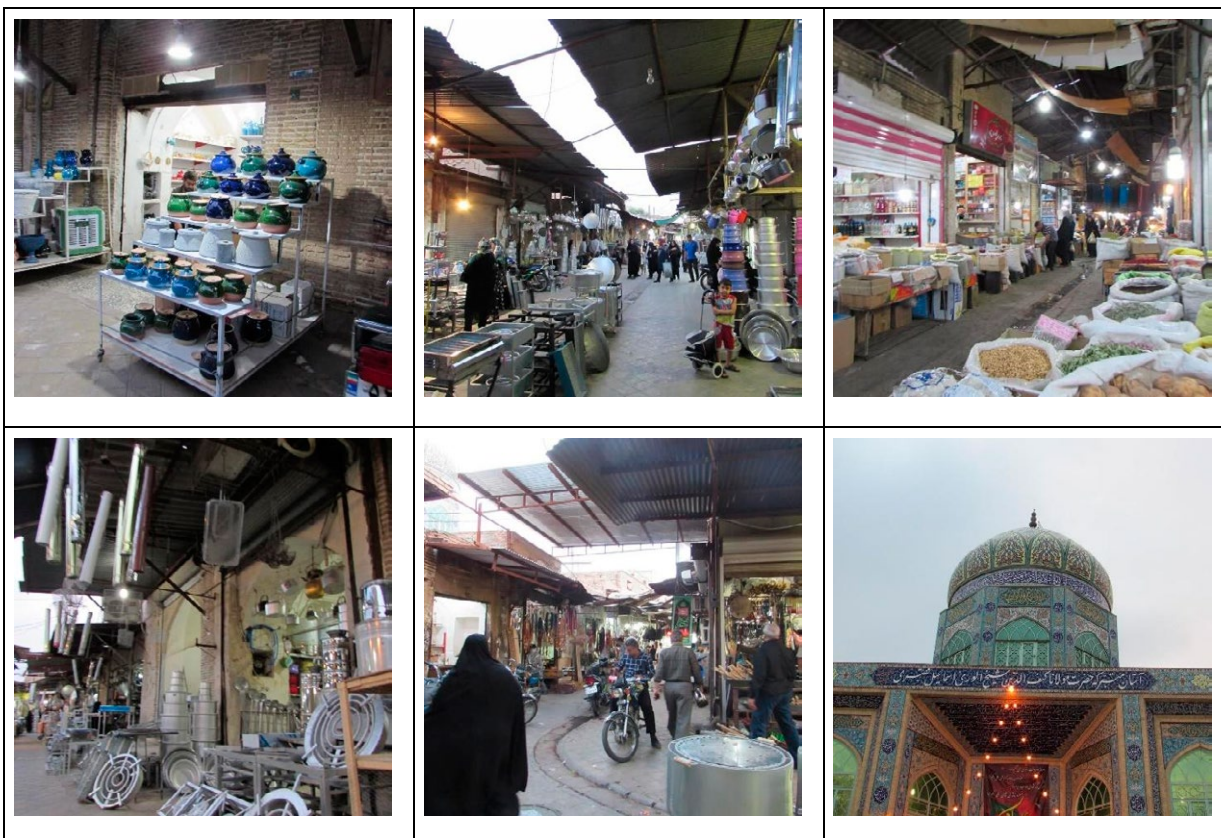


Fig. 6. Photos of the bazaar of Dezful

Ryc. 6. Zdjęcia bazaru w Dezful

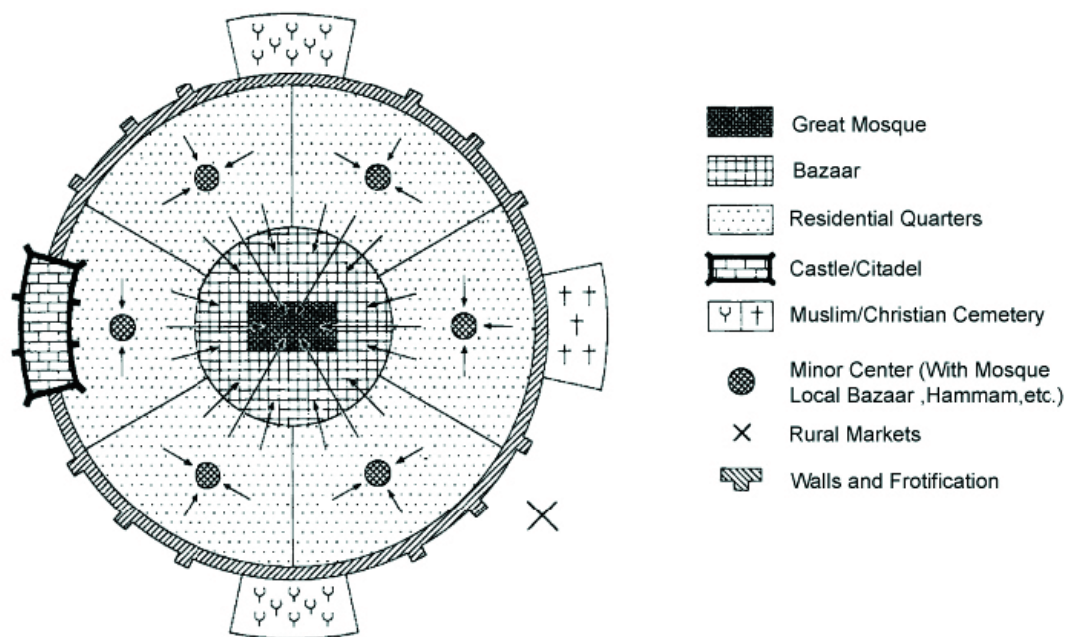


Fig. 7. The typical model of Islamic city associated with Iranian cities; source: [Shafaqi 2008]

Ryc. 7. Typowy model islamskiego miasta związany z miastami irańskimi; [Shafaqi 2008]

## The problems of historical bazaars

### Bazaar terminology

The term “bazaar” originates from Persian and holds cultural significance in Iran, dating back to 3000 BC [Pourjafar et al. 2013]. Haeri [2004] states that “bazaar” pertains to commerce, influencing Arabic and Turkish. Shafaqi [1997] highlights bazaars as social and commercial venues comprising shops and stores. Some researchers consider them central to Islamic cities, forming part of a cohesive urban context [Mehdipour, Rashidi Nia 2013].

These environments grow in value over time, reflecting cultural identities [Hossaini 1992], as historical urban contexts allow interaction with past visions and social behavior. However, the declining quality of Iran’s historical urban areas has led to local migration and diminished neighborhood functions [Kiani 2010]. Deteriorating fabric, poor infrastructure, and an influx of non-locals reduce quality of life [Rahaei et al. 2013]. Meshkini et al. [2011] emphasize adapting historical contexts to modern needs, while Majedi and Lahsaei Zadeh [2006] argue that urban development fragments historical centers. Zangiabadi and Vafaei [2009] note that physical, economic, social, and cultural standards are critical for preserving old urban contexts. International efforts to safeguard historical areas began with the 1960 Gubbio Congress, followed by several initiatives such as the 1964 Venice International Congress, which underscored the importance of historical buildings in shaping urban landscapes. In Iran, significant legal reforms started in 1931, but many restoration efforts failed due to flawed approaches, often prioritizing new

construction incompatible with historical environments [Rahnama, Abbaszadeh 2008]. Hekmat Nia and Mousavi [2007] stress that revitalization involves more than building renovations, requiring attention to practical, economic, social, and cultural factors. Preserving historical bazaars presents multifaceted challenges linked to policy frameworks, community engagement, and urban dynamics. Contemporary governance structures frequently lack effective policy tools for heritage preservation, evidenced by limited current legal frameworks compared to historical laws [León et al. 2020]. Coordination among municipalities, cultural heritage organizations, and urban planners often remains inadequate, causing conflicts and inefficiencies [Fabbri et al. 202]. Community engagement is crucial for the sustainability of bazaars. Local residents and business owners must be actively involved to respect their needs and cultural practices [Arabeyyat 2023]. Public-private partnerships offer potential financing and support for maintenance [Zhong, Chen 2017], while comparative studies demonstrate that successful projects integrate local participation and innovative funding [Gomaa, 2023]. Contemporary challenges, including digital commerce and climate change, also affect bazaars. Online shopping undermines traditional commerce, and climate change accelerates site degradation [Huerto-Cardenas et al. 2021]. Furthermore, intangible cultural heritage—traditional crafts and social practices—must be woven into preservation to maintain cultural significance [Wang 2024]. Global examples emphasize holistic heritage management approaches that incorporate both tangible and intangible elements [Ginzarly et al. 2018].

## Results and discussion

In urban planning, revitalization means to improve the social and economic activities of an old urban fabric that has lost its original function. It aims to establish a balance between conservation and development [Motamedi 2002]. Revitalization means integrating the lost parts of a work or spatial organization [Bina 2008].

The revitalization of a building, a complex, or an urban space, results in the restoration of that building, that complex, or that urban space. Since the main purpose of this research is to identify the factors effective in revitalizing the historical bazaar of Dezful, before examining and explaining effective factors, different approaches to revitalizing the historical context of the cities and relevant theories are listed in the table below.

The urban revitalization theory focuses on identifying influential factors and assessing the effectiveness of actions taken to revitalize key areas of the city. This serves as the primary criterion for research. Executive institutions, like the municipality and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, must take significant measures to address these factors in Dezful's historical context. The table below outlines the problems in these historical areas across various dimensions.

Through surveys and qualitative assessments of historical contexts, the experts and researchers have proposed some ideas and solutions that could be effective in revitalizing the historical context regarding the role of the historic bazaars. The following table presents all the possible factors and sub-factors.

Theory	Approaches	Sources
Urban poverty and deprivation	It emphasizes economic, physical, and social planning solutions in cities.	Balchin et al. [1988]
Preserving vitality and spirit of life in urban living	It emphasizes the spirit of life and activity in urban living.	Azari [2009]
Urban revitalization	It emphasizes the revitalization or reconstruction of urban areas.	Tayebi [2010]
The social role of lands	It emphasizes private ownership and the use of urban lands.	Koosheshgaran [2012]
Spatial planning	It emphasizes the perception of beauty, spatial identity, and sense of belonging in urban areas.	Baghaei et al. [2008]

Table 1. Different approaches to the revitalization of the historical context of the cities and relevant theories; all tables by the authors

Tab. 1. Różne podejścia do rewitalizacji kontekstu historycznego miast i odpowiadające im teorie; wszystkie tabele przygotowane przez autorów

Problems in the historical contexts according to experts' and researchers' opinions	
Physical problems	Solutions
Physical destruction is one of the most significant problems in these urban areas. These centers are having serious problems regarding passages, walls, interior spaces of houses, and service spaces.	1. To construct new buildings in harmony with the existing context [Conzen 1966] 2. To emphasize organic order in historical contexts [Doratli et al. 2004] 3. To apply past artistic methods for designing the space of historical context [Moradi Dastmalchian 2005] 4. To pay attention to materials, techniques, and function in the context [Ashworth 1991]
Functional problems	Solutions
Physical problems in the context have affected the functions of buildings, stores, patterns, squares, etc.	1. To establish a balance between the services and the needs [Raeesi 2016] 2. To pay attention to the structure and the access to the urban space [Shahtemori, Mzaheerian 2013]
Economic problems	Solutions
Considering physical problems in historical contexts, proper revitalization, restoration, and regeneration measures have not been taken in these urban centers, making them unattractive to people and directly influencing the economic function of the context.	1. To emphasize historical urban centers as a part of the economic cycle of the city [Tiesdell, Heath 1996] 2. Tourists and the tourism industry will bring currency and improve the physical and functional qualities in the context. Therefore, tourists' needs should be respected [Wilsmore 1994].
Social problems	Solutions
The poor performance of these valuable urban cores has attracted low-income and non-local people. This issue has greatly affected the cultural and social aspects of the context in such a way that no one can see an integrated social identity in these areas.	The social dimension is the most important one in urban restoration [Orbasli 2000]. Promoting social situations is important in retaining the inhabitants of the context [Tiesdell, Heath 1996]. To emphasize the consideration of residents' opinions in the research and pre-design steps of revitalization and regeneration of historical contexts [Roberts, Skyes 2000]

Table 2. The problems in historical contexts in various dimensions; by the authors

Tab. 2. Problemy w kontekstach historycznych w różnych wymiarach

Sub-factor No.	Factor	Sub-factor	Source No.*
1	Religious	Religious buildings near the bazaar	1, 5, 7, 10
2		Selling religious goods in the bazaar	5, 7, 9
3		Holding religious ceremonies in the bazaar in various months	2, 6, 10
4		Spatial connection between the religious space and the bazaar	1, 5, 9
5		The serving of the bazaar by religious space	1, 7, 11
1	Cultural	Seasonal festivals in the neighborhoods	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10
2		Tourism tours for visiting the neighborhoods	3, 4, 8, 9
3		Holding business introduction programs for people in the bazaar by shopkeepers	2, 7, 8
4		Holding job training workshops by the cultural heritage organization	1, 4, 8, 11
1	Social	Attendance of both males and females in the bazaar	2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11
2		Attendance of various age groups in the bazaar	4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11
3		Attendance of various ethnicities in the bazaar	1, 4, 7, 10
4		The focus of different ethnic groups on the sale of unique goods	2, 6, 11
1	Physical	Iranian architectural ornaments in the bazaar	1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10
2		Spatial hierarchy in the bazaar	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11
3		Different functions in the bazaar (stores)	1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11
4		Spatial quality of the stores	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
5		The quality of walls in the bazaar	3, 5, 9, 11
6		Psychological security in the bazaar	6, 8, 9, 11
7		The quality of the passages in the bazaar	1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10
1	Economic	The price of the goods in the bazaar	3, 4, 6, 7, 9
2		The businesses of international brands in the bazaar	4, 5, 8, 11
3		The old family businesses in the bazaar	1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10
4		The economic functions in the bazaar	1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
5		The old style of the business in the bazaar	2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 11

\* Sources: 1. [Akbari 2001], 2. [Yazdan Panah Lari 2008], 3. [Pakzad 2006], 4. [Bahreyni 2006], 5. [PourAhmad, Mousavi 2011], 6. [Saeidnia 2009], 7. [Najafi 2011], 8. [Barati, Zarringhalam 2013], 9. [Mohammadian, Faramarzi 2013], 10. [Balilan Asl et al. 2011], and 11. [Mahdinezhad Moghadam, Khazaei 2007]

Table 3. The studied effective factors and sub-factors in revitalizing the historical contexts of cities (with a focus on historic bazaars)

Tab. 3. Badane czynniki i podczynniki efektywne w rewitalizacji kontekstów historycznych miast (ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem bazarów historycznych)

The present study investigated 5 factors and their sub-factors (N = 25). Due to their large number, they were encoded as follows to be entered into the software. For example, Table 5 shows how they were encoded.

Codes	Factor	Sub-Factor or Measure
A1	Religious	Religious buildings near the bazaar
A2	Religious	Holding religious ceremonies in the bazaar in various months
A3	Cultural	Seasonal festivals in the neighborhoods
A4	Cultural	Holding business introduction programs for people in the bazaar by shopkeepers
A5	Social	Attendance of both males and females in the bazaar
A6	Physical	The quality of the passages in the bazaar
A7	Physical	Different functions in the bazaar (stores)
A8	Economic	The old family businesses in the bazaar
A9	Economic	The old style of the business in the bazaar

Table 4. How sub-factors are encoded

Tab. 4. Kodowanie podczynników



Factor	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Std. error of the mean
Religious	245	3.1963	0.48676	0.03110
Cultural	245	3.4172	0.47242	0.03018
Physical	245	3.8122	0.43971	0.02809
Economic	245	3.6934	0.44751	0.02859
Social	245	3.5972	0.45176	0.02886

Table 5. The mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation of the factors studied

Tab. 5. Średnia, odchylenie standardowe i współczynnik zmienności badanych czynników

Factor	The results of the t-test to compare the means					
	t-value	Df	Sig.	Mean difference	95% confidence interval	
					Lower limit	Upper limit
Religious	12.813	244	0.000	0.19633	3.135	3.257
Cultural	12.923	244	0.000	0.41722	3.358	3.476
Physical	16.372	244	0.000	0.81222	3.757	3.867
Economic	14.951	244	0.000	0.69344	3.687	3.750
Social	13.516	244	0.000	0.59722	3.541	3.654

Table 6. The results of the t-test to compare the means

Tab. 6. Wyniki testu t porównującego średnie

To examine the historic bazaar of Dezful in terms of the research factors, three descriptive indicators of mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation were used, as listed in Table 5.

In line with the descriptive-analytical methodology, 245 valid responses revealed all factors' means exceeded three. Standard deviation, coefficient of variation, and a *t*-test confirmed religious, cultural, physical,

economic, and social effectiveness. Stratified sampling, expert validation, and entropy weighting underpin the rigorous approach for revitalizing Dezful's historic bazaar, ensuring methodological reliability.

The *t*-test results validate the statistical significance of all factors ( $p < 0.05$ ), confirming their effectiveness in revitalizing Dezful's historic bazaar. Pearson's correlation coefficient selected the ideal indicators, while

Indicator	Priority	Cli	(di+) + (di-)	Normalized Weight (%)	Normalized Cumulative Weight (%)	Entropy Weight	Expert Judgment Score	Survey Mean Score
A1	7	0.468	0.015	12.5	45.0	0.18	4.1	3.8
A2	8	0.446	0.015	11.8	56.8	0.16	3.9	3.7
A3	5	0.487	0.016	14.0	32.5	0.21	4.3	3.85
A4	9	0.437	0.017	10.5	67.3	0.14	3.7	3.6
A5	4	0.534	0.017	15.5	80.2	0.23	4.6	3.95
A6	1	0.728	0.016	20.8	20.8	0.3	4.9	4.2
A7	2	0.681	0.016	18.5	39.3	0.27	4.7	4.1
A8	3	0.653	0.015	17.2	56.5	0.25	4.5	4.0
A9	6	0.472	0.016	13.0	69.5	0.19	4.2	3.85

Table 7. How sub-factors are ranked

Tab. 7. Klasyfikacja podczynnów

Religious Sub-Factors	Priority	Normalized Weight (%)	Normalized Cumulative Weight (%)	Entropy Weight	Relative Closeness to Ideal Solution (Ci)	Expert Judgment Score	Survey Mean Score
Religious buildings near the bazaar	1	34.05	34.05	0.3	0.752	4.8	3.95
Selling religious goods in the bazaar	2	22.43	56.48	0.25	0.645	4.2	3.8
Holding religious ceremonies in the bazaar	3	21.92	78.4	0.22	0.621	4.0	3.7
Spatial connection between religious space and the bazaar	4	12.86	91.26	0.15	0.502	3.5	3.5
The serving of the bazaar by religious space	5	8.74	100.0	0.08	0.398	3.0	3.2

Table 8. The rankings of religious sub-factors using the TOPSIS technique

Tab. 8. Rankingi podczynnów religijnych przy użyciu techniki TOPSIS

entropy ensured unbiased weighting. The methodological rigor, including normality tests and expert validation, strengthens the reliability of the findings for urban planning applications.

The TOPSIS method ranked sub-factors using entropy-derived weights, expert evaluations, and survey data, ensuring an objective prioritization process. A6, A7, and A8 ranked highest (Priority = 1, 2, 3), exhibiting the strongest influence with high  $C_i$  values (0.728, 0.681, 0.653) and Entropy Weights (0.30, 0.27, 0.25). Lower-ranked indicators (A4, A2, A1) showed reduced impact, as reflected in lower  $C_i$  values and cumulative weights. The expert judgment scores and survey mean scores reinforce the ranking validity, ensuring alignment with stakeholder perceptions and policy needs. These rankings support urban planners in strategically prioritizing revitalization efforts while maintaining a data-driven and stakeholder-inclusive approach.

The TOPSIS ranking identifies “religious buildings near the bazaar” as the most influential sub-factor (Priority = 1,  $C_i$  = 0.752, Entropy Weight = 0.30), reflecting its high cultural significance and proximity. Conversely, “serving by religious space ranks” lowest (Priority = 5,  $C_i$  = 0.398, Entropy Weight = 0.08), indicating weaker functional integration. The entropy-weighted methodology ensures unbiased prioritization, with “selling religious goods in the bazaar” (Priority = 2,  $C_i$  = 0.645) and “holding religious ceremonies” (Priority = 3,  $C_i$  = 0.621) also playing significant roles. These rankings, validated by expert judgment scores and survey mean scores, provide strategic insights for urban planners in preserving heritage value while optimizing revitalization efforts in Dezful’s historic bazaar.

The TOPSIS ranking identifies seasonal festivals in the bazaar as the most influential cultural sub-

Cultural Sub-Factors	Priority	Normalized Weight (%)	Normalized Cumulative Weight (%)	Entropy Weight	Relative Closeness to Ideal Solution ( $C_i$ )	Expert Judgment Score	Survey Mean Score
Seasonal festivals in the bazaar	1	34.71	34.71	0.32	0.765	4.7	3.85
Tourism tours for visiting the bazaar	2	25.56	60.27	0.26	0.654	4.4	3.75
Holding business introduction programs for people in the bazaar by shopkeepers	3	21.87	82.14	0.22	0.598	3.9	3.65
Holding job training workshops by the cultural heritage organization	4	17.86	100.0	0.2	0.482	3.6	3.4

Table 9. The rankings of cultural sub-factors using the TOPSIS technique

Tab. 9. Rankingi podczynników kulturowych przy użyciu techniki TOPSIS

Physical Sub-Factors	Priority	Normalized Weight (%)	Normalized Cumulative Weight (%)	Entropy Weight	Relative Closeness to Ideal Solution ( $C_i$ )	Expert Judgment Score	Survey Mean Score
The quality of the passages in the bazaar	1	22.41	22.41	0.28	0.77	4.9	4.15
Iranian architectural ornaments in the bazaar	2	19.54	41.95	0.25	0.68	4.6	4.0
Spatial hierarchy in the bazaar	3	17.23	59.18	0.23	0.62	4.3	3.85
Different functions in the bazaar (stores)	4	15.41	75.59	0.21	0.59	4.1	3.7
Spatial quality of the stores	5	13.87	88.46	0.19	0.53	3.8	3.55
The walls of the passages in the bazaar	6	7.25	95.71	0.12	0.42	3.4	3.4
Psychological security in the bazaar	7	4.29	100.0	0.09	0.35	3.0	3.25

Table 10. The rankings of physical sub-factors using the TOPSIS technique

Tab. 10. Rankingi podczynników fizycznych przy użyciu techniki TOPSIS

factor (Priority = 1,  $C_i = 0.765$ , Entropy Weight = 0.32), emphasizing its role in attracting visitors and enhancing cultural vibrancy. Conversely, holding job training workshops by the cultural heritage organization ranks lowest (Priority = 4,  $C_i = 0.482$ , Entropy Weight = 0.20), indicating its comparatively lower impact. The entropy-weighted methodology ensures objective prioritization, with tourism tours for visiting the bazaar (Priority = 2,  $C_i = 0.654$ ) and holding business introduction programs by shopkeepers (Priority = 3,  $C_i = 0.598$ ) also playing vital roles. These rankings, validated by expert judgment scores and survey mean scores, offer strategic guidance for urban planners in leveraging cultural factors to enhance heritage preservation and revitalization efforts in Dezful's historic bazaar.

The TOPSIS ranking identifies the quality of the passages in the bazaar as the most influential physical sub-factor (Priority = 1,  $C_i = 0.770$ , Entropy Weight = 0.28), highlighting its crucial role in accessibility and user experience. Conversely, psychological security

in the bazaar ranks lowest (Priority = 7,  $C_i = 0.350$ , Entropy Weight = 0.09), indicating its relatively lower direct impact. The entropy-weighted methodology ensures objective prioritization, with Iranian architectural ornaments in the bazaar (Priority = 2,  $C_i = 0.680$ ) and spatial hierarchy in the bazaar (Priority = 3,  $C_i = 0.620$ ) also playing significant roles. These rankings, validated by expert judgment scores and survey mean scores, provide strategic insights for urban planners in enhancing physical attributes to support heritage preservation and revitalization in Dezful's historic bazaar.

The TOPSIS ranking identifies old family businesses in the bazaar as the most influential economic sub-factor (Priority = 1,  $C_i = 0.785$ , Entropy Weight = 0.34), highlighting their role in preserving traditional commerce and attracting loyal customers. Conversely, the price of goods in the bazaar ranks lowest (Priority = 5,  $C_i = 0.375$ , Entropy Weight = 0.10), indicating its relatively lower impact on economic sustainability. The entropy-weighted methodology ensures objective pri-

Economic Sub-Factors	Priority	Normalized Weight (%)	Normalized Cumulative Weight (%)	Entropy Weight	Relative Closeness to Ideal Solution ( $C_i$ )	Expert Judgment Score	Survey Mean Score
The old family businesses in the bazaar	1	35.92	35.92	0.34	0.785	4.85	4.2
The businesses of international brands in the bazaar	2	23.78	59.7	0.26	0.67	4.5	4.0
The old style of the business in the bazaar	3	18.69	78.39	0.22	0.61	4.2	3.8
The economic functions in the bazaar	4	12.95	91.34	0.15	0.49	3.75	3.6
The price of the goods in the bazaar	5	8.66	100.0	0.1	0.375	3.3	3.4

Table 11. The rankings of economic sub-factors using the TOPSIS technique

Tab. 11. Rankingi podczynn  k  w ekonomicznych przy u  yciu techniki TOPSIS

Social Sub-Factors	Priority	Normalized Weight (%)	Normalized Cumulative Weight (%)	Entropy Weight	Relative Closeness to Ideal Solution ( $C_i$ )	Expert Judgment Score	Survey Mean Score
Attendance of both males and females in the bazaar	1	41.25	41.25	0.36	0.79	4.9	4.25
Attendance of various age groups in the bazaar	2	27.85	69.1	0.28	0.68	4.4	4.0
Attendance of various ethnicities in the bazaar	3	20.45	89.55	0.22	0.61	4.1	3.75
The focus of different ethnic groups on the sale of unique goods	4	10.45	100.0	0.14	0.42	3.6	3.5

Table 12. The rankings of social sub-factors using the TOPSIS technique

Tab. 12. Rankingi podczynn  k  w spo  ecznych przy u  yciu techniki TOPSIS

orization, with businesses of international brands in the bazaar (Priority = 2,  $C_i = 0.670$ ) and the old style of business in the bazaar (Priority = 3,  $C_i = 0.610$ ) also playing crucial roles. These rankings, validated by expert judgment scores and survey mean scores, offer strategic insights for urban planners and policymakers to enhance economic resilience and revitalization efforts in Dezful's historic bazaar.

The TOPSIS ranking identifies attendance of both males and females in the bazaar as the most influential social sub-factor (Priority = 1,  $C_i = 0.790$ , Entropy Weight = 0.36), highlighting its role in fostering inclusivity and social engagement. Conversely, the focus of different ethnic groups on the sale of unique goods ranks lowest (Priority = 4,  $C_i = 0.420$ , Entropy Weight = 0.14), indicating its comparatively lower impact. The entropy-weighted methodology ensures objective prioritization, with attendance of various age groups in the bazaar (Priority = 2,  $C_i = 0.680$ ) and attendance of various ethnicities in the bazaar (Priority = 3,  $C_i = 0.610$ ) also playing significant roles. These rankings, validated by expert judgment scores and survey mean scores, provide strategic insights for urban planners to enhance social dynamics and cultural inclusivity, contributing to the revitalization of Dezful's historic bazaar.

## Conclusions

This study has systematically identified, evaluated, and ranked the key factors influencing the revitalization of historic bazaars in Iran, using the historic bazaar of Dezful as a case study. The analysis confirms that physical, economic, social, cultural, and religious factors significantly shape the revitalization process. Among them, physical factors (Priority = 1, Mean = 3.8122) exert the strongest influence, followed by economic (Priority = 2, Mean = 3.6934), social (Priority = 3, Mean = 3.5972), cultural (Priority = 4, Mean = 3.4172), and religious (Priority = 5, Mean = 3.1963) factors.

A TOPSIS-based multi-criteria decision-making model, incorporating entropy weighting, expert judgment scores, survey mean scores, normalized weight percentages, and cumulative influence rankings, was applied to sub-factors within each category to determine the most and least effective elements in the revitalization process.

### 1. Physical factors

- The quality of the passages in the bazaar (Priority = 1,  $C_i = 0.770$ , Entropy Weight = 0.28, Normalized Weight = 22.41%, Cumulative Weight = 22.41%) emerged as the most crucial sub-factor, enhancing both accessibility and usability.
- Iranian architectural ornaments in the bazaar (Priority = 2,  $C_i = 0.680$ , Entropy Weight = 0.25, Normalized Weight = 19.54%) was also highly ranked, emphasizing heritage preservation.
- The walls of the passages (Priority = 6,  $C_i = 0.420$ , Entropy Weight = 0.12, Normalized Weight =

7.25%) and psychological security (Priority = 7,  $C_i = 0.350$ , Entropy Weight = 0.09, Normalized Weight = 4.29%) showed lower influence, indicating areas for improvement.

### 2. Economic factors

- The presence of old family businesses in the bazaar (Priority = 1,  $C_i = 0.785$ , Entropy Weight = 0.34, Normalized Weight = 35.92%) significantly contributes to economic stability.
- Businesses of international brands (Priority = 2,  $C_i = 0.670$ , Entropy Weight = 0.26, Normalized Weight = 23.78%) enhance market diversity and attract external consumers.
- The price of goods (Priority = 5,  $C_i = 0.375$ , Entropy Weight = 0.10, Normalized Weight = 8.66%) ranked lowest, suggesting its influence on revitalization is relatively minor.

### 3. Social factors

- The attendance of both males and females in the bazaar (Priority = 1,  $C_i = 0.790$ , Entropy Weight = 0.36, Normalized Weight = 41.25%) was found to be the strongest social factor, emphasizing gender inclusivity.
- Attendance of various age groups in the bazaar (Priority = 2,  $C_i = 0.680$ , Entropy Weight = 0.28, Normalized Weight = 27.85%) also played a major role.
- The focus of different ethnic groups on unique goods (Priority = 4,  $C_i = 0.420$ , Entropy Weight = 0.14, Normalized Weight = 10.45%) ranked the lowest, indicating a need for targeted initiatives to encourage cultural integration.

### 4. Religious factors

- The presence of religious buildings near the bazaar (Priority = 1,  $C_i = 0.752$ , Entropy Weight = 0.30, Normalized Weight = 34.05%) emerged as the leading religious factor.
- Selling religious goods in the bazaar (Priority = 2,  $C_i = 0.645$ , Entropy Weight = 0.25, Normalized Weight = 22.43%) was also significant.
- The serving of the bazaar by religious space (Priority = 5,  $C_i = 0.398$ , Entropy Weight = 0.08, Normalized Weight = 8.74%) ranked the lowest, suggesting limited functional integration.

### 5. Cultural factors

- Seasonal festivals in the bazaar (Priority = 1,  $C_i = 0.765$ , Entropy Weight = 0.32, Normalized Weight = 34.71%) were the most influential cultural element.
- Tourism tours for visiting the bazaar (Priority = 2,  $C_i = 0.654$ , Entropy Weight = 0.26, Normalized Weight = 25.56%) ranked highly, demonstrating the importance of cultural tourism.
- Holding job training workshops (Priority = 4,  $C_i = 0.482$ , Entropy Weight = 0.20, Normalized Weight = 17.86%) showed a relatively lower impact.



### **Proposed strategies for comprehensive revitalization**

To enhance the influence of both high-ranking and lower-impact sub-factors, the following strategic interventions are proposed:

#### Physical improvements:

- Renovating walls of passages and preserving historical architecture to enhance visual appeal.
- Providing financial support for shop renovations to maintain traditional aesthetics.
- Optimizing spatial organization while maintaining heritage-based flooring patterns.

#### Cultural initiatives:

- Expanding seasonal festivals and tourism programs to strengthen cultural engagement.
- Encouraging mentorship programs where experienced merchants transfer knowledge to younger generations.
- Promoting heritage workshops to sustain traditional craftsmanship.

#### Economic revitalization:

- Supporting rare, traditional businesses to preserve historical commercial identity.
- Integrating modern economic models while maintaining the old style of business.
- Encouraging economic diversification by welcoming international brands while protecting local businesses.

#### Social engagement:

- Ensuring gender and age inclusivity through community-based initiatives.
- Promoting cultural diversity by encouraging ethnic collaboration in trade.
- Strengthening psychological security through public safety measures and improved lighting.

#### Religious integration:

- Enhancing spatial connections between the bazaar and religious centers.
- Increasing religious ceremonies to reinforce cultural traditions.
- Improving religious spaces to enhance their role in community gatherings.

By implementing these strategic interventions, the revitalization of historic bazaars can be comprehensive and sustainable, ensuring that both highly ranked and lower-impact sub-factors contribute meaningfully to their preservation and development. The integration of physical, economic, social, cultural, and religious elements, backed by data-driven prioritization (TOPSIS, entropy weighting, expert validation, and survey analysis), provides a strong framework for urban planners, policymakers, and stakeholders to effectively revitalize Dezful's historic bazaar while maintaining its heritage, cultural significance, and economic vitality.

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## Abstract

Bazaars are fundamental to Iranian architecture, serving as hubs for social, economic, cultural, and religious activities. However, modernization and urban development have led to the decline of historic city centers, due to insufficient infrastructure, low security, improper accessibility, and unbalanced land prices. This study evaluates the factors influencing the revitalization of Dezful's historic bazaar using a descriptive-analytical approach. Surveys and semi-structured interviews were conducted with various stakeholders. Data analysis employed entropy weighting, the Delphi method, *t*-tests, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and the TOPSIS technique. Results indicate that physical, economic, social, cultural, and religious factors significantly impact revitalization, with physical factors being the most influential and religious factors the least. Findings were validated through stakeholder discussions, considering urban planning policies, economic shifts, and government interventions.

## Streszczenie

Bazary stanowią fundamentalny element irańskiej architektury, pełniąc funkcję ośrodków życia społecznego, gospodarczego, kulturalnego i religijnego. Jednakże procesy modernizacyjne oraz rozwój urbanistyczny doprowadziły do degradacji historycznych centrów miast. Przyczyn tego zjawiska należy upatrywać w niewystarczającej infrastrukturze, niskim poziomie bezpieczeństwa, ograniczonej dostępności oraz nierównoważonych cenach gruntów. Niniejsze badanie analizuje czynniki wpływające na rewitalizację historycznego bazaru w Dezfulu, wykorzystując podejście opisowo-analityczne. W ramach pracy przeprowadzono ankiety i częściowo ustrukturyzowane wywiady z różnymi grupami interesariuszy. Do analizy danych zastosowano metodę ważenia entropijnego, technikę delficką, testy *t*, współczynnik korelacji Pearsona oraz technikę TOPSIS. Wyniki wskazują, że czynniki fizyczne, ekonomiczne, społeczne, kulturowe i religijne mają istotny wpływ na proces rewitalizacji, przy czym największe znaczenie przypisano czynnikom fizycznym, a najmniejsze religijnym. Ostateczne ustalenia zostały zweryfikowane poprzez konsultacje z interesariuszami, z uwzględnieniem polityki planowania przestrzennego, zmian gospodarczych oraz interwencji ze strony władz publicznych.