

Original Research Paper

Investigating the Role of Creative City Indicators in Sustainability of Surrounding Regions and Providing Strategies to Improve it (Case Study: City of Shiraz)

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Abstract: Cities play a major role in regional development and can help develop surrounding regions, also. In this connection, various approaches have been presented to the relationship between creativity in cities and surrounding areas, including theories of the creative city. Considering its framework, a creative city can embrace a geographical realm beyond cities. This research investigates the role of creative city indicators in the sustainability of surrounding regions using the case study of Shiraz, then offers strategies to strengthen this link. The research has a descriptive-analytical method and is based on survey studies through a questionnaire. The statistical population of this research consists of all experts of Shiraz, an exact figure of whom is unknown. The sample volume includes 100 experts who were questioned randomly. The questionnaire's validity was confirmed by the experts, and its reliability was found to be 0.79 using Cronbach's alpha. The test result indicated that the criteria of a creative city in the sustainability of surrounding regions were significant at less than 0.05. A review of mean creative city indicators including creative human capital (4.060), life quality (3.820), creative services (3.692), spatial characteristics (3.655), technology (3.467), creative industries (3.990) and cultural and tourism heritage (3.920) suggested the effects of the city of Shiraz on the sustainability of the surrounding regions. Most of the effects pertained to creative human capital, creative industries and cultural and tourism heritage criteria. Factorial analysis indicated that the four strategies of advertisement and creation of value chains, modeling of surrounding regions of Shiraz's creativity, the relationship between training and tourism plans, as well as the relationship between technology and research centers in the city of Shiraz with surrounding regions were found to strengthen the relationship between the city of Shiraz as a creative city and surrounding regions.


Keywords: Creative city, framework, Shiraz, sustainability, surrounding regions

RUNNING TITLE: Creative city indicators in sustainability of surrounding regions

INTRODUCTION

Cities are the hubs of nations' wealth; in the new century, however, the nature of wealth production and development has changed, as ideas and their conversion into production and services have revealed the foundation of it. On the other hand, with the introduction of globalization, the creation of a united culture, and the

weakening of local cultures of different nations, there is a need for cultural diversity. Creative cities respond to the need to use the idea of residents' creativity to develop different aspects of development and pay attention to cultural developments (Ghorvani & Shams, 2020). The premise of a creative city is founded on such ideas as culture, art and cultural crafts (Pourz-karya & Fadaei-Nejad Bahramjerdi, 2019). In this type of city, culture plays the most pivotal role due to the fact that it gives a place exclusive

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characteristic (Basteh-Negar & Hasani, 2018). In creative cities, there is a direct relationship between urban assets and facilities to absorb creative, social and human capitals in the fields of urban economics, as the use of these creative capitals can be used to predict development and expansions (Pourzakarya & Fadaei-Nejad Bahramjerdi, 2019; quoted from Florida, 2012). Thus, a creative city concentrates on cultural planning in cities to look for urban development by absorbing the creative class, developing creative industries and cultural industries, and finally, creating economic growth (Asadi & Sami, 2018). In view of these concepts and relevant policymaking, the current age is experiencing a social-economic transition, where creativity is the driving force of urban, national and regional economic growth (Zanganeh Shahraki & Fotouhi-Mehrbani, 2018). Consistent with the metropolis of Shiraz's vision as set out in Development Documents, this city is viewed as a knowledge-based, smart, global and creative city whose relation with the said indicators constitutes a creative city. However, environmental problems, reduced biodiversity, social inequality, social deviances, rampant bureaucracy, complicated business law, etc., have caused major hurdles to the creative and talented human capitals as the driving force for the fulfillment of nationwide development document goals and urban and regional development. This will, on its own, obstruct the materialization of creativity in cities, thus forcing people to migrate. Despite this, Iranian cities, especially the metropolis of Shiraz, enjoy high natural and cultural capitals due to their rich historical, cultural and geographical history; these natural and geographical capitals can play a major role in the cultural development and finally in the materialization of a creative city. That said, in the Iranian urban system, the metropolis of Shiraz has served as a hub for the deployment of treatment, academic and research centers, playing a pivotal role in national, regional and international domains. This city also contributes to introducing creative and innovative activities and a creative economy. In addition, the city of Shiraz enjoys major urban elements such as cultural and tourism centers, which embrace a large portion of the population, including the creative class of the city.

On the other hand, Shiraz has a long history and involves many past historical buildings. In sum, in view of these capacities and limitations, this city can take steps toward a creative city with many developments. In this connection, and considering the importance of the creative economy, creative industries, creative class and generally a creative city for the economic, social and cultural development, and in view of the recreation of urban space and growing expansion of the concept of the creative city among the academic and urban populations, this study aims to examine the role of creative city indicators in the sustainability of surrounding regions via providing different strategies to strengthen the city.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Theoretical Foundations

The idea of a creative city was first developed by Landry in the late 1980s (Landry, 2008). Landry's creative city philosophy, which is based on peoples' imagination, serves as the largest source of each city. Creativity can originate from every source. As a result, a creative city philosophy assumes that there is always a greater creative potential in one place (Pourzakarya & Fedaei-Nejad Bahramjerdi, 2020; quoted from Baycan, 2011). The philosophy of a creative city states that there are always creative potentials that should be well recognized and planned (Dousti et al. 2019:32). Thus, a creative city is a place for the growth of creativities in urban dynamism; it is a place for artistic creativity, scientific and technological innovation and serves as an expressive voice of growing cultures (Mafi et al. 2018; quoted from Ebrahimi, 2008).

A creative city is generally understood in four categories: the creative city as a central point of creative and cultural industrial infrastructure, the creative city as a place of creative economic activity, the creative city being synonymous with creatively effective class and the creative city as a place for the development of the creative culture.

Concerning the research literature, the following studies can be summarized:

Rodrigues and Franco (2020) found that creative cities required the identification of two clusters: 1) creative cities and their relation

with creative culture and class and 2) creative and cultural clusters and networks.

B.D. Goldberg Miller (2019) suggested that urban attractiveness consisted of infrastructure factors, including built cultural context, art facilities, labor/life options and actualization opportunities of a creative class, as well as soft factors such as the “coldness” of a city, which make the urban attractively as a tourism center and thus bring about many cultural opportunities for the urban center.

Valerio (2016) found that creative cities can use their complicated capacities and functions to stimulate economic innovation and cultural innovation, the use of collective intelligence, training of local skills and entrepreneurial opportunities. Networks and associations (e.g., creative city networks), major urban development centers, cultural diversity and successful models strengthen participation and support sustainable urban development by driving constructive development.

In his cultural economics and creative context article, Scott (2006) defines creative clusters as a systematic cultural network of creative and cultural industries in a region.

In his creative city article, Bradford (2004) referred to cultural recreation in a creative city to discuss the importance of cultural diversity and reciprocally cultural perception through training and participation of the target society.

Ford (2009) reviews several creative industry researches to refer to creative recreation in urban cultural hubs and its role in preserving urban identity.

Mousavi et al. (2020) did a study entitled “Analyzing the role of creative cultural tourists in attracting tourists in the city of Isfahan,” suggesting that characteristics of historical, cultural, social, and scientific works as well as scientific, handicrafts and natural and artistic works are viewed as tourism attractions of Isfahan, with the creative cultural tourism affecting the attraction of tourists there. However, barriers and lack of facilities related to creative cultural tourism industries in the city of Isfahan have led to a drop in the number of tourists, which has undermined the infrastructure and caused cultural underdevelopment.

Panahi and Dadashpour (2019) did a study entitled “Analysis of the role of creative city indicators in urban tourism development (Case

study: Isfahan)” using creative city indicators proposed by Richard Florida and those provided by Vanolu. Research results suggested that indicators of art, urban landscape, cultural vitality, special attractions, and diversity were mostly associated with urban tourism development in Isfahan.

In a study “Evaluation of conformity of the city of Ghayen with creative city indicators,” Asadi and Sami (2018) investigated the city using creative city approaches. Findings revealed that the factor of creative talents took priority out of creative city indicators, while the creative infrastructure took the last priority. It was also found that cultural heritage could affect creative governance as mediated by the creative industries.

Bazrafshan and Bameri (2018) found a greater correlation between creative tourism and financial tourism, internal business processes and learning as well as a growth indicator, indicating a positive linear relationship between them.

Methods, techniques and realms

The area under study is the city of Shiraz and its surrounding regions. The city of Shiraz is one of the metropolises of the country. This metropolis has been divided into 11 districts and covers a land of over 217 km². Consistent with the 2016 Population and Housing Census, Shiraz has a population of 1565572 people. The population density of this city is 68.9 people per hectare. Considering the cultural, historical, medical, and geographical capacities, this city can greatly contribute to the regional development of smaller cities and villages. The important thing in this context is the type of this city’s feedback on surrounding regions. Accordingly, new creativity and methods are among the most important approaches adopted for a city like Shiraz, affecting the surrounding environment and the city itself. This study emphasizes the effects of the city of Shiraz using the creative city approaches in surrounding areas. (Figure 1)

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present research is descriptive-analytical which falls under quantitative types of research. This research gathers field data through a ques-

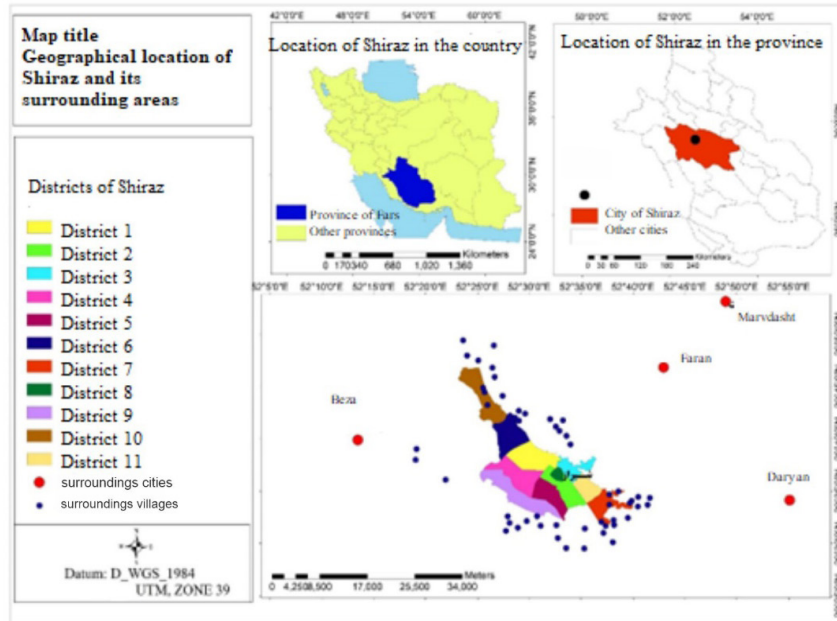


Fig 1: Map of the geographical location of the city and region

tionnaire tool. The questioning was performed at the individual level. The statistical population of this research was comprised of a community of experts in line with the subject under study. The statistical population of the research was not clear due to the lack of available statistics. According to the research and the present limitations in accessing the population of experts, the sample size was calculated to be 100 people. The validity of the research tool was conducted and confirmed by the expert community. The reliability of the tool was also calculated using Cronbach's alpha statistic, amounting to 0.79, which is acceptable. In this research, SPSS software was used for statistical test analysis. The following table shows the indicators, items and calculated Cronbach's coefficient. (Table 1)

Findings and Data analysis

An analysis of the respondents' statistics suggests that 65% were men and 35% were women. Also, in terms of age, the minimum age of the samples was 27 years, and the maximum was 57 years. Most people in the age group (from 36 to 45 years old) were 39 years, followed by the age group (from 46 to 55 years old) was 32 years. Also, in terms of education, 49% held a

bachelor's degree, 30% a master's degree, and 21% a doctorate. More than 23% of the respondents were academic professors, 40% were experts and specialists in the executive field (departments), and 37% were students working in urban planning and urban development.

Ranking of Creative City Criteria in the Sustainability of Surrounding Regions

A review of the descriptive statistics and ranking of creative city criteria, as well as their role in the sustainability of the surrounding regions, indicated that the most important and effective variable pertained to handicraft attractions with an average of 4.151, taking the priority in the ranking. Also, employees with higher education with an average of 4.150 and historical attractions of Shiraz with an average of 4.040 ranked second and third, respectively. The lowest average pertained to the variety of access to counter offices with an average of 3.430 and then hotels and accommodations with an average of 3.431. A comparison of the minimum and maximum averages suggested that all the variables under study could affect the sustainability of the surrounding areas. In other words, the variables of the creative city in the city of Shiraz could be

Tab 1: Cronbach's alpha coefficient of research indicates

Indicator	Item	Cronbach's alpha
Creative human capital	Talented and elite people, employees with higher education, urban experts	0.79
Creativity and innovation	Research and training units, researchers and research activities, science and technology development parks, industrial clusters	0.76
Life Quality	Citizens' culture and tourism, urban environmental status, urban economic status, urban structural status	0.82
Creative services	Presence of health and treatment centers, hotels and accommodations, recreational services, library services, access to the press	0.84
Spatial characteristics	Investment attraction, geographical and communication situation	0.77
Technology	Quality of the Internet, access to counter offices, access to ATMs, access to cafenets	0.81
Creative industries	Traditional industries and handicrafts, companies and urban industries	0.78
Cultural and tourism heritage	Cultural heritage (reading of the Shahname, ceremonies, feast, etc.), historical attractions, handicraft attractions, nationally and globally registered works	0.82

effective in the surrounding areas and leave desirable effects. The city of Shiraz is structured so that its historical and tourism characteristics can be used to affect the surrounding areas, including cities and villages. Table (2) gives the status of the variables of the creative city in the sustainability of the surrounding areas. (Table 2)

Role of Creative City Criteria in Sustainability of Surrounding Regions

To measure the role of creative city criteria in the sustainability of surrounding regions, the One-Sample t-Test with a criterion limit of 3 was used. The results suggested that all criteria were significant at less than 0.05. A review of the mean differences of the creative city criteria and theory relevant to statistics suggests that the city of Shiraz could positively affect surrounding regions and their development. A review of mean creative city indicators including creative human capital (4.060), life quality (3.820), creative services (3.692), spatial characteristic (3.655), technology (3.467), creative industries (3.990) and cultural and tourism heritage (3.920) suggested the effects of the city of Shiraz on the sustainability of the surrounding regions, as the mean of the criteria was greater than the criterion limit of 3. A review

of the total criteria scale also indicated that the results were significant at levels less than 0.05. A review of mean differences was 0.800, and the t statistic was 22.82, suggesting that the city of Shiraz affected the sustainability of the surrounding areas and helped develop smaller cities and villages. In other words, due to its historical, cultural, geographical and medical functions, the city of Shiraz managed to create positive changes in the development of the surrounding areas. The mean total scale was found to be 3.80, as the test results indicated that the most effects on the sustainability of the surrounding areas pertained to the criteria of creative human capital, creative industries and cultural and tourism heritage, with mean rates of 4.060, 3.990 and 3.920, respectively. The human capital, tourism and creative industries in the city of Shiraz can affect the surrounding areas and help them develop (Table 3).

Factorial Analysis of Strategies to Strengthen Relationship between the Creative City (Shiraz) and Surrounding Regions

Appropriate strategies must be adopted to strengthen the relationship between a creative city (e.g., Shiraz) and surrounding areas because the development of relations between Shiraz as a creative city with special characteristics in the region and other villages or cities requires

Tab 2: Ranking of creative city indicators in the sustainability of creative regions

Items	SD	Mean	Rank
Expert and talented people	1.039	4.030	5
Employees with higher education	1.048	4.150	2
Urban experts	0.942	4.000	7
Research and training units	1.153	3.890	11
Researchers and research activities	1.266	3.650	18
6. Development and technology parks	1.233	3.880	12
7. Industrial clusters	1.082	3.860	13
8. Citizens' culture and tourism	1.017	3.710	17
9. Urban environmental status	1.266	3.460	25
10. Urban economic status	1.214	4.010	6
11. Urban structural status	1.247	3.600	20
12. Presence of health and treatment centers	1.129	3.581	21
13. Hotels and accommodations	1.191	3.431	27
14. Recreative services	1.176	3.502	24
15. Library services	1.316	3.444	26
16. Access to press	1.193	4.031	4
17. Investment attraction	1.057	3.750	15
18. Geographical and communication status	1.444	3.562	22
19. Quality of the Internet	1.119	3.829	14
20. Access to counter offices	1.027	3.430	28
21. Access to ATMs	0.964	3.720	16
22. Access to cafenets	1.347	3.611	19
23. Traditional handicrafts	1.018	3.990	10
24. Urban industries and companies	0.758	3.992	9
25. Cultural heritage (reading of the Shahname, ceremonies, feast, etc.)	1.234	3.540	23
26. Historical attractions	0.931	4.040	3
27. Handicraft attractions	0.868	4.151	1
28. Nationally and globally registered works	0.967	3.951	8

the review and strengthening of some indicators. As noted, over 14 factors were analyzed to help realize effective strategies. In the present study, to determine strategies affecting the strengthening and linking of the city of Shiraz and surrounding regions, the KMO value was obtained at 0.588, suggesting the appropriate status of the data for the factorial analysis. This rate must be greater than 0.50, with Bartlett's rate amounting to 1552.57 being significant (0.000) at a 99% confidence level. (Table 4)

Tab 4: KMO and Bartlett values affecting the strengthening of the creative city and surrounding areas

KMO	0.5888
(Bartlett Test)	1552.57
DF	91
Sig	0.000

Eigenvalue: It indicates the share of each strategy from the total variance of the variables, which, the greater its value, the more important

Tab 3: Role of creative city criteria in the sustainability of surrounding areas (one sample t-test)

Criterion	Test basis-3						Mean
	T	Freedom Degree	Sig.	Mean difference	Confidence level at 95%		
					Lower bound	Upper bound	
Creative human capital	16.65	99	0.000	1.060	0.933	1.18	4.060
Creativity and innovation	13.57	99	0.000	0.820	0.700	0.939	3.820
Quality of life	9.250	99	0.000	0.692	0.544	0.841	3.692
Creative services	8.066	99	0.000	0.635	0.479	0.792	3.636
Spatial characteristics	6.490	99	0.000	0.655	0.454	0.855	3.655
Technology	12.28	99	0.000	0.647	0.542	0.752	3.647
Creative industries	18.96	99	0.000	0.990	0.886	1.093	3.990
Cultural and tourism industries	15.31	99	0.000	0.920	0.800	1.039	3.920
Total scales	22.82	99	0.000	0.800	0.730	0.870	3.80

and effective it is. Table 5 shows that the first strategy has contributed the most (40.236%) to explaining the total variance of the variables about the strategies of strengthening the creative city and surrounding areas, followed by the second, third, and fourth strategies explaining (20.133%), (14.920%) and (7.827%) of the dependent variables. Table 5 gives the number of strategies extracted, their eigenvalues, the percentage of their variability and cumulative frequencies of their variances. (Table 5)

Naming the Strategies

To determine the number of strategies in this study, strategies whose eigenvalue was greater than 1 were adopted. Thus, four strategies, whose eigenvalues were greater than 1, were extracted. Table 6 gives studied the strategies, their eigenvalues,

factors and factorial loads. Below, the naming of the strategies and existing solutions are addressed.

First strategy: Results indicated that seven variables or factors were included in the first strategy (Table 6). These variables explained 40.236% of the total variance of strategies of strengthening the creative city (Shiraz) and surrounding regions. Given the factors included in this category, the first strategy was named “advertisement and creation of value chain (services and industries) between Shiraz and surrounding areas.”

Second strategy: Results indicated that two variables or factors were included in the second strategy (Table 6). These variables explained 20.133% of the total variance of strategies of strengthening the creative city (Shiraz) and surrounding regions. Given the factors included in this category, the second strategy was named “Modeling of sur-

Tab 5: Strategies to strengthen the relationship between the creative city and surrounding regions

Strategies	Eigenvalue	Variance percentage of the eigenvalue	Cumulative percentage of the variance
First	5.633	40.236	40.236
Second	2.819	20.133	60.369
Third	2.089	14.920	75.289
Fourth	1.096	7.827	83.116

rounding areas of Shiraz’s creativity.”

Third strategy: Results indicated that two variables or factors were included in the third strategy (Table 6). These variables explained 14.920% of the total variance of strategies of strengthening the creative city (Shiraz) and surrounding regions. Given the factors included in this category, the third strategy was named “Relation between training and touring plans in the city of Shiraz and surrounding regions.”

Fourth strategy: Results indicated that two variables or factors were included in the fourth strategy (Table 6). These variables explained 7.827% of the total variance of strategies of strengthen-

ing the creative city (Shiraz) and surrounding regions. Given the factors included in this category, the fourth strategy was named “Relation of research and technology centers between the city of Shiraz and surrounding regions.”

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

A review of city relations with its surrounding regions, including villages and other cities, has always been a major subject that lays the ground for all types of spatial and sustainable planning because the integrated study and planning of the cities cannot be made possible without regard

Table 6: Strategies for strengthening the creative city (Shiraz) and surrounding regions.

Strategy	Eigenvalue	Factor	Factorial load
Advertisement and creation of value chain (services and industries) between Shiraz and surrounding areas	40.236	Directing part of the investment in Shiraz city to the surrounding areas	0.853
		Creating a value chain of tourism handi-crafts in the surrounding areas and the city of Shiraz	0.856
		Introducing tourists to the city of Shiraz to visit attractive surrounding areas	0.614
		Emphasizing tourism advertisement of the surrounding areas in Shiraz city	0.614
		Introducing the industries of rural areas to the tourists of Shiraz	0.943
		Creation and expansion of urban creative industries in the surrounding areas	0.873
		Increasing the access to surrounding areas to the services of Shiraz city	0.816
Modeling of surrounding areas of Shiraz’s creativity	20.133	The use of urban elite society in the development of surrounding areas	0.871
		Modeling of the surrounding areas from the creations implemented in Shiraz city	0.939
Relation between training and touring plans in the city of Shiraz and surrounding regions	14.920	Supporting creative programs in surrounding areas by Shiraz City Municipality	0.739
		Holding tourism development trainings in surrounding villages and cities by Shiraz Municipality	0.885
Relation of research and technology centers between the city of Shiraz and surrounding regions	7.827	Creating a link between the technology and development centers of Shiraz city and surrounding rural and urban areas	0.845
		Setting up research units in the field of creativity in Shiraz city and surrounding areas	0.872

for their geographical places, as many urban development issues, such as migration depends on rural and surrounding areas. In this connection, the emergence of new development approaches, including the creative approach, has indicated the importance of these relations. As its framework suggests, the creative city approach emphasizes the creativity and innovation of various aspects of geographical places. It is one of the most significant approaches that lay the ground for the relationship between geographical places because cities, with their creativity and innovation, can affect the development of their surrounding regions and include a more extended area of their own urban spaces. As a metropolis with various historical, cultural, medical and geographical functions, the city of Shiraz is no exception, as planning of this city may affect the surrounding areas. It is noteworthy that some of its current problems, including suburbanization, have roots in surrounding areas. Thus, the city of Shiraz, given the creative city approach, can leave a considerable impact on the surrounding areas.

Test results indicated that the criteria of a creative city affect the sustainability of the surrounding areas. Considering the capacities of creative and expert human resources, the city of Shiraz can direct its plans to the surrounding areas and effectively prevent the problems of these areas and their development. Also, the presence of novel technologies, creative industries and widespread creative services in Shiraz contribute to this field. One of the most important effects of the city of Shiraz on the surrounding areas and their sustainability is the characteristics of the place and the cultural-historical heritage of this city. Shiraz is known for being a tourist metropolis that receives many tourists from the country and the world each year. This capacity can affect the development of surrounding areas. The tourism industry in Shiraz city should not only lead to the city itself, but as a creative city in tourism, it should provide the ground for the development of tourism and the surrounding areas in general and the existing cultural, economic and social relations in this connection. It needs to also strengthen technology and industries by relying on tourism sources. To create and strengthen relations between the city of Shiraz as a creative and central city in the province of Fars and its surrounding small cities and villages, there are various approaches, the

most important of which so advertisement and the creation of a value chain between this city and the surrounding areas. Advertisement in the tourism industry and creating a value chain with the villages in the production area could help strengthen this approach. The modeling of Shiraz's created by the surrounding areas can also be another effective strategy because diverse creativity is noted in various tourism, service and industrial areas in the city of Shiraz. Thus, smaller cities and villages can utilize these patterns to develop better. Training communications and tourism plans between the city of Shiraz and surrounding regions can also be promising in this connection. In addition, the relationship between technology and research centers in Shiraz with surrounding areas can be named another strategy because science and technology in Shiraz are considerable and can affect the smaller cities and villages, as service and tourism communications based on technology services can help strengthen the link between Shiraz and other areas.

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