

Commercial Dynamism and Its Impact on The Urban Rhythm of The Algerian City - The State of The City Of Souk Ahras -

By

Tourghi Hani

Planning Department, Faculty of Earth Sciences, Badji Mokhtar - Annaba University, Sidi Amar P.B. 12, Annaba, 23000, Algeria

Correspondence Author Email: hani.tourghi@univ-annaba.org

Testas Mouhamed

Planning Department, Faculty of Earth Sciences, Badji Mokhtar - Annaba University, Sidi Amar P.B. 12, Annaba, 23000, Algeria

Sid Ahmed Soufiane

Planning Department, Faculty of Earth Sciences, Badji Mokhtar - Annaba University, Sidi Amar P.B. 12, Annaba, 23000, Algeria

Received: 04/ 2023

Accepted: 07/2023

Published: 08/ 2023

Abstract

Commercial dynamism has had a notable impact on the urban rhythm of the Algerian city of Souk Ahras. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the activity and vibrancy of commercial centers within the city. These centers have transformed into major business hubs, leading to the growth and organization of the urban area.

The concentration of commercial activities in the city centers has resulted in a centralization effect, drawing in people and businesses to these core areas. As a consequence, the distribution of commercial services and benefits has become imbalanced between different sectors of the city. The centralization of commercial activities has led to the development of a bustling urban core while potentially neglecting other parts of the city, creating disparities in urban development and opportunities for residents.

The urban rhythm of Souk Ahras has been influenced by this commercial dynamism. The city's core areas are now vibrant and bustling with economic activities, creating a lively and fast-paced environment. However, this concentrated activity might have consequences on other parts of the city, which may experience slower development and limited access to commercial services.

Commercial dynamism impacts the organization and urban rhythm of the city of Souk Ahras, considering that trade governs the economic and urban life of the city. Commerce is a vital function, as evidenced by the cessation of activity and dynamism in the city during the COVID-19 period.

Key Words: Souk Ahras, hierarchical dynamics, commercial structure, urban rhythm, covid19.

1. Introduction

Without being real experts in the concept of time in the city, city dwellers can also observe the dynamics generated by urban rhythms. The city's temporalities are clearly visible: the use of urban space changes according to the hours, days of the week, and even seasons. These diverse rhythms are actually shaped by those who live in the cities, through their movements, activities, and commercial and economic uses, making them easily understandable phenomena. Everyone expects to see people in public transportation during rush hours or in restaurants during lunchtime, as well as various commercial activities. Although variables such as commercial usage, urban density, or cultural and economic activities in the area affect the richness of urban rhythms, it is ultimately the movement and flows that characterize these dynamics and make them evolve

Trade plays a significant role in urban areas, and the importance of commercial activities varies from one city to another. Different factors contribute to the variation in the role played by these activities in each city's economy. The interaction of these factors manifests in different forms of localization of commercial activities within cities and their centers. This interaction is realized through various urban processes that vary according to the economic role and level of development reached by the cities [1].

The commercial function is one of the fundamental elements of the city as it has a direct impact on society and is influenced by it. "Trade constantly evolves to meet the needs of the population, resulting in urban and architectural changes in the aesthetic appearance. These changes manifest themselves through the presence of commercial establishments, the roles of stakeholders, and the movement of commercial flows, making it a structured element of the urban space and the multiple relationships that characterize the organization and development of the urban space" [2], The commercial function is an influential and controlling factor in the urban rhythm of the space. This is achieved through the actual presence and significance of commercial usage in urban life for the residents, as well as the arrangement and distribution of commercial and economic activities over time, such as during peak hours and the temporal distribution of work, leisure, and shopping. The commercial attractiveness of one area may outweigh others. Therefore, it can be said that urban rhythm affects the quality of urban life for the residents and is closely linked to the dynamics of trade in the urban space.

Commerce has become a dynamic and transformative factor in the growth and development of Algerian cities today. It is considered a sector that influences the attractiveness and level of urban areas in terms of service quality, urban and population dynamics, and the quality and adaptability of urban life. Trade represents a prominent aspect of vitality and hierarchical dynamics in any region since cities were born out of trade [3], For the purpose of studying the dynamics of trade and its impact on the urban rhythm of the city and its effect on the hierarchical level, we have chosen the city of Souk Ahras, which possesses natural and economic resources, as well as good infrastructure and facilities. In addition, recent commercial investment programs and projects have contributed to accelerating the dynamics of trade.

Commerce has become one of the economic and developmental sectors that affect the growth and organization of the urban space and the rhythm of the city. Therefore, it has become an actor and a determinant in urban life within the Souk Ahras community, significantly affecting the hierarchical level in the city. In light of this, we will attempt to

shed light on the relationship between trade in the city of Souk Ahras and its impact on the urban rhythm by studying the reality of trade in the city and its societal and economic effects during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will also analyze the different sector levels in terms of attractiveness and vitality and the sectors that attract commercial services.

Based on the points mentioned, the main question can be formulated as follows:

Can urban trade be considered an active factor that controls the urban rhythm of Souk Ahras city?

Through the main question, several sub-questions arise as follows:

- Does urban trade contribute to the growth and organization of the urban space and rhythm?
- How does the radiation of the main commercial business district in the city center affect the urban space?
- What are the hierarchical levels of urban trade in the city of Souk Ahras?

Research Objectives:

The objectives of this topic are manifested in the significant interest in urban trade and its impact on the urban rhythm in the city of Souk Ahras, considering it as a phenomenon that distinguishes Algerian medium-sized cities and requires further study. The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Highlight the phenomenon of urban trade and its areas of influence on the urban space and rhythm.
- Clarify how commercial usage controls the growth and organization of the urban space in the city.
- Identify the hierarchical level of the city's sectors and their impact on the urban rhythm.
- Determine the interrelationships between the urban space and commercial activities.

2. Research Methodology

In order to address and study this topic, we used a descriptive and analytical methodology. The descriptive method was used to explore urban trade in the city of Souk Ahras, its focal points, and its commercial structure. The analytical method was employed to analyze the results derived from the empirical study through field investigations of urban trade elements, in order to understand and clarify the outcomes resulting from the concentration and localization of commercial activities and their impact on the hierarchical structure of urban sectors in the city. Additionally, we examined the spatial differentials in terms of attraction and polarization, assuming the existence of a main commercial business district in the city center of Souk Ahras and its hierarchical impact on other sectors of the city.

In addition to highlighting the importance of trade for the vitality and dynamism of the city, this significance becomes evident during the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the urban space

2.1. The Step of the Field

In order to be able to achieve the desired results through this research, necessary information, data, and statistics related to the topic were collected. Therefore, data collection was carried out at the first time by the administrative departments, and then many field investigations were carried out to complete all the data.

2.2. Collecting Statistical Data at The Administrative Departments

It consists of communicating with various administrative and technical services in order to review the official documents that would enrich the subject, while organizing meetings with officials and specialists from certain administrations such as:

- National statistics office
- Department of programming and budget monitoring.
- Technical services of the municipalities and departments of the state of Souk Ahras.
- Direction of urbanism, architecture, and construction of the State of Souk Ahras
- Direction of Commerce of the state of Souk Ahras
- Service of Commercial Register of the state of Souk Ahras.

Despite the multiplicity of administrative services, it was not possible to collect all the data necessary for the research, even if some of them are available; they are either incomplete or incompatible with the various documents obtained from the various services.

2.3. Collection of Statistical Field Data

This step is considered the most crucial in preparing the research and is linked to conducting field investigations to enumerate commercial establishments in the city of Souk Ahras in the year 2022. The aim is to highlight the importance of commercial activities on the urban rhythm and dynamics of the city.

2.4. The Data Analysis Step

There are several ways to evaluate the spatial distribution pattern of business activities, and they range from simple descriptive visual analysis to geographical analysis. This is related to the nature of the data used to measure this phenomenon and to clarify its role in managing the urban network of cities [4].

Accordingly, after collecting the data and information related to the topic of the research, they were classified and analyzed in order to present the results in several forms: matrices, tables, and graphs to support the discussion and results, which helps in explaining the phenomena that the research seeks to analyze and link its elements together.

2.5. Indicator of Commercial Concentration

This consists of the scarcity logic of commercial stores instead of the global ones and this shows the actual real weight for the business activity in Souk Ahras city which offers a urban system that allows hierarchy for centers of commercial concentration [5].

And for its calculation it must follow the arithmetic calculation following [6].

$$Dc = \sum(Sk \times Cc) \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

Dc: Indicator Davies for each city, Sk: Scarcity coefficient commercial stores for Kind of shops in each city, Cc: number of commercial stores in each city, Such as:

$$Sk = \frac{1}{CKc} \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

Ckc: number of commercial stores for Kind of shops in each city.

2.6.Indicator of Commercial Centrality

The Commerce Centrality Indicator is based on the number of residents, which is the engine of business activity, so the Bennison Indicator relates between the Davies Indicator and the number of residents in each city. However, the calculation of the Bennison Indicator is very complex [7], and in order to reach it, a calculation must be performed [8]:

$$Ctr = \frac{Dc \times Ps}{Pc} \dots\dots\dots(3)$$

Ctr: centrality for Kind of shops in each city, Ps: Population of state, Pc: Population of city.

$$CtrA = D \times Ctr \dots\dots\dots(4)$$

CtrA: absolute centrality for kind of shops in each city. For that it requires

The absolute concentration of a particular city,through relations (3) and (4) produces the following relationship(5)

$$CtrA = \frac{D^2 \times Ps}{Pc} \dots\dots\dots(5)$$

$$CtrR = \frac{CtrA}{CtrAs} \dots\dots\dots(6)$$

CtrR : relative centrality for Kind of shops in each city, CtrAs: absolute centrality for Kind of shops in state

$$B = \sum CtrR \dots\dots\dots(7)$$

B:Bennison Indicator, \sum CtrR: Sum of relative centrality for various commercial activities in the city.

3.Resultant And Discussion

3.1. The importance of the city of Souk Ahras :

The city of Souk Ahras is located in the east of Algeria, in the middle of the state of Souk Ahras, and is administratively its headquarters, where the latter is located in the upper plateau region and about 700km away from the capital, it shares with the Republic of Tunisia a border strip called the Eastern Hill.

The city has benefited from several important development projects as a decision Center for the state, the most important of these projects that are directed to the housing sector in various formats as one of the most important directions taken care of by the state [9].

It is located in the east of the country between 36°00' and 36°30' north and between 7°30' and 8°00' east. Its population in 2008 (last general population census) was 155259 inhabitants and its housing stock amounted to approximately 27118 dwellings [10] and its area was about 4510 hectares [11].

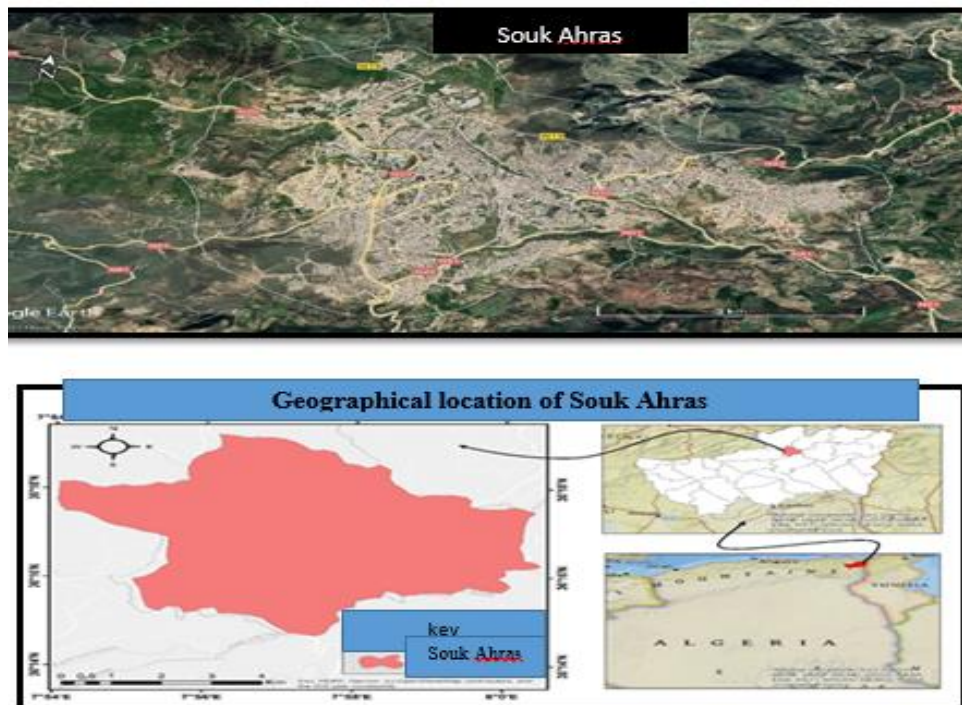


Figure 1.2: Geographical Location of Souk Ahras

3.2. Commercial heaviness in the city of Souk Ahras:

According to the statistics and official data from the Directorate of Trade in the province of Souk Ahras and the National Center for Commercial Registration, the municipality of Souk Ahras has a total of 7.875 registered businesses distributed across various sectors as defined in the classification of the Economic Activities Code. The distribution is shown in the following table

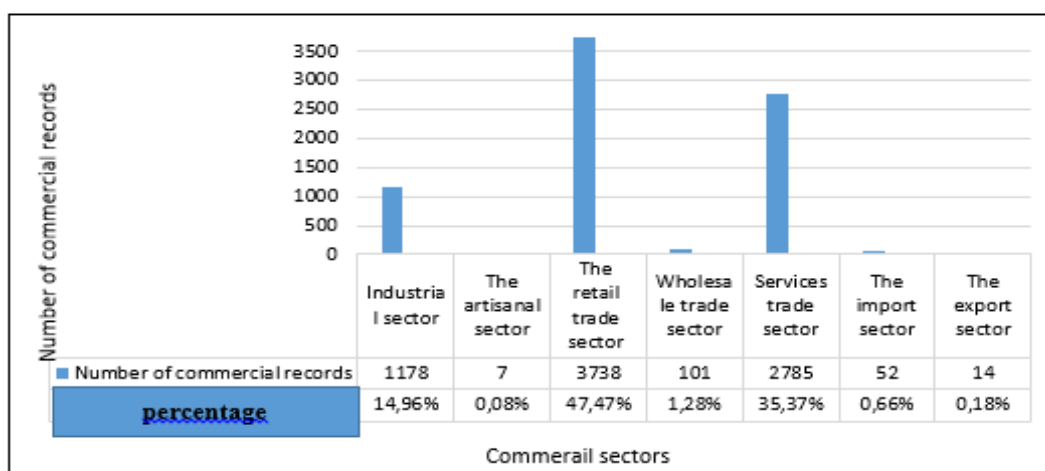


Figure 3: Distribution of commercial records in the city of Souk Ahras *Source* : (Directorate of Commerce, 2022) [12].

According to statistics from the relevant trade authorities, the city of Souk Ahras occupies the first position in the Souk Ahras province in terms of the number of commercial registrations, with a total of 7,875 registered businesses. This highlights the dominance of urban trade as an active and dynamic sector in the city. By considering the population size, the per capita number of commercial establishments is approximately 1 registered business for every 23 residents. This is roughly equivalent to the national indicator of 1 registered business for every 23 residents. This indicates the importance of commercial activity as a structuring and regulating factor in the urban and economic life of Souk Ahras.

In terms of the classification of commercial registrations according to the Economic Activities Code, the dominant sectors are retail trade (3,738 registered businesses) and services (2,785 registered businesses), accounting for 82.84% of the total. The industrial sector follows with 1,178 registered businesses, representing 14.96%. Wholesale trade, import-export, and crafts sectors come after, with lower proportions due to the lack of investment in these areas. Overall, we can conclude that retail trade (food, clothing, etc.) and service-related businesses (doctors, cafes, lawyers, restaurants, etc.)

dominate urban trade in Souk Ahras. Commercial activity is a significant component of the city and one of its essential economic inputs. It covers the boundaries of the region and serves as a future pillar for attracting external flows. Therefore, the urban trade sector is the sector of the future in creating wealth and development in the city of Souk Ahras.

3.3. Commercial Center in Souk ahras city:

The difference between the urban sectors of Souk Ahras is not limited to the number of shops, attractions, or commercial density because commercial activities are characterized by a heterogeneous distribution through the urban fabric, some of which appear continuously and others are subject to certain circumstances or regional specificity and others are related to the size of the population[13].

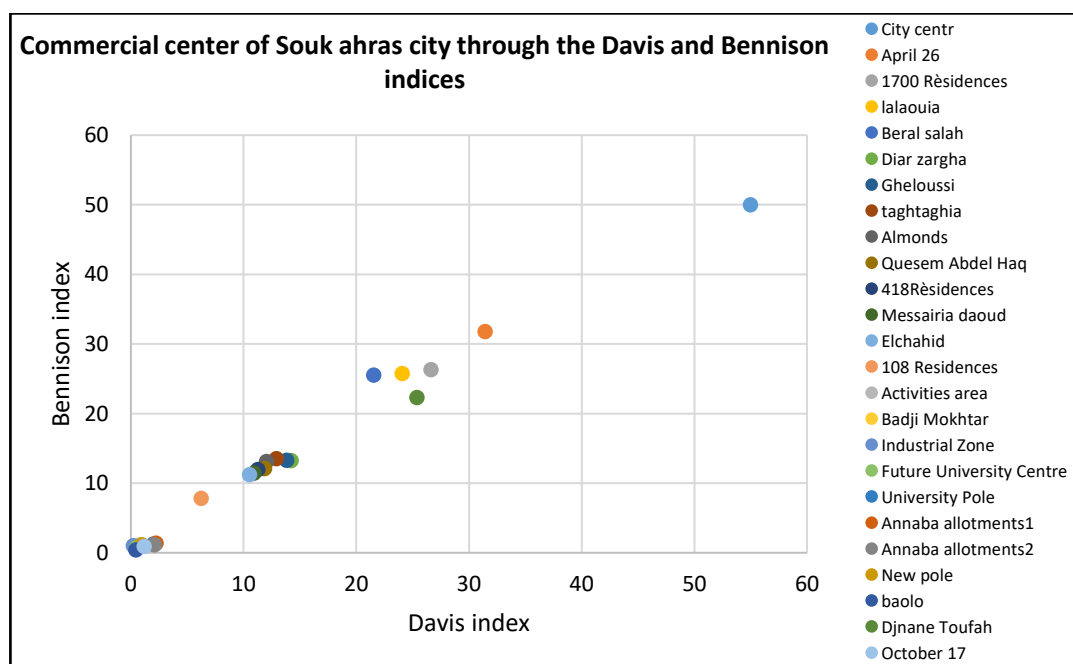


Figure4: The commercial centrality of the city of Souk Ahrast through the Indicators of Davies and Bennison

Through the distribution of business activities at the level of the 123 business essay, the Davis and Bennison indices were calculated at the level of the city's 26 urban sectors and are embodied at the level of Figure No. (03) Where we found:

For the Davis Index, which averaged 12,8732, it was the highest value in the downtown sector at 54.9873, a high value that reflects the large centrality of this sector, followed by the 26-April sector with 31,4265, and the 1700 Rèsidences sector with 25,6387 ... While the lowest value was recorded in the future university center sector, by 0.2143.

For the Bennison Index, the city's average value was 11,5071, with its highest value in the downtown sector at 49.4513, followed by Sector 26 Avril at 29,8335 and 1700 Rèsidences at 24,7411, while the lowest value in the baolo sector was 0.4.

3.4. Hierarchical structure of the dynamics of the urban sectors of the city of Souk Ahras

Through field investigations as well as the study of the commercial structure and centrality in the space of the city of Souk Ahras, the dynamics of the urban sectors of the city can be demonstrated, where we mean hierarchical structure is the ranking of the urban sectors into categories according to their functional and service importance [14].

Hierarchy is one of the methods of classification and spatial analysis and is of great importance in the detection of the hierarchy of administrative units serviced and their population rankings [15].

Hierarchies can be sectoral hierarchies, such as revealing the level and centrality of the studied service, and can be spatial hierarchies by clarifying the centrality of administrative units in the field and highlighting disparities in the localization, functional role and contribution of business activities to the development process [16]. Through the above-mentioned data and study, we consider the rank level of the city of Souk ahras

Level 1: Very high hierarchical dynamics

This level focuses on one sector located in the center of the city of Souk Ahras, with a significant population and a high commercial activity that corresponds to a high commercial weight in the city. It also has a large number of commercial shops, attracting a very high commercial density. It is characterized by the presence of prominent facilities, infrastructure, and services. This hierarchical level is classified as upscale and high in the main commercial business district, exerting a significant influence and dynamics on the entire city.

Level 2: Medium hierarchical dynamics

This level includes five urban sectors: 26 April, 1700 rèsidences, Djanetoufah, Lalaouia, Beral Salah, the number of shops at this level has reached a commercial store with an estimated percentage of commercial activities in the city, are medium-impact and dynamic sectors characterized by being located on the outskirts and close to the sector of the city center and affected by its great dynamic radiation

Level 3: Weak hierarchical dynamics

This level comprises nine urban sectors described in Fugire4, including Diar Zarqha, Mazrish, Almonds, University Pole... Characterized by low density sectors and commercial and service attractions, they are sectors with residential uses that have a weak dity in effect

Level 4: Very weak hierarchical dynamics

This level comprises ten urban sectors described in Figure No. 4, anchored by the area of activities, 108 residences, allotments of annaba 1 and 2, Badji Mokhtar ... we conclude from this level that these sectors suffer from urban exclusion and lack of any attractiveness or commercial or social weight because they are sectors located on the far outskirts of the areas of influence, as they are modern sectors oriented for future reconstruction

4. Covid-19 And Urban Commercial Dynamics.

To combat the spread of COVID-19, epidemiologists, and other scientists argued for physical distancing, also known as social distancing. It was immediately understood that the proxemic advice or rule to keep two metres away from one another would affect urban movement patterns. But what of future pandemics and their demands of architecture and urban design? Should the design of public space adapt to such possible future scenarios?

If we look at crowding as a concept of sharing space, it does not necessarily have to appear simultaneously in one time–space moment, but it is framed through an interest in one and the same object. The perception and sharing of this object, especially when including touch, hearing, seeing, and smelling something that we have in common, may require us to follow in one another's footsteps and experiences to a certain extent—suddenly there are moments that used to be shared directly but which now include successive moments or sequences [17].

The urban rhythm in the city of Souk Ahras has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Several precautionary measures were implemented to limit the spread of the virus, including restrictions and suspensions of commercial activities, which had a general impact on daily life in the city. Here are some of the effects witnessed in Souk Ahras:

Procedures for restriction and suspension of business activity

The Algerian government imposed a variety of preventive measures on commercial activities, including restrictions and suspensions of work. These measures were implemented starting from March 22, 2020, when Executive Decree (69-20) was issued, outlining measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and combat it. These measures affected the movement of workers, trade, and the transportation of goods, imposing restrictions on commercial activities throughout the country, except for essential activities such as the sale of food and pharmaceutical products[18].

Decreased movement and reduced public gatherings:

The city experienced a decline in people's movement and a decrease in public gatherings. Large gatherings were avoided, and movement in streets and public spaces was restricted. There was a focus on maintaining social distancing and physical distancing between individuals.

Change in purchasing and consumption patterns:

Souk Ahras witnessed a change in the patterns of purchasing and consumption. There was an increased reliance on online shopping and home delivery services. Traditional brick-and-mortar stores that relied on in-person presence experienced a decline in business and revenue.

Impact on cultural and entertainment life:

Cultural and entertainment events in the city, such as festivals, art performances, and music concerts, were suspended. The entertainment and cultural industry was significantly affected, and activities with a communal nature and public gatherings came to a halt.



Figure 5.6.7.8: *Absence of urban movement and dynamics during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

5. Discussion

The case study of the city of Souk Ahras was taken as an example, and in the context of trying to address and diagnose this topic in order to find urban solutions to this phenomenon, a number of findings and recommendations were recorded where we can highlight the findings of the study below:

Results

- . The city center sector represents the central business district of the city.
- . Urban trade impacts the organization and urban rhythm of the city.
- . The distribution of commercial activities in the urban sectors of the city of Souk Ahras is characterized by unbalance, the sector of the city center is the most important sector in terms of commercial and social attraction, which reflects the urban phenomenon of commercial centralization that affects the growth and organization of the field
- . The Algerian city has witnessed a significant rise in the dynamic of its city centers, this dynamic has become a prominent rectifier led to increase the effectiveness of cities and increase their material inputs, the commercial center is an internal

commercial dynamic of the city contributes to increase the attractiveness of the population and territories for trade, and thus contribute to the growth of the city

Imbalance and disparity in the utilization of the quality of commercial services in the urban sectors of the city

- . The hierarchical level of the urban sectors in the city of Souk Ahras reflected the reality of these sectors, which requires the strengthening of the fourth level sectors of shops and service equipment, so that they are effective future sectors and not dormant sectors
- . Commercial dynamism governs the vitality and movement of the city, as evident during the COVID-19 period with a complete halt of commercial activities. This highlights that commercial dynamism directs the movement and rhythm of the city.

Recommendations

- . Actors need to find urban solutions to the problem of imbalance in the distribution of commercial uses and services, as this affects the attractiveness of the urban sectors of the city
- . The need for a fair distribution of service uses in a balanced manner at the level of all urban sectors of the city, so that there is parity between sectors
- . The need to develop a guiding scheme for commercial reconstruction that will adjust the future strategy of organization and programming for the settlement of carpentry uses at the city level, where local actors are allowed to guide and manage the process of commercial growth in the field [19].
- . The need to develop an urban transport scheme within the Algerian city, and this to address the imbalances caused by urban trade at the level of the field, urban transport is a tool to regulate the commercial sector from the approximation and advancement of the quality of Service
- . The need to rely on statistical studies, which show the degree of the rank level of the city, and this for use in urban programming processes

6. Conclusion

Our study concluded that the hierarchical commercial dynamics at the level of the medium-sized Algerian cities as the city of Souk Ahras, has become in recent years a significant increase in the dynamics of the centers of their cities, where these centers became a picture of a major business area leading to the growth and organization of the city area, due to the centralization and large commercial concentration at the level of city centers, which highlights the disparity in distribution and benefit of commercial service between the city sectors and this through the results of the index of assembly and commercial concentration, which requires City actors should put this urban problem in urban planning and programming of city-wide service wealth.

Our study highlights the significance and role of urban trade in organizing the urban space and controlling the urban rhythm of the city. Trade plays a leading function that governs the economic life of the city and its dynamics.

References

- Mouhamed Msilhi, F. (2000). *Geography of services*. Cairo: the theoretical framework and Arab applications, modern presses.
- Benghadban F. (2016). Analysis of the Spatial Distribution Correlation of the Commercial Activities in Major Algerian Cities (Empirical Study on the City of Annaba). *Jordanian Journal of Social Sciences*. Vol 9, NO 2, p 271
- Brice, N. (2011). *the local food retailer in the city center of large conurbations, the example of Toulouse and Zaragoza*. Doctoral thesis. University of Toulouse. Toulouse.
- Benghadban F. (2016). Analysis of the Spatial Distribution Correlation of the Commercial Activities in Major Algerian Cities (Empirical Study on the City of Annaba). *Jordanian Journal of Social Sciences*. Vol 9, NO 2, p 271
- TOUMI F. (2016). The problem of the organization of commercial activities in urban space, case study of the city of Chéria. Magister memory. Urban Techniques Management Institute, University of Constantine 03, Constantine: Algeria, p A
- BOUZAHZAH, F. (2015). Urban dynamics and new centrality, case of Biskra. Doctorate In Science. Regional Planning Department, University of brother mantouri, Constantine: Algeria, p 240.
- AZBAOUI, S. (2005). The role of urban networks and roads in the organization of State of Oum
- El Bouaghi. Magister memory. Urban Planning Department, University of brother mantouri, Constantine: Algeria, pp 179-180
- FARHI, A (2000). New towns and towns of equilibrium, Case of Biskra and Batna. State Doctorate. Department of Architecture, University of brother mantouri, Constantine: Algeria, p 158.
- Hani, T. (2020). The reality of the informal sector in the Algerian city: The state of the pavement trade in Souk Ahras. *International Journal of Innovation and Applied*, 916.
- ONS. (2008), Recensement général de l'habitat et de la population, Office National des Statistiques, RADP
- P.D.A.U. (2019). *Review the master plan for the development and reconstruction of Souk Ahras 2019*. Souk Ahras.
- Directorate of Commerce. (2022). *Report of the Directorate of Commerce for the city of Souk Ahras*. Souk Ahras.
- Lekhal, A. (1996). *Economic basis and spatial role of small towns in eastern Algeria*. Constantine: State doctoral thesis, Institute of Earth Sciences, Mentouri University.
- Mohamed, A. (2015). *urban network of Tawat province in Adrar state, organization and performance mechanisms*. Oran: majester's note, University of Oran 2.
- Prost, M. (1969). *The hierarchy of cities according to their commercial and service activities*, Ed Gautheir Villars. Paris.
- Bonnefoy, J. (1993). *Frequentation of shops and services: approach to communal behavior*. Montpellier: Mappemonde, n4 (special S.I.G).
- Alrabadi S. (2020). Crowdability of Urban Space, Doctoral Thesis, Department of Architecture and Built Environment, Faculty of Engineering, Lund University, p204
- Yahia A, (2021), The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Commercial Activities and Urban Dynamics, *Journal of Humanities Sciences at Umm Al-Bouaghi University*, Volume 9, Issue 1, March 2022, p. 457
- Anoun, N. (2012). The role of commercial architecture in the organization of urban areas-the case of batna city. Constantine: Faculty of Earth and cosmology, Mountouri Brothers University.