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Article

# Economic Indicator Assessment and Prioritization in Yazd City: A Study of Learning City Development in Iran

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**Abstract:** Globalization, knowledge economy, information technology advancements, and the rise of learning societies contribute to the concept of a learning city. The study examines the economic indicators of Yazd city, Iran, in the context of learning city development. A descriptive-analytical approach with a survey method and cluster sampling was employed. Data analysis involved Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, single-sample T-test, simple linear regression, and Kendall's W test. The normality test confirmed data normality. The T-test indicated that experts perceived the current state of most variables in Yazd as undesirable. Regression analysis revealed a significant positive association between the economic index and independent variables. Kendall's W test prioritized areas based on economic indicators, with the top 7 and bottom 5 areas identified for focused interventions. The study emphasizes the need to prioritize areas within Yazd based on their economic indicators. This prioritization informs strategies for enhancing social and legal aspects of Yazd's transformation into a learning city. Further research should explore effective methods to cultivate a full-fledged learning environment in the city.

**Keywords:** lifelong learning; economic indicators; learning organization; learning city development; Yazd

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## 1. Introduction

The ever-changing landscape of the 21st century necessitates a continuous process of knowledge acquisition and skill development. This phenomenon, termed lifelong learning, has become essential for both individual and societal well-being (Mawas, 2018; Laal, 2012; Abbasi et al., 2012). Psychology acknowledges learning as a cornerstone for understanding human behavior (Yarkoni, 2017; De Houwer et al., 2013). However, reaching a universally agreed-upon definition for "Learning" remains challenging due to its inherent complexity (Jain, 2003; Bouton, 2007; Schwartz et al., 2002). In response to this emphasis on continuous learning, the concept of learning cities has emerged. Yazd city districts leverage collaborative partnerships to cultivate a cultural shift that prioritizes learning throughout life (Scientific and Technical Information Center for Urban Management, 2012). This approach utilizes learning as a tool to drive social cohesion, economic development, and societal renewal, encompassing all sectors of the community (Scientific and Technical Information Center for Urban Management, 2012). Similar to other learning communities, the development of learning cities necessitates the creation of innovative structures and processes (Shapira, 2008; Faris, 2006, p. 34). The growing emphasis on learning cities stems from various factors, including globalization, economic forces, advancements in information technology, business transformation, the rise of customer-centricity, the increasing importance of knowledge and expertise, evolving employee roles and expectations, a diverse and mobile workforce, and the constant flux and uncertainties of the modern world (Safania, 2015, p. 37).

Prior research suggests a connection between learning styles and the effectiveness of professional education programs (Olivos et al., 2016; Kennedy, 2016; Garet, 2001; Hayes, 1997; Grasha, 1987). Their study (p-value = 0.002) identified a significant relationship between these factors. Furthermore, Juceviciene (2010) conceptualizes a learning city as a multifaceted social structure. Its development hinges on fostering learning opportunities across all city levels, encompassing residents, families, organizations, and urban management through collaborative networks. Hamilton (2010) emphasized the importance of increased investment, establishing learning city networks, and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including education, business, local government, and the private sector. Di Sivoa and Ladianaa (2010) defined a learning society as one characterized by widespread and lifelong learning. They advocate for lifelong learning as a fundamental strategy for societal improvement across social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions, ultimately aiming to enhance citizens' quality of life. Langworth and Kelly (2006) focused on Canadian learning cities, highlighting the need for raising awareness of lifelong learning, achieving high literacy rates, promoting citizen engagement, fostering strong partnerships between businesses and educational institutions, and increasing funding and resources to facilitate continuous learning opportunities. Limited domestic research on lifelong learning and learning cities in Iran necessitates a focus on the key studies, such as Sarvar et al. (2016) investigated the relationship between learning city characteristics and educational institutions in Bonab City. Their findings revealed a positive and significant correlation between the characteristics of a learning city and the size and type of educational centers, including schools, universities, and applied learning institutions. Hosseini and Gholipour (2015) explored the connection between Islamic learning city indicators and sustainable urban development in Rasht City. They suggest that fostering advancements in Islamic learning city indicators can contribute to achieving sustainable urban development, potentially transforming Rasht into a prominent knowledge hub. Manafi and Esmail Pour (2015) emphasized the need to tailor citizen education and training programs to align with the city's mission and objectives, ultimately contributing to the successful fulfillment of the city's vision. Bayat et al. (2012) examined the concept of a learning city within the context of Tehran's 6th municipal region. Their research identified factors influencing the formation of this concept and assessed the region's current status based on learning city dimensions, as perceived by experts.

This research presents a novel contribution to the existing knowledge on learning cities. While previous studies established the framework (Iamtrakul, 2022; Németh, 2020; Facer, 2019), limited research has explored the prioritization of economic factors. The critical gap remains in addressing the prioritization of economic factors within the framework. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this knowledge gap by exploring the hitherto unexamined area of integrating economic considerations into learning city development strategies. Specifically, the research investigates the correlation between economic indicators and the success of learning city initiatives within the context of Yazd city districts. The investigation employs a novel methodology for analyzing economic indicators and their alignment with the learning city framework. This approach facilitates the prioritization of districts based on their economic strengths, enabling the development of targeted strategies. These strategies leverage existing economic advantages to cultivate a thriving learning environment within the selected districts. Therefore, this study presents groundbreaking insights by integrating economic considerations and offering a data-driven approach for prioritizing areas within a city to foster a successful learning environment.

By analyzing the economic aspects of learning city development, this research offers valuable insights for policymakers and urban planners. Understanding the interplay between economic factors and learning city initiatives can inform strategies for resource allocation and infrastructure development within different city districts. This, in turn, can contribute to fostering a more equitable and sustainable learning environment for all residents.

## **2. Learning City Development**

The concept of lifelong learning and its connection to active citizenship finds its roots in the works of Coombs and Lingerad (as cited in Maleki Avarasin & Faraji, 2015). UNESCO's reports

emphasize this notion, framing learning itself as an internal treasure to be cultivated throughout life (Maleki Avaresin & Faraji, 2015). Learning cities are cities that offer opportunities, promote learning from basic to higher education, reinvigorate learning in society and families, facilitate learning at work, expanding the use of modern learning technologies, increasing the quality and the power of education, developing a learning culture in Creates a lifetime for citizens (Balangao, 2013: 6). Cities themselves are the embodiment of accumulated experiences and knowledge gained through the ongoing process of urbanization (Leadbetter, 2021; May, 2017; Löw, 2013; Yigitcanlar, 2011; Kirkabadi & Alipour, 2011). In today's knowledge-driven world, local and regional authorities recognize the crucial role of human and social capital in shaping a successful future. Therefore, urban managers and policymakers increasingly prioritize initiatives like the development of learning cities (Gertler & Wolf, 2004). As Candy (2003) aptly points out, a learning city actively seeks to adapt and thrive in a constantly evolving world. By embracing the principles of lifelong learning and fostering a culture of continuous knowledge acquisition, cities can achieve significant progress and enhance their overall governance (Echoes of the city, 2012).

Research posits that learning cities cultivate a multitude of societal benefits. Fostering a culture of continuous learning empowers individuals, potentially leading to reduced crime and poverty while learning environments promote personal and professional growth, fostering a sense of accomplishment and encouraging collaboration within communities. These environments also contribute to increased self-esteem and community stability by equipping individuals with the skills necessary to actively participate. Furthermore, learning cities prioritize citizen awareness of their rights and responsibilities, leading to a more informed citizenry actively engaged in civic life. One crucial aspect involves creating accessible learning environments, striving to cater to individuals regardless of location, potentially including unconventional settings. This fosters ubiquitous learning, making knowledge acquisition readily available. Ultimately, learning cities aim to cultivate a citizenry actively involved in shaping the political, economic, social, and cultural landscape through intellectual and responsible participation. A core principle involves fostering the acceptance of lifelong learning, where individuals continuously develop their knowledge and skills. Learning initiatives contribute to the development of both personal and collective skillsets, alongside promoting shared values. Learning environments foster a spirit of collaboration and emphasize providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all individuals, regardless of background (Culwick, 2019; Dekoulou & Trivellas, 2015; Ly et al. 2017; Sun, 2007).

### *2.1. Connecting to Economic Indicators*

Economic indicators serve as a foundation for comprehending the impact of learning initiatives on a city's overall development (Pupphachai, 2017). These indicators offer a multifaceted lens through which researchers can assess the influence of acquired knowledge and skills on educational attainment and economic approaches within the city (Feldmeyer, 2020). Analyzing economic data allows them to connect the dots between learning initiatives and tangible economic improvements. Furthermore, economic indicators provide a comprehensive picture of the city's economic health. By identifying and ranking the city's overall well-being, researchers gain valuable insights into areas of strength and potential weaknesses. This information is crucial for addressing local economic disparities. Economic indicators can reveal variations in economic performance across different districts within a city, highlighting the factors influencing the economic landscape of each region. By understanding these disparities, targeted interventions can be designed to foster economic development across all districts. Economic data also plays a vital role in identifying the dominant skillsets and the density of different occupations within specific regions. This information is instrumental for informing the development of targeted interventions and educational programs that directly address the specific needs of the local workforce. Finally, analyzing economic data helps determine which subjects and interventions require the most focus within the context of learning city initiatives. It offers valuable insights into potential future economic shifts, functioning as an "Early Warning System" for emerging challenges. This foresight enables proactive measures to be taken,

allowing for mitigation strategies to be implemented (Gouédard, 2021; Lehtonen, 2015; Truong, 2016: 1188).

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Data Collection

This study employed a survey methodology for data collection. The research design adopts a descriptive-analytical approach with a focus on applied development. A cluster sampling technique was utilized to select participants. Indicators were extracted through a rigorous process of thematic analysis involving: 1) Comprehensive review of relevant literature which included Prior research and subject-specific publications. 2) Expert survey, a survey was conducted with 30 experts, including professors and specialists representing diverse fields like geography, urbanization, economics, and urban management. The survey aimed to achieve consensus on the variables defining the "Learning City of Yazd".

#### 3.2. Questionnaire Development and Validation

The questionnaire was designed to assess both statistical characteristics and social/legal variables. It consisted of 8 questions with a 5-point Likert scale. The validity of the instrument was established through consultation with relevant professors and experts.

#### 3.3. Sampling and Participants

Due to the specialized nature of the research, the target population comprised experts and professionals actively involved in organizations related to the "Learning City of Yazd" concept. These organizations included municipalities, educational institutions (schools and universities), companies, community centers, and libraries. As the exact population size was unknown, a convenience sampling approach was utilized. A sample size of 320 participants was determined. The questionnaire, divided into two sections, was distributed proportionally across the 8 districts of Yazd city, considering the population size of each area.

#### 3.4. Instrument Reliability

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire. The obtained value of 0.893 indicates a high level of reliability and confirms the internal consistency of the instrument in measuring the research variables.

#### 3.5. Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze the collected data. The following statistical tests were employed: 1) Kolmogorov-Smirnov test: This test assessed the normality of the data distribution. 2) One-Sample T-Test: This test analyzed the difference between the sample mean and a hypothesized value. 3) Simple Linear Regression: This test examined the relationship between two continuous variables. 4) Kendall's W: This test assessed the concordance between rankings of the same items by multiple raters.

**Table 1.** Research Indicators and Variables presents the specific elements used in this investigation.

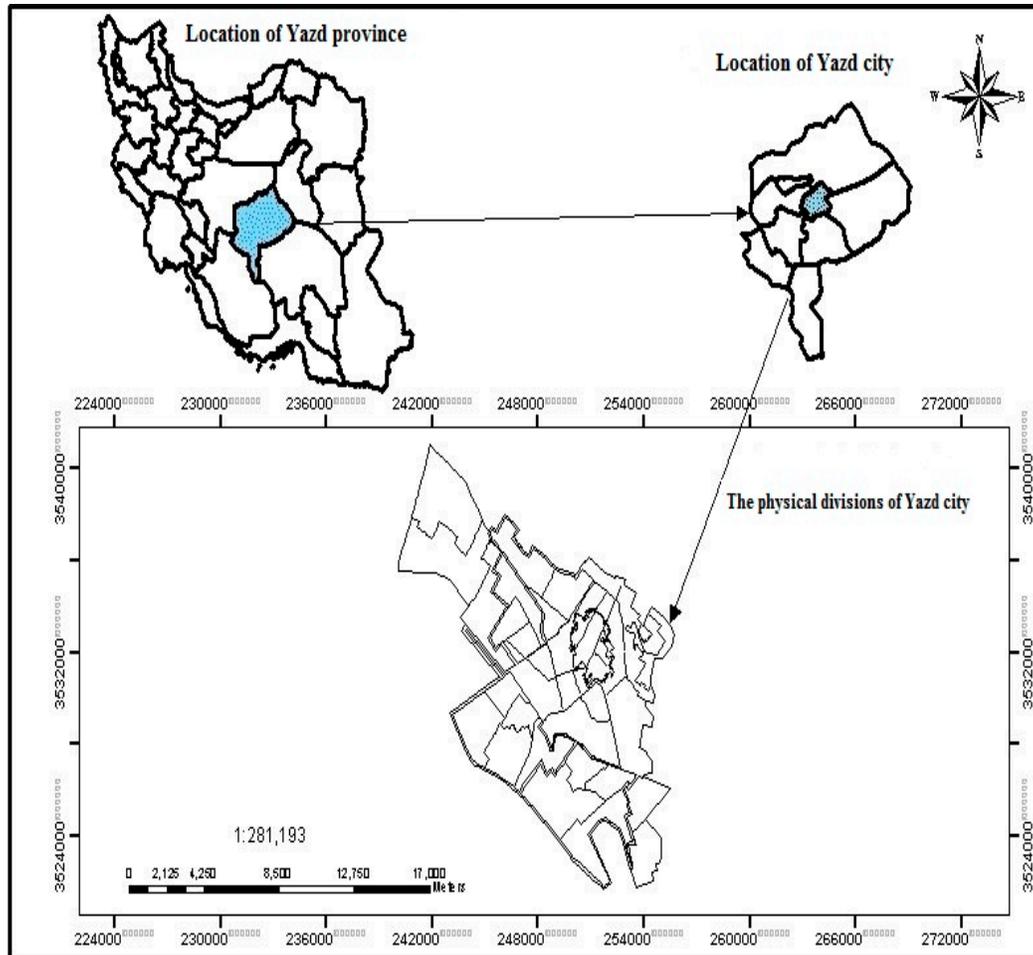
Index	Variable
	Implementing incentive programs, such as bonuses or financial rewards, to motivate learning within organizations

<b>Economic</b>	Developing strategic partnerships with local communities and government officials to support organizational learning initiatives
	Fostering collaboration through joint activities between schools, universities, companies, media outlets, and local authorities
	Understanding the economic aspects of organizations, including cost-benefit analysis and human capital investment
	Encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit within organizations, fostering innovation and intrapreneurship
	Enhancing economic productivity in organizations by optimizing resource utilization and implementing lean management practices
	Promoting a culture of fairness and continuous improvement within organizations to ensure high-quality standards
	Maintaining financial responsibility through sound financial management practices to support learning and development initiatives

Source: The authors, adapted from Sarver et al., 2017; Ghiyoswand and Abdul Shah, 2016; Emami et al., 2015; Shams et al., 2015; Balangao, 2013; Yang, 2010; Candy, 2003; Kilpatrick, 2003; Don Clark, 2000; www.fa.irunesco.org; www.longlearn.org.uk; www.muhc.ir.

#### 4. Case Background

Yazd province occupies a central position within Iran's inner plateau. It borders Semnan and Khorasan Razavi provinces to the north, Kerman province to the south, South Khorasan province to the east and south, and Isfahan province to the west. The city of Yazd itself is situated at coordinates 29°52' to 33°27' north latitude and 52°55' to 56°37' east longitude. It encompasses an area of approximately 99.5 square kilometers and is administratively divided into three regions and eight urban areas (Yazd City Governor, 2019). Based on the latest census data from 1995 conducted by Iran's Statistics Center (2017), the total population of Yazd stands at 656,447, with 195,134 households.



**Figure 1.** Location and Physical Divisions of the Study Area. Source: Authors, 2024.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Descriptive Findings

The study sample comprised 320 participants. Among these, 40.7% belonged to the 20-30 year age group, followed by 51.9% in the 30-40 year range. Individuals aged 40-50 and those above 50 constituted 3.7% each. Regarding gender distribution, 85.7% were male and 14.3% were female. Marital status revealed that 74.3% were married, while 25.7% were single. Educational attainment demonstrated a high level of qualification. A significant portion (44.4%) held bachelor's degrees, with 51.9% possessing undergraduate qualifications. Doctoral degrees were held by 3.7% of the sample.

### 5.2. Data Analysis

This research employed the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess the normality of the data obtained from the questionnaire responses. This test evaluates the compatibility of the data with a specific theoretical distribution (typically a normal distribution). A statistically significant result ( $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ) indicates non-normality, necessitating the application of non-parametric statistical tests. Conversely, a non-significant result ( $p$ -value  $\geq 0.05$ ) suggests that the data conforms to a normal distribution, allowing for the use of parametric tests.

In this study, as presented in Table 2, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results confirmed the normality of the data ( $p$ -value  $\geq 0.05$ ). This finding implies that the data exhibits a normal distribution, enabling the utilization of parametric statistical tests for further analysis.

**Table 2.** Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Results for Economic Index of the Learning City in Yazd.

Variable	Area	Data Distribution Analysis	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Sig. (2-tailed)
Implementing incentive programs, such as bonuses or financial rewards, to motivate learning within organizations	1	Normal	0/372	0/995
	2	Normal	0/883	0/417
	3	Normal	0/667	0/766
	4	Normal	0/303	1
	5	Normal	0/661	0/769
	6	Normal	0/614	0/846
	7	Normal	0/368	0/999
	8	Normal	0/717	0/682
Developing strategic partnerships with local communities and government officials to support organizational learning initiatives	1	Normal	0/372	0/995
	2	Normal	0/595	0/880
	3	Normal	0/667	0/766
	4	Normal	0/667	0/766
	5	Normal	0/665	0/768
	6	Normal	0/883	0/417
	7	Normal	0/367	0/998
	8	Normal	0/998	0/272
Fostering collaboration through joint activities between schools, universities, companies, media outlets, and local authorities	1	Normal	0/380	0/990
	2	Normal	0/520	0/949
	3	Normal	0/661	0/770
	4	Normal	0/667	0/766
	5	Normal	0/666	0/767
	6	Normal	0/500	0/964
	7	Normal	0/369	0/999
	8	Normal	0/717	0/682

Understanding the economic aspects of organizations, including cost-benefit analysis and human capital investment	1	Normal	0/379	0/991
	2	Normal	0/595	0/870
	3	Normal	0/667	0/766
	4	Normal	0/668	0/765
	5	Normal	0/667	0/766
	6	Normal	0/883	0/417
	7	Normal	0/368	0/999
	8	Normal	0/816	0/518
Encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit within organizations, fostering innovation and intrapreneurship	1	Normal	0/369	0/998
	2	Normal	0/301	1
	3	Normal	0/651	0/801
	4	Normal	0/669	0/764
	5	Normal	0/667	0/766
	6	Normal	0/567	0/905
	7	Normal	0/368	0/999
	8	Normal	0/998	0/272
Enhancing economic productivity in organizations by optimizing resource utilization and implementing lean management practices	1	Normal	0/378	0/992
	2	Normal	0/520	0/949
	3	Normal	0/659	0/780
	4	Normal	0/666	0/765
	5	Normal	0/303	1
	6	Normal	0/883	0/417
	7	Normal	0/368	0/999
	8	Normal	0/512	0/956
Promoting a culture of fairness and continuous improvement	1	Normal	0/389	0/981
	2	Normal	0/567	0/905
	3	Normal	0/688	0/713
	4	Normal	0/667	0/766

within organizations to ensure high-quality standards	5	Normal	0/667	0/766
	6	Normal	0/883	0/417
	7	Normal	0/367	0/997
	8	Normal	0/782	0/573
Maintaining financial responsibility through sound financial management practices to support learning and development initiatives	1	Normal	0/380	0/990
	2	Normal	0/567	0/905
	3	Normal	0/438	0/991
	4	Normal	0/303	1
	5	Normal	0/669	0/665
	6	Normal	0/500	0/964
	7	Normal	0/368	0/999
	8	Normal	0/717	0/672

Following confirmation of normal data distribution through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, a single-sample T-test was employed to analyze the research variables. The detailed results are presented in Table 3. Expert evaluations revealed an undesirable state regarding various aspects across most Yazd city areas. This is particularly evident in variables like "Applying Bonus Systems" and "strategic programs for working with local communities." Statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) were observed between the mean scores assigned by experts and a reference value (number 3), indicating that the current state falls below the desired level in these areas.

A closer examination of specific areas reveals concerning trends. Area 6 consistently exhibited the lowest mean scores across most variables, highlighting a significant difference compared to the reference value ( $p < 0.05$ ). Conversely, Area 7 generally obtained the highest mean scores, suggesting no significant difference from the reference value ( $p > 0.05$ ) for several variables. For instance, in the "applying bonus system" variable, Area 6 displayed the lowest score ( $p < 0.05$ ), signifying a significant gap compared to the reference value. On the other hand, Area 2 had the highest mean score ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating no significant difference. Similar patterns were observed in the "strategic programs" variable, where Area 6 had the lowest score ( $p < 0.05$ ) and Area 7 had the highest score ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 3.** Single-Sample T-Test Results for the Economic Index of the Learning City in Yazd City Areas.

Variable	area	Mean	Std. Deviation	Test value	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Implementing incentive programs, such as bonuses or	1	2/22	0/500	3	-3	0/158
	2	2/74	0/500	3	-1	0/391
	3	2/33	1/155	3	-1/581	0/175
	4	2	1	3	-1/732	0/225

financial rewards, to motivate learning within organizations	5	2/69	0/577	3	-1	0/423
	6	1/65	0/577	3	-5/196	0/014
	7	2/45	2/121	3	-0/333	0/795
	8	2/13	0/816	3	-1/981	0/125
Developing strategic partnerships with local communities and government officials to support organizational learning initiatives	1	2/22	0/500	3	-3	0/158
	2	2/22	1/500	3	-3	0/158
	3	2/33	0/577	3	-1/581	0/175
	4	2/69	0/577	3	-1	0/423
	5	2/33	0/577	3	-1/581	0/175
	6	1/85	0/500	3	-5	0/015
	7	3/5	0/707	3	1	0/500
	8	2/33	1/033	3	-1/581	0/175
Fostering collaboration through joint activities between schools, universities, companies, media outlets, and local authorities	1	2	1	3	-1/732	0/195
	2	3	1/414	3	0	1
	3	2/37	0/577	3	-2	0/184
	4	2/77	1/155	3	-0/500	0/667
	5	2/23	1/155	3	-1	0/423
	6	2/1	0/816	3	-2/449	0/225
	7	3/5	0/707	3	1	0/500
	8	2/43	0/816	3	-2	0/102
Understanding the economic aspects of organizations, including cost-benefit analysis and human capital investment	1	2/05	1/258	3	-1/192	0/319
	2	2/25	1/5	3	-1	0/391
	3	2/33	1/155	3	-1	0/423
	4	1/77	0/577	3	-4	0/057
	5	1/37	0/577	3	-5	0/037
	6	2/76	0/500	3	-1	0/391
	7	3/5	0/707	3	1	0/500

	8	2	0/632	3	-3/873	0/112
Encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit within organizations, fostering innovation and intrapreneurship	1	2/18	0/957	3	-1/567	0/215
	2	2/49	1/291	3	-0/775	0/495
	3	2/63	0/577	3	-1	0/423
	4	2	1	3	-1/732	0/195
	5	1/31	0/577	3	-6/325	0/001
	6	2/73	0/957	3	-0/522	0/628
	7	3	1	3	0	1
	8	1/61	0/516	3	-5	0/038
Enhancing economic productivity in organizations by optimizing resource utilization and implementing lean management practices	1	2/01	0/500	3	-4	0/115
	2	3	1/414	3	0	1
	3	2/57	0/577	3	-1	0/423
	4	2/13	0/577	3	-2	0/184
	5	2	1	3	-1/732	0/225
	6	2/52	1	3	-1	0/391
	7	3	1	3	0	1
	8	2/34	1/211	3	-1/348	0/235
Promoting a culture of fairness and continuous improvement within organizations to ensure high-quality standards	1	1/89	0/957	3	-2/611	0/080
	2	2/74	0/957	3	-0/522	0/628
	3	2	1	3	-1/732	0/195
	4	2/77	0/577	3	-1	0/423
	5	1/31	0/577	3	-6/325	0/001
	6	2/55	0/500	3	-1	0/391
	7	1/55	0/707	3	-3	0/205
	8	2/59	1/095	3	-2/236	0/076

Maintaining financial responsibility through sound financial management practices to support learning and development initiatives	1	2/03	0/957	3	-2/611	0/180
	2	2/14	0/957	3	-1/567	0/215
	3	2/30	1/528	3	-0/756	0/529
	4	2	1	3	-1/732	0/225
	5	1/23	0/577	3	-6/319	0/001
	6	2	0/816	3	-2/449	0/192
	7	2/51	0/707	3	-1/10	0/501
	8	2/32	0/816	3	-2	0/102

Following confirmation of normal data distribution through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, a simple linear regression analysis was employed to explore the potential relationship between the economic index and independent variables within Yazd city. As presented in Table 4, the results revealed a statistically significant relationship between these variables. This finding suggests that the independent variables collectively influence the economic index in Yazd city to a statistically noteworthy degree.

**Table 4.** Summary of Linear Regression Model for the Economic Index with Independent Variables in Yazd City.

Index	Independent variables	Delta Statistics ( $\Delta$ )						Std. Error of the Estimate	Adjusted R Square	R Square	R
		Durbin-Watson	Sig. F Change	df 2	df 1	F Change	R Square Change				
Economic	Education	1/567	0/000	19	1	121/544	0/915	14/24653	0/909	0/915	9450/
	Age	1/967	0/001	19	1	123/633	0/919	14/95863	0/903	0/919	9650/
	Marital status	1/659	0/004	19	1	111/569	0/796	16/73454	0/785	0/796	8210/

The regression analysis revealed significant relationships between the economic index (dependent variable) and the independent variables: education, age, and marital status. Education, The R-squared value (0.915) indicates a strong positive correlation between the economic index and

education level. This implies that the economic index can explain approximately 91.5% of the variability in the education variable. Furthermore, the adjusted R-squared (0.909) and the significant F-statistic ( $p < 0.001$ ) further support the model's strong explanatory power. The Durbin-Watson statistic (between 1.5 and 2.5) suggests no significant autocorrelation in the residuals. Age, Similar to education, the R-squared value (0.919) signifies a strong positive correlation between the economic index and age. The economic index can explain roughly 91.9% of the variations in the age variable. The adjusted R-squared (0.903) and the significant F-statistic ( $p < 0.001$ ) reinforce this association. The Durbin-Watson statistic remains within the acceptable range (1.5-2.5), indicating no major concerns about autocorrelation. Marital Status, The R-squared value (0.796) suggests a moderately strong positive correlation between the economic index and marital status. The economic index explains approximately 79.6% of the variability in the marital status variable. While the adjusted R-squared (0.785) is lower than the previous models, the significant F-statistic ( $p < 0.004$ ) indicates a statistically relevant relationship. The Durbin-Watson statistic again falls within the acceptable range (1.5-2.5).

The W. Kendal test reveals statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) in how respondents perceive the economic index across different areas. This signifies that respondents hold varying opinions regarding the economic strength of each location. Furthermore, the W. Kendal values close to 0 suggest a low level of agreement among respondents concerning the specific economic indicators. This implies that individuals might have diverse perspectives on the economic strengths and weaknesses of each area. Table 5 presents the average ranks assigned to each area based on various economic indicators. Area 7 consistently received the highest average ranks across most indicators. For instance, in "Implementing incentive programs," Area 7 ranked highest (5.89) signifying a perceived effectiveness in motivating learning within organizations. Similarly, Area 7 achieved the top rank (6.36) in "Strategic Planning," indicating a perceived strength in collaborating with local communities. Conversely, Area 5 consistently received the lowest average ranks, suggesting a need for improvement in various economic aspects. For example, Area 5 received the lowest rank (1.81) in "Implementing incentive programs," highlighting a perceived weakness in this area.

**Table 5.** Ranking of Yazd city areas according to Economic indicators of the learning city in the test of W. Kendal.

Variable	Area	Mean Rank	Ranking
Implementing incentive programs, such as bonuses or financial rewards, to motivate learning within organizations	1	3/65	5
	2	5/89	1
	3	4/02	4
	4	2/99	7
	5	5/21	2
	6	1/81	8
	7	4/54	3
	8	3/23	6
Sig. (2-tailed)	0/001		
W. Kendal	0/129		
Developing strategic partnerships with local communities and government officials to support organizational learning initiatives	1	3/41	4
	2	3/41	4
	3	4/22	3
	4	5/96	2
	5	4/22	3
	6	2/01	5
	7	6/36	1

	8	4/22	3
Sig. (2-tailed)	0/003		
W. Kendal	0/298		
Fostering collaboration through joint activities between schools, universities, companies, media outlets, and local authorities	1	2/38	8
	2	5/63	2
	3	4/11	5
	4	5/03	3
	5	3/67	6
	6	3/12	7
	7	6/41	1
	8	4/34	4
Sig. (2-tailed)	0/004		
W. Kendal	0/365		
Understanding the economic aspects of organizations, including cost-benefit analysis and human capital investment	1	3/99	5
	2	4/53	4
	3	5/02	3
	4	2/47	7
	5	1/66	8
	6	5/78	2
	7	6/29	1
	8	3/11	6
Sig. (2-tailed)	0/001		
W. Kendal	0/132		
Encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit within organizations, fostering innovation and intrapreneurship	1	2/71	5
	2	3/55	4
	3	4/17	3
	4	2/11	6
	5	1/47	8
	6	4/96	2
	7	5/31	1
	8	1/89	7
Sig. (2-tailed)	0/000		
W. Kendal	0/065		
Enhancing economic productivity in organizations by optimizing resource utilization and implementing lean management practices	1	2/98	6
	2	5/92	1
	3	5	2
	4	3/56	5
	5	2/39	7
	6	4/44	3
	7	5/92	1

	8	4/04	4
Sig. (2-tailed)	0/000		
W. Kendal	0/101		
Promoting a culture of fairness and continuous improvement within organizations to ensure high-quality standards	1	2/87	6
	2	5/09	2
	3	3/11	5
	4	5/63	1
	5	1/22	8
	6	3/81	4
	7	1/91	7
	8	4/39	3
Sig. (2-tailed)	0/002		
W. Kendal	0/220		
Maintaining financial responsibility through sound financial management practices to support learning and development initiatives	1	3/01	5
	2	3/33	4
	3	4/02	3
	4	2/28	6
	5	1/47	7
	6	2/28	6
	7	4/95	1
	8	4/62	2
Sig. (2-tailed)	0/000		
W. Kendal	0/098		

Based on the W. Kendal test results, respondents generally perceived Area 7 to possess a stronger economic index compared to other areas. This is evident from its consistently high average ranks across most economic indicators. In contrast, Area 5 consistently received the lowest ranks, indicating a perceived need for improvement in its overall economic performance.

This analysis examines the economic performance of various areas within Yazd city, considering their role in a learning city framework. The W. Kendal test was employed, with results presented in Tables 5 and 6. Statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) exist in how respondents perceive the economic index across various areas (Tables 5 and 6). This signifies diverse opinions regarding the economic strength of the learning city within each location. Additionally, the low W. Kendal values (close to 0) suggest a lack of consensus among respondents concerning both specific economic indicators (Table 5) and the overall economic index (Table 6). This implies varying perspectives on the factors contributing to economic performance. In Area Rankings and Economic Disparity, Tables 5 and 6 showcase average ranks assigned to each area based on various economic indicators and the overall economic index:

- **Economic Indicators:** Area 7 consistently received the highest average ranks across most indicators in Table 5 (e.g., incentive programs, strategic planning). This suggests a perceived advantage in aspects crucial for a learning city's economic performance.
- **Overall Economic Index:** Similarly, Area 7 achieved the top rank (6.71) in Table 6, indicating a perceived strength in its overall economic standing. This could be attributed to the presence of universities and academic resources within this area.

Conversely, Area 5 consistently received the lowest ranks in both tables. This suggests a need for improvement in various economic aspects (Table 5) and a perceived disadvantage in its overall economic performance within the learning city framework (Table 6). The mentioned historical texture and "Worn Texture" in Area 5 potentially indicate a lack of investment, contributing to its lower ranking. Focusing on developing learning city characteristics within Area 5 could yield benefits:

- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Promote partnerships between educational institutions, businesses, and government to foster lifelong learning.
- **Increased Access to Education:** Invest in educational infrastructure, provide training programs, and create a supportive environment for skill development.
- **Citizen Empowerment:** Promote civic engagement, critical thinking skills, and participation in decision-making processes.

The W. Kendal test analysis reveals significant variations in how respondents perceive the economic performance of the learning city across different areas. While Area 7 exhibits a perceived advantage, Area 5 requires focused efforts to improve its economic standing and support a robust learning environment. Implementing the suggested recommendations could lead to: 1) Stronger relationships between learning organizations. 2) Increased success and self-esteem within the community. 3) Enhanced citizen participation in various aspects of civic life. 4) A culture of continuous learning throughout life.

**Table 6.** Economic Indicators of the Learning city in the W. Kendal Test.

Variable	Area	Mean rank	Ranking
Economic	1	3/38	7
	2	6/69	2
	3	5/25	3
	4	3/69	5
	5	2/31	8
	6	4/44	4
	7	6/71	1
	8	3/56	6
Sig. (2-tailed)	0/001		
W. Kendal	0/178		

## 6. Discussion

Cities play a pivotal role in driving economic growth in the contemporary world. Learning serves as a crucial fuel for this advancement, fostering innovation and a skilled workforce. The learning city movement, a recent phenomenon gaining traction globally, holds immense potential to be one of the most significant developments in our dynamic times. This research delves into the evaluation of economic indicators within the framework of a learning city in Yazd, Iran. The analysis focuses on various districts within the city. The study employed the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess data normality. The results indicated a normal distribution, allowing for the use of parametric statistical tests. A single-sample T-test revealed that the current state across most Yazd city districts, as evaluated by experts, falls below the desired level. This signifies a need for improvement in the economic index of the learning city by managers, officials, and policymakers of Yazd city. Further analysis using simple linear regression established a significant relationship between the economic index and independent variables such as education level, age, and marital status. The findings suggest that the economic index can explain a substantial portion of the variance in these variables: 91.5% for educational level, 91.9% for age, and 79.6% for marital status.

To prioritize interventions within Yazd's districts based on the economic index of the learning city, the W. Kendal test was utilized. The analysis revealed significant differences in economic performance across the districts. Area 7 consistently displayed the highest average ranks across various economic indicators, suggesting a perceived advantage in this crucial aspect. Conversely, Area 5 exhibited the lowest average ranks, indicating a requirement for targeted interventions to strengthen its economic standing within the learning city framework.

Prior research has established a connection between learning styles and the effectiveness of professional education programs (Olivos et al., 2016; Kennedy, 2016; Garet, 2001; Hayes, 1997; Grasha, 1987). Juceviciene (2010) conceptualizes a learning city as a multifaceted social structure that depends on fostering learning opportunities across all levels, encompassing residents, families, organizations, and urban management through collaborative networks. These ideas are echoed by Hamilton (2010) who emphasizes increased investment, establishing learning city networks, and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Building on this foundation, Di Sivoa and Ladianaa (2010) define a learning society as one characterized by widespread and lifelong learning. They advocate for lifelong learning as a fundamental strategy for societal improvement across social, economic, political, and cultural dimensions, ultimately aiming to enhance citizens' quality of life. Langworth and Kelly (2006) specifically focus on Canadian learning cities, highlighting the need for raising awareness of lifelong learning, achieving high literacy rates, promoting citizen engagement, fostering strong partnerships between businesses and educational institutions, and increasing funding and resources. There is limited domestic research on lifelong learning and learning cities in Iran. However, some key studies have been conducted. Sarvar et al. (2016) investigated the relationship between learning city characteristics and educational institutions in Bonab City. Their findings revealed a positive and significant correlation between the characteristics of a learning city and the size and type of educational centers. Hosseini and Gholipour (2015) explored the connection between Islamic learning city indicators and sustainable urban development in Rasht City. They suggest that fostering advancements in Islamic learning city indicators can contribute to achieving sustainable urban development. Manafi and Esmail Pour (2015) emphasized the need to tailor citizen education and training programs to align with the city's mission and objectives, ultimately contributing to the successful fulfillment of the city's vision. Bayat et al. (2012) examined the concept of a learning city within the context of Tehran's 6th municipal region. Their research identified factors influencing the formation of this concept and assessed the region's current status based on learning city dimensions.

The current study aligns with previous research emphasizing the significance of lifelong learning and collaborative efforts across diverse sectors in establishing successful learning cities. This necessitates prioritizing investments in areas like Area 5 with a lower economic index. Fostering collaboration through a network involving managers, authorities, organizations, and investors is crucial for achieving this objective. Building upon the evaluation of Yazd's economic indicators within the learning city framework, this research proposes recommendations to address the areas requiring improvement. City officials and planners have outlined a multifaceted approach aimed at fostering a thriving learning environment. Public engagement is crucial and can be achieved through training-based seminars for residents. Conducting surveys within various neighborhoods can provide valuable data on educational needs to inform targeted planning initiatives.

Enhancing infrastructure and accessibility is essential. Establishing an electronic infrastructure specifically designed for a learning city network would provide the necessary foundation for knowledge sharing and collaboration. Organizing workshops centered on promoting lifelong learning opportunities would further enrich the educational landscape. To fully leverage the city's potential, existing institutions like universities, schools, retirement homes, and kindergartens should be actively involved by incorporating relevant programs and initiatives. Finally, achieving good urban governance necessitates the effective integration of education and knowledge acquisition into broader urban management practices. This holistic approach would ensure the successful development and implementation of learning city initiatives.

The realization of this vision hinges on the establishment of a dedicated learning city committee. This committee should encompass representatives from diverse sectors, including city managers, citizens, and private entities. Fostering collaboration and partnerships among these stakeholders is fundamental for ensuring the effective implementation of the proposed recommendations. A collective effort that prioritizes public engagement, infrastructure development, institutional involvement, and holistic governance holds immense potential for cultivating a robust learning environment throughout Yazd, particularly in Area 5, which requires concentrated efforts to strengthen its economic standing within the learning city framework.

## 7. Conclusions

The evaluation of Yazd City's economic indicators within the learning city framework reveals a need for improvement across most areas. Statistical analysis confirms a significant positive correlation between the economic index and factors like education level, age, and marital status. This highlights the crucial role of these aspects in a thriving learning environment. Among the various districts, Area 7 consistently demonstrates the strongest economic index, suggesting a perceived advantage in areas crucial for a learning city's success. Conversely, Area 5 exhibits the weakest economic performance, indicating a necessity for focused interventions. These findings align with existing research emphasizing the importance of lifelong learning and collaboration across diverse sectors within a learning city. Therefore, prioritizing investments in districts like Area 5 becomes essential. Establishing a collaborative network involving managers, authorities, organizations, and investors is crucial to achieving this goal.

In conclusion, this study underscores the significance of integrating economic considerations into the development strategies of learning cities. By addressing economic disparities and fostering collaboration amongst stakeholders, cities can cultivate a more equitable and sustainable learning environment that empowers all residents. Focusing on targeted interventions in areas like Area 5, through initiatives promoting education, infrastructure development, and citizen engagement, holds immense potential for fostering a robust learning culture throughout the city. Further research opportunities lie in exploring effective implementation strategies for these recommendations and evaluating the long-term impact of prioritizing economic factors on the overall success of learning city initiatives.

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