

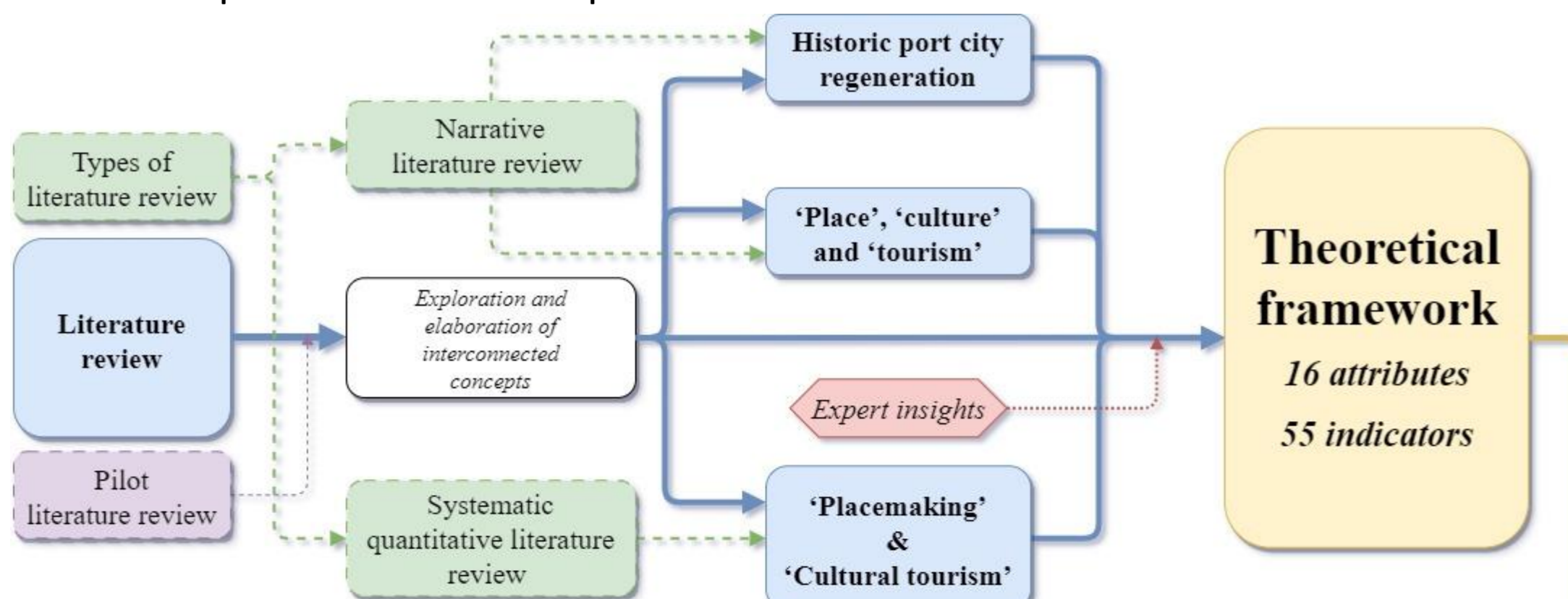
An Investigation of Placemaking Attributes for Cultural Tourism in Historic Port Cities: Using the Fuzzy Delphi Method

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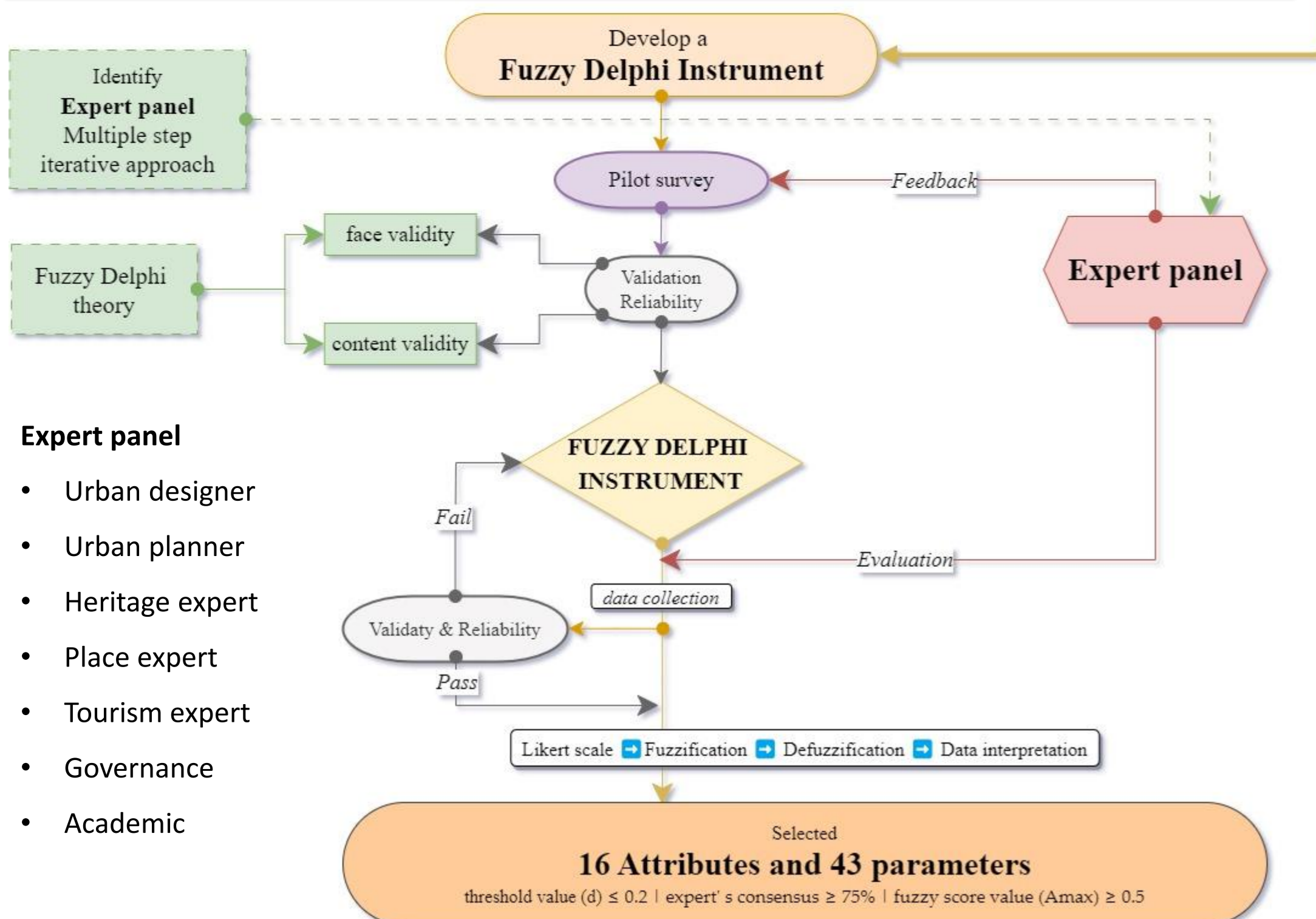
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INTRODUCTION & AIM

The importance of sustainability in all fields, especially in the realm of urban planning, has become a matter of utmost urgency due to the ill effects of globalisation. The spokes of globalisation have also triggered immense growth in the cultural tourism sector, where places are staged exclusively for tourists, alienating the locals for profit-driven objectives. The importance of the community and its people in sustaining the essence of the place is often overlooked by the decision makers. A placemaking framework can be a decisive guide in the decision-making processes to augment cultural tourism practices in unique destinations like historic port cities. This study aims to highlight the importance of placemaking by presenting a meticulous compilation of attributes and indicators that guide decision-makers aspiring to enhance the cultural tourism experience in historic port cities



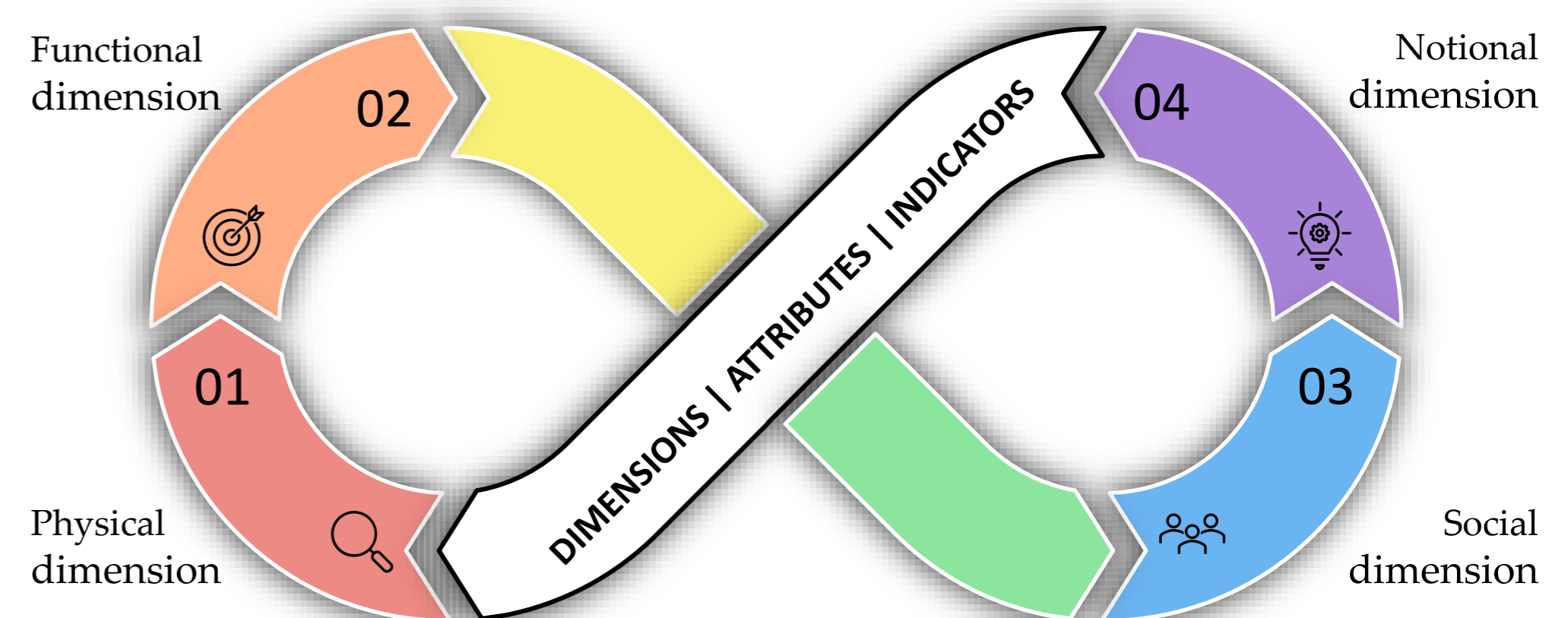
METHOD



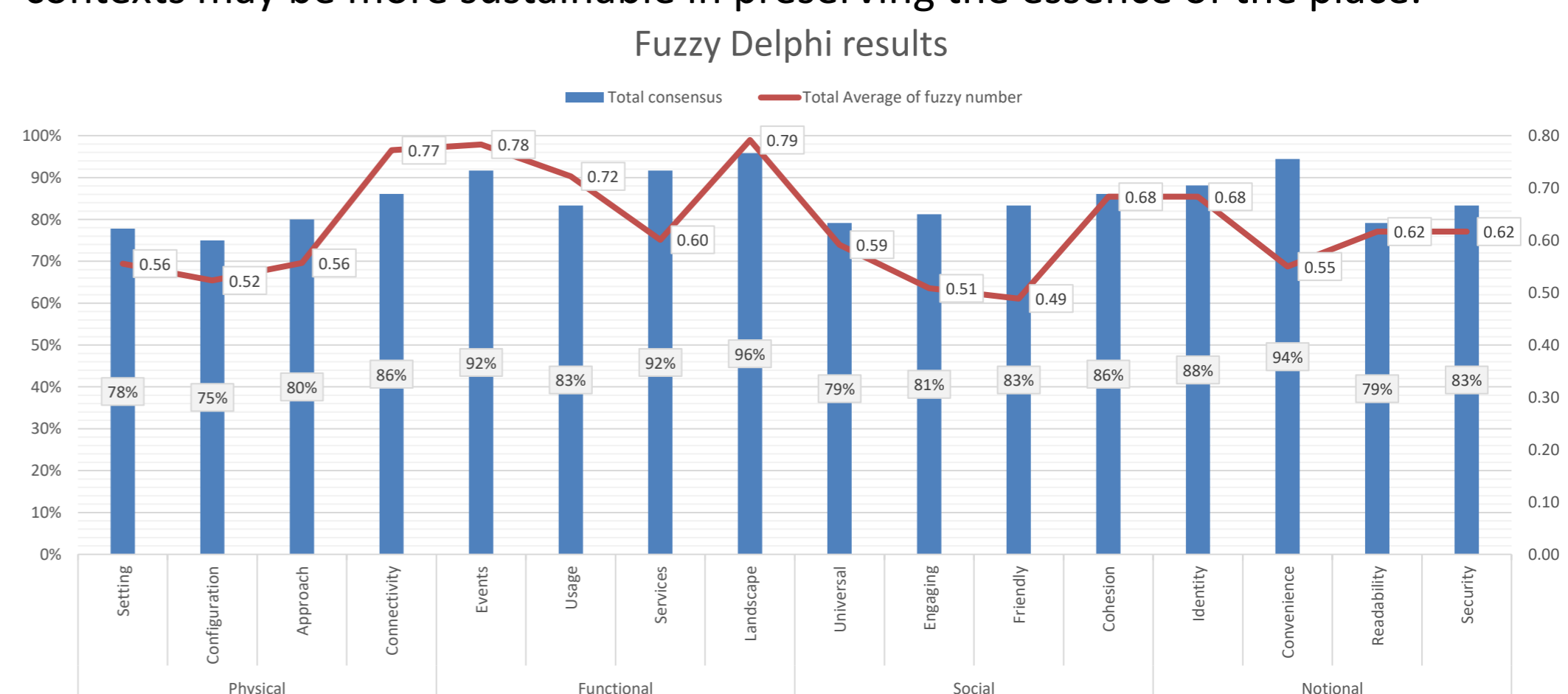
In the traditional Delphi method, the experts provide their opinions on a given topic through a series of iterative surveys and the process continues until a consensus is reached or a predefined level of convergence is achieved. The expert competency and ability to predict outcomes vary significantly, influenced by factors like educational background, experience, data access, and individual approaches. In the context, the Fuzzy Delphi technique incorporates fuzzy logic and fuzzy set theory to handle uncertainties and vagueness in expert judgments. It enables experts to provide more nuanced responses, expressing varying degrees of agreement or disagreement with a particular statement or question. Unlike studies where prioritization and ranking require iterative rounds to reach a consensus, the primary objective of the study was identification of items to gather a diverse set of expert insights without the need for multiple iterations. A single round of Delphi sufficed the study due to a high degree of homogeneity in the perspectives of the expert panel.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The experts' opinions align to the greatest extent along the functional dimensions followed by the notional dimensions, indicating a strong consensus for both. The indicators like neighbourhoods shops, maintenance and green space under the functional dimensions have recorded maximum consensus. The indicators under the notional dimensions that secured the maximum consensus include the visual appeal of the structure, heritage significance of the place and the comforting shades. The notional dimensions encapsulate the intangible aspects of a destination, fostering a deeper appreciation of culture and contributing to the sustainable development of a place. The experts may have rated land use typology, building's line and building's materials and colors as the lowest priority indicators due to being less subject to change. This has led to the reduced levels of consensus for indicators under physical dimension.



As noted by Nezar Al Sayyad, the overemphasize of physical and social dimensions has led to the commodification of the place, alienating locals and disrupting the authenticity of the cultural experience. A balanced approach that integrates functional and notional dimensions within physical and social contexts may be more sustainable in preserving the essence of the place.



CONCLUSION

Though the study reaffirmed the importance of functional dimensions, the experiences of actual end-users may differ depending on the tourists' typology. This consolidated inventory presented in this research functions solely as a reference point for the authors to assess how the indicators manifest in historic port cities. The impending framework after the onsite assessment can serve as a practical toolkit for policymakers and investors in similar destinations grappling with parallel challenges in the realm of cultural tourism development.

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C. Okoli and S. D. Pawlowski, 'The Delphi method as a research tool: An example, design considerations and applications', Information and Management, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 15–29, Dec. 2004, doi: 10.1016/j.im.2003.11.002.