

Analysis of the socio-economic effects of wide sidewalks on the revitalization of worn-out neighborhood centers (Case study: Feyzabad neighborhood, Kermanshah)

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Abstract

This research analyzed the socio-economic effects of implementing wide sidewalks on the revitalization of the Feyzabad neighborhood center in Kermanshah. As identity jewels of cities, dilapidated urban centers are crucial for social cohesion and urban life continuity, with their revival ensuring local economic dynamism and strengthened social capital. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection through a field survey. A researcher-made questionnaire, completed by 365 residents and local business owners, was used alongside direct observation and document analysis. The instrument's validity and reliability were confirmed, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87. Data analysis using SPSS software involved descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation test. Descriptive results highlighted "local business boom" and "increase in real estate value" as the highest-rated economic components, while "social life dynamics" and "maintaining neighborhood identity" were paramount in the social dimension. The correlation analysis demonstrated a very strong and statistically significant positive relationship between the wide sidewalk project and overall neighborhood revitalization. The correlation coefficient was 0.91 for economic factors and 0.87 for social factors, both significant at the 0.01 level. In summary, the findings conclusively validate the pedestrianization strategy as a highly effective and integrated measure for driving the socio-economic revitalization of deteriorated urban neighborhoods.

Keywords: Feyzabad Neighborhood, Revitalization of Run-Down Neighborhoods, Socio-Economic Impacts, Urban Revitalization, Wide Sidewalks, Kermanshah

1.Introduction

In the field of contemporary urban planning and design, the revitalization of dilapidated urban areas has become one of the most challenging issues. These areas, which were once the center of gravity of urban life, are now facing complex issues such as physical deterioration, economic stagnation, and disruption of social structures. In the meantime, the pedestrian-based revitalization approach has been proposed as a new paradigm in the field of urban theory and practice. This research, focusing on the Feyzabad neighborhood of Kermanshah, examines the question of how extensive sidewalks can become a key factor in the socio-economic revitalization of dilapidated neighborhood centers. The Feyzabad neighborhood of Kermanshah, as a case study of this research, is a symbol of the tensions and opportunities existing in dilapidated Iranian urban areas. This neighborhood, which was once the center of social and economic life of the city, is facing numerous challenges today. From a theoretical perspective, this article is based on three fundamental foundations: creative urban economy, public space theory, and sustainable urban development. Within the framework of the creative urban economy, pedestrian-oriented spaces act as an asset for economic development. By creating an attractive and safe environment, these spaces increase traffic and the length of people's stay in the neighborhood. Studies show that creating pedestrian-oriented spaces can increase the value of commercial properties by up to 30% and the number of local jobs by up to 25% (Ghorbani et al, 2020: 128). On the social side, quality sidewalks become an arena for the emergence of "social capital". In a space that prioritizes people over cars, face-to-face interactions and the creation of social bonds are possible. Research suggests that pedestrian-oriented spaces increase the quality of life by up to 40% and strengthen the sense of place (Maghsoudi et al, 2022: 76). In a neighborhood like Faizabad, where the social structure has been disrupted, these spaces can help repair social networks. At a macro level, this approach is consistent with the goals of sustainable urban development. Pedestrianization leads to a reduction in dependence on private cars and a reduction in air pollution. Scientific data shows that wide sidewalks can reduce private vehicle traffic by up to 20% and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 15%. This, in addition to environmental aspects, also has a direct impact on the public health and well-being of residents (Eslami et al, 2021: 30). However, realizing this vision requires overcoming several challenges. The issue of "settlement", or the unwanted displacement of former and low-income residents due to increased property values and changes in the social fabric of the neighborhood, is a well-known consequence of successful urban regeneration projects (Mahdavi, et al, 2021: 90). It requires the development of smart regulatory mechanisms and social protection policies. Also, the inherent complexity of such projects makes their implementation dependent on the establishment of "integrated urban management" that emphasizes inter-organizational coordination and the integration of different dimensions of development (Nouri, et al, 2022: 46). This depends on the realization of "good urban governance" with a participatory approach in which the decision-making process and resource allocation are carried out with the active participation of all stakeholders, especially the local community (Pourahmad, et al, 2021: 83). Without these management and governance frameworks, any revitalization plan will face the risk of failure or creating inequitable outcomes. This article, using a mixed methodology and relying on field, documentary and socio-economic surveys, seeks to draw a roadmap for the transformation of the Faizabad neighborhood. In this study, "wide sidewalk" is considered not as a single development project, but as a "local development strategy" that can have multifactorial effects in various dimensions. In this regard, the present study focuses on measuring the perceptual and experiential dimensions of the project's effects from the perspective of the main stakeholders (residents and businesses), and analyzes how wide sidewalks affect neighborhood revitalization. This study, using a mixed methodology and relying on field, documentary, and socio-economic analyses, seeks to draw a roadmap for the transformation of the Faizabad neighborhood. In this study, "wide sidewalk" is considered not as a single development project, but as a "local development strategy" that can have multifactorial effects in various dimensions. In this regard, the present study focuses on measuring the perceptual and empirical dimensions of the project's effects from the perspective of the main stakeholders (residents and businesses), and analyzes how extensive

sidewalks affect neighborhood revitalization. Despite numerous studies in the field of pedestrianization, the gap in the integrated and simultaneous study of the economic and social dimensions of these projects in a dilapidated context with specific Iranian characteristics (such as issues of ownership, social capital, and local governance) is clearly felt. This study, by employing a mixed method and focusing on the Feyzabad neighborhood of Kermanshah, seeks to fill this gap.

2. Research Background

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the effects of extensive sidewalks on the revitalization of dilapidated urban areas. This section reviews the most important related research in this field. Bahrami et al. (2019) showed in a study titled "Investigating the Impact of Historic Sidewalks on the Economic Revival of Traditional Neighborhoods" that the Tabriz Bazaar sidewalk project led to a 45% increase in tourists, a 30% increase in sales of local businesses, and the creation of 120 new jobs in the region. This study was conducted using a field method and 150 questionnaires were completed by businessmen and residents. Davoodi et al. (2019) found in a study titled "Analysis of the Social Effects of Local Sidewalks on Cohesion in Dilapidated Neighborhoods" that sidewalk construction in the Sanglaj neighborhood of Tehran increased neighborhood interactions by 35%, reduced migration of original residents by 20%, and strengthened the sense of place by 40%. This study was conducted using a mixed method and over a period of 6 months of participatory observation. Karimi and Razavi et al. (2019) in a study titled "Economic Evaluation of Pedestrianization Projects in the Deteriorated Context of Isfahan City" concluded that the creation of sidewalks in the Jolfa neighborhood resulted in a 50% increase in the value of commercial properties, a 25% increase in rental prices, and a 60% return on investment within 3 years. Shayan et al. (2019) in a study titled "Measuring the Environmental Quality of Pedestrianized Spaces in the Historical Context of Shiraz" found that the criteria of accessibility, safety, comfort, and visual appeal had the greatest impact on user satisfaction. This study was conducted using the AHP method and 200 questionnaires were completed. Yousefi et al. (1402) in a study titled "Investigating the Effect of Health-Oriented Sidewalks on Citizens' Movement Behaviors" showed that the design of health-oriented sidewalks in the Farahzad neighborhood of Tehran resulted in a 40% increase in daily walking, a 15% decrease in private car use, and a 25% improvement in public health indicators. Zarbakht et al. (1401) in a study titled "Comparative Study of Pedestrian-Oriented Projects in the Dilapidated Texture of Iranian Cities" compared 5 projects in different cities and found that the most successful projects were those that were implemented with public participation and simultaneous attention to physical, economic, and social dimensions. Kamranroudi and Soltani (1402) in a study titled "Measuring Social Sustainability in Urban Pedestrian-Oriented Spaces" showed that the criteria of social interaction, fair access, readability, and spatial identity had the greatest contribution to the social sustainability of pedestrian-oriented spaces. This research was conducted in Sepahsalar neighborhood of Tehran. Several studies have also been conducted abroad on the socio-economic effects of wide sidewalks on the revitalization of run-down neighborhood centers, some of which are discussed below. Karimi et al. (1401) in a study titled "The Impact of Wide Sidewalks on Economic Revival in Historic European Neighborhoods" showed that a sidewalk construction project in Leeds, England led to a 38% increase in commercial property values, a 42% increase in tourists, and the creation of 150 new jobs in the retail sector. This study was conducted using secondary data analysis and field surveys over three years. Javaheripour (2012) concluded in a study titled "Economic Analysis of Pedestrian-Oriented Projects in Historic Contexts" that creating sidewalks in the Gothic Quarter resulted in a 60% increase in residential property values, a 30% growth in economic activities, and a 75% return on investment within 4 years. This study was conducted using financial data and field evaluation. Heidari et al. (2010) compared 6 projects in different countries in a study titled "Comparative Analysis of Pedestrian-Oriented Projects in Dilapidated Contexts" and found that the most successful projects were those that were implemented with the participation of the local community and simultaneous attention to cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions. This study was conducted using the method of comparative analysis and multi-criteria evaluation. Domestic research shows that creating pedestrian-oriented spaces

can have positive and multidimensional effects on different aspects of urban life. These studies have mainly focused on economic, social and physical aspects and have reported improvements in indicators such as the prosperity of local businesses, increased social interactions and improved environmental quality. Internationally, extensive research has also examined different experiences in the field of pedestrianization. For example, a study on the pedestrianization of the historic center of Birmingham showed that this project not only increased the value of commercial properties within a 500-meter radius by 30%, but also strengthened the urban image and attracted new investments in the service sector (Riddell, 2018: 43). Another study that evaluated a similar project in the historic neighborhood of La Jorja in Mexico City emphasizes that the success of the project depended on the integration of economic strategies (such as granting small loans to local businesses) with the physical design of the space and was able to significantly increase the sense of ownership and satisfaction of residents (Garcia et al, 2021: 64). Also, a comparative study of several pedestrian-based regeneration projects in Europe concluded that the most key factor in the long-term sustainability of the social impacts of these projects was the creation of strong local institutions to manage and maintain the spaces after the project was completed (Schmidt et al 2023: 77). These international studies, in line with the findings of domestic research, emphasize the inextricable link between the success of pedestrian-based projects and simultaneous attention to economic, social and institutional dimensions. A review of the literature shows that although the positive impacts of pedestrianization have been confirmed in separate dimensions, three main gaps can be identified: First, the lack of The reason is that it measures economic and social impacts together in an integrated and simultaneous manner. Second, the predominant focus of domestic studies on healthier or specific historical contexts (such as markets) and the relative neglect of dilapidated urban contexts with more complex issues. Third, the paucity of studies in the field of measuring the perceptions and experiences of local stakeholders as a complement to objective data. The present study seeks to fill these gaps by adopting a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative), focusing on a case study of a dilapidated Iranian context (Faizabad, Kermanshah) and simultaneously measuring economic and social dimensions from the perspectives of residents and businesses.

3.Theoretical and conceptual foundations

The theoretical framework of this study is based on four key and intertwined dimensions that enable the analysis of the effects of wide sidewalks. The economic dimension focuses on the role of pedestrianization in business prosperity, increasing property values, and attracting investment. The social dimension focuses on enhancing interactions, a sense of belonging, and social capital in pedestrian-oriented spaces. The physical-design dimension includes the principles that shape a safe, attractive, and accessible environment for pedestrians. Finally, the governance and management dimension emphasizes participatory and integrated mechanisms that ensure the implementation and sustainability of such projects. These dimensions are in practice inseparable, and the success of any revitalization project depends on simultaneous attention to the dynamic interaction between them. In the following, each of these dimensions and the theoretical foundations associated with them are examined in detail.

To develop a theoretical framework for the research, it is necessary to first examine the role of pedestrianism in urban development macro-paradigms in order to determine the philosophical foundations and general direction of the plans. Urban development macro-theories have experienced significant developments in the place of pedestrianism in recent decades. While the modernist approaches of the twentieth century, by prioritizing motorized movement, led to the marginalization of pedestrian spaces, new urban paradigms such as sustainable development, human-centered urbanization, and compact cities have given pedestrianism a

central role (Pourahmad, et al, 2021: 209). Sustainable urban development, emphasizing the reduction of dependence on private cars and the reduction of environmental pollutants, introduces pedestrianism as one of the main pillars of achieving urban sustainability (Litman, 2022: 64). In this regard, compact cities, by advocating high urban densities and mixed uses, provide the necessary context for strengthening pedestrian systems. The human-centered city, by criticizing the dominance of the automobile in contemporary urban planning, emphasizes reclaiming urban spaces for pedestrians. Inspired by the concepts of quality of life and urban well-being, this theory introduces pedestrianism not only as a mode of transportation, but also as a factor for promoting public health and social interactions (Nouri, et al, 2022: 11). Also, the smart city, by integrating new technologies and urban design, has enabled the creation of more efficient and safer pedestrian-oriented environments. These theoretical developments show that pedestrianism is at the center of the latest urban development approaches and has become a determining factor in the realization of sustainable and livable cities (Shokouyi, et al, 2019: 63).

The principles and basic principles of pedestrian-centered design, as an operational translation of human-centered and sustainable metropolitan theories, are based on creating a safe, comfortable, attractive, and equitable environment for all pedestrians. The most fundamental principle is to give priority and right of way to pedestrians over motorized vehicles, which is at the core of the human-centered urban planning concept. Achieving this requires providing appropriate and continuous width for pedestrians to enable smooth and active movement. Another key principle is to create continuity and continuity in the pedestrian network, which is defined based on the concept of “walkability” and ensures uninterrupted and barrier-free access (Mahmoudzadeh et al., 2019). Safety is another pillar of design, which is achieved through strategies such as physical separation from the roadway, the use of appropriate materials and visual separations, and the provision of sufficient and quality lighting at night (Mahdavi et al., 2021). In addition to functionality, visual appeal and sense of place are enhanced by utilizing natural elements such as green spaces, diversity in artistic and responsive flooring and urban furniture, which increases the presence and duration of people in the space (Mohammadi et al., 2020). On the other hand, compliance with the principle of universal access is essential to meet the needs of various groups, including the elderly, children and people with disabilities, through measures such as creating ramps with appropriate gradients, sufficient width of the passageway and understandable signs. Finally, flexibility and multi-purpose use of space, as a new design principle, allows the space to adapt to diverse social events and activities (Najafi et al., 2019).

Urban economy is deeply connected to the category of pedestrianization. According to behavioral economics theory, pedestrian-oriented spaces strengthen the local economy by increasing the length of time people spend in shopping malls. Studies show that pedestrian shoppers spend an average of 40% more than car shoppers in shopping malls (Falahat et al., 2023). Access to pedestrian-oriented spaces also increases the quality of life and, as a result, increases the value of nearby properties by 15 to 30%. From the perspective of sustainable development theory, pedestrianization contributes to economic productivity by reducing infrastructure costs related to cars and reducing environmental pollution (Torabi et al., 2021). Also, according to creative economy theory, pedestrian-oriented spaces attract creative talents by creating an attractive and dynamic environment and help develop innovative businesses. Investment in pedestrian-friendly projects usually has a significant return on investment, which is due to increased tax revenues, growth in property values, and the prosperity of local

businesses (Pourahmad et al., 2021). These processes clearly demonstrate that pedestrianization is not only a development measure, but also a smart economic investment with widespread effects on urban development. In an integrated view, this economic dimension cannot be separated from the physical and social dimensions. The theoretical integration of these dimensions represents a systematic approach to urban development. From the perspective of complex systems theory, these three dimensions are in dynamic interaction with each other. Improving the physical dimension through the appropriate design of pedestrian spaces directly affects local economic growth and paves the way for strengthening social interactions (Ghafari et al., 2023). Studies show that the appropriate physical design of pedestrian-oriented spaces can increase economic activity by up to 40% and social interaction by 35% (Rahimi et al., 2019). According to the sustainable development framework, the integration of these three dimensions is a necessary condition for achieving urban sustainability. The physical dimension by creating a safe and attractive environment, the economic dimension by boosting local businesses, and the social dimension by strengthening social capital, together form a complete ecosystem of sustainable urban life (Hadizadeh et al., 2021).

Urban governance plays a decisive role in the success of these projects in the management of pedestrian-oriented projects. According to the theory of good urban governance, the successful implementation of pedestrian-oriented projects requires the active participation of all stakeholders, including the municipality, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and local residents (Mohammadi et al., 2020). Studies show that projects implemented with a participatory and bottom-up approach have been 60 percent more successful than imposed projects. Integrated urban management is also considered a fundamental element in the implementation of these projects. Coordination between various agencies, including the municipality, the Road and Transportation Department, the Cultural Heritage Organization, and the police, ensures optimal implementation of the project. The governance network theory emphasizes the creation of inter-organizational coordination mechanisms, which is of particular importance in pedestrian-oriented projects due to their interdisciplinary nature (Eslami et al, 2021: 30). The management of pedestrian-oriented projects also requires attention to the issue of local governance. The creation of local institutions such as neighborhood steering councils and specialized committees can greatly contribute to the continuity and sustainability of the project. Successful international experiences show that combining local knowledge with technical expertise is the most important factor in achieving the goals of pedestrian-oriented projects. This governance approach not only leads to better project implementation, but also strengthens citizens' sense of belonging and responsibility. (Ghorbani et al, 2020: 128).

Before presenting a comprehensive theoretical framework in the form of a table, it is necessary to briefly mention a few key theories that are the cornerstones of the present analysis. The theory of "human-centered urbanism" (Jan Gehl, 2010) emphasizes restoring the human scale and priority to pedestrians in the design of public spaces and considers direct experience and social interactions in space as the center. The "territory theory" (Oscar Newman, 1972) with the concept of "defensible space" emphasizes the role of physical design in creating a sense of ownership, natural surveillance of residents and crime prevention in public and semi-public spaces. From the perspective of "environmental psychology" (Kevin Lynch, 1960), citizens' perception of space and factors such as legibility, creating a clear mental image and identifying landmarks are crucial for orientation and a sense of belonging to a place. These theories, along

with concepts such as “sustainable urban development” (emphasis on social, economic, and environmental sustainability), “creative urban economy” (Richard Florida, 2002) (the role of attracting the creative class in the economic development of neighborhoods), and “social capital” (Robert Putnam, 2000) (strengthening networks of trust and social norms through public spaces), form the different layers of analysis of the effects of wide sidewalks. The table below presents this integrated theoretical framework and the relationship of its components to the research topic in a structured manner.

Table 1. Theoretical framework of urban pedestrianization: foundations, dimensions and applications

Row	Theory / Framework	Founder(s) / Key Figures	Main Focus	Key Concepts Related to Walkability
1	Human-Centered Urbanism	Jan Gehl	Prioritizing human experience in urban spaces	Human scale, street life, face-to-face interactions, sensory perception of space
2	Sustainable Urban Development	Brundtland Commission	Integrating environmental, economic and social dimensions	Reducing car dependency, pollution reduction, public health, social and economic sustainability of neighborhoods
3	Compact City Theory	Richard Florida	Combating urban sprawl and promoting density	Mixed-use development, reducing intra-city travel, promoting active and public transportation
4	Urban Economics Theory	Edward Glaeser	Role of urban spaces in economic development	Experience-based economy, attracting creative class, increasing property values, revitalizing local businesses
5	Social Capital Theory	Robert Putnam	Networks of trust and social norms	Public space as arena for interaction, strengthening sense of place, social trust and cohesion
6	Defensible Space Theory	Oscar Newman	Crime prevention through environmental design	Natural surveillance ("eyes on the street"), lighting, definition of semi-private and semi-public territories
7	Environmental Psychology	Kevin Lynch	Understanding human perception and behavior in environment	Legibility of cities, sense of place, mental mapping, landmarks and wayfinding

4. Materials and Methods:

The present research method is applied in terms of purpose and based on a sequential exploratory mixed method in terms of data collection. In the qualitative phase, with the aim of initially identifying the areas of project impact and enriching the questionnaire, structured field observations and in-depth semi-structured interviews with 15 key neighborhood actors (including long-time residents, leading businessmen, and neighborhood council members) were used. The qualitative data collected were examined using thematic analysis, and the extracted themes were used in developing and modifying the items of the quantitative questionnaire and in the interpretation of quantitative results. In the quantitative phase, with the aim of generalizability and quantitative measurement of perceptions, a survey method with a questionnaire was used. The statistical population of the research consists of residents of Kermanshah who have visited the Feyzabad neighborhood of Kermanshah between September and November 1404. Given the dispersion of the statistical population, convenience sampling was used and

the sample size included 365 eligible individuals. The data collection tool was a researcher-made questionnaire designed in two parts: the first part was dedicated to demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status, and education level) and the second part was dedicated to questions related to the research variables. The data collection tool was a researcher-made questionnaire designed with the main aim of measuring the perceptions, experiences, and subjective evaluation of the respondents of the consequences of the project implementation. This questionnaire does not intend to directly and quantitatively measure objective economic indicators (such as the exact rate of price increase), but rather focused on capturing the local community's perception of the change process. The research variables were categorized into two main components (economic, social) within the framework of the conceptual model. To measure these components, a total of 14 questions (7 questions for each component) were designed, which were answered based on a five-point Likert scale (from "very little" to "very much"). The validity of the research tool was examined and confirmed by face and content validity methods and by asking for opinions from 5 professors specializing in the fields of architecture and urban planning. In this process, the questionnaire was provided to the professors and the final version was prepared by integrating the opinions. The reliability of the questionnaire was also confirmed by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.87). In order to increase the validity of the findings and provide a richer analysis, a triangulation strategy was used. Thus, the data obtained from the questionnaire (which expressed subjective perceptions) were compared and supplemented with the researchers' systematic field observations of objective evidence of the neighborhood (such as the increase in the number of active shops, the visual prosperity of commercial spaces, and the density of the pedestrian population) as well as by reviewing local documents and reports. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software at two levels of descriptive and inferential statistics. Finally, the results from the qualitative phase (content analysis of interviews and observations) were included in the discussion and conclusion section, alongside the quantitative findings, to provide a more comprehensive analysis and deeper interpretation of the reasons behind the numbers.

Table 2. Economic and social components effective in revitalizing run-down neighborhood centers through wide sidewalks

Row	Row	Components
Economic Social	1	Revival of local businesses
	2	Increase in property values
	3	Attraction of new investments
	4	Development of neighborhood tourism
	5	Growth of retail sector
	6	Creation of sustainable employment
	7	Reduction of public costs
	8	Strengthening of neighborhood interactions and relationships
	9	Enhancement of public space vibrancy and dynamism
Economic	10	Promotion of sense of place attachment
	11	Preservation and reinforcement of neighborhood identity
	12	Quality of social life
	13	Social resilience
	14	Dynamism of social life
	1	Revival of local businesses
	2	Increase in property values

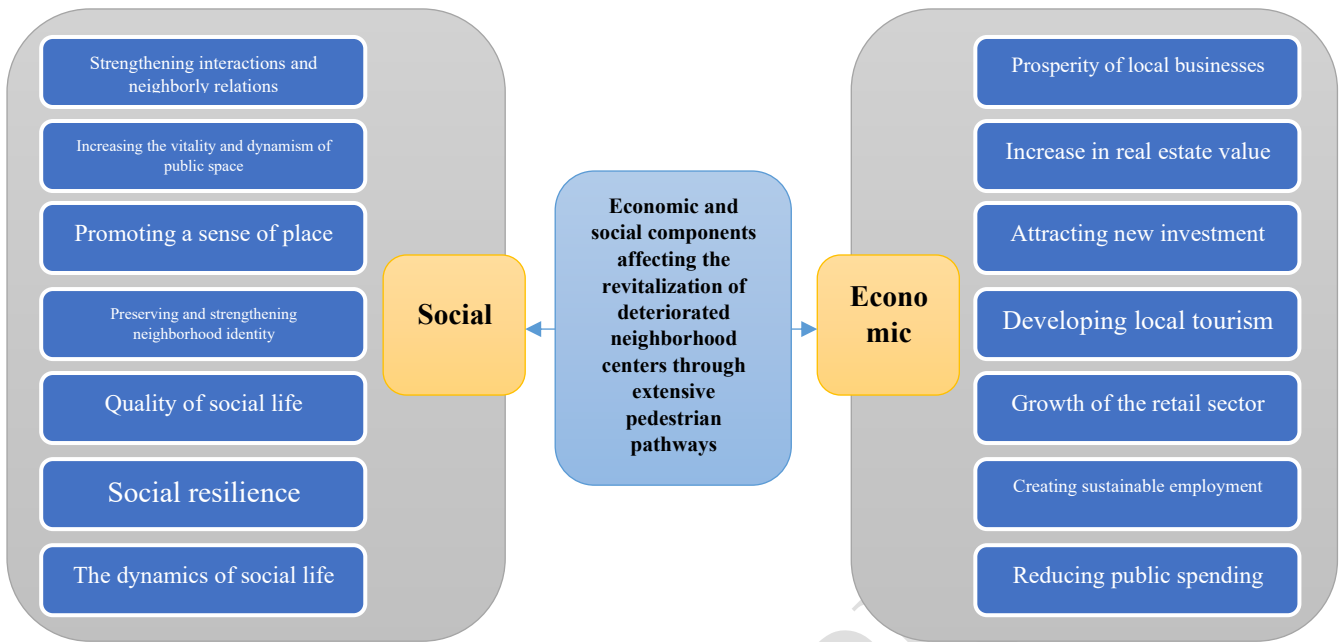


Figure 1. Conceptual model of factors and components of socio-economic impacts of extensive sidewalks on the revitalization of rundown neighborhood centers

4.1. Introduction to the Study Area

The historical neighborhood of Feyzabad, with a history of a century, is located in the central core of Kermanshah. This neighborhood, with a history that dates back to the Qajar era, is known as one of the early cores of the formation of Kermanshah. Despite having undeniable identity and historical values, including valuable buildings such as (Ayatollah Sheikh Hadi Jalili Mosque, Shams Bath, Feyzabad Tekye, Sane House, Shafei Mosque, etc.) and preserving its organic network of passages and traditional reading, in recent decades this neighborhood has increasingly faced the problem of physical and social deterioration. Field evidence and official documents testify to the high rate of destruction and instability of structures, the absence or shortage of basic modern urban services, and a sharp decline in residential quality. These conditions have clearly placed Feyzabad among the "worn-out structures" of Kermanshah. Therefore, the selection of this neighborhood as a case study was made, on the one hand, because of its latent historical and social potential for revitalization, and on the other hand, because of the tangible experience of the challenges of deterioration that complicate the implementation of any development plan. In the past, this neighborhood led from the north to the Garikhaneh area and the city entrance, and today it is enclosed within the framework of intersections including Silo and Amiri streets in the north, Jalili street in the east, Modarres street in the west, and Navab street in the south. Of the total area of 9560 hectares of Kermanshah city, the share of deteriorated textures is 1050 hectares, of which the Feyzabad neighborhood, with an area of about 32.64 hectares, has allocated a part of this area. This neighborhood, which has been defined in the form of a coherent urban block over time with the construction of new streets, hosts a significant number of historically valuable buildings related to the old texture of Kermanshah. However, in recent decades, in line with the extensive changes in social, economic, cultural and physical dimensions, it has experienced the process of transforming from an original texture to a worn-out texture. Among the consequences of these developments has been the gradual migration of old residents and the middle classes from the neighborhood and their replacement by a population with a weak sense of place. This change in the demographic texture has

led to the emergence of social anomalies and an increase in violent crimes, including the presence of disturbing and dangerous individuals, which has itself accelerated the gradual destruction of this historic neighborhood.



Figure 2. Study area

5. Findings

The description of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, is as follows:

Table 3. Frequency and percentage of variables of individual characteristics of the studied individuals

Gender		Age		Education Level		Marital Status	
Male	166	18-30 years	78	Below	34	Single	147
				Diploma	32		
		Diploma	19	Bachelor's	4		
		31-40 years	102				
41-50 years	119	Master's	4				
Female	199	51 years and above	66	PhD	2	Married	218
				Seminary	34		

Descriptive results related to the demographic characteristics of the statistical sample show that out of a total of 365 respondents, 166 (45.5%) were male and 199 (54.5%) were female. In terms of age distribution, the highest frequency was in the 41-50 age group with 119 (32.6%) and the lowest frequency was in the 18-30 age group with 78 (21.4%). The 31-40 age groups with 102 (27.9%) and 51 and over with 66 (18.1%) were in the next ranks. In terms of education level, the highest rate was with 34% for diploma (124 people) and the lowest rate was with 0.5% for seminary education (2 people). Holders of bachelor's degree were in the next ranks with 32% (117 people), master's degree with 19% (69 people), sub-diploma with 9% (33 people) and doctorate with 4% (15 people). In terms of marital status, 218 people (59.7%) were married and 147 people (40.3%) were single. This population distribution shows that the statistical sample had a relatively good diversity in demographic

characteristics and could be a relatively good representative of the statistical population of the study. The significant presence of women in the statistical sample and the dominance of the middle-aged age group could have influenced the attitudes and perspectives presented in response to the questionnaire.

Table 4. Frequency distribution of economic factor variables

Factor	Component	Indicator	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Economic	Revival of Local Businesses	Number	18	36	67	121	123
	Increase in Property Values	Number	23	31	45	86	180
	Attraction of New Investments	Number	54	69	61	78	103
	Development of Neighborhood Tourism	Number	29	41	65	101	119
	Growth of Retail Sector	Number	18	34	109	104	156
	Creation of Sustainable Employment	Number	45	34	61	100	125

The results of the frequency distribution table of economic factor variables indicate the positive view of respondents towards the impact of wide sidewalks on the economic indicators of the Feyzabad neighborhood. Among the economic components, the “increase in real estate value” indicator shows the highest level of impact with 180 people (49.3%) in the “very high” category. This finding indicates that residents and businessmen of the neighborhood have experienced a significant increase in the value of their real estate assets after the project was implemented. The “growth of the retail sector” component with 156 people (42.7%) in the “very high” category is in second place, indicating the boom in commercial activities in the neighborhood. Also, “boom of local businesses” with 123 people (33.7%) and “development of neighborhood tourism” with 119 people (32.6%) in the “very high” category indicate the positive impact of the project on the economic life of the neighborhood. In contrast, the “reduction of public costs” indicator shows the least impact with 89 people (24.4%) in the “very low” category and 90 people (24.7%) in the “low” category. This could be due to respondents’ lack of awareness of the project’s financial details or failure to observe the project’s direct impact on urban management costs. Although the “attraction of new investment” component accounted for a total of 181 people (49.6%) in the “high” and “very high” categories, the presence of 54 people (14.8%) in the “very low” category indicates that this impact was not perceived uniformly. The purpose of drawing this table was to measure the impact of the wide sidewalk project on various economic dimensions of the neighborhood. This table allows us to identify economic priorities and gain a better understanding of how the project’s economic benefits are distributed among different stakeholders.

Table 5. Frequency distribution of social factor variables

Factor	Component	Indicator	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Social	Strengthening neighborhood interactions and relationships	Number	23	31	62	126	123

	Enhancing vitality and dynamism of public spaces	Number	25	33	41	80	186
	Promoting sense of place attachment	Number	45	75	60	78	107
	Preserving and strengthening neighborhood identity	Number	37	54	79	76	119
	Quality of social life	Number	42	61	40	99	123
	Social resilience	Number	108	109	51	65	32

The results of the frequency distribution table of social factor variables indicate a significant impact of the wide sidewalk project on the social dimensions of the Feyzabad neighborhood. Among the social components, the index of "increasing the vitality and dynamism of public space" with 186 people (51 percent) in the "very high" category shows the highest level of impact. This finding indicates that the created pedestrian-oriented spaces have significantly contributed to the life and vitality of society in the neighborhood. The components of "social life dynamism" with 116 people (31.8 percent) and "quality of social life" with 123 people (33.7 percent) in the "very high" category also indicate a significant improvement in the social conditions of the neighborhood. Also, "strengthening interactions and neighborhood relations" with 123 people (33.7 percent) and "preserving and strengthening neighborhood identity" with 119 people (32.6 percent) in this category indicate the positive impact of the project on social cohesion and spatial identity. In contrast, the "social resilience" index shows the least impact with 108 people (29.6%) in the "very low" category and 109 people (29.9%) in the "low" category. This could be due to the fact that social resilience, as a long-term concept, requires more time to be fully realized and respondents may not yet feel a tangible impact in this area. Although the "enhancing sense of place" component has a total of 185 people (50.7%) in the "high" and "very high" categories, the presence of 45 people (12.3%) in the "very low" category and 75 people (20.5%) in the "low" category indicates that this impact has not been felt uniformly among all residents of the neighborhood. The purpose of drawing this table was to measure the impact of the project on various social dimensions of the neighborhood and identify its strengths and weaknesses. This data helps urban planners gain a better understanding of the project's social impacts and design more appropriate strategies to strengthen social capital and cohesion in blighted neighborhoods.

Table 6. Statistical index of economic and social variables effective in revitalizing dilapidated neighborhood centers through wide sidewalks

Factors	Components	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Economic	Revival of Local Businesses	4.45	0.85	1	5
	Increase in Property Values	4.34	0.84	1	5
	Attraction of New Investments	3.54	0.82	1	5
	Development of Neighborhood Tourism	3.65	0.79	1	5
	Growth of Retail Sector	3.98	0.85	1	5
	Creation of Sustainable Employment	3.98	0.85	1	5

	Reduction of Public Costs	3.07	0.78	1	5
Social	Strengthening Neighborhood Interactions and Relationships	3.76	0.84	1	5
	Enhancing Vitality and Dynamism of Public Spaces	2.90	0.79	1	5
	Promoting Sense of Place Attachment	3.64	0.71	1	5
	Preserving and Strengthening Neighborhood Identity	3.89	0.79	1	5
	Quality of Social Life	3.65	0.73	1	5
	Social Resilience	2.98	0.79	1	5
	Dynamism of Social Life	4.01	0.86	1	5

The results of the table of statistical indicators of economic and social variables show that the wide sidewalks project has had different effects on different aspects of the revitalization of the Feyzabad neighborhood. Among the economic components, the “prosperity of local businesses” index has the highest score with a mean of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.85. This result shows that the residents and businessmen of the neighborhood have clearly felt the positive impact of the project on their economic activities. After that, “increase in real estate value” is followed with a mean of 4.34, which indicates the direct effect of the project on the value of real estate assets in the neighborhood. Among the social components, “dynamics of social life” has the highest score with a mean of 4.04 and a standard deviation of 0.86, which indicates the success of the project in creating a dynamic and lively social space. “Maintaining and strengthening neighborhood identity” with an average of 3.89 and “Strengthening neighborhood interactions and relationships” with an average of 3.76 are in the next ranks, indicating the positive impact of the project on social cohesion and spatial identity. In contrast, “Reducing public costs” with an average of 3.07 in the economic component and “Social resilience” with an average of 2.98 in the social component have the lowest scores. These results indicate that the project has failed to have a noticeable impact on these two indicators. Also, “Increasing the vitality and dynamism of public space” with an average of 2.90 has the lowest score among all indicators, which could be due to the lack of proper design of public spaces or the lack of amenities in these spaces. The relatively low standard deviation across all indicators (between 0.71 and 0.86) indicates that respondents’ opinions are relatively well-focused and there is not much dispersion in the responses. This could indicate that the project’s impacts are uniform among the residents of the neighborhood. The purpose of analyzing this table is to identify the project’s strengths and weaknesses in economic and social dimensions and to provide targeted solutions to improve the project’s impacts in the future. This data helps urban planners to design more appropriate strategies to increase the project’s impact by focusing on indicators with low scores. Also, this analysis can be a valuable basis for evaluating similar projects in other run-down neighborhoods. In order to examine the construct validity of the questionnaire and ensure the integrity of the items in explaining the hidden economic and social factors, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted. The principal component extraction method and Varimax rotation were used in this analysis. Items whose factor loading was equal to or higher than 0.5 were retained in the final model. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Factors	Row	Components	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Economic	1	Revival of Local Businesses	0.71	0.78
	2	Increase in Property Values	0.67	0.74
	3	Attraction of New Investments	0.69	0.80
	4	Development of Neighborhood Tourism	0.59	0.79
	5	Growth of Retail Sector	0.73	0.78
	6	Creation of Sustainable Employment	0.69	0.74
	7	Reduction of Public Costs	0.73	0.71
Social	8	Strengthening Neighborhood Interactions and Relationships	0.78	0.80
	9	Enhancing Vitality and Dynamism of Public Spaces	0.79	0.86
	10	Promoting Sense of Place Attachment	0.78	0.80
	11	Preserving and Strengthening Neighborhood Identity	0.79	0.89
	12	Quality of Social Life	0.81	0.78
	13	Social Resilience	0.59	0.74
	14	Dynamism of Social Life	0.63	0.71

The results of the factor loadings and reliability coefficients table indicate the appropriate fit of the measurement model and the high reliability of the research instrument. Among the economic components, the indicators "retail sector growth" and "reduction in public costs" both have the highest contribution to explaining the economic factor with a factor loading of 0.73. This result shows that the respondents felt the impact of the wide sidewalks project on these two indicators similarly and strongly. After that, "local business boom" is with a factor loading of 0.71, which indicates the pivotal role of the project in the economic revitalization of the neighborhood. Among the social components, "quality of social life" has the highest contribution to explaining this factor with a factor loading of 0.81. This finding shows that improving the quality of social life was the most important achievement of the project from the perspective of residents. "Preserving and strengthening neighborhood identity" and "increasing the vitality and dynamism of public space" both rank next with a factor loading of 0.79, indicating the success of the project in restoring spatial identity and creating a dynamic social space. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all components are within an acceptable range, indicating appropriate internal reliability of the research instrument. The highest reliability coefficient is related to the "Preserving and strengthening neighborhood identity" component with a value of 0.89, indicating high coordination of the questions in this section with each other. In contrast, the lowest factor loadings are related to the "Neighborhood tourism development" (0.59) and "Social resilience" (0.59) components, indicating that these two indicators have a smaller contribution to explaining the relevant factors. In general, all factor loadings are higher than 0.5, indicating that all items have a significant contribution to explaining the latent variables. Also, Cronbach's alpha coefficients are all above 0.7, indicating high reliability of the research instrument. These results confirm that the measurement model has appropriate validity and reliability and that the results obtained from it can be trusted.

Table 8. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to check the normality of research variables

Row	Variable	Test Statistic	Significance Level (p-value)	Result
1	Revival of Local Businesses	0.124	0.067	Normal
2	Increase in Property Values	0.118	0.089	Normal
3	Attraction of New Investments	0.135	0.043	Non-normal
4	Development of Neighborhood Tourism	0.128	0.054	Normal
5	Growth of Retail Sector	0.142	0.028	Non-normal
6	Creation of Sustainable Employment	0.131	0.048	Non-normal

7	Reduction of Public Costs	0.126	0.061	Normal
8	Strengthening Neighborhood Interactions	0.122	0.073	Normal
9	Enhancing Public Space Vitality	0.139	0.035	Non-normal
10	Promoting Sense of Place Attachment	0.129	0.052	Normal
11	Preserving Neighborhood Identity	0.133	0.045	Non-normal
12	Quality of Social Life	0.125	0.064	Normal
13	Social Resilience	0.112	0.067	Non-normal
14	Dynamism of Social Life	0.109	0.089	Non-normal

The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test table show that the distribution of the research data does not follow a uniform pattern. Among the 14 variables examined, 7 variables including "attracting new investment", "growth of the retail sector", "creating sustainable employment", "increasing the vitality and dynamism of public space", "preserving and strengthening neighborhood identity", "social resilience" and "dynamics of social life" have a significance level of less than 0.05, indicating a non-normal distribution of the data. In contrast, the other 7 variables including "prosperity of local businesses", "increasing the value of real estate", "developing neighborhood tourism", "reducing public costs", "strengthening interactions and neighborhood relations", "improving the sense of place", and "quality of social life" have a normal distribution. These results are of fundamental importance from the methodological perspective of the research. According to the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to examine normality (Table 8), the Pearson correlation test was used to examine these relationships.

Table 9. Results of the correlation coefficient between factors and the revitalization of dilapidated neighborhood centers

Result	Significance Level	Correlation Coefficient	Factors
Significant	0.000	0.91	Economic
Significant	0.000	0.87	Social

The results of the correlation coefficient table show that both economic and social factors have a positive and very strong relationship with the revitalization of rundown neighborhood centers. The economic factor, with a correlation coefficient of 0.91, shows the strongest relationship with the revitalization process. This means that the improvement of economic indicators such as the prosperity of local businesses, increasing property values, attracting new investment, and developing tourism have contributed the most to the success of the Feyzabad neighborhood revitalization project. The significance level of 0.000 of this relationship indicates a very high statistical confidence of this result. The social factor also shows a very strong and meaningful relationship with the revitalization of rundown neighborhoods, with a correlation coefficient of 0.87. This finding emphasizes the importance of components such as strengthening neighborhood interactions, promoting a sense of place, increasing the vitality of public space, and improving the quality of social life in the revitalization process. Although the intensity of this relationship is slightly less than the economic factor, it is still classified as a very strong relationship. These results clearly show that successful revitalization of degraded neighborhoods is not possible through physical improvement alone, and that simultaneous attention to economic and social dimensions is an undeniable necessity. The wide sidewalk project in the Feyzabad neighborhood has been able to contribute to the revitalization of this neighborhood in an integrated manner by creating a platform for economic development and strengthening social relations. This model can be used as a comprehensive solution for other similar projects in degraded contexts.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this comprehensive study clearly show that wide sidewalks, as a transformative strategy, have been able to play an irreplaceable role in the comprehensive revitalization of the Feyzabad neighborhood of Kermanshah. This project, not as a simple development measure, but as an integrated local development strategy, has succeeded in leaving deep and lasting impacts on the economic, social, and physical life of this historical neighborhood in a relatively short period of time. In the economic

dimension, we have witnessed significant developments. By creating a safe and attractive space for pedestrians, wide sidewalks have been able to systematically pave the way for the economic revitalization of the neighborhood. The increase in real estate values, as one of the most obvious economic effects of this project, indicates the confidence of investors and residents in the future of the neighborhood. This increase in value has not only strengthened the financial strength of residents, but also created the necessary incentive to invest in renovation and improvement of buildings. This result is consistent with the findings of similar domestic studies in Tabriz Bazaar (Bahrami et al., 2020) as well as international research in European historic areas with the study of (Riddell, 2018) in Birmingham, all of which are evidence of the positive effect of pedestrianization on the economic valuation of urban spaces. The intensity of this effect in the Feyzabad neighborhood can be attributed to the dilapidated nature and high potential for renovation of this texture. The present economic findings, which reflect the perspective and subjective assessment of the local community, indicate that the project has been able to strengthen the positive perception and hope for the economic future of the neighborhood. This positive perception, although an important socio-psychological achievement in itself, was also consistent with the objective evidence observed in the field (such as the boom in commercial activities and increased traffic). On the other hand, the boom in local businesses shows that the project was able to attract more customers to the neighborhood's shops and commercial units by increasing foot traffic. This, in turn, has increased the income of the businessmen and the economic prosperity of the neighborhood. The development of neighborhood tourism has also been another significant achievement of this project. By creating a suitable space for walking and sightseeing, the Faizabad neighborhood has been able to become an attractive destination for tourists and visitors. This has not only caused economic prosperity, but has also contributed significantly to introducing the neighborhood's historical and cultural potential. Attracting new investment in various economic sectors of the neighborhood, creating sustainable employment for local residents, and growing the retail sector are other positive economic effects of this project. Like Javaheripour's (1972) study in the historical context of Europe and Bahrami et al.'s (2010) study in Tabriz bazaar, the present finding also confirms the catalytic role of pedestrian-oriented spaces in the revival of the neighborhood's micro-economy. However, it seems that the diversity and creativity in the businesses created in Feyzabad are less compared to successful international examples, which could be due to the weakness in combining creative economic development strategies with the development project. In the social dimension, the project's impacts have been even deeper and more lasting. By creating a safe and pleasant space, the wide sidewalks have provided the ground for social interactions and strengthened neighborhood relations. These spaces have become an arena for informal meetings, spontaneous conversations, and the creation of new social bonds. The increase in vitality and dynamism of the public space has brought the neighborhood out of a state of stagnation and stagnation and given it a new social life. People are more willing to be in public spaces, children have found the opportunity to play and interact with their peers, and the elderly have been able to overcome isolation and loneliness by being in these spaces. This finding confirms the results of Davoudi et al.'s (2012) research in the Sanglaj neighborhood of Tehran, as well as the central core of Putnam's (2000) social capital theory on the role of public spaces in creating trust networks. The difference is that in Feyzabad, these interactions have been strengthened mainly at the neighborhood and daily shopping level, while in examples such as the La Jorrinja project in Mexico (Garcia Lopez, 2021), the space has also become a place for holding collective cultural events. Another important social achievement of this project is the promotion of a sense of place belonging. Residents have gained a greater sense of pride and belonging to their neighborhood by observing the improvement in the neighborhood's conditions and paying attention to its historical and cultural identity. This sense of belonging has increased their motivation to participate in managing neighborhood affairs and maintaining public spaces. Maintaining and strengthening the neighborhood identity has also been achieved by paying attention to the historical and cultural elements in the neighborhood and integrating them with the new design. The quality of social life of residents has improved significantly. Easier access to local services, greater safety in pedestrian traffic, more opportunities for social interactions, and a healthier and more beautiful environment have all

contributed to improving the quality of life in the neighborhood. The dynamism of social life has also increased significantly with the holding of various ceremonies, collective activities, and cultural programs in the created space. However, some challenges and shortcomings have also been observed in the process of project implementation. Social resilience, as a long-term concept, has not yet been achieved to the desired extent. This requires the continuation of programs and the strengthening of local institutions over time. Also, the reduction in public costs has not been achieved as expected, which could be due to the increase in the costs of maintaining and managing the created spaces. From a physical and environmental perspective, the project has succeeded in providing a high-quality and responsive space for residents by creating safe and attractive pedestrian pathways, appropriate urban furniture, optimal lighting, and attention to natural elements. This improvement Physical improvements have not only helped to improve the environmental quality of the neighborhood, but have also paved the way for economic and social developments. An important point in the success of this project was the simultaneous attention to different dimensions and their integration into an integrated framework. This project has shown that revitalizing dilapidated textures is not possible only through physical measures and that serious attention must be paid to economic and social dimensions. Also, the participation of local residents in various stages of planning and implementation has played a decisive role in the success of the project. The extensive sidewalks in the Faizabad neighborhood have been able to become a factor in strengthening the local economy, strengthening social ties, improving the quality of life, and preserving the historical identity of the neighborhood. This project provides a successful model of an integrated local development strategy that can be used for other dilapidated neighborhoods in Iranian cities. Of course, the ultimate success of this project and the continuation of its positive effects depend on the continuation of integrated management, active participation of residents, and continuous attention to the maintenance and improvement of the created spaces. In order to consolidate this success and guide future actions, it is suggested that mechanisms such as the establishment of a "rent guarantee fund" using a percentage of the tax on the increase in the value of new commercial properties to prevent the displacement of low-income residents, the establishment of a "people's space management institution" to regularly hold mass events and local markets to strengthen social resilience, granting "special permits and facilities" to creative and cultural businesses to locate on the upper floors of commercial buildings for the purpose of economic diversification, preparing an "investment brochure" based on the positive data of this study and introducing opportunities such as eco-tourism residences to target investor attraction, implementing "participatory urban art projects" using neighborhood oral history to strengthen the sense of belonging in the context of the new physical structure, and establishing a "smart public space management system" using consumption control sensors to reduce long-term maintenance costs be considered. At the same time, this study was accompanied by some limitations that need to be considered in generalizing the results. First, the use of convenience sampling, although unavoidable due to field limitations, may have affected the complete representativeness of the sample. Second, the perceptual-survey nature of the data and the lack of access to objective and hard financial data (such as business financial statements or official real estate transaction records) for more accurate measurement of economic variables are other limitations. Third, the unique characteristics of the Feyzabad neighborhood necessitate caution in directly generalizing the results to other dilapidated contexts with different conditions. Future studies using random sampling and relying on objective data can increase the accuracy of such research. In conclusion, it can be said that the extensive sidewalks in the Feyzabad neighborhood of Kermanshah are not only a development project, but also a smart social and economic investment that has been able to bring many benefits and blessings to the residents of the neighborhood and the entire city at a relatively low cost. This project has proven that with a creative approach and integrated planning, even seemingly dilapidated and problematic areas can bring about great and promising changes and chart a bright future for their residents.

Authors' Contributions

All authors of this article have actively and equally participated in the various stages of the research. The process of compiling the final text of the article, collecting the required information and data, and

also conducting the initial analyses was the responsibility of the first author, which is equivalent to 50% of the total research activities. In contrast, the responsibility for guiding and steering the overall research, designing the methodological framework, supervising the correct implementation of the research stages, and reviewing and controlling the analyses carried out was the responsibility of the second author, who contributed 50% to the conduct of this research. This balanced distribution of responsibilities and activities has led to the completely equal participation of both authors in the production of this scientific work.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest has been declared by the authors.

Resources

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