

Original Article

Received: 2025/11/26
Revised: 2026/01/28
Accepted: 2026/01/29



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HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Toofan S. Shiroyeh Zad B. Analysis of the socio-economic effects of wide sidewalks on the revitalization of deteriorated neighborhood centers (Case study: Feyzabad neighborhood, Kermanshah). *Urban Economics and Planning* 7(9):76-92.

DOI: [10.22034/uep.2026.562264.1789](https://doi.org/10.22034/uep.2026.562264.1789)

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

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Abstract

This research analyzes the socio-economic effects of implementing wide sidewalks on the revitalization of the Feyzabad neighborhood center in Kermanshah. As identity jewels of cities, deteriorated urban centers are crucial for social cohesion and the continuity of urban life, with their revival ensuring local economic dynamism and strengthened social capital. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection through a field survey. A researcher-developed questionnaire, completed by 365 residents and local business owners, was used in conjunction with 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, whereas "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 deteriorated
neighborhoods
socio-economic impacts
urban revitalization
wide sidewalks
Kermanshah

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1. Introduction

In contemporary urban planning and design, the revitalization of deteriorated urban areas has become a challenging topic. Once the center of gravity of urban life, these areas 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 urban theory and practice. Focusing on the Feyzabad neighborhood of Kermanshah, this research examines the question of how extensive sidewalks can become a key factor in the socio-economic revitalization of deteriorated neighborhood centers. The Feyzabad neighborhood of Kermanshah, a case study in this research, serves as a symbol of the tensions and opportunities that exist in deteriorated Iranian urban areas. This neighborhood, which was once the center of social and economic life of the city, is now facing numerous challenges. Theoretically, this article is based on three fundamental premises: In the context of the creative urban economy, pedestrian-oriented spaces are not only a passage, but also a cultural and economic capital (Alimohammadi & Abdollahi, 2018: 33-46); by strengthening social interactions and creating value, these spaces become a platform for innovation and sustainable development, leading to the prosperity of local businesses (Akbari et al, 2022: 33-52); and by creating an attractive and safe environment, these spaces increase traffic and the length of stay of people in the neighborhood. Studies show that the creation of pedestrian-oriented spaces can increase the value of commercial properties by up to 30% and the number of local jobs by up to 25%. In the social dimension, quality sidewalks become an arena for the emergence of "social capital" (Farouk Hassan et al., 2022: 97). In a space that prioritizes people over cars, streets become arenas for face-to-face interactions, cultural exchange, and social solidarity (Izadi et al., 2019: 161-177). Research shows that pedestrian-oriented spaces increase quality of life by up to 40 percent and enhance social capital by strengthening a sense of place (Pourahmad et al., 2010: 73-92). These spaces ensure the mental and physical health of citizens by reducing pollution and stress, and they provide a platform for the formation of dynamic local communities by creating a safe and lively environment for dialogue and participation (Rahimi et al., 2021: 285-296). 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 in air pollution. Scientific data show that wide sidewalks can reduce private vehicle traffic by up to 20% and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 15%. In addition to environmental aspects, this has a direct impact on the public health and well-being of residents. However, realizing this vision requires overcoming several challenges (Iranmanesh et al., 2024: 88-113). The issue of "settlement", or the unwanted displacement of former and low-income residents due to increasing property values and changing the social fabric of the neighborhood, which is a well-known consequence of successful urban regeneration projects, requires the development of smart regulatory mechanisms and social protection policies (Hamzei et al., 2024: 1-15). The inherent complexity of such projects also makes their implementation dependent on the establishment of "integrated urban management" that emphasizes inter-organizational coordination and the integration of different dimensions of development. This depends on the realization of "good urban governance" with a participatory approach (Khavari & Khavari, 2011: 277-297). Using a mixed methodology and relying on field and documentary analyses, as well as socio-economic surveys, this article develops a roadmap for transforming the Faizabad neighborhood. In this research, "wide pedestrianization" 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). It investigates the impact of wide pedestrianization on the neighborhood's revitalization. Despite numerous studies on pedestrianization, the gap in the integrated and simultaneous study of the economic and social dimensions of these projects in the deteriorated context with specific Iranian characteristics (such as issues of ownership, social capital, and local governance) is clearly felt. This study aims to fill this gap through a mixed-method study focusing on the Feyzabad neighborhood of Kermanshah.

2. Research background

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the effects of wide sidewalks on the revitalization of deteriorated urban areas. This section reviews the

most important related research in this field. Shabani and Izadi (2014) explained the theoretical frameworks of the creative city as a new approach to urban regeneration in an article titled "A new approach to creative city regeneration". They emphasized the importance of an integrated view of cultural, social, and economic dimensions in revitalizing urban spaces. Sahraian and Movahed (2017) specifically operationalized the concept of creative development in a study titled "Analysis and identification of areas underpinning creative development of deteriorated areas with an emphasis on tourism" in the Fahadan neighborhood of Yazd. Their findings showed that to identify areas susceptible to creative development, various indicators should be considered in four areas: economic (such as land value), social (such as literacy level), physical-functional (such as building quality), and institutional-management (such as land ownership). The results of the hierarchical analysis in this study introduced land value, with an importance coefficient of 44.41 percent, as the highest priority among the indicators that underpin creative development in deteriorated contexts. This finding is directly linked to the discussion of the "creative urban economy" and the role of space (here, land) as a key asset for development. In a study titled "Explanation of the conceptual framework for sustainable regeneration of historic contexts," Izadi et al. (2019) concluded by reviewing international documents and charters that the sustainable regeneration approach has a comprehensive perspective on economic, social, cultural, and managerial dimensions. They introduced criteria such as creative industries, cultural neighborhoods, and cultural events as the main pillars of this approach, which are directly linked to the discussion of the urban creative economy. In their study "Explanation of cultural policies affecting culture-based urban regeneration," Karimzadeh et al. (2017), emphasizing the experiences of Istanbul, showed that successful regeneration requires the integration of cultural policies with creative urban design. Their findings introduced components such as cultural activities into urban public spaces, as well as their combination with creative urban design, as key factors in the economic and social revitalization of urban areas. These results highlight the role of public and pedestrian-oriented spaces as the main context for these activities. Iranmanesh et al. (2024) conducted a meta-analytical study named "Analysis of urban morphological components affecting social vulnerability." Although the study title seems different,

its findings emphasized the importance of the physical structure and form of the city in the level of social resilience. This study indirectly showed that pedestrian-oriented and human-oriented spaces (as part of urban morphology) can reduce social vulnerability and contribute to social sustainability by facilitating interactions and increasing social cohesion. Rahimi et al. (2021) concluded in a study titled "Investigating the role of country divisions in the implementation process of land use planning programs" that social unity and cohesion, as well as the logical arrangement of divisional units, have a direct impact on the successful implementation of development programs. Their finding that the positive and high impact of social unity and cohesion on advancing development goals, at 0.77, confirms that social capital resulting from interaction in public spaces is an essential foundation for the realization of sustainable urban development and land-use planning programs. As we can see, these studies clearly demonstrate that sustainable urban development and the creative economy are not possible without considering the physical context, such as pedestrian-oriented public spaces, and the social contexts, including social capital and cohesion. Public spaces in this framework serve a role beyond a physical element and are defined as containers for cultural events, social interactions, and ultimately, drivers of the creative economy. These studies have primarily focused on economic, social, and physical aspects, reporting improvements in indicators such as the prosperity of local businesses, increased social interactions, and improved environmental quality. In the international dimension, extensive research has also examined various experiences in the field of pedestrianization. For example, a study by Farooq Hassan et al. (2022), published in the *Ain Shams Engineering Journal*, examined the evolution of regeneration approaches in historical contexts. The findings of this review study showed that the dominant paradigm in recent decades has moved from mere conservation to integrated and development-oriented approaches. In this new paradigm, urban heritage regeneration is no longer simply a conservation measure, but rather a creative and sustainable process that emphasizes the participation of local communities and uses cultural capacities, leading to the economic and social revitalization of historical contexts. Roberts et al. (2022) proposed the concept of "sustainable urban regeneration" as a new approach to dealing with deteriorated and historic contexts. This approach

aimed to enhance the environmental, social, and economic efficiency of cities by focusing on creating a coordinated system between urban institutions and ecological elements. In such a context, paying attention to the internal and local capacities of cities, especially in the form of the creative economy, gains double importance. The creative economy, which focuses on cultural, artistic, and innovative industries, offers the opportunity to leverage local resources for sustainable development, transforming the city into a competitive, participatory, and identity-based space. International studies, along with findings from domestic research, underscore the strong connection between the success of pedestrian-oriented projects and the need to consider economic, social, and institutional dimensions. A review of the literature reveals that although the positive effects of pedestrianization have been confirmed in separate dimensions, three main gaps can be identified: First, the lack of studies that have integrated and simultaneously measured economic and social impacts; second, the predominant focus of domestic studies on healthier or specific historical contexts (such as markets) and the relative neglect of deteriorated urban contexts with more complex issues; and third, a lack of study in measuring the perceptions and experiences of local stakeholders as a complement to objective data. The present study aims to fill these gaps by adopting a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative), focusing on a case study of a deteriorated Iranian fabric (Faizabad, Kermanshah), and simultaneously assessing economic and social dimensions from the perspectives of residents and businesspeople.

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 dimension – design – encompasses 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 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, we must first examine the role of pedestrianization in the macro-paradigms of urban development to determine the philosophical foundations and general direction of the plans. In recent decades, the macro-theories of urban development have experienced significant developments in the field of pedestrianization. While the modernist approaches of the twentieth century, by prioritizing motorized movement, led to the marginalization of pedestrian spaces (Moeidfar & Saberi, 2020: 137-159), new urban paradigms such as sustainable development, human-centered urbanization, and compact cities have given pedestrianization a central role. Sustainable urban development, emphasizing the reduced dependency on private cars and environmental pollutants, introduces pedestrianization as one of the main pillars of achieving urban sustainability (Lynch, 1960). In this regard, compact cities, by defending 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 the reclaiming of urban spaces for pedestrians (Karimzadeh et al., 2017: 95-106). 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 fundamental factor for promoting public health, reducing urban stress, and facilitating social interactions (Evans, 2001: 44). By encouraging citizens to engage in daily physical activity, pedestrian-centered spaces play a key role in preventing non-communicable diseases and reducing the burden of healthcare costs. These spaces achieve spatial justice in the city by creating equal opportunities for the presence of all age and social groups (Soltanzadeh Zarandi & Raisi, 2017: 52-70). Meanwhile, the smart city, by combining new technologies and urban design, has opened a new horizon for the development of pedestrianization. Smart sensors increase safety and comfort by monitoring air quality and pedestrian density. Routing applications suggest the best and safest walking routes to citizens, and smart lighting systems ensure night security by detecting the presence of pedestrians (Tajik et al., 2017: 53-65). Thus, the integration of new technologies with human-centered approaches has enabled more

efficient and inclusive and safer pedestrian-centered environments, which ultimately leads to the improvement of the quality of urban life and the realization of sustainable development (Abbaszadegan & Razavi, 2006: 28). These theoretical developments show that pedestrianization has become the focus of the latest urban development approaches and a determining factor in realizing sustainable and livable cities. The principles and foundations of designing pedestrian-centered spaces, as an operational translation of the theories of the human-centered and sustainable metropolis, are based on creating a safe, comfortable, attractive, and fair environment for all pedestrians (Mohammadi et al., 2018: 1-6). The most fundamental principle is granting priority and right of way to pedestrians over motor vehicles, which is at the core of the concept of human-centered urban planning. This requires providing adequate and continuous width for pedestrians to enable smooth and active movement (Naranjo-Valencia et al., 2016: 30-41). Another key principle is to create continuity in the pedestrian network, which is defined based on the concept of "walkability" and ensures uninterrupted and barrier-free access. Safety is another design pillar, achieved through strategies such as physical separation from the roadway, using appropriate materials and visual separations, and providing adequate and quality lighting at night. In addition to functionality, visual appeal and a sense of place are enhanced by the use of natural elements, such as green space, a variety of flooring, and artistic and responsive urban furniture (Putnam, 2000). On the other hand, it is essential to comply with the principle of universal access 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 passage, and understandable signs (Landry, 2000). Finally, flexibility and multi-purpose use of space, as a new design principle, allows the space to adapt to various social events and activities (Azizi & Arbab, 2008: 153). Urban economics is deeply connected to the concept of pedestrianization. According to behavioral economics, pedestrian-oriented spaces strengthen the local economy by increasing the time people spend in shopping centers. Studies show that pedestrian shoppers spend an average of 40% more than car shoppers in shopping centers. Additionally, access to pedestrian-oriented spaces enhances the quality of life, resulting in a 15 to 30% increase in the value of nearby properties (Gehl, 2010). From the perspective

of sustainable development theory, pedestrianization contributes to economic efficiency by reducing infrastructure costs associated with cars and reducing environmental pollution. According to the creative economy theory, pedestrian-oriented spaces attract creative talents by fostering a vibrant and dynamic environment, which in turn helps develop innovative businesses (Rafieian & Razavi, 2010: 269-287). Investment in pedestrian-oriented projects typically yields a significant return on investment, driven by increased tax revenues, rising property values, and the prosperity of local businesses. This clearly shows that pedestrianization is not only a development measure but also a smart economic investment with widespread effects on urban development (Putnam, 2010). 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 (Hartley, 2005). From the perspective of complex systems theory, these three dimensions are in dynamic interaction with each other. Improving the physical dimension through the proper design of pedestrian spaces directly impacts local economic growth and creates the basis for strengthening social interactions. Studies show that the proper physical design of pedestrian-oriented spaces can increase the amount of economic activities by up to 40% and the intensity of social interactions by 35%. The basis of the sustainable development framework is that the integration of these three dimensions is a necessary condition for achieving urban sustainability (Falamaki, 2008). The physical dimension, by creating a safe and attractive environment, the economic dimension, by promoting local businesses, and the social dimension, by strengthening social capital, together form a complete ecosystem of sustainable urban life. Urban governance in the management of pedestrian-oriented projects plays a decisive role in the success of these projects (Shafia, 2014). Before presenting a comprehensive theoretical framework in a table, we must briefly mention a few key theories that are the cornerstones of the present analysis. The theory of "human-centered urbanism" (Gehl, 2010) emphasizes the restoration of the human scale and pedestrian priority in the design of public spaces, considering direct experience and social interactions in space as the center. The "territory theory" (Newman, 1972), with the concept of "defensible space," emphasizes the role of physical design in creating a sense of ownership, natural surveillance through residents, and

crime prevention in public and semi-public spaces. From the perspective of “environmental psychology” (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” (Florida, 2002) (the role of attracting the creative class in the economic development of neighborhoods), and “social capital” (Putnam, 2000) (the strengthening of trust networks and social norms through public spaces), form the different layers of analyzing the effects of wide sidewalks. Table 1 presents the 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, and sensory perception of space
2	Sustainable urban development	Brundtland Commission	Integrating environmental, economic, and social dimensions	Reducing car dependency, pollution reduction, public health, and 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, and 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, and revitalizing local businesses
5	Social capital theory	Robert Putnam	Networks of trust and social norms	Public space as an arena for interaction, strengthening the 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, and definition of semi-private and semi-public territories
7	Environmental psychology	Kevin Lynch	Understanding human perception and behavior in the environment	Legibility of cities, sense of place, mental mapping, and landmarks and wayfinding

4. Materials and methods

The present research method is applied in terms of purpose and a sequential exploratory mixed-method in terms of data collection. In the qualitative phase, to initially identify the areas of project impact and enrich 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 to develop and modify the items of the quantitative questionnaire and to interpret the quantitative results. In the quantitative phase, with the aim of generalizability and quantitative measurement of perceptions, a survey method using a questionnaire was employed. The statistical population

of the research consisted of residents of Kermanshah who had visited the Feyzabad neighborhood between September and November 1404. Given the dispersion of the statistical population, convenience sampling was employed, and the sample consisted of 365 eligible individuals. The data collection tool was a researcher-developed questionnaire, designed in two parts to measure the perceptions, experiences, and subjective evaluation of the respondents regarding the outcomes of the project implementation. The first part was dedicated to demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status, and education level), and the second part was dedicated to questions on the research variables. The questionnaire did not intend to directly and quantitatively measure objective economic indicators, such as the exact rate of price increase; it rather focused on capturing the local

community's perception of the change process. The research variables were categorized into two main components (economic and social) within the conceptual model framework. To measure these components, a total of 14 questions (seven questions for each component) were designed, which were answered using a five-point Likert scale (from "very little" to "very much"). The validity of the research tool was examined and confirmed through face and content validity methods and by asking for opinions from five specialized professors in 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). To increase the validity of the findings and provide a richer analysis, a

triangulation strategy was used. Thus, the data obtained from the questionnaire, expressing 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 influencing the revitalization of the deteriorated neighborhood centers through wide sidewalks

Factors	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 the 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 the sense of place attachment
	11	Preservation and reinforcement of neighborhood identity
	12	Quality of social life
	13	Social resilience
	14	Dynamism of social life

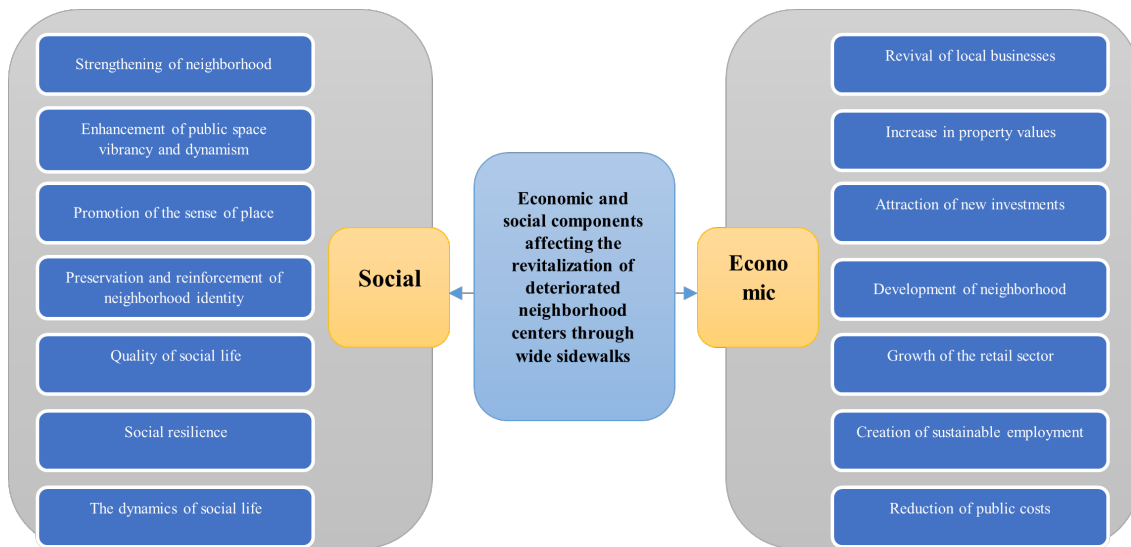


Figure 1. Conceptual model of factors and components of socio-economic impacts of extensive sidewalks on the revitalization of rundown neighborhood centers

4.1. Introduction to the study area

The historical neighborhood of Feyzabad, which dates back to the Qajar era, is situated in the central part of Kermanshah. This area is recognized as one of the earliest cores in the development of Kermanshah. Despite its significant identity and historical value, characterized by notable buildings such as the Ayatollah Sheikh Hadi Jalili Mosque, Shams Bath, Feyzabad Tekye, Sane House, and Shafei Mosque, the neighborhood has experienced increasing physical and social deterioration in recent decades. Additionally, it has struggled to preserve its organic network of passages and traditional ambiance. Field evidence and official documents indicate a high rate of destruction and instability in structures, a lack of basic modern urban services, and a marked decline in residential quality. These conditions have clearly positioned Feyzabad among the “deteriorated structures” of Kermanshah. This neighborhood was chosen as a case study due to its latent historical and social potential for revitalization, as well as the tangible challenges posed by its deterioration that complicate the implementation of any development plan. Historically, Feyzabad connected the north to the Garikhaneh area and the

city entrance. Today, it is surrounded by intersections, including Silo and Amiri streets to the north, Jalili street to the east, Modarres street to the west, and Navab street to the south. Out of Kermanshah’s total area of 9,560 hectares, 1,050 hectares are classified as deteriorated, with Feyzabad accounting for approximately 32.64 hectares of this area. Over time, this neighborhood, defined by a coherent urban block created through the construction of new streets, has been home to numerous historically valuable buildings from Kermanshah’s old urban fabric. However, in recent decades, extensive changes in social, economic, cultural, and physical dimensions have transformed Feyzabad from an original texture into a deteriorated one. One of 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 demographic shift has led to social anomalies and an increase in violent crime, including the presence of disturbing and dangerous individuals, further contributing to the ongoing deterioration of this historic neighborhood.



Figure 2. Study area

5. Findings

the respondents, including gender, is as follows:

The description of the demographic characteristics of

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 diploma	34	Single	147
		31-40 years	102	Diploma	32		
		41-50 years	119	Bachelor's	19		
Female	199	51 years and above	66	Master's	4	Married	218
				PhD	2		
				Seminary	34		

The demographic characteristics of the statistical sample revealed the following results: out of the 365 respondents, 166 (45.5%) were male, and 199 (54.5%) were female. In terms of age distribution, the highest frequency was observed in the 41-50 age group, which included 119 respondents (32.6%). The lowest frequency was in the 18-30 age group, with 78 respondents (21.4%). The 31-40 age group, with 102 respondents (27.9%), and the 51 and over category, with 66 respondents (18.1%), stood next. Regarding education levels, the largest group consisted of individuals with diplomas (34%, or 124 people), while

the smallest group was those with seminary education (0.5%, or 2 people). The remaining educational categories included bachelor's degree holders at 32% (117 individuals), master's degree holders at 19% (69 individuals), sub-diploma holders at 9% (33 individuals), and doctorate holders at 4% (15 individuals). In terms of marital status, 218 respondents (59.7%) were married, while 147 respondents (40.3%) were single. This population distribution indicates that the statistical sample exhibited a relatively suitable diversity in demographic characteristics and may serve as a reasonable representation of the overall

population for the study. The significant presence of attitudes and perspectives expressed in response to women in the sample and the predominance of the questionnaire. middle-aged individuals could have influenced the

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 the retail sector	Number	18	34	109	104	156
	Creation of sustainable employment	Number	45	34	61	100	125

The results of the frequency distribution 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 property values” indicator shows the highest impact, with 180 individuals (49.3%) in the “very high” category. This suggests that residents and businessmen in the neighborhood have experienced a significant increase in the value of their real estate assets after the project implementation. The “growth of the retail sector” component, with 156 individuals (42.7%) in the “very high” category, is in second place, indicating the boom in commercial activities in the neighborhood. Additionally, the “revival of local businesses” with 123 individuals (33.7%) and “development of neighborhood tourism,” with 119 individuals (32.6%) in the “very high” category, indicate the positive impact of the

project on the neighborhood’s economic life. In contrast, the “reduction of public costs” indicator shows the least impact, with 89 individuals (24.4%) in the “very low” category, and 90 individuals (24.7%) in the “low” category. This can 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 accounts for a total of 181 individuals (49.6%) in the “high” and “very high” categories, the presence of 54 individuals (14.8%) in the “very low” category indicates that this impact is not perceived uniformly. Table 4 presents the impact of the wide sidewalk project on various economic dimensions of the neighborhood. It allows us to identify economic priorities and gain a better understanding of how the project’s economic benefits are distributed among various stakeholders.

Table 5. Frequency distribution of social factor variables

Factor	Component	Indicator	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Social	Strengthening of neighborhood interactions and relationships	Number	23	31	62	126	123
	Enhancement of public space vibrancy and dynamism	Number	25	33	41	80	186
	Promotion of the sense of place attachment	Number	45	75	60	78	107
	Preservation and reinforcement of 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
	Dynamism of social life	Number	44	50	49	106	116

The results of the frequency distribution 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 indicator of “enhancement of public space vibrancy and dynamism,” with 186 individuals (51%), in the “very high” category, shows the highest level of impact. This finding suggests that the created pedestrian-oriented spaces have significantly contributed to the life and vitality of society in the neighborhood. The components of “dynamism of social life,” with 116 individuals (31.8%), and “quality of social life,” with 123 individuals (33.7%), in the “very high” category also indicate a significant improvement in the social conditions of the neighborhood. Additionally, “strengthening of neighborhood interactions and relationships,” with 123 individuals (33.7%), and “preservation and reinforcement of neighborhood identity,” with 119 individuals (32.6%), in this category indicate the positive impact of the project on social cohesion and spatial identity. In

contrast, the “social resilience” indicator shows the least impact, with 108 individuals (29.6%) in the “very low” category, and 109 individuals (29.9%) in the “low” category. This indicates 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 component of “promotion of the sense of place attachment” accounted for a total of 185 individuals (50.7%) in the “high” and “very high” categories, the presence of 45 individuals (12.3%) in the “very low” category and 75 individuals (20.5%) in the “low” category suggests that this impact has not been felt uniformly among all residents of the neighborhood. Table 5 presents the impact of the project on various social dimensions of the neighborhood, identifying its strengths and weaknesses. These data help urban planners gain a better understanding of the project’s social impacts and design more appropriate strategies to strengthen social capital and cohesion in deteriorated neighborhoods.

Table 6. Statistical indicators of economic and social variables influencing the revitalization of deteriorated 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 the 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 of neighborhood interactions and relationships	3.76	0.84	1	5
	Enhancement of public space vibrancy and dynamism	2.90	0.79	1	5
	Promotion of the sense of place attachment	3.64	0.71	1	5
	Preservation and reinforcement of 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 table of statistical indicators for economic and social variables suggests that the wide sidewalks project has had various effects on different aspects of revitalizing the Feyzabad neighborhood. Among the economic components, the “revival of local businesses”

has the highest score with a mean of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.85. This result highlights that the residents and businessmen of the neighborhood have clearly felt the positive impact of the project on their economic activities. Next is “increase in property

values” with an average 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, the “dynamism of social life” has the highest score, with a mean of 4.04 and a standard deviation of 0.86, indicating the project’s success in creating a dynamic and lively social space. “Preservation and reinforcement of neighborhood identity,” with an average of 3.89, and “strengthening of 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, “reduction of 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 suggest that the project has no noticeable impact on these two indicators. Additionally, “Enhancement of public space vibrancy and dynamism,” with an average of 2.90, has the lowest score among all indicators, which may be due to the lack of proper design in public spaces or the lack of

amenities in these spaces. The relatively low standard deviation observed across all indicators, ranging from 0.71 to 0.86, indicates that the respondents’ opinions are closely aligned, showing minimal variation in their responses. This may suggest that the project’s impacts are consistent among the neighborhood residents. Table 6 outlines the project’s strengths and weaknesses in both economic and social dimensions, along with targeted solutions to enhance the project’s future impact. This data helps urban planners to design more appropriate strategies to increase the project’s impact by focusing on indicators with low scores. Additionally, this analysis can be a valuable basis for evaluating similar projects in other deteriorated neighborhoods. 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 with a factor loading equal to 0.5 or higher 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 the 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 of neighborhood interactions and relationships	0.78	0.80
	9	Enhancement of public space vibrancy and dynamism	0.79	0.86
	10	Promotion of the sense of place attachment	0.78	0.80
	11	Preservation and reinforcement of 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 indicate the appropriate fit of the measurement model and high reliability of the research instrument. Among the economic components, the indicators “growth of the retail sector” and “reduction of 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. Then, “revival of local businesses” stands, with a factor loading of 0.71, indicating 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 suggests that improving the quality of social life is the most significant achievement of the project from the residents’ perspective. “Preservation and reinforcement of neighborhood identity” and “enhancement of public space vibrancy and dynamism” both rank next, with a factor loading of 0.79, indicating the project’s success in restoring spatial identity and creating a dynamic social space. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for all components are within an acceptable range, indicating that the research instrument has appropriate internal reliability. The highest reliability coefficient belongs to

the “preservation and reinforcement of neighborhood identity,” with a value of 0.89, indicating a high coordination of the questions in this section with each other. In contrast, the lowest factor loadings belong to the “development of neighborhood tourism” (0.59) and “social resilience” (0.59), indicating their 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 the 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 of neighborhood interactions	0.122	0.073	Normal
9	Enhancement of public space vibrancy and dynamism	0.139	0.035	Non-normal
10	Promotion of the sense of place attachment	0.129	0.052	Normal
11	Preservation and reinforcement of 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 show that the distribution of the research data does not follow a uniform pattern. Among the 14 variables examined, seven variables, including “attraction of new investment,” “growth of the retail sector,” “creation of sustainable employment,” “Enhancement of public space vibrancy and dynamism,” “Preservation and reinforcement of neighborhood identity,” “social resilience,” and “Dynamism of social life” have a significance level of less than 0.05, indicating a non-normal distribution of the data. In contrast, the other

seven variables, including “revival of local businesses,” “increase in property values,” “development of neighborhood tourism,” “reduction of public costs,” “strengthening of neighborhood interactions,” “promotion of the sense of place attachment,” and “quality of social life,” have a normal distribution. These results are significant 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 deteriorated neighborhood centers

Result	Significance level	Correlation coefficient	Factors
Significant	0.000	0.91	Economic
Significant	0.000	0.87	Social

The correlation coefficient table indicates that both economic and social factors have a positive and very strong relationship with the revitalization of deteriorated 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 revival of local businesses, increasing property values, attracting new investment, and developing tourism, had the highest contribution to the success of the Feyzabad neighborhood revitalization project. The significance level of 0.000 in this relationship indicates a very high statistical confidence in this result. The social factor also shows a very strong and meaningful relationship with the revitalization of deteriorated 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, enhancing 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 demonstrate that successful revitalization of deteriorated neighborhoods is not solely possible through physical improvement; simultaneous attention to economic and social dimensions is an undeniable necessity. The wide sidewalk project in the Feyzabad neighborhood has contributed 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 demonstrate that wide sidewalks, as a transformative strategy, have played 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 provided a systematic basis for economic revitalization of the neighborhood. The increase in the property value, as an economic market effect of this project, reflects the confidence of investors and residents in the neighborhood's future. Property value growth has not only strengthened the financial base of residents but also created the necessary incentive to invest in renovation and improvement of the buildings.

This result aligns with the findings of domestic studies (Sahrayan & Movahed, 2017) and international research in European historical areas, including Farouk Hassan's (2022) study, all confirming the positive impact of pedestrianization on the economic value of urban spaces. The strong effect observed in the Faizabad neighborhood can be linked to the poor condition and high potential for renovation of this area. The current economic results, reflecting the local community's subjective perspective and assessment, indicate that the project has fostered a positive outlook and hope for the neighborhood's economic future. This optimistic perception, while an important social and psychological milestone, also matches the actual observed improvements, such as increased commercial activity and traffic. Additionally, the success of local businesses suggests that the project has helped attract more customers to shops and commercial units, boosting income and economic prosperity in the neighborhood. Developing neighborhood tourism has been another significant achievement of this project. Creating a suitable space for walking and sightseeing has made Faizabad an appealing destination for visitors. This has not only stimulated economic growth but also contributed significantly to introducing the neighborhood's historical and cultural potential. The project has also attracted new investments across various sectors, created sustainable jobs for residents, and expanded the retail market. However, the diversity and creativity of businesses in Faizabad seem to be less advanced compared to successful international examples,

possibly due to the weak integration of creative economic strategies within the development project. In the social dimension, the project's impacts are deeper and more lasting. By providing a safe and inviting environment, wider sidewalks have created platforms for social interactions and strengthened neighborhood relationships. These spaces now host casual meetings, spontaneous conversations, and new social connections. The lively and vibrant public space revitalized the neighborhood, encouraging more public space use, where children can play and socialize, and elderly residents can overcome isolation. This aligns with Izadi et al.'s (2019) research on sustainable regeneration of historic contexts and Putnam's (2000) social capital theory, which emphasizes the role of public spaces in fostering trust networks. In Faizabad, these interactions mainly occur at the neighborhood and daily shopping levels. Furthermore, fostering a sense of belonging has been another key social benefit. Residents exhibit greater pride and attachment to their neighborhood through visible improvements and appreciation of its historical and cultural identity. This sense of belonging has motivated increased participation in neighborhood management and the preservation of public spaces. The neighborhood's identity has been reinforced through the integration of historical and cultural elements into new designs. Overall, residents' social quality of life has notably improved through easier access to local services, increased safety, more opportunities for social interaction, and a healthier, more attractive environment. The neighborhood's social vibrancy has also grown thanks to various cultural events and community activities held in the new spaces. Yet, some challenges persist. Long-term social resilience has yet to reach the desired level, requiring ongoing programs and stronger local institutions. Also, expected reductions in public costs have not materialized, possibly due to increased maintenance expenses for the new spaces. From a physical and environmental perspective, the project has succeeded in providing a high-quality, responsive space for residents by creating safe and attractive pedestrian paths, suitable urban furniture, optimal lighting, and attention to natural elements. These enhancements have improved environmental quality and paved the way for economic and social development. An important factor behind this success was addressing different dimensions simultaneously within an integrated framework. The project demonstrates that revitalizing deteriorated

areas depends not only on physical improvements but also on economic and social strategies. Active resident participation throughout planning and implementation has been essential. The extensive sidewalks in Faizabad have strengthened the local economy, social ties, overall quality of life, and the neighborhood's historical identity. This project offers a successful model of integrated local development that could be applied to other neglected neighborhoods across Iran. Nonetheless, the ultimate success of the project and its long-term benefits depend on sustained coordinated management, active resident engagement, and continuous maintenance and improvements. To reinforce this success and guide future efforts, mechanisms such as establishing a "rent guarantee fund" funded by a percentage of the increase in new commercial properties value, creating a "people's space management institution" for hosting regular community events and markets, issuing "special permits and facilities" for creative and cultural businesses on upper floors of commercial buildings for economic diversification, developing an "investment brochure" based on the positive data of this study and introducing opportunities like eco-tourism residences to target investor attraction, implementing "participatory urban art projects" based on neighborhood oral history to enhance 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 should be considered. Some limitations of this study include the use of convenience sampling due to field constraints, which may affect the complete representativeness of the sample. The reliance on perceptual survey data and the lack of access to objective financial data, such as business records or property transaction data, are additional constraints. Also, the unique features of Faizabad suggest caution when applying these results directly to other deteriorated neighborhoods with different conditions. Future research employing random sampling and objective data can improve accuracy. In conclusion, the wide sidewalks in Faizabad are more than a development project; they are a smart social and economic investment that has brought many benefits at a relatively low cost. This project demonstrates that with innovation and integrated planning, even areas in poor condition can achieve remarkable and promising transformations, offering a brighter future for their residents.

Authors' Contributions

Both authors equally contributed to the production of this scientific work. The process of compiling the final text of the article, collecting the required information and data, and conducting the initial analyses (50% of the research activities) was the responsibility of the first author. Guiding the overall research, designing the methodological framework, supervising the correct implementation of the research stages, and reviewing and controlling the analyses (50% of the research activities) was the responsibility of the second author.

Acknowledgments

The present research received no financial or moral support from domestic or international institutions or organizations. All stages of the research, from initial design to data collection, analysis, and final compilation, were carried out solely by relying on the personal resources and capabilities of the researchers. In addition to demonstrating the complete scientific independence of the research, this expresses the authors' commitment to observing the principles of research ethics and publishing results based on impartial and independent findings.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

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