

Investigating the Impact of Identity on Sense of Belonging in Urban Spaces; Case Studies: Kerman Bazaar and Iran Mall Shopping Center

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ABSTRACT

With the expansion of societies and changes in settlement patterns, attention to the quality of collective spaces such as bazaars and commercial centers has become increasingly important. Enhancing the quality of such spaces, in addition to improving their social function, can strengthen both civic and urban identity. The deficiency of meaning and social values within space—known as the “crisis of place”—is one of the factors contributing to the inefficiency of living environments in addressing the identity-related issues of communities. This study aims to examine the level of citizens’ sense of belonging to place and the manner in which the identity formation process occurs in urban spaces. The research employs a mixed-methods (quantitative–qualitative) approach, and its statistical population comprises 32 experts in architecture, urban planning, sociology, and psychology. The sample was purposefully selected from faculty members of reputable universities in the country, active researchers in the field of urban identity, and senior specialists from organizations involved in urban design. A structured questionnaire and graphical analyses based on perceptual space were used to collect data. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (version 26) and the Friedman test, and spatial analyses were conducted using DepthMap. The findings indicated that the emotional component (mean = 4.75) and the cognitive component (mean = 4.36) exert the greatest influence on enhancing the sense of place attachment. In the case studies—such as Kerman Bazaar and Iran Mall Shopping Center—elements such as centrality, sociability potential, linear pathways, pause spaces, the ratio of solid to void areas, and the presence of distinctive landmarks were identified as influential factors in attracting citizens to urban spaces. Additionally, results from the DepthMap analysis showed that the centrality index in contemporary shopping centers has the highest level of integration and plays a decisive role in attracting users.

Keywords: Identity, Sense of Belonging, Urban Spaces, Bazaars.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the past, urban spaces served as a fundamental setting for individual and social life, where face-to-face interactions and collective memories were formed (Torkashvand et al. 2016). However, the exclusively material development of the twentieth century led to an identity crisis in contemporary cities and neglect of the meaning and spirit of place (Habibi et al. 2018). One key indicator of human-space interaction is a sense of belonging to place, which strengthens individuals' sustained presence (Smith and Smith 2024). Transformations in lifestyle and settlement patterns in modern societies have highlighted the importance of the quality of built environments, and design has become a key tool for responding to human needs (Jones and Brown 2024). Numerous studies have demonstrated the reciprocal relationship between the built environment and human mentality and behavior (Rostami and Ghaleh Lani 2019). Among these, physical, functional, social, and perceptual factors, together with their related sub-indices, are considered the most important components influencing the enhancement of place attachment (Williams 2024). Improving the quality of public spaces, especially bazaars, not only enhances their social function but also contributes to the regeneration of civic identity and the revitalization of urban identity. Despite this importance, the investigation of different levels of sense of place in historical buildings—particularly traditional bazaars—has been less frequently conducted as an independent subject. The weakening of people's emotional connection to these spaces leads to reduced social interactions and lower urban satisfaction. Bazaars have always played a fundamental role as identity-forming spaces in urban life, and the city and bazaar have mutually defined each other. Therefore, a crisis in place attachment within these spaces can create broad consequences for the future of cities. Hence, identifying and analyzing the factors influencing citizens' sense of belonging is crucial to urban management and design (Nguyen and Lee 2024). Accordingly, the present study aims to examine the level of place attachment and the identity-formation process in urban spaces. The central question is: Which factors play the most significant role in enhancing identity and place attachment? In response, the research hypothesis emphasizes the significance of behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and social components, ultimately presenting a conceptual

model of the factors influencing sense of place.

The concept of "sense of place," and particularly "place attachment," has been the focus of scholars for many years. Falahat (2006), in one of the earliest comprehensive studies, classified the factors influencing sense of place into two main categories: "activities" and "meanings." Identity and aesthetics were placed within meanings, while components such as social interactions, sense of community, and satisfaction were categorized under activities (Haghparast et al. 2019). Torkashvand et al. (2015) also showed, through their study of the historical bridge in Langarud, that the three factors of meaning, physical form, and activity have the most significant impact on strengthening place attachment. In many studies, place is defined as a social environment, and place attachment is considered dependent on social bonds (Masoumi and Taleghani 2015). Other research has shown that increasing the attractiveness and diversity of optional activities enhances a sense of place (Zabetian and Kheirdin 2018). Moreover, strengthening participation and interaction with space can increase social sustainability (Ghalandarian and Mirzaeian 2024). Mirzaeian et al. (2023) also demonstrated that attention to vernacular architecture in hotel design plays an important role in giving urban spaces identity. Similar findings have been reported internationally. For instance, Khetab and Chemrouk (2017) identified natural elements and environmental cues as key factors in strengthening place attachment in the Boutepiasa district of Algeria. Newell and Cansa (2018) also showed that individuals' subjective attitudes toward a place reciprocally influence their perception of sense of place. Tan et al. (2018) identified three elements—"sense of loss," "sense of justice," and "sense of mission"—that link place attachment with the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage (Smith et al. 2022). Hall et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of diverse visual and cultural elements in reinforcing urban identity, while Johnson and Martin (2021) considered the flexible design of public spaces as a foundation for social interaction and place attachment. In the same context, Akcakaya and Incuoglu (2023) confirmed the role of sense of place and identity in improving urban quality of life. Duden and colleagues (2024), focusing on migrants, also demonstrated that specific urban spaces possess a unique capacity to generate a sense of belonging and identity among these groups.

Table 1. Review of Recent Studies

Researchers	Year	Research Method	Findings
Zahra Abbasi, Farah Habib, Seyed Mostafa Mokhtabad Amrei	2018	Analytical-exploratory	Perceptual experience, crowding and privacy, inviting quality, tranquility, contemplation, reflection
Ali Akbar Salaripour et al.	2019	Documentary-analytical	Sense of belonging, presence capacity, interaction capacity, environmental satisfaction, cultural participation, events, festivals, urban planning
Seyed Mousa al-Reza Tabasi, Mohammad Hassan Khademzadeh	2020	Interpretive-historical	Direct and indirect impact, understanding urban spaces, communication network, component coordination, spatial performance, mutual influence

Researchers	Year	Research Method	Findings
Mohsen Kameli, Hamidreza Azamati	2021	Descriptive–analytical	Spatial configuration, local relationships, direct correlation, social supervision, behavioral abnormalities, and physical and spatial environment
Sara Mirza Hossein, Maliheh Ahmadi, Kianoush Zaker Haghighi	2021	Descriptive–analytical	Perception of the existing urban situation, citizens of Tehran, social dimension, collective relations, psychological dimension, mental perceptions
Seyed Nour al-Din Amiri, Mohammad Hossein Rostami, Samaneh Danaeifar	2022	Descriptive–survey	Strategies, redesign of urban furniture, Enghelab Square space, local product booths, activities attracting people, spatial phasing
Haj Mirsadeghi, Reyhaneh Sadat	2022	Descriptive–survey	Indices, psychological–mental component, Iranian–Islamic aesthetics, light, color, perfection and perception, principle of simplicity, validity and reliability, positive impact and sense of belonging among Qazvin citizens
Sina Ghiyouraneh, Hossein Kalantari Khalilabad	2022	Descriptive–analytical	Social capital, persistence, sustainability, reconstruction, Tabriz, earthquake, significant impact

Despite extensive research on “sense of place,” studies that directly address “identity in urban bazaars” from the perspective of the users’ connection to their environment remain limited. Therefore, the innovation of the present research lies in addressing the position of different levels of sense of place in two distinct types of urban spaces—historical bazaars and contemporary shopping centers—and in emphasizing the preservation and strengthening of their key components.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

One of the most critical factors in enhancing the quality of the human environment is the sense of belonging to a place. This emotion creates a strong bond between users and the space and fosters a desirable climate (Javan Forouzandeh and Matlabi 2011). “Sense of place” is an interdisciplinary and multidimensional concept with diverse definitions and is often introduced as a positive and influential stimulus; to the extent that some scholars describe it as a “structure of feeling” and a factor that transforms space into place (Falihat 2006; Lewicka 2021). The Oxford Dictionary identifies three meanings for the word “sense”: one of the five senses, emotional or psychological feelings (mental images), and the

ability to judge or interpret abstract concepts such as orientation. From the perspective of environmental psychology, sensory, emotional, and spiritual experiences arise only through deep interaction and identification with space (Scannell and Gifford 2022). Recent studies indicate that place attachment is a multidimensional relationship between the individual and the environment, encompassing identity, functional dependency, environmental bonding, and social relations (Wächter 2024). Elements such as green spaces, social interactions, and cultural markers also reinforce this bond (Urban Sci 2024; Boffi et al. 2023). In Iran as well, studies have examined the role of physical characteristics and modes of dwelling in shaping place attachment (Bakraei and Vafaei 2023; Rashidkolver et al. 2023). The findings show that the environment is not merely a physical collection but a bearer of meanings and messages, interpreted through users’ experiences and expectations. This perception directly influences individuals’ judgment, satisfaction, and willingness to remain present in the space (Hernández et al. 2021). From Canter’s perspective, place is an inseparable part of the individual. In his model, it is considered the product of the interaction among three elements: human activity, mental perception, and physical characteristics (Zangeneh et al. 2021; Devine-Wright 2022).

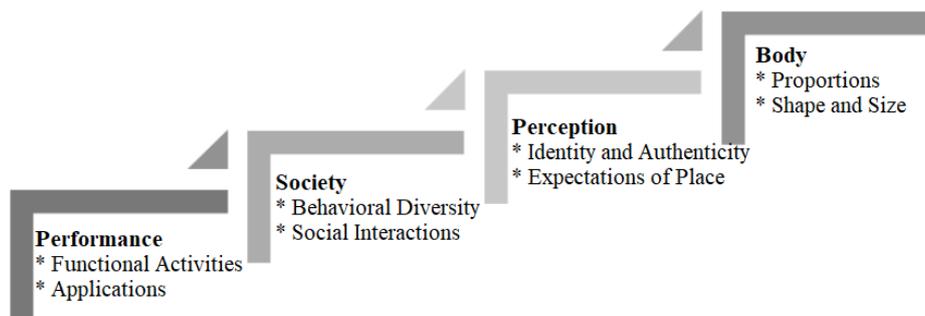


Fig. 1. Components Affecting Sense of Place in Urban Spaces
 (Kafi Ahrabi and Zarrabadi 2017)

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In the Moein Dictionary, “identity” refers to the essence and characteristics that distinguish an individual or phenomenon, and it may represent an objective, unique reality (Torkashvand et al. 2016). Individual identity is not limited to inherent traits; social and physical environments also shape it. Among these factors, space and place play a pivotal role. Space is an abstract concept, whereas place is a part of space that acquires meaning and value through human presence. Direct human interaction with the environment grants place its unique characteristics. Urban identity results from the interaction among humans, the environment, and the social structure, and it is examined across three dimensions: physical, semantic, and social. The physical dimension encompasses the city’s physical structure and spatial organization, reflecting its inhabitants’ beliefs and culture. According to Mumford, historical cities possessed visual and diverse identities, whereas modern urbanism, through its uniformity, has weakened these qualities (Mumford 1961). The semantic dimension, as emphasized by Lynch, relates to “meaning” and the capacity of residents to perceive and mentally visualize the city (Lynch 1984). A place gains meaning when sensory experience and mental imagery are formed within the individual (Pakzad 2009). The social dimension pertains to human interactions and provides a foundation for developing place attachment. Collective memory derived from social actions is the core element of place identity (Nasr and Majedi 2013). Recent studies describe urban identity as a multilayered phenomenon shaped by physical, cultural, historical, social, and technological factors. Reinterpreting contemporary heritage through prominent elements such as streets, mosques, squares, and bazaars can strengthen the Iranian–Islamic urban identity (Basirinejad et al. 2024). Among these, the bazaar is one of the most significant urban spaces that, beyond its economic function, has historically played social, cultural, and even political roles (Nejad Ebrahimi and Sedighi 2018). The physical structure of the bazaar not only shaped the backbone of the historical urban fabric but also maintained organic connections with squares, mosques, schools, and palaces (Abbasi et al. 2015). In such a setting, place identity reaches its peak, for the bazaar is both a site of social interaction and a symbol of the society’s cultural and economic identity. Thus, place is not merely a physical location but a realm where memories, interactions, and shared experiences are formed. As Relph states, the emotional bond between humans and place is the key to understanding the true meaning of “place” (Relph 2008). A space that enables experience, continuity, and discovery strengthens belonging and identity, fostering an

individual’s identification with the environment.

3. METHOD

Given the study’s aim, a mixed-methods (quantitative and qualitative) research approach was adopted. First, through a review of written sources, components related to the sense of place and identity formation were extracted. Subsequently, to refine and validate these components, open-ended interviews were conducted with 32 specialists in architecture, urban planning, sociology, and psychology. Participants were selected through purposive sampling and the snowball technique, and the data were analyzed using the grounded theory approach and axial coding. In the next stage, a researcher-made questionnaire based on the qualitative findings was developed and distributed among the same group of experts. Data collection occurred in the field during morning (9–12) and evening (16–21) periods. Quantitative data were analyzed using Spearman’s correlation test and path analysis in SPSS 26. In the final stage, the final indices were examined and analyzed using Depth Map software.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction of the Case Studies

The case study samples include two Iranian bazaars: Kerman Grand Bazaar and Iran Grand Bazaar (Iran Mall). Kerman Grand Bazaar extends from Arg Square to Moshtaghieh Square, and its various sections—such as Vakil Bazaar, Ekhtiyari Bazaar, and Ganjali Khan Bazaar—have gained national and international recognition due to their unique characteristics. This bazaar is the longest in Iran, and most of its sections were built after the 8th century AH. The purpose of examining this bazaar is to analyze identity within the structure of Iranian–Islamic bazaars.

As a modern example, the Grand Bazaar of Iran (Iran Mall) was also studied. Iran Mall is a commercial, cultural, and recreational complex located in the northwest of Tehran, near the Chitgar Lake, and is considered one of the five largest malls in the world and the Middle East. It has been designed with the objectives of economic development, the promotion of Iranian–Islamic culture and architecture, and the creation of a social and recreational environment. The complex includes the Grand Mosque, a traditional Sharbatkhaneh, cinema halls, gardens, a traditional bazaar, the Jundishapur Library, and numerous halls, all of which add a distinctive architectural character to the complex (Lotfi and Rezaei 2022).

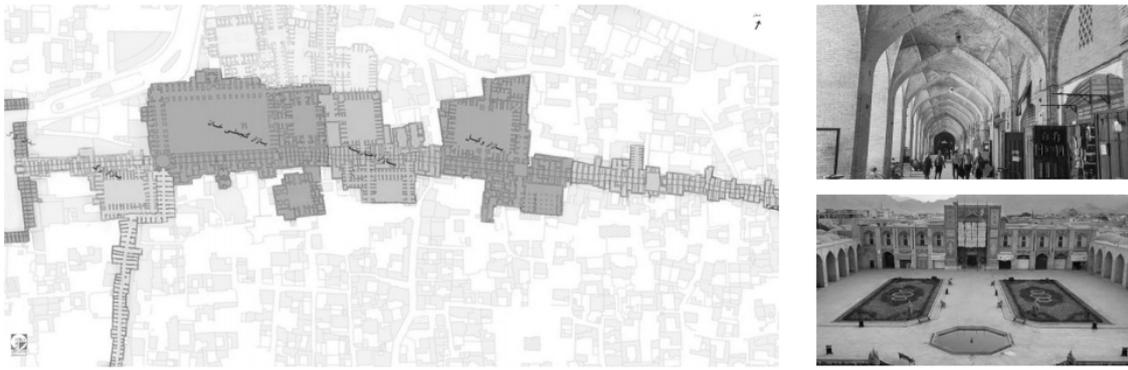


Fig. 2. Study area of Kerman Bazaar
(Lotfi and Rezaei 2022)

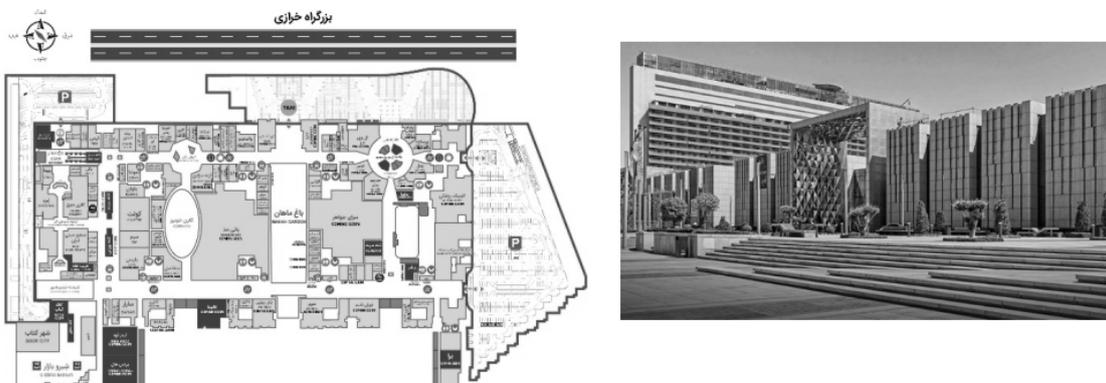


Fig. 3. Study Area of Iran Mall
(iranmall.com)

4.2. Quantitative Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires were statistically analyzed to identify the components influencing urban identity and to strengthen citizens' sense of place attachment. The analyses were conducted to clarify the relationships among the elements. The reliability of the instrument was

evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which exceeded 0.7 (Table 2), indicating high reliability and the accurate measurement of the intended concepts. This level of reliability ensures that the questionnaire provides valid and dependable data for statistical analysis and that the resulting outcomes can be trusted.

Table 2. Reliability Level of Questionnaire Items

Reliability of Statistical Analyses		
Questionnaire	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Components of Creating a Sense of Place Attachment	12	0.921
Components of Place Identity	12	0.847

4.3. Friedman Test / Two-Way ANOVA Analysis

To assess and rank the importance of components influencing urban identity and citizens' sense of place attachment, the Friedman test was used. This nonparametric method compares the mean ranks of dependent data and does not require normality

assumptions. The test results were interpreted based on the significance level (Sig); if Sig < 0.05, the differences among the ranks are significant, indicating that respondents assign different levels of importance to each component.

Table 3. Friedman Test

N	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig
100	436.215	23	0.000

The Friedman test not only examines the significance of differences in component mean ranks but also enables their prioritization. For this purpose, the Ranks Table was used, which displays the mean rank of each component; higher values indicate greater

importance from the respondents' perspective. The analysis results are presented in Table 4, where the rank and priority of the components in shaping urban identity and enhancing place attachment are specified.

Table 4. Prioritization of Components Influencing Spatial Identity in Urban Spaces to Enhance Citizens' Sense of Place Attachment Based on the Friedman Test

Components	Mean Rank	Indicators
Cognitive	4.36	Spatial legibility, place identity, personal identity, sense of place, individual interactions, presence of people, elements, spatial geometry
Behavioral	4.01	Social response, social interactions, citizen participation
Social	3.59	Presence of diverse groups, social actions within the environment, history, and culture, and social activities
Affective	4.75	Place dependence, place attachment, social bonding, physical characteristics, individual needs, contextual characteristics

In this study, the relationship between the sense of belonging and each component affecting identity was examined using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (ρ). This nonparametric method is used for rank data and provides information on the intensity and direction of the relationship between variables.

Table 5 presents the statistical relationship between behavioral components and the level of citizen participation in social space and interactions. The correlation coefficient of 0.455 indicates a positive, moderate relationship, in which increases in one variable are accompanied by increases in the other.

Table 5. Significance Level of Behavioral Components

Behavioral Components	Citizen Participation in Space	Social Interactions
Correlation Coefficient	0.455	0.455
Significance Level	0.455	0.455

Table 6 shows correlation coefficients of 0.55 and 0.412 for spatial legibility and place identity, respectively. These indicate positive and moderate relationships, meaning that as spatial legibility

increases, place identity also moderately increases. The results highlight the significant role of cognitive components in enhancing citizens' sense of place attachment.

Table 6. Significance Level of Cognitive Components

Cognitive Components	Spatial Legibility	Place Identity
Correlation Coefficient	0.412	0.55
Significance Level	0.510	0.643

Table 7 indicates a correlation coefficient of 0.455, reflecting a positive, moderate relationship, meaning that strengthening historical and cultural elements is

associated with increased citizen participation and social activities.

Table 7. Significance Level of Social Components

Social Components	History and Culture	Social Activities
Correlation Coefficient	0.455	0.087
Significance Level	0.674	0.233

Table 8 shows the correlation coefficients between the emotional components of place attachment. The coefficient of 0.901 indicates a strong, positive

relationship (Sig.=0.021), indicating that increasing citizens' emotional attachment is associated with greater attachment to the urban environment.

Table 8. Significance Level of Affective Components

Affective Components	Place Dependence	Place Attachment
Correlation Coefficient	0.901	0.467
Significance Level	0.021	0.542

The research findings show that there is a significant difference between the components that affect the identity of the foot in urban spaces and those that promote citizens' sense of belonging. Emotional and cognitive components have the most significant impact and are ranked higher than behavioral and

social components. The most critical indicators for strengthening a sense of belonging are, respectively, spatial legibility, citizen participation, the presence of diverse groups, and spatial connection, which are considered the key factors in creating a sense of belonging and spatial identity.

Table 9. Types of Correlations

Component	Hypothesis	Correlation Value
Behavioral	Citizen Participation in Space	0.986
	Social Interactions	0.832
Cognitive	Spatial Legibility	0.721
	Place Identity	0.912
Social	History and Culture	0.953
	Social Activities	0.879
Affective	Place Dependence	0.986
	Place Attachment	0.741

Based on Table 9, there is a reciprocal relationship among the components influencing spatial identity in urban spaces. Strengthening behavioral, cognitive, social, and affective components can directly enhance the sense of place attachment. These results show that all dimensions play a mutually reinforcing role in forming spatial identity and place attachment, and that their interactions improve the quality of citizens' experience of urban spaces.

4.5. Software Analysis

In this section, using the DepthMap software and analyzing the plan of Kerman Bazaar and Iranmal

Shopping Center, the impact of practical components on promoting a sense of belonging to the place was examined. This software enables analysis of spatial parameters at different scales, including space permeability, physical access, viewpoints, and axial maps. According to Tables 10 to 12, using DepthMap software to examine the degree of space permeability, physical access, and viewpoints, and to analyze axial maps, helps better understand how citizens interact with space and promote a sense of belonging to the place in urban spaces.

Table 10. Evaluation of Components Affecting the Enhancement of Place Attachment in Iran Mall Complex

Space Name	Integration	Depth	Connectivity	Control	Dispersion	Integration
Lobby	2.90	2.65	6	0.867	1.84	
Corridor	1.09	1.39	9	0.642	1.39	
Rest Area	2.31	1.72	7	0.761	1.94	
Shops	1.97	2.04	5	0.986	2.12	
Entrance	2.02	1.33	9	0.732	1.54	

Table 11. Evaluation of Components Affecting the Enhancement of Place Attachment in Iran Mall Complex

Space Name	Integration	Depth	Connectivity	Control	Dispersion	Physical Accessibility
Lobby	2.69	2.06	8	0.736	1.47	
Corridor	1.87	1.95	9	0.873	1.60	
Rest Area	2.71	1.55	5	0.921	1.99	
Shops	1.76	1.03	9	0.760	1.10	
Entrance	2.04	2.64	6	0.652	2.13	

Table 12. Evaluation of Components Affecting the Enhancement of Place Attachment in Iran Mall Complex

Space Name	Integration	Depth	Connectivity	Control	Dispersion	Viewpoints (Depth of Field)
Lobby	2.09	2.17	7	0.126	1.93	
Corridor	1.65	1.88	9	0.850	1.59	
Rest Area	2.37	1.09	6	0.734	1.04	
Shops	1.29	1.27	7	0.871	1.10	
Entrance	2.13	2.71	8	0.743	2.18	

Table 13 includes the isovist indices, which represent the geometric and visual characteristics of the space. The values of perimeter, minimum and maximum view radius, and visual obstruction, displacement of the

visual center, and the distribution and concentration of the view field indicate spatial quality and assist in analyzing users' visual perception.

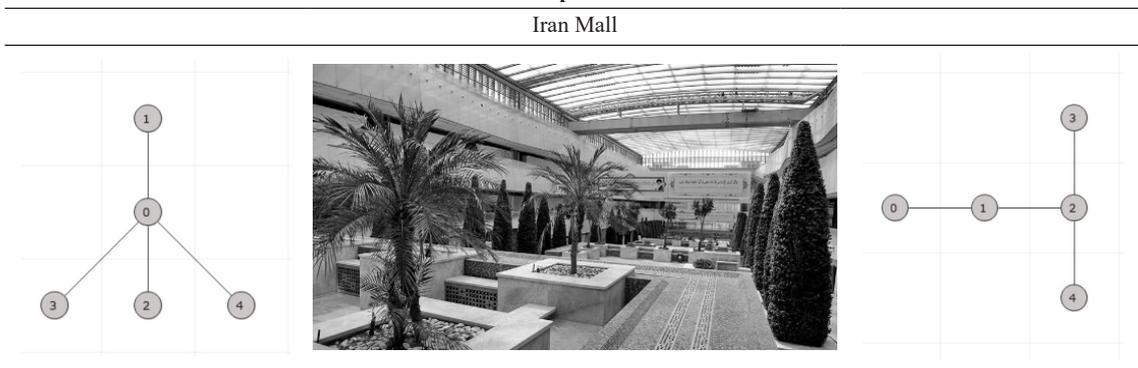
Table 13. Value of the Accessibility Index Extracted from the Isovist Graph (Software Output)

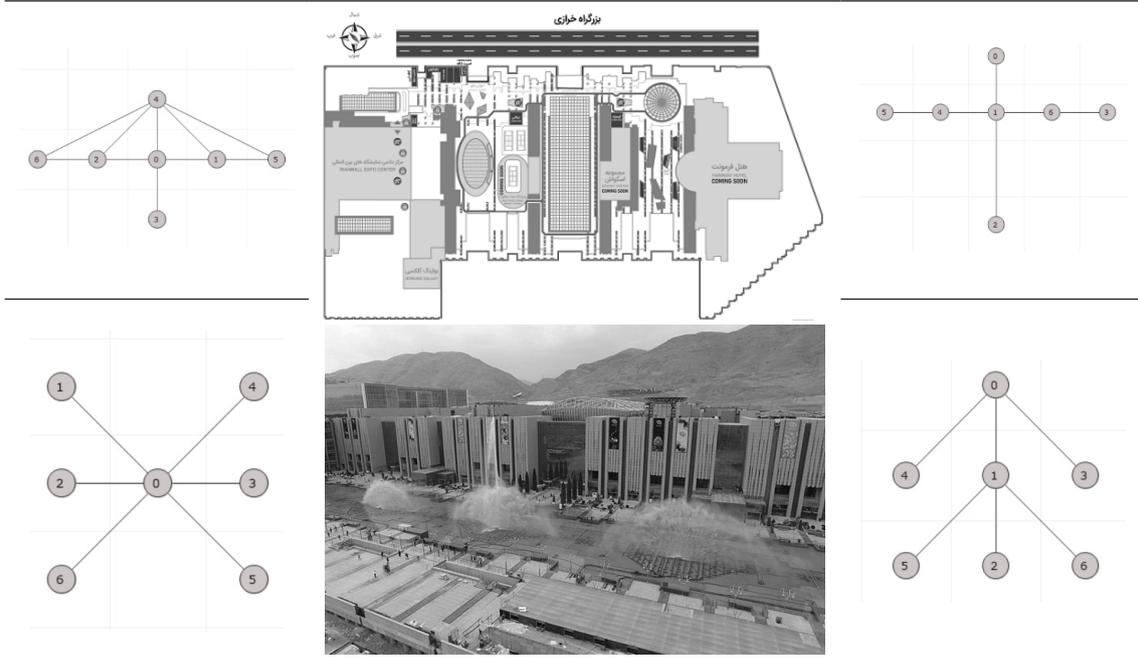
Field of View Environment	Occlusion of the Field of Vision	Minimum Field of View Radius	Maximum Field of View Radius	Amount of the Field of View Deviation	Field of View Deviation Angle	Field of View Density	Field of View Area	cy	cx	Reflection
2132.213	621.1037	13.93621	321.2183	29.36171	321.7492	0.026421	3155423	23571.24	437798.2	0
2927.411	458.1057	14.05602	292.146	23.3261	384.9123	0.043608	12446.73	39580179	595105.1	1

The graph generated by AGraph (Table 14) and indices derived from DepthMap (Table 10) examine three syntactic components related to spatial cognition and identify key points of the spatial network. In the tables, blue and green colors indicate the lowest

values, while orange and red indicate the highest values for each component. These analyses enable an examination of the spatial structure, the performance of different areas, and a better understanding of how users experience and interact with urban spaces.

Table 14. General Graph of Iran Mall collection





Spatial analysis of Iranmall shows that the highest connectivity is in the central lobby, and the shopping center has a high relative depth. Physical accessibility analysis using yellow lines (longest routes) and green/blue (shortest routes) shows that the central routes are highly legible and serve as connecting points.

The results of DepthMap and AGraph indicate that Iranmall, with its high connectivity, has effective components that promote a sense of place; the central lobby, as a key point, creates a sociable environment and attracts people. Table 15 presents the spatial depth index for each graph separately.

Table 15. Measuring the Effective Components of Promoting a Sense of Belonging to Place in Kerman Bazaar

Space Name	Integration	Depth	Connectivity	Control	Dispersion	Integration
Lobby	1.45	2.54	8	0.932	1.63	
Corridor	0.69	1.09	9	0.871	1.60	
Rest Area	2.63	2.90	9	0.844	1.91	
Shops	1.32	1.34	6	0.810	1.42	
Entrance	1.09	2.05	6	0.762	2.08	

Table 16. Measuring the Effective Components of Promoting a Sense of Belonging to Place in Kerman Bazaar

Space Name	Integration	Depth	Connectivity	Control	Dispersion	Integration
Lobby	1.21	2.43	7	0.194	1.83	
Corridor	1.05	1.09	9	0.762	1.91	
Rest Area	2.87	2.11	9	0.981	1.33	
Shops	1.64	1.04	7	0.809	1.09	
Entrance	1.13	2.04	6	0.852	2.26	

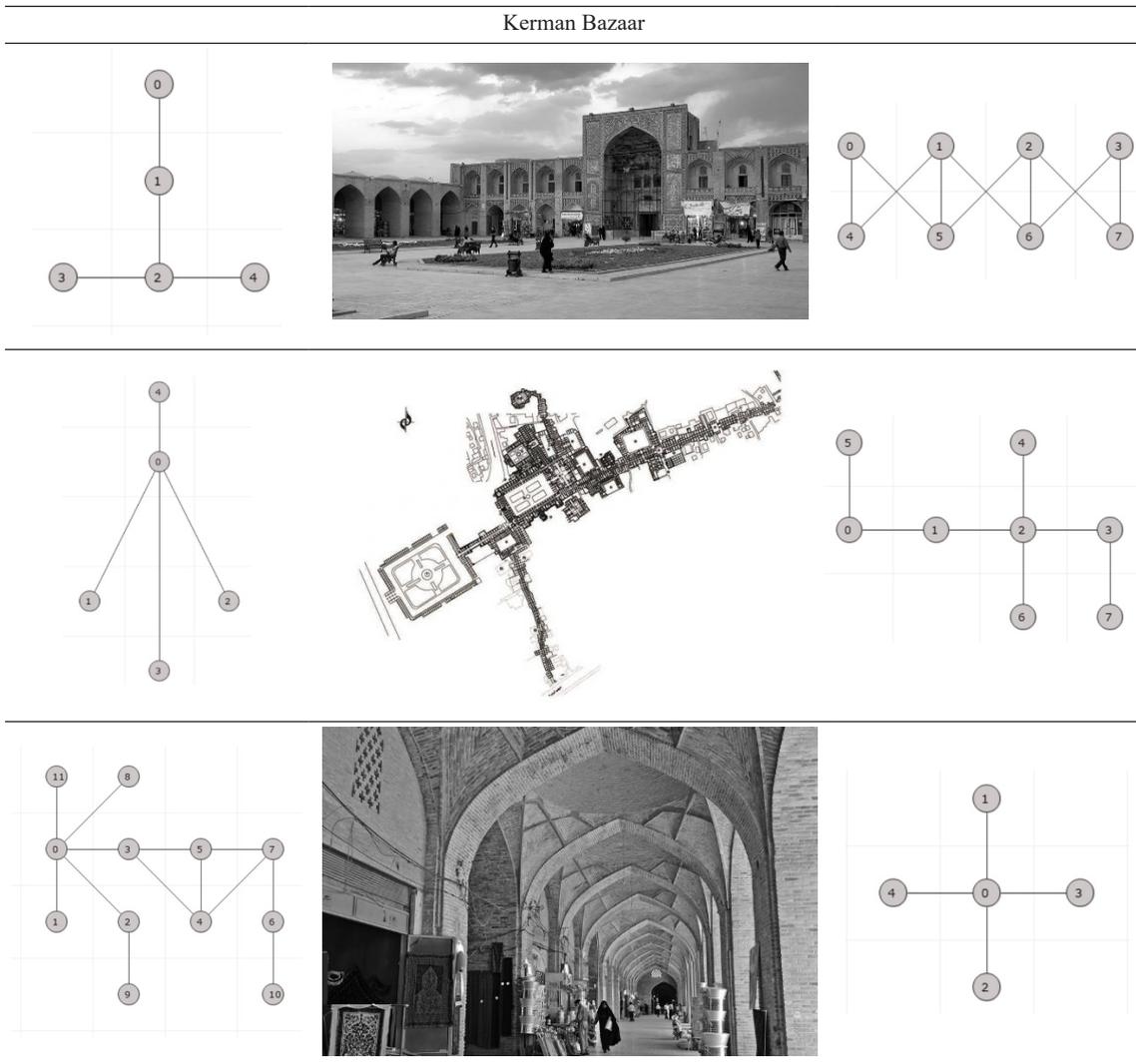
Table 17. Measuring the Effective Components in Promoting a Sense of Belonging to Place in Kerman Bazaar

Space Name	Integration	Depth	Connectivity	Control	Dispersion	Integration
Lobby	1.19	2.43	7	0.176	1.87	
Corridor	2.65	1.65	9	0.793	1.31	
Rest Area	2.96	2.86	9	0.890	1.78	
Shops	1.84	1.07	8	0.801	1.51	
Entrance	1.43	1.71	6	0.712	2.12	

Based on the analyses of Tables 15 to 17 and the examination of the syntactic components, the traditional Kerman bazaar was examined. The colors blue/green indicate the lowest, and orange/red the highest. The highest connectivity was observed

in the central spaces of the bazaar, which also has a high relative depth. Linear paths and open and closed spaces shape users' movement paths, social interactions, and cognitive experiences.

Table 18. General Graph of Kerman Bazaar



Analysis of two examples of traditional bazaars, Kerman and Iran Mall, shows that open and intermediate spaces, straight lines, social spaces, and legibility of routes play an essential role in promoting a sense of belonging to a place. In Kerman, the sense

of belonging is higher, indicating the importance of identity and the role of traditional spaces in fostering a sense of place. In contrast, in modern shopping centers such as Iran Mall, traditional bazaars have a lesser influence on design, and a sense of belonging is

less evident. In these spaces, lobbies and signboards define routes, while in the traditional bazaar, linear routes and aisles made different functions clear. Relative depth analysis shows that, in both examples, access is spaced, but in the conventional bazaar route, options rest spaces and spatial elements moderate the

limitation. In contrast, in Iran, Mall lobbies provide spaces for rest and access, in addition to separating areas. Table 19 shows the indicators separately and through a motion graph, clarifying the spatial and syntactic differences between the two examples.

Table 19. Values of the Indicators examined from the Natural Motion Graph related to Several Nodes as a Sample Output from the Software

Second Moment of Area	First Moment of Area	Number of Crossings	Connectivity	x	y	Reflection
3451	93.105144	-1	6	4361426	431692	53710
73	17.430776	-1	4	4361429	431692	53711
64087	1042.47	-1	41	4361432	431692	53712
49	15.28761	-1	2	4361432	431695	121448
262021	2510.9232	-1	62	4361435	431695	121449
249302	2651.7052	-1	75	4361435	431698	176765
42097	1189.726	-1	41	4361435	431701	342321
269671	3210.8908	-1	95	4361438	431701	342322

6. CONCLUSION

This study shows that factors such as social spaces, active citizen participation, spatial centrality, linear paths, high spatial integration, and other syntactic and spatial components significantly enhance place attachment and urban identity. Increasing social activities and interpersonal interactions strengthen attachment and identity. In traditional bazaars like Kerman, intermediate spaces and timches create dynamic, lively, and memorable environments, allowing merchants and citizens to form emotional connections with place. In Iran Mall, central lobbies and linear paths have the highest integration and

user presence, but attachment is lower due to spatial segregation and lack of natural interaction. Hence, designing new shopping centers should be creative, aligned with Iranian-Islamic culture and identity, and responsive to social and psychological needs of users. Using traditional elements and avoiding unprincipled innovations can enhance identity and place attachment in modern spaces. These findings align with both domestic and international studies, confirming the role of design elements and spatial quality indicators in enhancing place attachment (Jang et al. 2023; Akçakaya and İnceoğlu 2023; Amini and Farahani 2023; Mousavi and Alinia 2022).

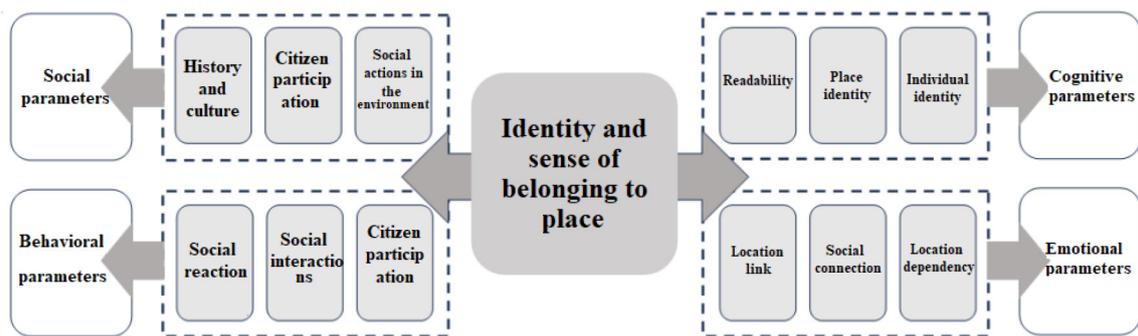


Fig. 4. Final Research Model

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

MORAL APPROVAL

The authors commit to observe all the ethical principles of the publication of the scientific work based on the ethical principles of COPE. In case of any violation of the ethical principles, even after the publication of the article, they give the journal the right to delete the article and follow up on the matter.

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The authors state that they have directly participated in the stages of conducting research and writing the article.

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