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## Socio-Spatial Interactions and Place Attachment: Towards Sustaining Traditional Shopping Areas

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### KEY WORDS

Place Attachment, Socio-Spatial Interactions, Traditional Shopping Area, Qualitative Method, Libya.

### ABSTRACT

This research examines how behavioral tendencies contribute to a sense of attachment to place in the historic shopping district of Misurata City, Libya. With urban growth transforming Misurata, preserving a deep connection to traditional zones presents a challenge. This study aims to identify elements that impact place attachment and suggests methods for improving urban environments. The research uses a qualitative methodology, integrating semi-structured interviews with 22 lifelong residents alongside systematic field observations to study behavioral tendencies, spatial interactions, and sociocultural factors. Major findings reveal that enhancing walkability and infrastructure, confronting cultural practices that create user separation, and safeguarding historic features are essential for bolstering place attachment. The study promotes urban policies that emphasize pedestrian-friendly designs, heritage-aware architectural approaches, and gender-inclusive environments. In contrast to earlier studies that relied on self-reported intentions, this research anchors the theory of place attachment in observable behaviors and real-life experiences, enriching discussions on sustainable urbanism and underscoring the relationship between cultural identity and behavioral patterns in developing resilient public spaces.

### الكلمات المفتاحية

### الملخص

الارتباط بالمكان، التفاعلات الاجتماعية المكانية، مناطق التسوق التقليدية، المنهجية النوعية، ليبيا.

تتناول هذه الدراسة كيفية تأثير السلوكيات الإنسانية والاجتماعية على الارتباط بالمكان في المنطقة التجارية التاريخية بمدينة مصراتة، ليبيا. فقد أدى التوسع العمراني السريع إلى تحديات في الحفاظ على الروابط مع المناطق التقليدية. يهدف البحث إلى تحديد العوامل المؤثرة في الارتباط بالمكان واقتراح استراتيجيات لتحسين البيئات العمرانية. اعتمدت الدراسة منهجية نوعية جمعت بين مقابلات مع 22 من السكان المحليين والمقيمين لفترات طويلة بجانب ذلك استخدمت منهجية الملاحظة لتسجيل الأنماط السلوكية وملاحظة التفاعلات المكانية والاجتماعية-الثقافية. أظهر التحليل الموضوعي أن سهولة حركة المشاة والحفاظ على المواقع التاريخية يعززان الروابط العاطفية والهوية المجتمعية، بينما تؤدي هيمنة السيارات وضعف الإدارة والممارسات المكانية القائمة على النوع الاجتماعي إلى إضعافها. وتؤكد النتائج أهمية تعزيز قابلية المشي والبنية التحتية، ومعالجة الممارسات الثقافية التي تعزز الفصل، والحفاظ على المكونات التاريخية لتعزيز الارتباط بالمكان. وتوصي الدراسة بسياسات تركز على تصميم حضري ملائم للمشاة، وممارسات معمارية تراعي التراث، وفضاءات عامة شاملة اجتماعياً. وعلى خلاف دراسات سابقة اعتمدت على التصورات الذاتية، يركز هذا البحث على السلوكيات الملحوظة، مما يساهم في إثراء نقاشات العمران المستدام.

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## 1. Introduction

Traditional shopping sectors function as vital social hubs within mixed-use urban environments, fostering community engagement and strengthening place attachment. These spaces attract diverse populations, enhancing social interactions and urban vitality (Carmona et al., 2010). Notably, traditional settings are recognized as optimal scales for analyzing human-place bonds, offering insights into cultural and emotional ties (Bazrafshan et al., 2021). However, the rise of economic and unchecked urbanization threatens these areas, eroding their social and economic roles and demanding urgent preservation strategies.

Libya's recent urban trajectory exemplifies this global challenge. Over recent decades, the country has undergone rapid construction and redevelopment, driven by shifting social and infrastructural needs. While awareness of preserving culturally significant public spaces such as historic markets has grown, the absence of coherent urban policies (Alakhal, 2024) has led to widespread neglect, encroachment, and physical degradation. Consequently, these spaces no longer serve as vibrant centers for commerce, work, or social exchange, undermining their historical and communal value.

Scholarship underscores the interplay between social dynamics and place attachment in traditional retail environments. Johnstone and Conroy (2008) found that social interactions, both direct and indirect, shape behavioral patterns and deepen emotional connections to these spaces. Similarly, Ujang (2014) identified factors such as user familiarity, cultural practices, and economic reliance as critical to sustaining place identity in Kuala Lumpur's markets, even amid urban transformation. These studies highlight how communal engagement fosters attachment, which in turn influences behavioral intentions.

An important yet largely unexplored area of research is how socio-spatial interactions and behaviors in specific settings, such as traditional sectors, affect residents' feelings of belonging. Most current studies on place attachment focus on predicting behavioral outcomes, such as enjoyment of community events (Su et al., 2018), eco-friendly actions, and the concept of place attachment itself (Wang et al., 2019; Counted et al., 2021). A recent study examined the relationship between place attachment and public spaces, revealing how cultural differences influence immigrants' connections to these environments. It highlighted their awareness of the significance of natural settings, social opportunities, and cultural factors that shape their experiences of place attachment (Ghasemishkaftaki et al., 2025). While existing findings emphasize the importance of communal spaces like parks and streets, research on attachment to traditional locations remains scarce.

Additionally, although place attachment is increasingly recognized in urban studies, it is still underexplored in many geographical contexts, particularly in developing countries like Libya. This gap suggests an overreliance on subjective intentions and predictions regarding behaviors, highlighting the need for studies that connect place attachment to socio-spatial interaction outcomes, especially in traditional environments. This research aims to address this gap by analyzing real data on socio-spatial behavioral interactions to explore the connections people have to locations within Libya's traditional markets. By conducting on-site observations and direct interviews, the study seeks to enhance understanding of how emotional and cultural ties to places manifest in tangible social and economic behaviors. The paper is structured as follows: it begins with a review of literature on place attachment and social interaction in traditional spaces, followed by a description of the methodology that integrates behavioral observation with qualitative insights. The results and discussion sections present findings, concluding with implications for urban policy. Ultimately, this work provides a context-specific framework for preserving Libya's cultural heritage while contributing to global discussions on sustainable urban development.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Conceptualizing Place Attachment in Traditional Retail Spaces

Place attachment is defined as the emotional, cognitive, and functional bonds individuals form with physical environments. It is often measured through various dimensions, including place identity, place dependence, social bonding, and affective ties (Xueli, 2021). In traditional retail spaces, place attachment is influenced by emotional, functional, social, and cultural factors. Place attachment encompasses both subjective emotions, such as feelings, and objective factors like physical utility and dependency. The relationship between place attachment and social interaction in public spaces is primarily linked to ethnic familiarity, economic dependence, and historical significance, with few opportunities for inclusive social

engagement (Ujang, 2018). When a place meets individuals' needs and helps them achieve their goals, it is perceived more positively, leading to a stronger bond with that place compared to others. Hence, a person's attachment to a place and their reliance on it depend on how enjoyable their experiences there are.

Place identity is rooted in the emotional connections linked to the cultural and historical significance of a space, such as heritage architecture or traditional crafts, which foster a sense of continuity and belonging (Xueli, 2021). Place dependence refers to the reliance on the unique offerings of traditional markets, including access to local goods, affordability, and convenience (Feng et al., 2022). Meanwhile, social bonding includes the interactions among visitors, vendors, and communities that create shared experiences and a collective identity (Meric et al., 2023). Emotional responses are also evoked by sensory elements (e.g., smells, sounds) and nostalgic memories associated with the space (ibid). Likewise, studies of traditional Iraqi historical sites have emphasized the importance of historical significance as a vital catalyst for tourism and enhancing place identity (Ghassan Hasan et al., 2025).

Research distinguishes between emotional and functional drivers of attachment. Dang and Weiss (2021) argued that emotional attachment is rooted in nostalgia, cultural pride, or personal memories (e.g., childhood visits to a market), while functional attachment can be measured through practical benefits, such as access to fresh produce or artisan services unavailable elsewhere (Feng et al., 2022). For instance, in traditional markets like Tunxi Old Street, China, emotional attachment (local identity) was a stronger predictor of loyalty than functional utility (local dependence) (Dang & Weiss, 2021). Likewise, a recent study conducted in the historic core of Old Rusafa, Baghdad, revealed a positive correlation between urban functionality, socio-economic vitality, and the preservation of cultural heritage (Alobaydi, Alobaydi, and Abdullah, 2025).

The physical design of the historic retail district amplifies place attachment through various factors, including walkability, mixed-use spaces, and active frontages. Furthermore, pedestrian-friendly layouts encourage exploration and lingering, fostering deeper engagement with the environment (Ghasemishkaftaki et al., 2025). Open storefronts and street vendors create visual and social vibrancy, enhancing perceived safety and community interaction (Meric, Tugce Ertan, and Ujang, Norsidah, and MacKee, 2023). These authors found that the integration of retail, residential, and communal areas (e.g., vendors, cafes, shops) supports multifunctional use and sustained visitation. In Misurata City, Libya, these design features will be examined for their role in fostering a sense of attachment to the place. Both users and visitors view the market as a vibrant communal hub.

Sociodemographic factors significantly influence place attachment, shaping how individuals form emotional, functional, and social bonds with their environments. For instance, various authors have proposed that several factors should be taken into account in place attachment studies, including age, education level, length of residence, homeownership status, income (Widya et al., 2019), place of origin, occupancy (Xu & Gursoy, 2020), past experiences, familiarity, satisfaction with the location and frequency of visits (Loureiro, 2014). Research has shown that older adults tend to have stronger place attachments due to a longer history with their environment (Hernández et al., 2007). In urban Asian settings, a study conducted in Kuala Lumpur shows that place attachment is closely linked to interactions among familiar individuals and ethnic groups. This finding underscores the necessity for more diverse and socially inclusive public spaces (Ujang et al., 2018). Overall, place attachment is not uniform but reflects intersecting sociodemographic realities, where ethnicity, class, and life stage interact with urban design and community infrastructure to create varied spatial experiences. Therefore, factors such as age, gender, and cultural background significantly impact place attachment. Understanding these factors is essential for designing inclusive and responsive urban spaces.

## **2.2. Socio-Spatial Interactions and Place Attachment**

Research indicates that place attachment embedded in emotional, cognitive, and functional bonds to a place shapes diverse behavioral patterns in traditional shopping areas. Similarly, studies note that sensory richness (e.g., smells, textures) and cultural symbolism in traditional markets enhance memorability, fostering repeat visits and word-of-mouth recommendations (Fard, 2024). This contrasts with modern malls, which often lack these affective triggers (Xueli, 2021). In Misurata City (Libya), the traditional area appears to have walkability and active street frontages in traditional markets, which encourage social interactions and reinforce visitors' emotional ties and loyalty.

Place attachment fosters collective identity, motivating individuals to engage in community activities. While useful, it may be beneficial to introduce another geographical example for a broader comparison. Traditional markets, such as Tunxi Old Street, thrive on the interactions between shopkeepers and visitors, which in turn strengthen social bonds and promote communal responsibility (Ling-li, 2010). Importantly, individuals with strong place attachment are more likely to advocate for heritage conservation, as seen in efforts to protect traditional architecture and local crafts in traditional settings. According to Kyle et al. (2004) individuals with a strong emotional connection to their local environment are more likely to engage in conservation activities, such as recycling and habitat restoration. This emotional connection often stems from a sense of stewardship, in which individuals feel responsible for the well-being of their environment. Place attachment serves as a significant predictor of community engagement and participation in local governance. This engagement is often fueled by a desire to enhance the quality of life in their community and a belief that their contributions can effect meaningful change (Di Masso et al., 2017; Fard, 2024).

The success of a place relies on the services it provides and its effectiveness as a public space where people can engage, reconnect with old friends, and form new connections (Carmona, 2021). In this context, Gehl (2010) argues that activities in outdoor spaces should prioritize individuals' needs for easy and comfortable movement, including opportunities for walking, sitting, standing, conversing, relaxing, playing, and exercising. These activity patterns, such as socializing and leisure, bolster place attachment by creating social spaces that enhance community ties and personal connections (Gehl, 2010). The emotional bonds that develop in these spaces render experiences meaningful and memorable. Montgomery (2013) emphasizes that a city must facilitate the creation and strengthening of connections among friends, families, and strangers. These connections imbue life with meaning and represent the city's greatest achievements.

Ujang and Gehl offer valuable insights into the relationship between people and urban spaces, albeit from different perspectives. Gehl (2010) emphasizes the behavioral and experiential dimensions of public life, highlighting how physical design elements such as walkability, visual connectivity, and active edges can enhance social interactions and urban vitality. His work advocates for human-scale environments that foster inclusive and vibrant spaces. In contrast, Ujang focuses on how identity, memory, and cultural symbolism influence place attachment, particularly within Asian and Islamic urban contexts (Ujang, 2012; Ujang & Zakariya, 2015). While Gehl provides tools for designing livable public spaces, Ujang offers a framework for understanding the deeper meanings that people associate with places. Together, their contributions inform this study's conceptual framework by connecting spatial configuration to emotional resonance and community engagement, essential components for revitalizing public spaces in Libyan cities.

In summary, the relationship between socio-spatial interaction and place attachment is essential for fostering meaningful urban environments. Strong place attachment promotes pro-environmental behaviors, enhances social interactions, and encourages community engagement, thereby contributing to increased social capital and resilience. The literature highlights the importance of designing urban spaces that prioritize accessibility and facilitate social connections, particularly in multicultural contexts. Furthermore, place attachment significantly influences residents' intentions to engage in local governance and community activities, underscoring its role as a key driver of positive behaviors and improved quality of life. By understanding and leveraging these dynamics, urban planners and community leaders can create environments that meet residents' functional needs while strengthening their emotional connections to the places they inhabit.

### **2.3. Planning And Development of Misurata City Center, Libya**

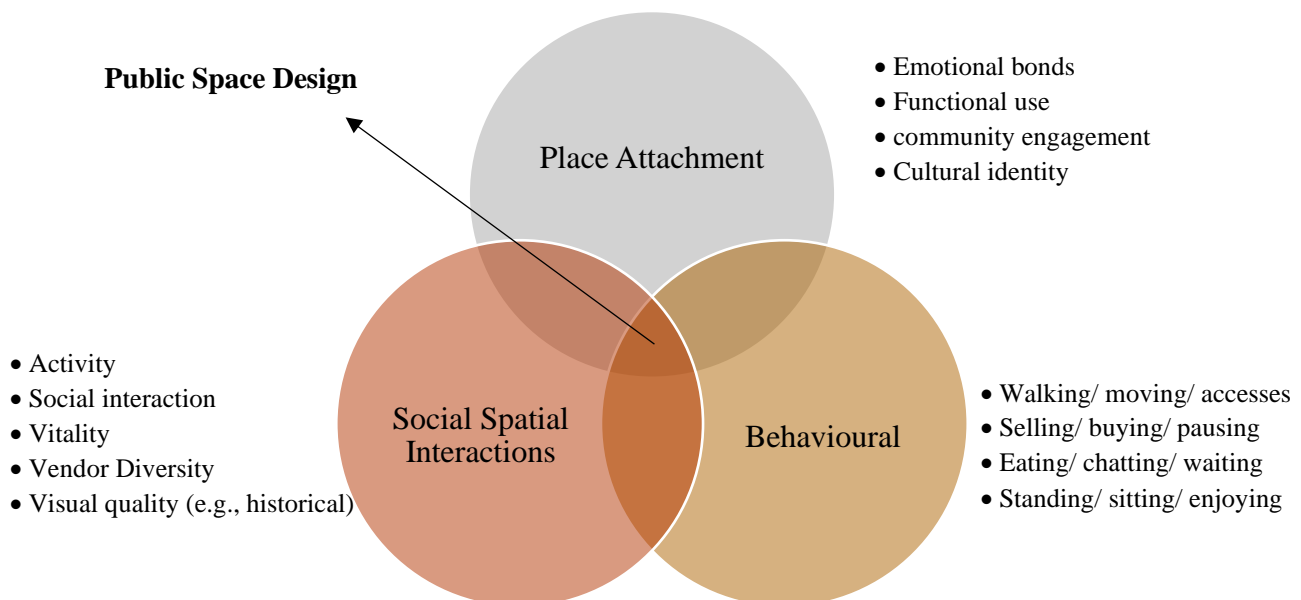
Historically, Libya's urban governance and planning have been influenced by a centralized bureaucratic approach, inadequate institutional frameworks, and changing political regimes. In the aftermath of conflict, the lack of effective tools for spatial planning and coordination has worsened urban issues. Local governments struggle with limited technical skills, resources, and political power needed to create inclusive plans or implement building regulations. Additionally, urban design often fails to connect with wider socio-economic recovery strategies, leading to a gap between community needs and development priorities (Abubrig, 2021). On the other hand, the disjointed nature of urban expansion also brings opportunities for grassroots and adaptable urban initiatives (Elgadi et al., 2021). Universities, local government officials, and urban design specialists can fill institutional voids by incorporating public space

solutions into Libya's fragile planning system (Elhasumi, 2018). This requires flexible, inclusive, and environmentally friendly approaches that can adapt to these constraints while fostering local resilience.

The urban development of Misurata, Libya, has faced challenges in balancing heritage conservation with modern growth. Historically, Misurata city's commercial center evolved from an oasis market town to incorporate European-style elements, resulting in a complex urban layout (Blake, 1968). This has led to difficulties in traffic management and infrastructure implementation. Urban planning in Libya aims to provide amenities and infrastructure to all towns, with foreign consultants developing multiple generations of master plans (Alakhal, 2024). However, the destruction of traditional areas in Misurata's city center for new commercial buildings has threatened the sense of place (Shinbira, 2012).

Like many Libyan cities, Misurata's transport system also requires improvement, as random planning and incompatibility with road specifications have negatively impacted social development, traffic safety, and congestion. To address these issues, there is a need for cooperation among stakeholders and a focus on preserving urban heritage while accommodating new development. Historically, Libyan cities' main streets and narrow alleys were surrounded by covered walkways where pedestrian movement and interaction took place, while public squares primarily hosted commercial and social interactions. However, over the past few decades, traditional sectors in Libya have faced significant challenges in balancing heritage conservation with modern urban development (Ejrroushi, 2024). Misurata City Centre faces several challenges in its planning and development. These include:

- Heritage conservation remains a major concern, as commercial developments increasingly replace historic zones. The destruction of traditional and historically significant areas is a significant issue. The city's historic core, which includes colonial buildings and traditional markets, has been subjected to intense pressure for commercial development. The existing historical buildings have also encountered challenges such as neglect, alterations, and insufficient maintenance and preservation by the local authority (Ejrroushi, 2024).
- Place Management: Inadequate place management, including poor parking regulations and a lack of maintenance, has negatively impacted the functionality and social potential of public spaces.
- Socio-Economic Dynamics: The city's development has been influenced by socio-economic factors, including rapid urbanization and population growth. These factors have led to a high demand for historical and traditional features, resulting in significant changes to the urban identity.



**Figure 1. Diagram illustrating the framework adopted in this study, emphasizing the conceptual relationship between socio-spatial interaction and place attachment in examining public space (the traditional area). Source: (Authors).**

Despite these challenges, Misurata City Centre, particularly its traditional shopping area, presents numerous opportunities for enhanced development, see Figure (1). The city's strategic location and commercial significance render it an attractive prospect for investment. This traditional area features a

layout that promotes social interaction and the exchange of goods and services, characterized by gathering spots, narrow alleys, and shaded streets. The narrow streets create an inviting atmosphere that encourages pedestrian movement. Historical buildings have been repurposed into shops and cafés, providing a unique shopping experience. Shaded walkways and open spaces enhance comfort and accessibility, inviting both residents and visitors to engage with their surroundings. Consequently, this study aims to examine these dynamics by connecting actual behavioral patterns in the traditional market with the sense of attachment to it. The research seeks to provide policies and guidelines for decision-makers to facilitate more effective future development.

### 3. Research Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative research design, aligning with established methodological frameworks for investigating place attachment and socio-spatial interactions and dynamics (Shaykh-Baygloo, 2020; Lee & Lee, 2017; Ramkissoon et al., 2013). The approach integrates systematic field observations and semi-structured interviews to capture subjective experiences within the traditional shopping district of Misurata city, Libya. In this study, socio-spatial interaction refers to the observable behaviors and practices through which individuals or groups engage with one another and with the physical environment in public spaces. This includes both social interactions (e.g., conversations, gatherings, passive co-presence) and spatial behaviors (e.g., movement patterns, occupation of specific areas, repeated use of certain elements such as benches or shaded zones), see Figure (2).

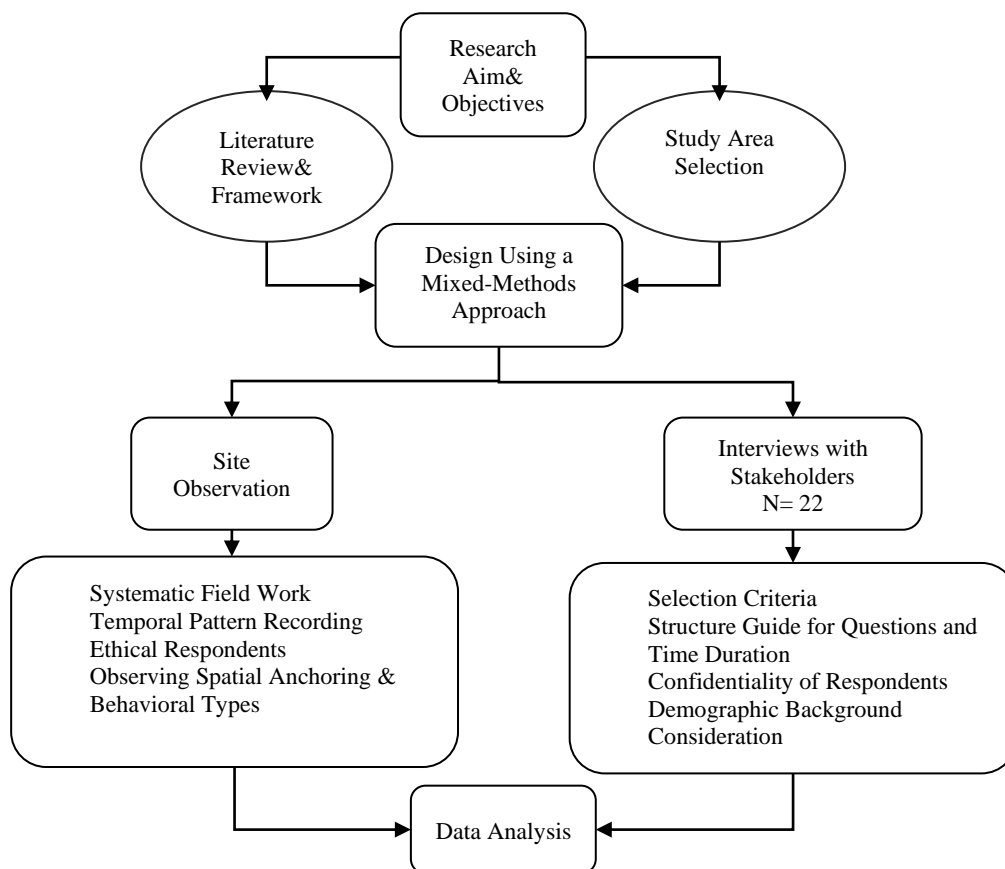


Figure 2. Research Methodological Approach Flowchart. Source: (Authors).

#### 3.1. The Study Area

The research was centered in the historic old market of Misurata, Libya. The area's layout, marked by gathering spots, shaded alleys, and open spaces, facilitates both commerce and social interaction. The characteristics of the area create an inviting atmosphere that encourages pedestrian movement. Historical buildings have been repurposed as shops and cafés, offering a unique shopping experience. Shaded walkways and open spaces enhance comfort and accessibility, inviting both residents and visitors to engage with their surroundings. Despite the significant changes occurring in urban spaces and public places across

Libya, few studies have focused on users' attachment to open public spaces. This research is the first to specifically examine place attachment in the traditional shopping area of Misurata, Libya. This localized focus in a less-studied geographical context represents a significant contribution to the field. The participants in this study were limited to the perceptions of Misurata residents, excluding foreigners, city visitors, and tourists. Only individuals who have lived and worked in Misurata either since birth or as long-term residents were considered. This focus on residents aimed to explore place attachment as a lived experience (Lewicka, 2008), highlighting its key significance in this study.

### 3.2. Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 participants (12 males, 10 females), aged 18-75, all lifelong residents of Misurata. A sample size of 20 to 30 is acceptable and commonly used in similar qualitative studies to achieve thematic saturation. Participants were purposively sampled to ensure representation across three criteria: User diversity (shop owners, workers, shoppers, office employees, students, and frequent visitors), spatial coverage (equal representation from distinct zones within the city center to account for locational nuances), and depth of engagement (individuals with long-term familiarity - minimum 10 years of residency - and high visit frequency - daily or weekly engagement). The interview protocol was coded around the four core themes and supplemented by emergent categories: functional engagement, emotional satisfaction, social interactions, and place attachment. Interview questions focused on functional use, emotional response, social engagement, and perceived attachment to place. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymized. Participants provided informed consent, with assurances of confidentiality and the right to withdraw.

The study aimed to capture the diverse experiences of public space users; however, it is important to acknowledge that the majority of direct participants were male. This gender imbalance can be attributed to cultural norms in Libya that often restrict women's visibility and mobility in public areas, particularly during participatory observational fieldwork. Moreover, practical barriers, such as the lack of research assistants and the necessity for gender-sensitive participation protocols, further limited access to female participants. Nonetheless, some women were successfully recruited through female workplace staff and group interviews in public spaces. Although these interviews were typically brief, lasting less than thirty minutes, they proved to be valuable. Collaboration with local women's organizations also played a crucial role in conducting interviews following the acquisition of consent.

The demographic analysis shows 56.4% of respondents identify as male and 43.6% as female, with ages ranging from 18 to 73, mostly between 22 and 56. A significant 68.6% are married. The group includes 54.5% who are visitors or shopkeepers and 27.3% who are shop proprietors. Over half, 54.5%, hold degrees, while 22.7% have diplomas. A cross-thematic analysis was employed, combining inductive coding (to identify emergent patterns from the data) and deductive coding (guided by place attachment theory). Interview transcripts were coded based on the four core themes and any other significant topics that arose. Observational data (photographs and notes) were triangulated with interview findings to validate linkages between physical design, observed behaviors, and expressed emotional ties.

### 3.3. Site Observation

Regular observations were conducted across the selected study areas within the traditional shopping district, including its streets and public spaces—the observation protocol involved documenting spatial usage, pedestrian behavior, and social interactions. Observations were carried out at different times of the day and on various days of the week to capture temporal variations in activity (e.g., peak hours vs. quiet periods) and spatial usage patterns. Data was recorded through detailed ethnographic note-taking and photography. Photographic documentation captured the physical environment, types of activities observed (e.g., informal gatherings, vendor-customer exchanges), and spatial features influencing engagement. Field notes recorded not only what was happening but also where and when, along with contextual factors such as architectural layout and accessibility. The observations aimed to provide an objective understanding of how the physical space was actually used and the types of interactions that occurred, complementing the self-reported data from interviews. Observed behaviors and spatial uses were categorized during the analysis phase to identify recurring patterns and link them to specific features of the environment. Moreover, observations were structured around three main dimensions:

- Behavioral types include solitary use, group interaction, or transient movement.
- Spatial anchoring: the specific location or element of the space involved (e.g., near fountains, seating, entrances).
- Temporal patterns: time of day and duration of interaction.

The socio-spatial interaction analysis is categorized and coded using a behavioral mapping template, which enables the identification of patterns contributing to place attachment and the vitality of public spaces. Figure (2) illustrates the research process and presents a flowchart that outlines the methodological approach employed in this study.

#### 4. Results

The analysis of systematic field observations and semi-structured interviews provided detailed insights into the behavioral patterns, spatial dynamics, and factors influencing place attachment within the traditional shopping area of Misurata. The findings are presented below, organized into four key categories: Observed Socio-Spatial Interactions and Activities, Place Management, and Influence of Built Environment and Events.

##### 4.1. Socio-Spatial Interactions and Place Attachment

Table (1) presents the key reasons contributing to residents' attachment to the traditional shopping area in Misurata, as identified through the study's findings. These reasons encompass a mix of emotional, functional, social, and physical attributes that collectively foster a strong bond between users and the place. Emotionally, the area fosters a sense of safety, warmth, and community, where people feel a natural connection and familiarity. Functionally, it serves as a central hub for shopping, trade, and specific services, efficiently fulfilling daily needs. The market also offers unique experiences through special events like its weekly evening market and annual holiday celebrations. From a social perspective, the area promotes interactions and strengthens community ties through both planned and spontaneous engagements, facilitating the exchange of news and traditions. Physically, while some aspects of the shopping center and surrounding buildings appear outdated, there is a strong desire to update designs and enhance decorative elements to improve its visual appeal. Importantly, the market's traditional physical form, including landmarks like the Sheikh Mosque and Nasser Square, is deeply valued as a reflection of traditional Arab culture and identity. Furthermore, the restriction of vehicle access in the area, as illustrated in Figure (3) below, enhances pedestrian spaces and fosters a more comfortable atmosphere.



**Figure 3. A distinction is made between car-free historic areas (on the right) and those dominated by vehicles (on the left). This contrast highlights the importance of pedestrian-friendly spaces that promote social connections, strengthen community ties, and enhance overall well-being. Source: (Site observation work conducted by the Authors).**

**Table 1: Reasons for Place Attachment in the Traditional Shopping Area of Misurata. Source: (Authors).**

Categories	Reasons for Place Attachment
Emotional Connection	- Perceived safety and warmth of the environment, akin to a "quiet room." - The experience of social interaction and "chatting with others as if we know each other," fostering a sense of community.
Functional Attributes	- The physical structure of the market facilitates clear commercial operations, though sometimes to the detriment of public space. - The ability to fulfill needs for shopping, trading, and specific services efficiently. - The market offers specific, distinct uses like the weekly evening market and annual holiday events, which draw people in for concentrated activities. - Provides unique commercial and social experiences during specific events.
Place Identity	- The market's overall physical form and prominent landmarks (Sheikh Mosque, Nasser Square) are recognized as reflecting traditional Arab culture and identity. - Preservation of the physical essence that embodies local culture and identity.
Physical Condition	- The narrow alleys and streets are seen as contributing positively by restricting vehicle access and enhancing pedestrian areas. - Maintenance and enhancement of pedestrian-friendly characteristics, including car-free zones, which contribute to a vibrant and comfortable atmosphere.

Participants frequently described the traditional shopping area as an attractive place that encourages their engagement and interaction, particularly referencing the narrow alleyways, vendors in front of the stores, and the absence of cars in certain zones. This physical characteristic was highlighted as fostering a sense of comfort and safety for pedestrians. One participant articulated this feeling, stating,

- “Being here feels like being in a quiet room. This market is quite different from others, like the one on Sana Street. It is notably quieter, with no cars around, so the only sounds you hear are people chatting, negotiating discounts, or asking about the goods they are seeking. It creates a sociable atmosphere” (P4-M-37 Y).

Another participant shared,

- “I am familiar with this place; I take my time wandering, shopping, and chatting with others as if we know each other. This place gives a sense of social connectivity more than other shops along the street” (P10-M-46 Y).

The study found that while there were some signs of limited movement and activity, it also noted many lively interactions such as chatting, eating, drinking, selling goods on the street, and social greetings. The result shows the patterns of activity and types of interactions observed in the area, along with how users engaged with their surroundings. However, the streets still offer few opportunities for interaction, mainly because of heavy vehicle traffic and a lack of pedestrian-friendly designs. To address these challenges, various solutions can be implemented. These might include creating community spaces with activities around the edges, adding outdoor seating, ensuring easy access throughout the area, and introducing more attractions to enhance the pedestrian experience.

These findings align with existing literature on social environments and responsive urban design. Barnett and Casper (2001) define social environments as the physical settings that facilitate social relationships and cultural interactions. Mehta (2013) emphasizes that responsive environments provide physiological comfort, stable behavioral patterns, enjoyable sensory experiences, and positive symbolic associations. These elements are crucial for fostering social interaction and place attachment. However, the lack of coordination, organization, and maintenance in Misurata’s old market undermines its potential as a vibrant social space.

#### 4.2. Gender Usage of Public Space

The study revealed a pronounced divergence in how men and women perceive and engage with the traditional market. Interview data indicated that men generally exhibit a stronger attachment and visit more frequently than women. This disparity is linked to factors such as the presence of migrant workers from various African countries who operate as vendors and shoppers, often irregularly, and differing comfort levels based on cultural norms. Female respondents consistently expressed discomfort with certain aspects of the market's atmosphere, particularly citing feelings of insecurity due to the presence of migrants and foreign workers and in crowded, male-dominated areas. As one female participant noted,

- “I just do not feel comfortable with the many migrants and foreign workers scattered everywhere here; this creates a sense of insecurity, despite the government's attempts to develop this area and make it more attractive” (P20-F-32 Y).

Another stated,

- "I rarely visit this place because it is always crowded with young men. However, I do feel comfortable here, especially during Eid when the vibrant atmosphere enhances the street" (P17-F-40 Y).

Many of the women surveyed mentioned feeling uneasy in the busy areas of the old market, which are mostly filled with men. One woman shared,

- “I seldom come here because it is usually crowded with young men. Yet, during Eid, I feel more at ease because the lively atmosphere brightens the street” (P18-F-24 Y).

A different woman expressed her respect and pride for the traditional market, which reflects the city's heritage. She wishes to see it as it once was, but feels uneasy about the increasing presence of immigrants and foreign workers.

- “I feel uneasy about the large number of migrants and foreign workers in this area; it makes me feel insecure, even though the government is trying to improve the region and make it more appealing” (P21-F-53 Y).

It is important to note that women typically stay at the outskirts of the market, where shops specialize in fabrics, embroidery, and home textiles. In contrast, men tend to congregate in the central sections, where stores offer clothing and shoes alongside cafes. Although women are present less frequently, the market still attracts a diverse range of social group backgrounds. However, the needs of individuals with special requirements are not adequately addressed.

Observational data support the notion of gendered space usage, indicating that women were predominantly found at the edges of the market, often near shops selling specific goods like fabrics, while men tended to congregate in the central areas associated with other types of commerce and cafes. The study found that in the Libyan context, the functions and uses of public spaces often vary significantly between men and women, influenced by cultural norms surrounding gender segregation. Despite the reported discomfort and spatial separation, participants perceived the market as generally inclusive, attracting diverse social groups. However, the needs of users with special requirements were noted as being inadequately addressed. These perceptions underscore the value users place on a pedestrian-oriented environment for facilitating social interaction, enhancing community feeling, and contributing to overall well-being.

The research underscores how social and cultural factors, particularly gender roles, affect familiarity with spaces in Misurata's market, aligning with the findings of Low and Altman's (1992). It illustrates how men's and women's interactions in public spaces reflect broader societal practices. Gehl (2010) advocates for public spaces that cater to diverse users, including marginalized groups, while Madanipour (2003) examines how cultural and religious values shape urban planning in predominantly Muslim societies. The results emphasize the necessity of incorporating these elements into urban development to enhance inclusivity and respect local traditions, thereby strengthening users' connection to their surroundings and fostering vibrant public spaces. Planners should address gender-specific needs to ensure safer and more welcoming environments.

### 4.3. Challenges and Desired Improvements for the Study Area

Table (2), summarizes the key challenges and desired improvements identified in the traditional shopping area of Misurata city. These insights are organized into four critical categories: sociability, users and activities, gender use of public space, and enhancing physical quality. Each category details specific issues observed during the study, including vehicular dominance, inadequate place management, gender-specific discomfort, and insufficient urban infrastructure. It also reflects the community's aspirations for a more vibrant, inclusive, and well-maintained public space. This overview highlights the complex relationship between the physical environment, social dynamics, and management practices that shape the character and usability of the area.

The result suggests key aspirations for enhancing the comfort, image, and overall functionality of Misurata's traditional shopping area. Participants emphasized the desire to create more sociable atmospheres and foster social connectivity, implying a need for design interventions that encourage

interaction and a sense of community. There is a clear aspiration for diverse activities, encouraging users to linger, engage in more than just commercial transactions, and utilize spaces for strolling, waiting, and dining. Specific attention was given to creating truly inclusive public spaces that address the comfort and security concerns of all genders, particularly women, by mitigating discomfort in crowded or male-dominated areas. Furthermore, participants expressed strong desires for improving the physical quality of the urban environment, including the establishment of comfortable and pedestrian-friendly public spaces through effective place management, clear parking regulations, and well-maintained sidewalks. The need for adequate facilities, such as comfortable seating, sufficient shade, quality street furniture, and improved paving, was highlighted. This reflects a broad aspiration for a more thoughtfully designed and consistently maintained public realm.

**Table 2. Challenges and Desires for Improving the Traditional Shopping Area of Misurata. Source: (Authors).**

Category	Challenges	Desires for Improvement
Sociability	- Limited opportunities for diverse social interactions due to commercial dominance and vehicular intrusion.	- Fostering a more sociable atmosphere through design and management.
	- Disconnect between urban design and social interaction.	- Enhancing social connectivity and opportunities for casual interaction.
Users and Activities	- Commercial activities primarily dominate spaces, limiting other forms of engagement.	- Encouraging a wider mix of activities beyond just buying/selling (e.g., strolling, waiting, dining, resting).
	- Limited pedestrian activities due to vehicular traffic and lack of dedicated infrastructure.	- Creating opportunities for lingering and extended stays (e.g., through inviting public spaces, active frontages).
	- Restricted engagement opportunities beyond immediate transactions.	- Developing the full potential of interstitial spaces (e.g., areas near the Sheikh Mosque, shaded alleys) for diverse uses.
Gender Use of Public Space	- Divergence in perception and engagement between men and women.	- Creating truly inclusive public spaces that cater to the needs and comfort of all genders.
	- Female discomfort/insecurity in crowded, male-dominated areas, partly due to the presence of migrant workers.	- Addressing security concerns for women (e.g., through improved lighting, presence, or designated comfortable spots).
	- Observed spatial segregation (women at edges, men in central areas).	- Designing spaces that consider and respect cultural norms surrounding gendered use while promoting accessibility and comfort for everyone.
	- The functions of public spaces vary by gender due to cultural norms.	
	- Needs of users with special requirements are inadequately addressed.	
Enhancing the Physical Quality	- Pervasive vehicular traffic and poor coordination of pedestrian integration.	- Establishing comfortable and consistently pedestrian-friendly public spaces, potentially through car-free zones or strict traffic management.
	- Inadequate parking and vehicular movement regulations, leading to disruption and inefficiency.	- Implementing effective place management, including clear parking regulations and traffic control.
	- Improper parking is negatively impacting sidewalks and open spaces.	- Ensuring well-maintained sidewalks and open spaces, free from obstructions.
	- Lack of adequate facilities for social interaction (e.g., seating areas, shaded spots, quality street furniture).	- Providing adequate facilities such as comfortable seating, sufficient shade, and high-quality street furniture.
	- Insufficient paving and suitable furniture for pedestrians.	- Improving the quality of pedestrian infrastructure, including paving and furniture.
	- General lack of space design, service quality, and organized shared activities encouraging lingering/staying.	- Enhancing overall space design and service quality to encourage users to stay longer and engage in more activities.
	- Insufficient maintenance and preservation efforts by the local authority.	- Implementing consistent maintenance and preservation programs by local authorities to uphold the quality and functionality of the urban space, including heritage elements like the Sheikh Mosque and Nasser Square, which are crucial for the area's identity.

#### 4.4. Influence of Built Environment and Events

The built environment itself plays a crucial role in shaping the character and use of the traditional shopping area. The inherent layout of narrow alleys and streets, while posing management challenges, also restricts vehicle access and contributes to the area's distinct atmosphere and potential for pedestrian activity. Landmarks like the Sheikh Mosque and Nasser Square were found to be important physical anchors, with the built environment reflecting the area's traditional Arab culture and identity. Temporal factors and specific events significantly influence the market's activity. The study found that activity peaks dramatically during the weekly evening market and annual events, such as holidays, highlighting its significant role as a hub for concentrated commercial and social activities during these times. Figure 4, depicting a scene from a weekly market at Al Nasser Square, highlights how such events attract people and foster engagement with the area. This underscores the role of programmed events in enhancing the vitality and character of the space. Additionally, Figure (4) presents a visual contrast between a car-free street in a historic area, which contributes to a vibrant atmosphere, and regions where vehicles are common. This comparison illustrates how the design and management of the built environment affect the perceived character and usability of the space.



**Figure 4. The weekly market at Al Nasser Square, along with the handmade traditional clothes in the Al Lefah market, attracts visitors and encourages them to return and engage with the area. Source: (Site observation work conducted by the Authors).**

To gain insight into market usage and its impact on personal connections, activities were observed within the designated area. Although it serves as the city's busiest commercial center, the market falls short in providing sufficient social amenities such as seating, shaded areas, and quality street furniture. According to Kyle et al. (2004), individuals who feel a strong emotional bond to their surroundings tend to engage more in community-enhancing activities, as demonstrated by the numerous social events noted at the Sheikh Mosque. Nonetheless, the small spaces adjacent to the round market and the Sheikh Mosque, along with the shaded shop fronts, offer few chances for sitting, resting, and meeting others.

The layout and features of traditional areas foster an atmosphere of social interaction and engagement. Participants described these spaces as sociable and walkable, highlighting how their scheme encourages a sense of place attachment and comfortable engagement. These characteristics enhance community bonds significantly more than what is typically experienced in areas dominated by vehicular traffic. More than half of the interviewees expressed this sentiment:

- “Being here is like being in a calm room. This market really stands out compared to others, like the one on Sana Street. It is much quieter here, without cars, so the only sounds are people chatting, negotiating prices, or inquiring about the products they want. It creates a friendly environment” (P3-M-31 Y).

Another interviewee noted that the traditional market encourages strong social connections and nourishes a friendly setting for interaction.

- “There is definitely a special vibe in the traditional market. The feel is one-of-a-kind. I often come here with friends, meandering around while chatting, joking, shopping, and relaxing together. The

vendors here are much friendlier than those in the main street market, where transactions are snappy, leading to minimal interaction or conversation” (P12-M-49 Y).

A friendly environment for pedestrians allows people to walk easily and at their own pace, enhancing their sense of connection, community, and overall happiness. This observation is supported by the research of Centre et al. (2015), which shows that walkable areas help tourists engage more with their surroundings and feel more attached to those places. In a similar vein, Southworth (2005) emphasizes that spaces designed for pedestrians create a safer and more comfortable atmosphere, encouraging deeper connections with the area. In Misurata, the traditional market setting brings people together informally, yet community involvement remains limited. This indicates that the type of community activities available can significantly affect people's attachment to a place.

In summary, the narrow streets in Misurata offer chances for social interaction, but challenges arise from vehicle traffic. In contrast, the open squares in Barcelona, Spain, are purposefully designed for social activities and include seating, greenery, and cultural events that promote community connections (Gehl, 2010). Misurata's traditional market serves as a unique example of how historical urban planning, commercial activity, and social interaction intertwine. Although its pedestrian-friendly design is an advantage, issues like a lack of coordinated management and heavy vehicle presence limit its potential as a lively social hub. By addressing these obstacles with specific measures, the area could become a more welcoming and vibrant public space that supports both social and economic attachment.

## 5. Discussion of Findings

Ineffective place management significantly impedes the area's vitality. The lack of sufficient parking areas and clear guidelines for vehicle movement and parking leads to confusion and inefficiency. Visitors frequently park indiscriminately, disrupting public spaces, obstructing pedestrian pathways, and thereby discouraging social interactions. This issue is compounded by the prioritization of cars over pedestrians, with vehicles often occupying spaces directly in front of store entrances or designated gathering areas. This lack of coordination undermines the area's potential as a vibrant social space, largely stemming from historical urbanization policies that favored commercial development over community needs. Such findings align with urban planning theories, notably Gehl's (2010) assertion that public spaces designed for pedestrians inherently foster socializing and enhance urban vitality. Beyond vehicular issues, the study also revealed deficiencies in the quality and maintenance of urban space and landscape elements. A lack of adequate facilities for social interaction, including insufficient seating, shaded spots, quality street furniture, and proper paving, was consistently observed and reported. These results support earlier research by Mahmoudi, Ahmad, and Abbasi (2015) on livable streets. Their findings highlighted improper walkway paving, inadequate public services and maintenance, and traffic congestion, which negatively impact well-being, place attachment, and overall street livability. These shortcomings reflect insufficient maintenance and preservation efforts by local authorities, negatively impacting the functional and social potential of these public spaces.

Despite these challenges, the inherent layout of the traditional market offers promising attributes. Its narrow alleys naturally encourage pedestrian engagement and create a sense of enclosure that fosters social interaction. This unique characteristic contributes to a feeling of comfort, quietness, and safety for many users, ultimately enhancing a sense of community compared to car-dominated areas. The observed pockets of activity within interstitial spaces and the vibrant atmosphere during weekly markets and annual events (as illustrated in Figure 1) underscore the market's significant potential as a social hub, even with limited formal social facilities. These peak activity periods highlight the latent social capacity of the market, often activated by specific events or rhythms.

Furthermore, heritage features such as the Sheikh Mosque, Al Lefah market, and Nasser Square exert a strong influence on place identity and attachment, consistent with research emphasizing the role of historical landmarks in anchoring collective memory and fostering emotional bonds. The built environment here reflects traditional Arab culture, acting as a vital cultural anchor beyond its religious function. However, the potential erosion of this cultural capital due to unregulated development poses a significant threat to its unique character and the sense of belonging it cultivates.

The findings of this study align with research on social and spatial dynamics in post-revolution Egypt and Tunisia, highlighting the crucial role of public spaces in daily life and artistic expression. For example,

Ravazzoli & Toso (2013) discovered that shared memories and casual street interactions significantly enhance community belonging in areas without formal planning, illustrating the informal re-appropriation of public spaces. Similarly, Nasser & Hassan (2022) explored how gender, informality, and cultural practices shape the use and perception of public spaces in Egypt, reflecting broader trends in the MENA region.

This research also supports the revitalizing heritage study conducted by (Ali et al., 2025), which argues that achieving a balance between historical preservation and sustainability requires a nuanced and multidimensional approach. By fostering community engagement, promoting responsible tourism, embracing technological adaptation, implementing adaptive reuse, and developing proactive policies, historic cities can evolve sustainably while preserving their cultural significance. Furthermore, studies by Shamsuddia et al. (2008) and Ujang (2014) in Malaysia illustrate how cultural symbols and urban planning impact the significance of places, particularly in historic and mixed-use districts, and underscore the role of place attachment in fostering a sense of community. These examples highlight the importance of social and spatial dynamics and the necessity for participatory and culturally appropriate approaches in public space planning.

The study's findings reveal significant gender differences in spatial perception and usage in Libya, where cultural norms heavily influence public space dynamics. Women expressed discomfort in crowded, male-dominated areas, highlighting the need for urban design interventions that are culturally sensitive and gender-inclusive. This aligns with broader discussions on addressing privacy and safety concerns for women in public spaces, particularly in Muslim-majority societies. Research by Askarizad & He (2023) emphasizes the importance of meeting the privacy needs of Muslim women in urban environments to promote social justice and equitable interactions. This may involve creating more opportunities for social engagement, improving accessibility, and ensuring a consistent atmosphere throughout the area.

Public spaces in the Arab world are shaped by gender, cultural norms, and religious beliefs, resulting in different experiences for men and women (Abdelrazek-Alsiefy, 2022). Comparisons with traditional markets in other Muslim countries, such as Malaysia, where community practices often encourage mixed-gender interactions, further illustrate how cultural context influences experiences of safety and belonging (Xu et al., 2025). This underscores the need for culturally informed interventions in Misurata to enhance female participation. Thus, careful planning and design of public spaces are essential for fostering meaningful interactions and a strong sense of community.

The challenges faced by Misurata's traditional shopping area are comparable to those encountered in historic commercial districts in cities worldwide. For example, traditional marketplaces in Asia, such as those in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Malaysia, grapple with the need to balance modernization with heritage preservation. These marketplaces must navigate increasing vehicular traffic and adapt public spaces to address contemporary social needs while honoring cultural norms (Winarso, 2010; Shahriar et al., 2023; Nayan et al., 2024). Studies in Arabic cities like Cairo, Baghdad, and Oman, Jordan, have also explored the impact of tourism, informal economies, and infrastructure challenges on the character and function of their traditional markets, often highlighting the tension between maintaining authenticity and implementing practical improvements for usability and accessibility (Al-Arab & Abbawi, 2023; El et al., 2024). The gendered use of public space is also a recurrent theme across the Arab world, influenced by cultural and religious factors, though its specific manifestations vary. A comparative analysis of vehicular intrusion, place management challenges, and gendered spatial practices in Misurata, along with documented cases in other Arab cities, could provide valuable regional context by identifying transferable lessons and distinct local specificities.

The research findings indicate that commercial activities, primarily buying and selling along shopfronts, dominate most spaces within the traditional shopping area. This strong emphasis on economic transactions can limit opportunities for broader social interactions, a concern echoed by Carmona et al. (2010), who suggest that an excessive focus on economic purposes can diminish the social and cultural significance of public areas. However, certain pockets within the market, such as those in front of the Sheikh Mosque and in shaded alleyways, serve as exceptions. They encourage a blend of shopping, socializing, and event hosting, while also providing crucial resting spaces for visitors. The traditional shopping area is undeniably a vital commercial hub, with a diverse array of shops and businesses that contribute to its vitality and serve as a primary draw for many visitors.

## 5.1. Practical Implications

A key challenge is the overwhelming vehicular traffic and lack of quality landscape infrastructure, which obstructs social interaction and undermines urban design principles that promote vibrant public life through pedestrian activity. Urban planners must balance heritage conservation with modern infrastructure by regulating vehicular traffic, parking, and encroachment. Establishing car-free zones and improving pedestrian connectivity between key locations, such as mosques, squares, and markets, could rejuvenate the area's social fabric. The disconnect between urban planning and social engagement stems from past development priorities that favored functional or commercial needs over social aspects.

Findings indicate that poor place management, especially regarding parking and landscape elements like pavement, trees, and seating, compromises the usability and integrity of traditional areas. This is consistent with the literature on the negative impacts of inadequate place management on public spaces. Inadequate place management likely carries negative economic implications. While the weekly market and annual events undoubtedly boost economic activity, the limited opportunities for lingering and social interaction beyond direct transactions may restrict the potential for extended visits and increased spending in complementary businesses like cafes. Improving the pedestrian environment and overall place management could significantly enhance the area's attractiveness for both shoppers and businesses, potentially increasing foot traffic, dwell time, and contributing to overall economic prosperity. The repurposing of historical buildings for commercial use presents an opportunity to seamlessly blend heritage preservation with economic activity, thereby fostering a unique market identity. Ultimately, ensuring the sustainability of these economic activities is intrinsically linked to creating a comfortable and accessible environment for all users.

Addressing women's safety concerns through improved lighting, designated gathering spots, and culturally sensitive layouts (e.g., semi-private seating areas) would democratize access to public space. In conclusion, Misurata's traditional market embodies the tension between preservation and progress. Its survival hinges on balancing economic vitality with the sociocultural values that define its identity. By centering human experiences in urban policy, planners can transform such spaces into resilient, inclusive hubs that honor heritage while nurturing community well-being, a lesson with profound relevance for cities worldwide grappling with similar dynamics.

Attachment to the traditional area formed through repeated visits, familiarity, and social interactions crucially impacts local vendors and the economic vitality of public spaces. When individuals develop emotional connections to a location, they are more likely to visit frequently, stay longer, and engage in consistent purchasing behavior. In traditional markets, this attachment fosters customer loyalty, maintains foot traffic, and encourages word-of-mouth promotion. Vendors benefit from a stable customer base and trust-based relationships, leading to personalized service and repeat transactions. Additionally, behavioral attachment promotes informal regulation and stewardship of the space: attached users help maintain cleanliness, discourage anti-social behavior, and participate in community events, enhancing the area's appeal to new customers and potential investors. In the Misurata case, where formal infrastructure is limited, this localized sense of place can support microeconomic activity and informal entrepreneurship, aiding economic regeneration and social stability.

## 5.2. Limitations and Future Research

This study offers valuable insights into place attachment and socio-spatial dynamics in Misurata's traditional shopping area; however, it does present certain limitations. Firstly, since the research focuses specifically on Misurata, the generalizability of its findings to other traditional markets, even within Libya or the broader Arab world, may be limited due to distinct local cultural, economic, and urban contexts. While the qualitative approach provides depth, future studies could benefit from quantifying attachment metrics through surveys or spatial analytics. Comparative analyses with other Libyan cities or markets in the MENA region would further contextualize the challenges faced by Misurata. Additionally, longitudinal research tracking the impact of proposed interventions, such as pedestrianization, could help validate design strategies. Another limitation is that respondents assessed place attachment exclusively through qualitative methods. Future research should also consider other intangible aspects, such as sounds and smells, which may uniquely influence individuals' place attachment. It is essential to explore the relationship between tangible and intangible elements to develop a comprehensive understanding of place attachment.

Furthermore, additional research is needed to investigate how preferences for various local landscape elements affect place attachment.

## 6. Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the intricate relationship between behavioral patterns and place attachment within the traditional shopping area of Misurata City, Libya. It affirms that distinctive physical and social features are fundamental in shaping street character, influencing user engagement, and contributing to urban legibility.

The research highlights that while inherent qualities like narrow, pedestrian-friendly alleys and heritage landmarks foster strong emotional and social bonds, the area's full potential is constrained by challenges such as vehicular dominance, inadequate place management, and cultural dynamics influencing gendered space use. The findings underscore the critical need for targeted interventions that prioritize pedestrian needs, enhance place management, and implement culturally sensitive, inclusive design strategies. By grounding the concept of place attachment in observed behaviors, the study offers a practical framework for urban planning and heritage conservation in Libya.

By grounding place attachment theory in observable socio-spatial interactions rather than self-reported intentions, this study bridges a critical gap in urban scholarship. It demonstrates how emotional bonds to place manifest not only through nostalgia or cultural pride but also through tangible practices such as daily visits, vendor-customer exchanges, and communal rituals. Adopting a behavioral lens enriches global discussions on sustainable urbanism by offering grounded evidence from real-world interactions, particularly in contexts where rapid development threatens traditional landscapes. Ultimately, sustaining the vitality and unique character of Misurata's traditional market, and similar spaces in Libyan cities, requires a balanced integration of heritage preservation, inclusive design, and place management. These efforts will ensure spaces remain meaningful amid ongoing urban development.

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