

# Exploring Place Attachment in the Traditional Shopping Area of Misurata City, Libya

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## Article information

## Abstract

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This study investigates the role of place attachment in shaping the experiences of individuals in the traditional shopping area of Misurata City, Libya. Using a qualitative approach, site observations and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 participants to explore the factors influencing place attachment in this context. The results reveal three key themes: walkability; mixed-use and active frontages; and attractiveness and pleasantness. The findings suggest that the traditional shopping area is a vibrant and walkable space that fosters social interactions and a sense of community. The study highlights the importance of designing urban spaces that prioritize walkability, active frontages, and social interaction to promote place attachment and enhance the overall quality of life for residents. The findings have implications for urban planning and design, and contribute to the growing body of research on place attachment and its role in shaping urban environments.

## I. Introduction

An expanding body of literature has explored the significance of social community, familiarity, sense of place, and meaning as attributes associated with traditional settings. Recent studies have particularly emphasized how these attributes have evolved through the analysis of visual images in social media posts [1]. Much of the current research on place attachment has investigated traditional streets and marketplaces, examining the unique physical elements that shape these settings [2], as well as visitors' preferences for specific attributes [3]. Indeed, traditional settings have been regarded as the most effective scale for studying people's attachment to places [4]. However, the influence of emotional feelings on shaping and redefining urban environments remains largely overlooked in current research.

Much of the current research on place attachment has examined how familiarity with a new environment enhances immigrants' connection to that place, thereby supporting their integration and overall well-being [5] [6] [7]. Even among the few exceptions that explored emotional responses, the emphasis was on how physical features and social values define urban places and influence visitors' experiences and attachments, rather than on the sentiments that arise from these attachments. Accordingly, current literature on human-place relationships indicates that connections formed through positive emotions significantly influence individuals' experiences, enhancing their overall quality of life. This research seeks to address a specific knowledge gap in the literature on place attachment, particularly in the context of traditional shopping areas within underexplored geographical settings like Misurata City, Libya.

### a. The Significance of This Study

- Much of the current literature emphasizes the physical and social dimensions of place attachment; however, there is limited understanding of individuals' emotional responses to traditional shopping areas. This research explores how emotional factors influence place attachment, thereby enhancing the theoretical framework of human-place relationships.

- Most studies on place attachment have primarily focused on Western and Asian contexts, with limited attention given to Middle Eastern settings. This research aims to address the gap in empirical evidence regarding place attachment in non-Western cultures, specifically in Libya, which has unique historical and cultural characteristics that may influence individuals' connections to their environment.
- While some studies have linked urban design elements to place attachment, research specifically examining the impact of design features in traditional shopping areas, such as active frontages and pedestrian pathways, on emotional engagement and attachment among residents and visitors is limited.

By addressing these gaps, this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of place attachment, particularly in the context of traditional urban environments in Libya, and provides insights that can inform urban planning and design strategies tailored to local cultural contexts.

## II. Literature Review

### a. Place Attachment

Place attachment refers to the positive emotional connection individuals have with specific locations, representing a significant aspect of the human-environment relationship [8]. Defined as the emotional bonds formed through interactions with particular places, place attachment is widely seen as a positive phenomenon [9]. According to the person-process-place (PPP) model proposed by [10] and [11], place attachment comprises three main dimensions: a personal/cultural dimension that focuses on individual experiences and meanings; a place dimension that emphasizes the physical and social characteristics of the location; and a psychological process dimension highlighting behaviors, emotional bonds, and cognitive elements. The importance of these dimensions can vary based on the context, suggesting that place attachment should be understood in relation to specific environments rather than as a universal concept [12].

Additionally, place attachment has been linked to improved psychological and social well-being [13]. Local landscape features are positively linked to the contribution of place attachment, with green and natural spaces playing a key role in strengthening these connections [14]. Urban parks contribute positively to individuals' quality of life, and exposure to nature can enhance cognitive capacities, particularly when the environment aligns with a person's identity [15]. The built environment, which encompasses settings for human activities, is also relevant to place attachment. Individuals develop functional, emotional, and social attachments through familiarity with environmental elements and shared experiences [16]. Additionally, social networks with friends and family members are positively correlated with place attachment [17].

It is evident that place attachment involves an interplay of affects and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, as well as behaviors and actions. [11] argue that shared experiences, symbolic meanings, and historical values contribute to the formation of attachment at the community level. They emphasize that both physical and social aspects of togetherness play crucial roles in fostering place attachment. Similarly, research conducted by Shamsuddin and Ujang (2008) reinforces the importance of the historical values of traditional streets in evoking personal meanings and fostering a strong sense of place attachment [19]. While a study on the Old Market Square in Nottingham, UK conducted by Cheshmehzangi and Heath (2012) asserts that human experiences and behaviors are significant factors in evaluating place attachment [21].

An important aspect of place attachment is functional attachment, which posits that individuals become attached to places that satisfy their basic desired needs. Moreover, this attachment can deepen when a place is recognized as significant in fulfilling functional requirements and supporting social goals (Stokols & Shumaker 1981). Recent research conducted in Australia by Zahnw (2024) indicates that environments where individuals participate in specific activities within a defined group, such as gyms and places of worship, promote a stronger sense of place attachment compared to commercial spaces such as large retail stores and cafes [23]. This attachment is further strengthened by the shared experiences and community interactions that take place in these settings. As a result, functional attachment often reflects the convergence of a setting's physical and cultural characteristics with individuals' emotional perceptions.

In light of ongoing urban changes, understanding place attachment and its influencing factors is crucial for enhancing the value of urban spaces in contemporary cities. In the case of Misurata City, pressures from development and the demands placed on traditional areas have led to significant physical transformations of public spaces, including historically significant open spaces. As a result, new developments, particularly within traditional settings, have altered constructed places and reshaped the established meanings embedded within

the existing social and cultural contexts. This research aims to review the relationships between place attachment and its associated factors within the urban context in the traditional area of Misurata City.

### **b. Place Attachment and Walkability**

Walkability continues to be a fundamental aspect of urban vitality, evolving from traditional conceptualizations (Gehl 2011) to contemporary smart city approaches [25]. Various studies also indicate that pedestrian-friendly environments are essential for encouraging social interactions and community engagement, which are crucial for fostering place attachment [26]. Conversely, car-dominated spaces can detract from community cohesion. Mahmoudi et al. (2015) highlight that urban environments prioritizing vehicular traffic often undermine opportunities for socialization. Walkability, which encompasses elements such as accessibility, safety, and comfort, significantly contributes to the overall experience of a location [28]. The concept of place attachment is closely related to the walking experience. Pedestrians experience greater exposure to and engage in more direct interactions with their environment while walking compared to other modes of transportation [29]. This intimate contact facilitates the formation of personal connections and the development of attachments and meanings associated with their surroundings.

Indeed, the relationship between walkability and place attachment displays a positive correlation between environments and place due to fostering closer interaction with settings. Many studies have explored the links between walkability, accessibility, and place attachment. Van den Berg et al. (2024) discovered that perceived neighborhood walkability is a stronger predictor of place attachment than objective measures and that social interaction satisfaction mediates this relationship [30]. They also noted that perceived walkability indirectly influences place attachment through neighborhood social interactions. Li et al. (2020) identified walkability and space quality as key factors influencing place attachment [32], while Lee, Kyle and Scott, (2012) highlighted the positive impact of accessibility on place attachment, with place satisfaction acting as a mediator [33]. Additionally, Chan and Li (2022) noted that various walking purposes, such as leisure or commuting, differently affect the degree of place attachment [34]. Koohsari et al. (2023) identified a significant relationship between the duration of recreational walking in the neighborhood and place attachment [35]. This finding is further supported by Li et al. (2020), who found that walkability and space quality are the most impactful factors related to place attachment [34].

In the context of Misurata, the absence of pedestrian-friendly, good landscaping design, and infrastructure presents challenges to enhancing public spaces, which subsequently impacts place attachment. Understanding the interplay between urban design and human experience is essential for fostering vibrant place attachment. Accordingly, this study aims to contribute valuable insights into the preservation and enhancement of traditional places in Misurata, ultimately promoting a deeper understanding of their significance in contemporary urban contexts.

### **c. Traditional Area and Place Attachment**

It is evident that traditional quarters have a stronger identity than contemporary places due to their historical and cultural values [36]. Traditional places continue to serve as vital repositories of cultural heritage, with recent studies highlighting that the local landscape features, historic parks, and traditional gardens enhance the perception of the restorative qualities of urban spaces due to individuals' familiarity with the area, along with their shared history and memories. This familiarity further deepens their attachment to the place [37]; [38].

Recent research by Kusumowidagdo et al. (2023) investigated the sense of place in traditional areas by analyzing 400 virtual pieces of evidence shared on social media platforms by respondents from Indonesia and Malaysia [40]. The study identified five key aspects of place quality that enhance the sense of place in traditional shopping streets: architectural style; store design; distinctive focal points; diversity of products; and services that reflect the physical characteristics of these shopping environments. This study also emphasizes how traditional spatial patterns naturally promote social interaction and cultural continuity, thereby ultimately promoting place identity. Environmental behavior studies in similar contexts show that traditional design solutions continue to offer valuable lessons for contemporary sustainable urban development [41].

This study examines the traditional area of Misurata City as a representative case study for Libya. The selected study area encompasses the entire city center of Misurata, covering approximately four hectares and bordered by the first ring road (see Figure 1). This area is regarded as the core of the city, where growth and expansion have occurred. It features a distinctive layout that encourages social interaction and facilitates the exchange of goods and services through gathering spots, narrow alleys, and shaded streets. The narrow streets create an

intimate atmosphere conducive to pedestrian movement. Historical buildings have been repurposed into shops and cafes, providing a unique shopping experience. Shaded walkways and open spaces enhance comfort and accessibility, motivating residents and visitors to engage with their surroundings. However, as the heart of the city's business district, this area has faced significant challenges, including neglect, alterations, and a lack of maintenance and preservation by local authorities.

Despite existing research, significant gaps remain in the literature on place attachment. Most studies have concentrated on neighborhoods, urban parks, and urban areas, with only a limited focus on the emotional factors involved. A notable exception is the study by Shukri et al. (2022), which employed semi-structured interviews and survey data from Malaysia to examine the role of place attachment in fostering sustainable environments on traditional streets [42]. Their findings indicate that daily engagement, historical significance, and functional use play a significant role in shaping users' attachment to a place. Furthermore, there is a lack of research on place attachment in Middle Eastern countries, including those in North Africa. Conducting similar studies in Libya could provide valuable insights and contribute to this field of inquiry. Thus, it is crucial to investigate the factors that enhance place attachment to inform the design of better environments for individuals.

### III. Research Setting

The traditional area encompasses the entire city center of Misurata, covering approximately four hectares and bordered by the first ring road. This area is regarded as the core of the city, where growth and expansion have occurred. It features a distinctive layout that encourages social interaction and facilitates the exchange of goods and services through gathering spots, narrow alleys, and shaded streets. The narrow streets create an intimate atmosphere conducive to pedestrian movement. Historical buildings have been repurposed into shops and cafes, providing a unique shopping experience. Shaded walkways and open spaces enhance comfort and accessibility, motivating residents and visitors to engage with their surroundings. However, as the heart of the city's business district, this area has faced significant challenges, including neglect, alterations, and a lack of maintenance and preservation by local authorities. The traditional shopping area of Misurata City (see Figure 1) was selected based the historical significance, active pedestrian usage, presence of traditional architectural elements, and its cultural and social significance.



Figure 1 Aerial photo of the study area within the city center of Misurata. (Source: [www.googleearth.com](http://www.googleearth.com)).

#### **IV. Research Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore place attachment within the traditional shopping district of Misurata City, Libya. Recognizing the complexity of place attachment as a social phenomenon, qualitative methods were chosen to effectively capture the nuanced experiences and emotional connections that individuals have with their surroundings [43]. The primary methods for data collection included semi-structured interviews and site observations. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 24 participants to ensure diverse representation among shopkeepers, regular visitors, and residents. This diversity was essential for understanding the factors influencing place attachment [44].

The study involved 24 participants, a sample size considered appropriate for qualitative research. Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) indicate that a sample size of 12 to 30 participants is typically adequate to achieve data saturation in qualitative studies [45]. Data saturation occurs when subsequent interviews yield minimal new insights, suggesting that the sample effectively captures the diversity of opinions and experiences within the target population. This sample size enables a thorough exploration of the emotional and social dimensions of place attachment within a specific cultural context.

The interview protocol featured open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses about participants' feelings toward the traditional shopping area, their experiences with social interactions, and the environmental attributes contributing to their sense of attachment. To complement the interviews, site observations provided insights into how individuals interact with their surroundings. These observations were carried out over three weeks, focusing on peak hours and weekends to capture a variety of activities and behaviors.

The first source of data collection was the face-to-face interviews with users, visitors, and residents of Misurata City. The aim of qualitative interviews was to discover salient personal and contextual factors associated with participants' feelings and emotions they have experienced towards traditional shopping area.

#### **V. Data Collection and Analysis**

The interviews were conducted with 24 participants, ensuring representation of age groups (20-65 years), gender balance (12 males, 12 females), users' types (shopkeepers, regular visitors, residents). The interview duration was 45 to 90 minutes and these were audio recorded with the participants' consent. All interviews were conducted in either the traditional area or other convenient and comfortable places. To avoid any ambiguity in the terminology used in conversation, the researcher used simple language that could be understood by all participants. Data saturation was reached when the interviews ceased to reveal any new relevant themes [45].

Participants were purposefully sampled to ensure representation from various sociodemographic backgrounds. The inductive approach was employed to identify key themes from their experiences, focusing on their feelings and emotions with regard to the traditional shopping area. A set of open-ended questions (why is this place your favorite?), (describe your feelings towards being in the traditional area), (do you think this place reflects the identity, if so, why do you think that?), (what features make you satisfy with this place?), (what makes the traditional area different from other areas in the city?) were prepared to guide the interviews [46].

The second data collection method was the site observations, which were employed to assess how individuals interact with their environment in real-time. Systematic observations were conducted over three months between March and June 2024. A series of different times were sampled during: peak hours (9:00-11:00 and 16:00-18:00); off-peak hours (14:00-16:00); weekdays and weekends. Numerous instruments used in the site observations to obtain the data behavioral mapping, including: photography; field notes; and a physical attributes checklist. This analysis aimed to evaluate the vibrancy of the spaces and their role in fostering engagement and attachment [47].

Ethical approval was obtained before the research began, and all participants provided informed consent. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained throughout the study, ensuring their identities and personal information remained protected. This methodological framework, grounded in qualitative research principles, facilitates an in-depth exploration of place attachment, offering valuable insights that enhance the understanding of urban environments in a non-Western context.



## I. Findings and Discussion

Three key themes emerged from participants’ responses that illustrate the complex relationships between their feelings towards traditional shopping areas: walking experiences; mixed-use activities; and overall life satisfaction. This section explores each theme in detail, highlighting how feelings and attachments are shaped by walking experiences, social interactions, and life satisfaction.

### a. Walkable Environments

Initially, the observations indicated that the number of pedestrians was significantly lower than the number of drivers. In hot environments such as Libya, most individuals prefer to navigate the city using air-conditioned vehicles. However, a contrasting scenario emerges in the study area, where individuals either consciously choose or are compelled to shop on foot. The visual landscape of the traditional area is defined by narrow shaded alleys, shortcuts, historical buildings and shops, creating an inviting atmosphere for walking and providing a safe shopping experience away from traffic. These narrow passages and irregular patterns are typical of numerous ancient Arab-Muslim cities and provide narrow paths and car-free environments that encourage people to park their car and shop on foot (as shown in Figure 2). In this context, several participants highlighted various aspects of walking experiences related to their attachment to traditional areas, emphasizing the absence of cars and the presence of safe, designated pedestrianized streets. These traditionally patterned alleyways further encouraged pedestrians to engage in walking, for instance, one respondent shared his experience while visiting the traditional area:

*“In the evening, my routine involves parking my car near Al Muqalk car park. I then walk towards the traditional area, passing through the Al Mfatoh market and exploring the shops until I reach Al Sheikh Mosque. After that, I head towards the left side, crossing Al Nasser Square, where there is a small restaurant that serves delicious Shawarma sandwiches. Finally, I return to my car and drive away” (R 04: PM-31 Y-04, in-depth interview).*

The absence of vehicular traffic in the traditional shopping area allows for a more relaxed and enjoyable shopping with a number of participants referring to this experience:

*“The area is very walkable, and you can feel safe walking around, even at night.” (Respondent 17: PM-31 Y-04, in-depth interview). Another participant added, “The fact that there are no cars makes it easy to navigate and allows you to focus on the shops and the people around you” (R19: PM-31 Y-04, in-depth interview).*



Figure 2 Accessibility and connectivity of the traditional area of Misurata City (Source: Authors).

The findings from the site observations further supported the rationale behind this conclusion. Safety from car traffic, both when crossing streets and parking in public spaces, is a crucial factor that significantly influences users' walkability in traditional areas. Furthermore, unlike other developed cities, Misurata does not implement car restrictions to promote a livable and sustainable environment. Instead, there is a greater emphasis on accommodating cars over pedestrians. This prioritization has significantly impacted the use of public spaces, as most citizens prefer to use their vehicles to navigate the city center. Our analysis also revealed the effects from the lack of parking facilities, leading to disorder as cars are parked almost anywhere that is available (see Figure 3). The presence of cars in the city center, particularly within the First Ring Road zone, which is the most active area, negatively impacts upon walkability, resulting in a significant transformation of the space. The results suggest that reducing vehicular traffic on urban streets could create more opportunities for pedestrians and ultimately foster a stronger sense of place attachment through walking and social interaction.

These findings suggest that the walkability is a crucial aspect of place attachment, as it enables individuals to move freely and comfortably within a space, fostering a sense of connection and attachment to the environment. These results align with a recent study on the walkability of historical public spaces in Tripoli, Libya, which identified safety and security as key factors influencing users' attitudes toward walking [48]. The traditional shopping area of Misurata City, Libya, is characterized by narrow alleyways and pedestrianized streets, which contributes to a walkable environment. The participants' descriptions of the area as "walkable" and "pedestrian-friendly" suggest that the physical characteristics of the space, such as the narrow alleyways and pedestrianized streets, contribute to a sense of comfort and safety. This pedestrian-friendly environment inspires individuals to walk freely and comfortably within the space, fostering a sense of security and well-being. This finding aligns with Ujang's (2014) study on walkability and attachment to tourism destinations, illustrating how walking is correlated with visitors' levels of engagement and attachment to these places [49].

The results of this study highlight the importance of walkability in shaping the experiences and behaviors of individuals in the traditional shopping area. The participants' descriptions of the area as "walkable" and "pedestrian-friendly" suggest that the physical characteristics of the space, such as the narrow alleyways and pedestrianized streets, contribute to a sense of comfort and safety. The participants also noted that the absence of vehicular traffic allows for a more relaxed and enjoyable shopping experience. These findings are consistent with previous research on the importance of walkability in urban design [24].

## **b. Active Frontages**

The field observations revealed that, despite the absence of open public spaces and well-designed landscaping that would promote gathering and socializing, the area's daily active building frontages consistently attract users (Figure 3). This indicates a strong interest not only in shopping but also in traditional ways of transactions and social interaction, contributing to the functionality and social connectivity of the place. Even seemingly impulsive activities, such as browsing goods, enhance the liveliness of the traditional area. This locale epitomizes local identity, providing an ambiance conducive to interaction and offering a wide array of shopping options. Furthermore, the layout of the stalls facilitates easy movement, while the activity at the shop fronts increases the likelihood of chance encounters. Active frontages imply a relationship between the public spaces and private buildings, which animates and enriches the atmosphere of the traditional area. Carmona et al., (2010) also argue that an active frontage adds interest, life, and vitality to public spaces.

One young respondent illustrated the distinctions between residing in a conventional area with active frontages versus other locations within the city:

*“The traditional area is characterized by small shops closely grouped together with frontage stalls that provide enjoyable spaces, unlike the scene in Sana Street where large modern facades dominate. It is a sociable place that allows for interaction with sellers and other people, whereas Sana Street hardly involves or remembers the seller; it is merely formal shops with fixed prices and offerings” (R20-PM-26 Y-012, in-depth interview).*



Figure 3 Mixed use and active frontage in traditional area. Source: (the author).

Site observations also revealed that the traditional area benefits significantly from its spatial diversity, which enriches the quality of the place by facilitating interaction and serendipitous encounters. This study area is renowned for its dynamic mix of shops, restaurants, cafes, and other establishments. The energetic ambiance, fostered by the presence of people engaging in various activities, cultivates a strong functional bond between individuals and the place. This supports Motieyan and Azmoodeh's (2021) identification that improving the mixture of land use at street level and promoting activity in urban spaces can enhance the quality of city life [51]. As posited by [52] and [53], places that embrace diversity and offer a variety of functions possess highly desirable traits in that they are vibrant, appealing, secure, and joyful qualities that collectively enhance the overall quality of the area. This indicates the importance of mixed use and active frontage in attracting individuals to public spaces and fostering place attachment. Active frontages featuring a variety of openings, such as shops, stalls, cafes, lightings, signs, and decorations, are crucial for attracting walkers [53]. These findings suggest that the traditional district remains highly favored by its intended users and cultivates a strong place attachment. As a result, it is imperative to safeguard the traditional attributes and patterns to sustain this sense of attachment.

### c. Social Behavioral Aspect

Another aspect that emerged from the interview analysis is the social and behavioral factor, which was also emphasized by many participants. The social dimensions of their connection to the traditional region are closely linked to their attachment to place. The spatial characteristics of the traditional area facilitate social interaction



and create opportunities for communication, conversation, inquiry, discussion, and casual exchanges. For instance, one participant, who visits the area weekly from a distant location, articulated that:

*“...being in the traditional area offers a distinct feeling compared to other streets. Unlike nearby streets such as Sana Street and Tripoli Street, traditional areas evoke a unique atmosphere. It is a quiet place where you can feel the ambiance; you can hear people chatting, negotiating discounts, or inquiring about goods” (R09: PM-31 Y-09, in-depth interview).*

These sentiments of attachment to traditional areas are clearly articulated by numerous respondents; below are several examples:

*“being in such a tiny space, surrounded by goods hanging on the walls and displayed on stalls in front of the shops, creates a pleasant environment for enjoying” (R11: PM-20 Y-11, in-depth interview).*

*“I feel, the atmosphere in the traditional area is different; it’s more enjoyable and sociable, here you can walk, sit, talk, and see many peoples shopping and moving around. Even the sellers are friendlier here” (R07: PM-31 Y-07, in-depth interview).*

Figure 4 presents an analysis of site observations, highlighting that the busiest area is the pedestrian path connecting Maiden al Nasser and Al Sheik Mosque. People often gather in the nearby cafes and fast-food restaurants, while others socialize near the local mosque and congregate under the trees in Maiden al Nasser, close to adjacent vendors. In the morning, pedestrian activities primarily focus on essential tasks, such as commuting to work, sitting in cafes, vendors preparing their goods, and buying fresh bread from a nearby bakery. In contrast, the afternoon shifts towards more social and optional activities, with shoppers exploring stores and street vendors, while office workers take their lunch breaks at restaurants and food stalls. By evening, pedestrian activities mainly center around sightseeing and visiting shops and street vendors. Additionally, people occasionally gather in front of Al Sheik Mosque after prayer times. Most vendors are situated along the walkway in front of the shops in Maiden al Nasser and within the covered pedestrian area, where shopping activities take place and interactions among people flourish.

These findings suggest that the traditional shopping area is a key factor in fostering a sense of place attachment through its sense of community. In other words, this suggests that the significance of the place is strongly linked to the activities taking place rather than its physical qualities. This connection relates to the enjoyment experienced and the place's ability to facilitate communication during shopping activities. The sense of pleasantness is conveyed through the respondents' feelings about the traditional area and its capacity to provide comfort, sociability, and a variety of goods and prices. These findings align with Ujang's, 2014 research that emphasizes the importance of interstitial spaces in creating vibrant public areas and promoting social interactions. The findings also reinforce the notion that individuals develop emotional connections to traditional places, evident in the design of these areas that promote pedestrian stratification and foster social interactions [49].

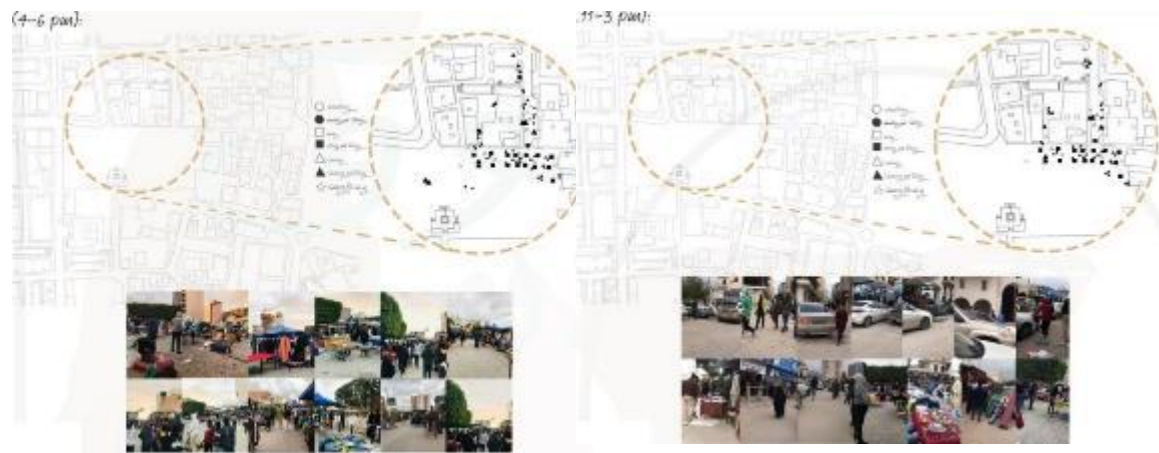


Figure 4. Activities analysis weekends, morning time, 11-03 AM and evening 4:00 to 6:00 MP. Source: (the author).

Overall, social interaction was recognized as a central component of place attachment, with participants describing the traditional shopping area as a communal space where relationships are formed and maintained. The atmosphere of friendliness and sociability was highlighted as a significant factor in fostering emotional connections to the environment. This finding aligns with previous research that underscores the importance of social networks in strengthening place attachment [17]. However, this study presents a unique perspective by illustrating that the traditional shopping area functions not only as a marketplace but also as a social hub that reinforces community bonds. These insights emphasize the necessity of designing urban spaces that promote social interaction, thereby enriching the community's sense of identity and belonging.

## II. Conclusion

This study explored the multifaceted concept of place attachment within the traditional shopping area of Misurata City, revealing significant insights that contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical urban policy. The findings highlighted three primary themes: walkability, active frontages, and social interaction, each playing a vital role in fostering emotional connections to the environment.

Furthermore, participants emphasized the importance of walkability, noting that pedestrian-friendly infrastructure enhances their sense of safety and encourages engagement with the shopping area. This finding aligns with existing literature linking walkability to place attachment [30]. However, this study extends the discussion by demonstrating that walkability not only improves physical access but also significantly impacts emotional well-being.

The presence of active frontages was recognized as vital for creating an inviting atmosphere. Participants described how the interaction between storefronts and pedestrians contributes to a vibrant community space, reinforcing findings from previous studies on urban design [55]. The research underscores the necessity for urban policies that promote mixed-use developments, enhancing both economic vitality and social cohesion.

Social interaction emerged as a fundamental aspect of place attachment, with participants viewing the traditional shopping area as a communal hub. This finding supports the notion that social networks are essential for strengthening place attachment [17]. By illustrating how the shopping area serves as a space for building relationships, the study emphasizes the importance of designing urban environments that facilitate social connections, enriching community identity.

The implications of these findings are significant for urban policy in Misurata City. Policymakers should prioritize walkability by developing pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, which can increase foot traffic and foster a stronger sense of community. Additionally, encouraging active frontages through mixed-use zoning can create vibrant public spaces that promote social interactions and economic vitality.

Investing in community spaces and supporting cultural events are essential for enhancing place attachment. These initiatives provide venues for social engagement and celebrate the unique heritage of Misurata City, fostering local pride and identity. Furthermore, involving community stakeholders in the urban planning process will ensure that developments reflect the needs and desires of residents, thereby increasing their sense of ownership and attachment to local spaces.

In conclusion, this research deepens the understanding of place attachment in a non-Western context, emphasizing the interconnectedness of urban design, social interaction, and emotional engagement. By addressing the specific needs of the community, urban policies can create more livable, vibrant, and emotionally resonant environments. Ultimately, the insights gained from this study advocate for a holistic approach to urban planning that prioritizes the emotional dimensions of community life, fostering stronger connections between residents and their environments.

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