Persian translation of this paper entitled: واکاوی شاخصهای مؤثر بر خلق مکان سوم با رویکرد شاهدمبنا (نمونهٔ موردی: پارک/تپههای ملت و دیدگاه شهر سنندج) published in this issue of journal

Original Research Article

An Analysis of Indicators Affecting the Creation of the Third Place Using an Evidence-Based Approach (Case Studies: Mellat and Didgah Park/ Hills in Sanandaj city)

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Received: 22/02/2021; accepted: 19/08/2022; available online: 22/12/2022

Abstract

Problem statement: Third place is a key concept for understanding the functioning of the relationship between the environment and society. Cities are complex socio-environmental systems and have always been a platform for social interaction, space for meeting, and spending leisure time. Looking at different areas of Sanandaj, the social inequalities in different neighborhoods, which are due to the unequal distribution of urban facilities and facilities, can be seen. This is sometimes associated with the authorities' view of locations and mismatches between actions taken and the concept of place and users' needs.

Research objective: The main goal of this research is to identify and validate the effective indicators in creating a third place.

Research method: The research method of this study is survey. This study is applied-developmental in terms of purpose and futuristic in terms of time. Data was collected through documentary and survey methods. Accordingly, "thematic" and "content" methods were used in evaluating the content of the subject literature, and also the "evidence-based" method was used in evaluating the case study and survey based on observation, documentation, and questionnaires. Qualitative information evaluation was performed in Maxqda 18 software.

Conclusion: The results of the study show the difference between the perspectives of influential groups including officials and users' opinions about the status and characteristics of the third place. One of the reasons for changes in urban spaces and place creation is the level of society's awareness of the effects of urban design as well as their demands. Such awareness will lead to the growth and development of people-oriented and the creation of urban places. Also, the set of users' requests, based on the evidence-based evaluation of Didgah park hills and Mellat, is in line with the indicators of creating a third place based on the content analysis of the relevant literature. Based on this, suggestions for the environmental and indigenous features of Sanandaj are presented.

Keywords: Content Evaluation, Third Place, Park/Hills, Evidence-Based, Sanandaj.

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Introduction

Urban spaces have played a significant role in promoting vitality and increasing the social interactions of citizens (Johnson, 2018). As man affects the environment, consequently in proportion to his needs and characteristics, he is also affected by the environment (Mojtabavi et al., 2020, 34); This has led to a lot of research in an attempt to examine the "third places" in people's daily lives and improve their life characteristics (Carlino & Saiz, 2019; Bruijn, 2018).

The urban public space should be a manifestation of life, diversity, a place for discovery, leisure and entertainment, seeing and being seen, learning and enjoying, and of the four characteristics of being sociable, providing a sense of comfort and convenience, and have the opportunity to engage in a variety of activities and engage with the space and ultimately ease of access. In fact, cities are a complex socio-environmental system in which the relationship between space and place is meaningful through the characteristics of the lives of its inhabitants (Cabrera-Barona & Merschdorf, 2018; Kemp & Stephani, 2015).

Urban spaces belong to all citizens and are not limited to their physical aspects. In fact, these spaces make sense with the presence of human beings and their activities.

Successful urban design, with its unique physical features, provides opportunities for citizens to connect and explore the environment. Healthy social interactions have a significant impact on health and well-being and life satisfaction (Hagell, Shah, Viner, Hargreaves, Varnes & Heys, 2018; Pachucki, Ozer, Barrat & Cattuto, 2015; Kok, Coffey, et al., 2013), (Pancholi, 2018; Credit & Mack, 2017).

According to what has been said, with urban growth and development, changes in work and life patterns, the need for recreation and leisure, creates more necessities for citizens and are among the essential needs. Creating such leisure spaces in the form of a third place will increase communication and interaction between people and urban vitality.

However, looking at different areas of Sanandaj, inequalities and social, economic, cultural, and livelihood conflicts in different neighborhoods of the city due to the unequal distribution of urban facilities, it is clear that sometimes they are rooted in the view of the authorities regarding the location and strangeness of the actions taken with the theme of location and the needs of users.

Therefore, the main purpose of the research is to identify and validate the effective indicators in creating the third place. Considering the importance of hills in the geography of Sanandaj city and, on the other hand, the necessity of urban parks in the formation of third places, the national park hills and the view of Sanandaj city, which have a high position in the minds of the people of this city, although they have not been systematically located and are welcomed by many users, were selected as a case study.

Theoretical Foundations & Research Background

Place

Edward Relph defines the concept of place as a safe haven through which one can see the world. A strong relationship means that man connects his position with other things and creates a psychological relationship with a specific point (Rahmani & Pourjafar, 2016). According to him, places are the semantic nuclei of the environment that are formed from the personal experiences of its users, and by integrating space and meaning, individuals create space either independently or among different groups and communities. They turn it into a place. Place is a meaningful space, which is why they have mainly defined place based on the emergence of social relations. In the counter location model, this relationship is clear. Today, city is no longer confined to the body but it has a spirit shaped by its existing platforms, which are used for establishing social relations (Carlino & Saiz, 2019; Mansouri & Jahanbakhsh, 2012). Urban spaces are platforms for the presence of citizens and the occurrence of their various behaviors. The relationship between space and behavior or environment and society in social and environmental sciences has led to the formation of theories that can be an effective guide to developing a space-based model to manage the behaviors of users of urban space (Paknejad & Latifi, 2017).

At the same time, by distancing cities from their human dimensions, the challenges of urbanization, the rupture of social relations, and the weakness of existing facilities have always caused psychological damage and increased social isolation among individuals. This highlights the need for a suitable platform to meet the social and leisure needs of people in urban areas (Nguyen Nguyen Lin & Chan, 2019; Martín, Martínez & Fernández, 2018; Shad, 2016).

At present, the public spaces of cities have been neglected due to the lack of policies and management of the society in their high position and have failed to respond to the different needs of human beings and provide them with comfort due to their functional flexibility (Heydari, Amirhajlou, Karkhane & Ahmadifard, 2013). Place is also an area of space that has a semantic and value load, and this means that the spatial experience is necessarily temporal and memory-oriented (Partovi, 2003, 46).

Ketabollahi (2017, 103), be lieves that place is a mixture of three fact ors: physical, social, and meaning. Place should provide a large set of measures for evaluating wall architecture, landscaping, incentives and stimuli, environmental issues, and most important ly in the field of behavior and it should also assess users' activities.

Third place

Along with the declining efficiency of residential places, work and study spaces as the first and second places in the 21st century, urban spaces, especially leisure spaces, which according to Altenberg are called the "third place", are of great importance and have played a significant role in

the vitality of urban space and the dynamism of citizens (Kargar & Gharehbaglou, 2015).

The term "third place" was first coined by the American sociologist Ray Altenberg in his book "A Very Good Place" in the 1990s. In this book, he refers to 'library' as the first place, 'the place of work and study' as the second place, and defines the third place as informal and social environments for communication and interaction with others, regardless of who they are (Lumba, 2018; Samadi Ahari & Sattarzadeh, 2018). Third places provide an opportunity for people to stand together and talk, regardless of the do's and don'ts of everyday life, and stay away from pollution.

These venues host regular, voluntary, informal, and enjoyable gatherings beyond the home and work environment. He believes that the existence of these places is of great importance for civil society, democracy, and social activities.

The third place is neither home nor work and study, it is a place between the two where people gather to spend time together and socialize (Lumba, 2018). Although work, study, and life play an important role in people's life satisfaction, third places contribute to the need for social interaction as a human need and the context for a healthy life for all sections of society (Campbell, 2017).

In other words, the third place stands for a place where the spirit of collective life flows. It increases the sense of belonging of individuals and social memory, which in itself will have a great impact on the social and individual development of users. The third place is a place where the possibility of pre-arranged interactions with friends, neighbors, acquaintances, and strangers takes place. The third place allows people to sit in a simple and peaceful place next to others, to talk to them and have a good time, in a place free from the worries of life.

It should be noted that the third place that Aldenberg first proposed is the nature of semi-public space related to functions such as coffee shops, stores, malls, markets, etc., but because the functional scope of the urban design profession is mainly the

public arena of urban space, therefore the purpose of the third place in this study is to create a platform for social interactions in the public space of the city (Table 1).

The existing literature on third place is briefly presented in the Table 2.

In this study, he cites the recent insight into the place that puts the evaluation and priority of the performance component at a higher level compared to other components of the place. Since 1990, the slogan has been "lighter, quicker, and cheaper (LQC) design", so in the current situation of Iran, which is in an unfavorable economic situation, the results of this study have more potential for reproducing urban places. Based on this, an attempt was made to observe the features related to the third place focusing on recent insights to evaluate them from the users' point of view in a case study.

It should be noted that a review of the background of related research showed that the components under study were mainly focused on the earlier insights in the field. In most of these researches, form, and meaning have been considered as two key components of place (Table 2). Accordingly, this research is innovative and

up-to-date in terms of content and it is necessary to do it in the economic conditions of Iran and Kurdistan Province (Fig. 1).

Research Methodology

The methodology of the present research is applied-developmental in terms of purpose. Data was collected using documentary and survey methods. Accordingly, "thematic-based" methods were used in analyzing the content of the subject literature, and also the "evidence-based" method was used in evaluating how the case study can be surveyed.

Content analysis is a thematic evaluation strategy and method of data simplification in which qualitative data is segmented, classified, summarized, and reconstructed in a way that the most important index data is saved during the research (Nichols & Neals, 2001). Content evaluation is a process for evaluating textual data and is one of the specialized methods in processing scientific data that is used to determine the existence of expected concepts and words in the text.

Since the present study is trying to understand the

Table 1. Third Place Characteristics. Source: Authors using Dolley & Bosman, 2019; Kızıltepe, 2019; Lumba, 2018; Farley, 2013; Quandt & Kröger, 2013; Davoodi & Modiri, 2015.

Third Place Characteristics	Description
Homes away from home	People away from the hustle and bustle of living in a place of peace and comfort (such as their home) are present and socialize with people and promote civic life among citizens.
Neutral bed	People travel in it in complete security and peace and socialize with others.
Leveling	All citizens benefit from it equally. It is accessible to everyone and far from official standards. The social and class differences that exist in the workplace and education should be ignored in the third place.
Dialogue	Dialogues and interactions are the main activities carried out in a third place. No activity like dialogue can explain a successful third place because it can increase the vitality of the space and increase its presence.
Accessibility	Each person can go there alone and easily whenever they want, with the confidence gained from the presence of other people in that space. In general, it should be in such a way that people can go there whenever they want.
Regular customer	People belong to that feeling and consider themselves a member of it. In other words, it can act as a permanent hangout for social groups.
Having a simple appearance	With a simple and luxurious appearance, it can create an inclusive atmosphere for all social classes.
The atmosphere of the environment not being serious	Individuals can engage in friendly and non-serious discussions and activities outside the official rules.

Table 2. Summary of research related to the third place. Source: Authors.

Researcher	Goal	Findings
(Goosen & Cilliers, 2018)	Investigating the role of third places in spatial planning in urban areas to improve social sustainability	The importance of social sustainability in urban areas: What will increase this level of social satisfaction and sustainability are the third places that people take refuge away from the worries of work and life.
(Samadi Ahari & SattarZadeh, 2017)	Finding the most important factors influencing the selection of third places as a space for spending leisure time in different social strata and classes.	The importance of citizens' culture, income, and their view of leisure spaces in choosing third places: Different social strata and classes demand different third places. Therefore, by considering this difference and creating inclusive spaces in accordance with the needs of the people, it is possible to reduce social tensions.
al., 2016)	Expanding the concept of third places to large social sites to develop and expand social relationships of people, especially the elderly, and promote their health.	The needs of users and features of the design platform: The creation of third places should be tailored to the needs of different people and strata. In designing and locating them, the social, economic, and cultural context must be considered.
(Alidoust, Bosman, & Holden, 2015)	The study of environmental-influencing factors, especially the characteristics of third place on the social life of individuals and creating environments to increase their presence in the environment and society. Researchers have extracted the ideal characteristics of these people through face-to-face interviews and examined them in their research.	Importance of ease of access and balanced distribution of third places: Third places that are more easily accessible are places where people can meet their various needs from the existing uses, such as recreation and sports centers.
(Hickman, 2010)	Examines the relationship between the existing infrastructure in the neighborhoods, the existence of third places, and the characteristics of social interactions in deprived areas. The necessary data have been collected using an open questionnaire and interviews.	The importance of the relationship between the third place and the richness of facilities in the relevant context: This study, which was conducted in several different cities, shows that the lack of urban services and facilities and the destruction of social spaces have caused many anomalies and the loss of civic identity in them.
(Manuel, 2009)	The discovery of some informal places in different places, to turn them into third places and investigate the relationship between these places and the health and well-being of citizens.	The importance of third places in the health of users: There is a direct connection between the third place and the health of the users of these spaces.

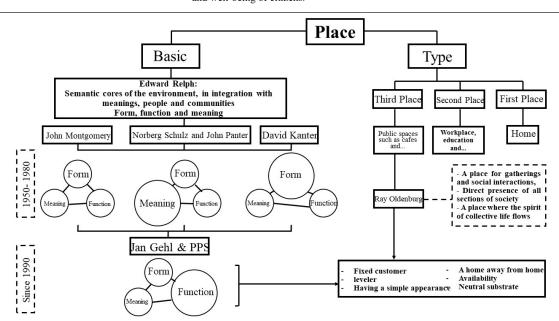


Fig. 1. Summary of theoretical literature and conceptual model of research. Source: Authors.

necessary features required for creating a successful third place from the perspective of users and experts, its evaluation process is a process of content and narrative that is narrated by users of space; In this context, the "evidence-based" approach is used.

The evidence-based approach or evidence-based practice (EBP) has emerged as a tool to help bridge the gap between traditional practice and formal research. EBP uses research to inform the work of professionals. Therefore, it can be integrated with participatory approaches that place more emphasis on the common definition of consensus and user-based problems and solutions (Healey, 1997; Innes, 1998; Van Herzele, 2004). By examining the characteristics of the presence of people and their daily experiences in the study area and interpreting and inferring the evidence obtained in the form of observations and questionnaires from the users and officials, the research is trying to use the content analysis method to achieve qualitative research objectives.

Previous studies have shown that the environmental preferences of users have been ignored and relied solely on the opinions and theories of experts and city managers in creating public spaces. Therefore, to solve this challenge, the present study tries to create third-user-friendly locations by achieving optimal solutions.

For this purpose, this research employed the qualitative analysis method and used MAXQDA 18 software for data analysis.

Therefore, sampling is based on research objectives and with maximum diversity. The criterion for selecting individuals was mainly park/hill users at random at the time of observing the behavior and completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire was semi-structured and researcher-made and sampling continued until the data saturation stage, and this process was stopped in the fiftieth interview. The reason for not continuing the interview was the saturation of data in the data collection stage. As the received responses were repeated beyond this number, 10 expert managers were interviewed to identify the opinions of non-user groups. In order to evaluate the research findings, content and thematic analysis were used. In this way, after each interview, they were implemented, summarized, and coded. Data encoding refers to the application of assigning tags to parts of the text submitted by respondents. In the final stages, the necessary studies were performed by applying the selected codes and features in MAXQDA 18 software (Fig. 2). Therefore, the present study seeks to answer the following questions.

1. What is the theme of successful third place in urban design literature? 2. Do users and urban

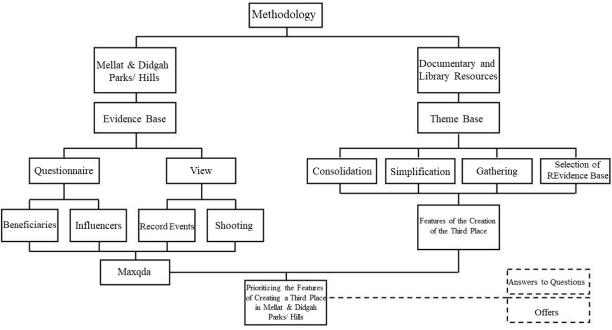


Fig. 2. The Process and Method of Research, Source: Authors.

management experts have the same view on the creation of leisure spaces and third places? 3. Based on the shared opinions of space users and city managers, what suggestions can be made to turn the park/hill nation into a third urban location?

Research Scope

The scope of the present study is Mellat and Didgah Parks in Sanandaj, the capital of Kurdistan Province. This complex is one of the mounds of Sanandaj city, which is located on the entrance axis of Sanandaj city from Kermanshah. This complex is one of the largest green spots in the city. The study area, in terms of location and spatial hierarchy, is in the middle of the city, has a regional urban function, and has played a recreational and green role since the 1940s.

This complex is adjacent to various functions such as Islamic Azad University Sanandaj Branch, Fajr Cultural Complex, children's play area, flower and plant exhibition, and retail buffets. The Pasdaran axis, which connects the entrance of the

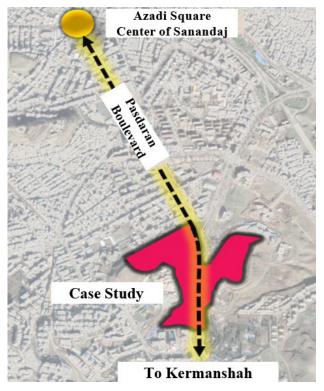


Fig. 3. Location of Case Study in Sanandaj. Source: Authors.

city to Azadi Square and the main core of the city, is the main access of this complex, in other words, this complex has divided the green space into two parts, east (Didgah Park) and west (Mellat Park) (Fig. 3). Among the problems that have caused people to distance themselves from this complex include the lack of safety at night, lack of long-term uses, and lack of facilities and services required, which have led to the occurrence of abnormal behaviors. The presence of adolescents and youth can be felt more (Fig. 4).

Findings and Discussion

Based on the literature and the evidence-based data on case studies, the characteristics of Third place are presented in the Table 3.

The Fig. 5 can be presented as a proposed research model, which aims to create a successful and popular third place. This model shows that several features affect the eight components of the third place; It should be noted that although each component requires its own characteristics, these characteristics overlap in most cases, and the absence of each, can affect all of these components; This confirms the effectiveness and the need to pay attention to all the comprehensive features to intervene and create a successful third place that can accommodate all segments of society and at different hours of the day and night. To evaluate the importance of each of the mentioned cases from the point of view of users of space and the opinions of experts, distributed questionnaires according to the analyzed features, which were examined in the form of 20 features, were given to MAXQDA 18 software to review, and evaluations were entered. The results of these studies are presented in the Fig. 6.

The evaluations provided in this software are such that the larger the dimensions of the squares indicate the importance of this feature in the answers provided in the interview. Looking at the results obtained, it is clear that from the point of view of experts and city officials, improving space







Fig. 4. Unisexual Behaviors of a Large-Scale Green Space, Summer 2021. Source: Authors' Archive.

Table 3. Characteristics of Third Placed based on the content analysis of the questionnaire. Source: Authors.

Third Place

- Use of green spaces and desirable natural landscape
 - Improving lighting and space security
- Use of amenities § Universal urban furniture, collectible, collectible
- \bullet Recreational space suitable for age groups, children, youth, and adults

Establishing behavioral prohibition policies, including a ban on smoking

• Pay attention to the audio landscape in the place

security, universality, and the use of long-term uses, respectively, are the most important features; And the use of proper flooring and cultural activities are features of the least importance. The table below shows the prioritization of all feature (Fig. 7).

Studies based on experts' theories show that 11.8% of the answers provided on security promotion, 10.7% on the universality of space, 9.2% and 8.2% of the answers provided, emphasis has been placed on universal urban

facilities and furniture, respectively, and the creation of a space for conversation and interaction, as the most important features. To examine the relationship between the opinions of officials and users, the results of coding and surveys are displaye (Figs. 8).

From the users' point of view, improving the security of the space, the universality of the space, as well as increasing the brightness of the space, and preventing unconventional behaviors in space, have

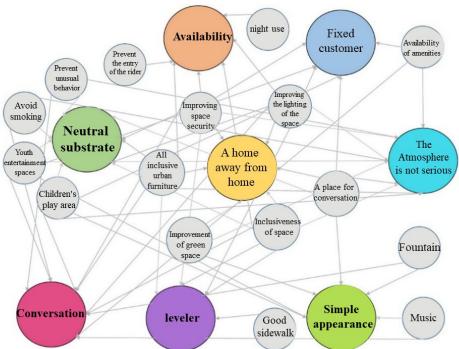


Fig. 5. Research Conceptual Model to Create Successful Third Places. Source: Authors.

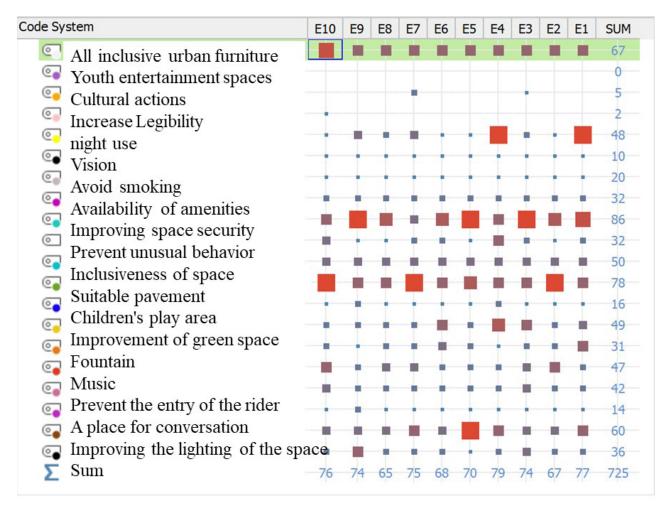


Fig. 6. Comparative Comparison of Data in Maxqda Software According to Experts' Opinions, Summer 2021. Source: Authors.

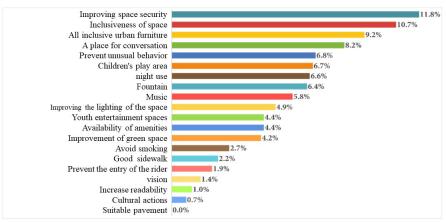


Fig. 7. Prioritization of Data According to the Opinions of Experts in Maxqda Software, Summer 2021. Source: Authors.

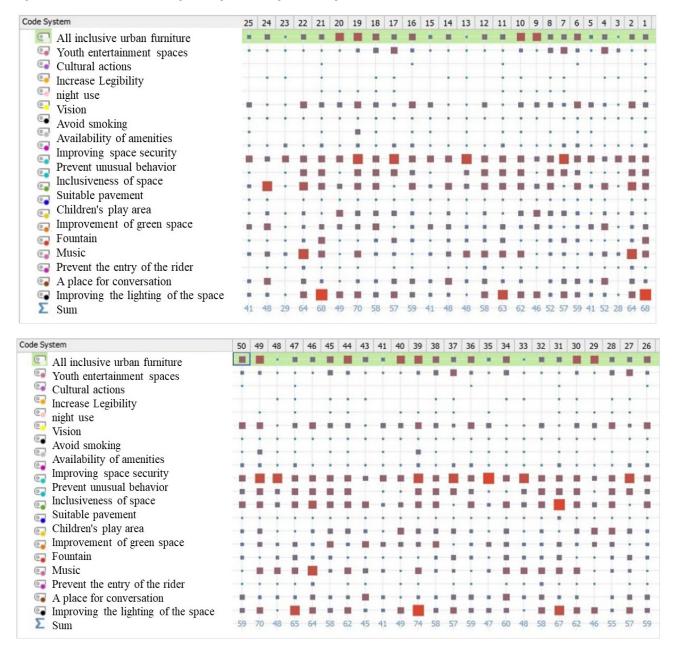


Fig. 8 . A Comparative Comparison of Data in Maxqda Software According to Space Users' Opinions, Summer 2021, Source: Authors

been mentioned as the most important features that city decision makers need to pay more attention to in creating this place (Fig. 9).

In general, studies based on the theories of space users show that 10.9% of the answers provided on the topic of improving space security, 8.6% on the universality of space, 8.5% on lighting, and 8.4% emphasized universal facilities and furniture as the most important features.

Conclusion

In the present study, an attempt was made to identify and explain the most important characteristics of a successful third place using a qualitative method and content analysis. The results of the analysis and interviews conducted with the users of the case study as well as the experts related to urban affairs and its analysis (using MAXQDA 18 software to identify 3428 codes of 20 expected features in the form of 8 main features of the third place, proposed by Ray Oldenberg), led to a successful leisure space in the study area.

The characteristics obtained from 50 questionnaires include: a) features of improving

the brightness and security of the space, b) the universality of the space, the use of inclusive urban furniture, c) A place for conversation, making the necessary arrangements to prevent unusual behaviors and smoking, d) creating recreational and play spaces for children and youth, the existence of long-term uses, playing music and using natural elements such as fountains to increase the richness of the environment, as well as more use of existing green spaces to enhance the vitality of the space, strengthening broad views of the city and measures such as cultural affairs and improving the amenities.

Among these, users placed more emphasis on improving the security of the space and its lighting at night, the installation of ubiquitous urban furniture, the use of long-lasting and required leisure uses, as well as making the necessary arrangements to prevent the occurrence of unusual behaviors.

In answer to the second question of the research, it should be noted the profound difference in the insights of officials and users, which is due to an incorrect understanding of urban design and its power to affect the public space of society.

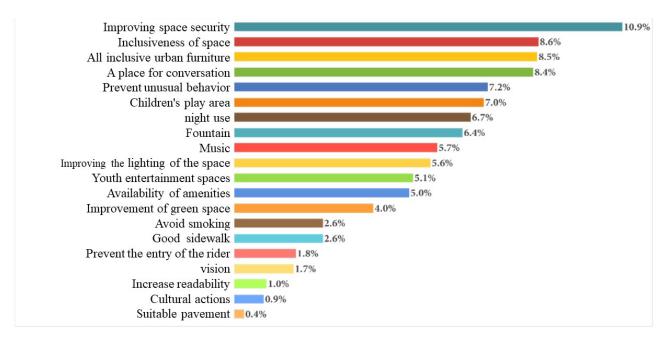


Fig. 9. Prioritization of Data According to the Opinions of Space Users in Maxqda Software, Summer 2021. Source: Authors.

One of the reasons for the change in urban spaces and the creation of places is the level of public awareness and demand. Awareness-raising at different levels of society about the importance of urban design and civic activism in the field of spatial change by users, should be considered in urban development plans as well as the subject of urban planning and architecture courses in universities and create a platform for users to play a role, be emphasized.

It is obvious that the use of young people and academic elites, at the managerial level and the emphasis on the intellectual role of universities in macro-decision-making, can minimize the gap between civil society and responsible society, and it should illuminate the path that leads to the growth and development of the people and the creation of urban places.

Based on this, suggestions are made to create a third place in the hill parks of Didgah and Mellat:

- 1. The combination of physical, functional, and meaning in the area of hill-parks,
- 2. Articulation of the hill-park environment to the surrounding texture,
- 3. Reproduction of space to continue night and day activities,
- 4.Creation and balanced distribution of new places in the area of hill-park,
- 5. Establishing more con nections between the hill parks with each other and with the surrounding green spaces as a whole unit.

Respecting the policies of upstream documents, including the plan to or ganize the hills of Sanandaj city

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HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Iranpanah, A.; Charehjoo, F. & Ketabollahi, K. (2023). An Analysis of Indicators Affecting the Creation of the Third Place using an Evidence-Based Approach (Case Studies: Mellat and Didgah Park/ Hills in Sanandaj city). *Baghe Nazar*, 19(115), 67-80.

DOI: 10.22034/BAGH.2022.330893.5133

URL: http://www.bagh-sj.com/article_155973.html?lang=en

