



Evaluating Citizens' Vitality Rate Based on Physical and Activity Components in Arts and Culture Centers (Case Study: The Khatam-al Anbiya Art and Culture Complex, Rasht, Iran)

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Abstract

In recent decades, urbanization and its problems have led to the decline of vitality and vivacity in the urban space. Therefore, vitality is an essential component of sustainable development. Also, cultural spaces, as part of public spaces, are considered suitable for social interactions and sustainable society. This study evaluates citizens' vitality using physical and activity components in arts and culture centers. To that end, an inferential-descriptive method including observation and electronic questionnaires was used to analyze the Khatam-al Anbiya Art Cultural Complex in Rasht, Iran. The collected data were analyzed in SPSS (ver. 22). Cronbach's alpha was used for reliability estimation. The estimated reliability (0.889) indicated the reliability of the questionnaire. The results indicated a direct relationship between citizens' vitality rate and physical and activity components of arts and culture centers. It can be concluded that among physical components, access and security, and among activity components, activity diversity, engaging activities, and festivals have a more significant effect on creating vitality in citizens when attending the Khatam-al Anbiya Art Cultural Complex.

Keywords: *vitality, physical and activity components, art cultural centers, Khatam-al Anbiya Art Cultural Complex, Rasht*

1. Introduction

Like an alive creature, a city needs vitality and joy to survive. [1] As Ecolysis mentions, “the living city belongs to all existing social groups in the city” [2]. As one of the most important gathering places, public spaces play a critical role in citizens promoting their social interactions and

the experience of collective participation. [3]. With the swift trend of urbanization, many tensions have found their way into people's lives and reduced vitality. Creating vitality is so important that it is one of the most important ideals and aims of planners [4]. Strengthening

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vitality can improve citizens' sense of place, presence in urban spaces, quality of life, and social health [5]. Cultural centers have an essential role in strengthening and increasing the social interactions among people and urban dynamism. Therefore, with a life-based design, the citizens' presence in these places can be continued, a valuable step in elevating society's culture. On the other hand, cultural centers create a good platform for strengthening social functions and have an indispensable influence on increasing social cohesion [6]. Furthermore, evaluating physical and activity components in the Khatam-al Anbiya Arts and Culture Complex of Rasht may significantly increase citizens' vitality. This study investigates the impact of physical and activity components on citizens' vitality in arts and culture centers, which is a new view on the issue in the literature. This is because previous studies have examined the components of vitality in public space. In this regard, here are some questions:

Which physical and activity components evaluate citizens' vitality in arts and culture centers?

Which physical and activity components are more influential in cultural-artistic centers in creating vitality for the citizens?

2. Literature review

2.1. Background Studies in the Field of Vitality

There have been many studies on the definition of vitality and the factors influencing it [7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19]. Previous studies mainly focus on public spaces on a scale, and architectural spaces have been less studied on the scale of the building [20]. In this paper, cultural-artistic centers have been particularly analyzed. This research investigates the criteria to design cultural spaces with the effect of social stability and spatial dynamics [21], while other studies examine the influential factors in promoting the socialization of the cultural center

[20,22]. Also, influential factors in designing cultural centers on social sustainability [23] have been studied.

2.2. Vitality and its various dimensions

Jacobs defines these as criteria: considering practical uses, mixed uses, paying attention to the street, texture permeability, social mixing, and flexibility of spaces to be influential in urban desirability and vitality [7]. Jacobs and Opliyard (1987) define vitality as the possibility of a comfortable life in a city. People in the urban space perceive and experience. Also, Ross, chairman of the UK's Commission on Architecture and Artificial Environment, believes vitality is the quality of life as people perceive and experience urban space [18]. Panter and Carmona report the most critical environmental qualities, including sustainability, urban landscape, and the quality of views, city form, building form, and communal spaces [26]. Lenard (1997) considers vitality as the possibility of people watching and hearing their voices, the possibility of informally gathering people in public arenas, the opportunity for children and adolescents to socialize in public arenas, and the affirmation of all citizens to respect each other's knowledge and awareness [27]. Lynch examines vitality on a large scale and divides it into survival, safety, adaptability, health, and biological stability. He primarily focuses on biological and ecological factors and ignores social and cultural factors [8]. Using Lynch's theories, Golkar determines the qualities of an appropriate city design from a theoretical perspective and considers good urban design due to three factors: functional quality, experimental-aesthetic quality, and environmental quality of cities [28]. Furthermore, Golkar introduces urban vitality as one of the practical components in urban design quality [18].

Azizi studies the identity and vitality, dynamism, adaptability, and diversity of the principles and criteria of sustainability of the city and the neighborhood by examining the sustainable

residential neighborhood of alley of Tehran [29]. Rezvani and Khosto study the influential factors on the vitality of urban spaces based on the concept of pedestrian shopping centers and examine the relationship between shopping activity, safety, and vitality in Sattar Khan St., Tehran. They report a positive relationship between shopping malls, shopping capacity, and street vitality [1].

Landry investigates the concept of vitality and numbers four economic, social, cultural, and environmental approaches for it. [30] Pamir expounds on the factors for creating a successful space. The factors are location, place size, and place planning and design [10]. Lee examines the influential factors on the quality of life in eight variables: housing, built environment, neighborhood safety, neighborhood health conditions, quality of public services, public relations, and family income [31]. Lopez and Carmona analyze the overlap data model of assessing urban vitality. In this study, European cities are used as a criterion. They conclude that green space influentially promotes urban vitality and quality of life [32].

Jalal al-Dini and Oktay study vitality in urban public spaces (urban streets). They conclude that good access, proximity to essential and attractive centers, and social and physical characteristics of the street are the influential factors of vitality in urban streets. [13] Mahmoudi et al. study the effects of physical problems on the quality and vitality of citizens in Kuala Lumpur. Their findings reveal that physical problems such as inadequate pavement and public services in addition to traffic congestion have led to a decline in street vitality in the city. [33] Wagner and Kiyooz (2012) and Samuel et al. (2016) examined the influential components of creating vitality in urban public spaces (especially urban streets) and mentioned components such as maintenance and cleaning, lighting, signs, canopies, and vegetation [14,15]. Studies also indicate that the location of signs has a significant relationship with their

sociability potential [34]. The placement of signs has a significant relationship with their socialization potential [34].

Latifi et al. compare urban vitality in Tehran neighborhoods based on four main criteria: neighborhood dynamism and vibrancy, optimal access to local services, the desirability of environmental quality, and urban security to achieve vitality in urban neighborhoods. They report that environmental pollution, health, and the quality of green and public spaces have the most significant influence on the vitality and livability of these neighborhoods. [4]. Shahivandi et al. only highlight the influence of economic vitality in creating environmental viability among four variables of economic vitality, social vitality, cultural vitality, and physical index [35].

Pourahmad et al. discuss the role of urban sidewalks of Shahrivar 17 St., Tehran, in promoting the vitality of urban spaces. They conclude that due to the current structure and function, the sidewalks in question have failed to bring vitality to the environment [36]. Another study that compares vitality in Tabriz's historical and modern commercial spaces concludes that the historic bazaar of Tabriz has a similar function as the modern commercial spaces today: a symbol of the social life of more sociality and liveliness [37]. Also, the landscape approach has been analyzed in creating vitality in Valiasr Street, Tehran, emphasizing the sense of place. It has been found that the landscape approach and the components obtained in the design can increase the presence of people in these spaces, thus improving their sense of belonging to space gradually and becoming a sense of place. Consequently, the vitality of the street and urban spaces is guaranteed [38]

Chen Zang et al. present a detailed spatial assessment of urban vitality in Chicago, USA, and Wuhan, China. They break down

urban vitality into four components: density, livability, accessibility, and diversity. They show that Chicago excels in accessibility and diversity, while Wuhan has higher values in density and livability. They report that local communities around landmarks or large areas are affected by their neighborhoods [39]. Askarizad studies the impact of socio-cultural factors in the formation of architectural spaces and states that architecture comes to life through socio-cultural organizations [40]. Akhavan et al. examine the influence of environmental-physical factors on the vitality and quality of urban streets. They conclude a significant relationship between vitality and quality of urban streets and physical environmental problems [41]. Ghorbanpour et al. discuss the components strengthening vitality in urban sidewalks in Alam al-Huda Sidewalk in Rasht. They base their research on a conceptual model with four criteria: use and activity, physical access and communication, climate, and environment. They conclude that the best strategy to improve public presence in the space in question is equipping the environment based on the climate of Rasht [42]. Previous studies treat specific aspects of vitality, for instance, theoretically and from the perspective of social identity. The present study deals with physical and activity components in arts and culture centers in creating citizen vitality, making it a practical and novel piece of research (Table 1).

2.3. The concept of vitality

Robert Cowan defines vitality and livability as: "Vitality and Viability." Urban vitality is a reflection of its busy level at different times of the day [43].

Landry considers vitality as the city's raw power and energy, which causes concentration and leads the city to creative activity. [44].

Table 1. The theoretical components of vitality based on literature review

Theorist	Year	components of vitality
Lynch	1984	Security, Legibility, safety, eligibility, survival, health and biological stability
Jacobs	1961	Diversity and attractiveness ,Diversity of activity, Security, Legibility, social mixing and space flexibility
Landry	2000	Environmental vitality, Economic vitality, Social vitality, cultural vitality
Chapman	2003	Attractions, accessibility, comfort, security and identity
AIA	2005	Identity, dynamism, flexibility and adaptability to new needs
Pakzad	2007	Variety, function and use, use of natural elements, invitation and presence of people, security, visual beauty
Golkar	2007	Variety of land uses, flexibility, visual personality, safety and security, spatial belonging, harmony with nature, climatic comfort, permeability
Dadpour	2012	Variety of activities, social interactions, security
Jalaladdin i& Oktay	2012	Diversity of land use, safety, physical forms, compatibility of activities, variety of activities, social interactions
Zeng et al	2018	Density, livability, accessibility and diversity

Urban vitality is the capacity of the city to respond and be resilient to conditions (ibid.). Urban vitality is related to life satisfaction in a particular place and is concerned with the local community's health [45].

2.4. Vitality components

According to Landry (2000) [30], the types of vitality and livability are as follows:

1. Economic vitality: Factors such as employment levels, income and living standards of people in an area, the annual number of tourists, land value are measured.
2. Social vitality: It is evaluated by the levels of activities and social interactions.
3. Environmental vitality and viability: consists of two parts. The first part is ecological sustainability, which consists of variables such as air pollution, wastewater disposal, traffic, and green spaces. The second part is the design, including readability, sense of place, architectural differentiation, lightening quality, safety, and security.
4. Cultural vitality: It includes identity, memories, traditions, social celebrations, handicrafts, and signs of the distinctive nature of the city. Vitality is divided into micro and macro levels. The micro-dimension falls into physical and non-physical parts (spatial and activity),

which in the physical part is referred to as indicators such as safety, security and beauty, and other influential factors. The macro-dimension consists of economic, social, cultural, and environmental components with specific indicators. Attractiveness and satisfaction are two imperative factors of vitality (Figure 1) [1].

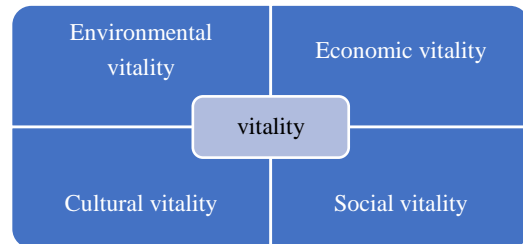


Fig. 1. Vitality components

Studies address parameters such as infrastructure, furniture, access, readability, appearance and lighting, and the design of passages to measure vitality in neighborhoods. In that regard there is a consensus among most theorists in this section [35]. According to the studies, the conceptual research model can be drawn as follows (Figure 2).

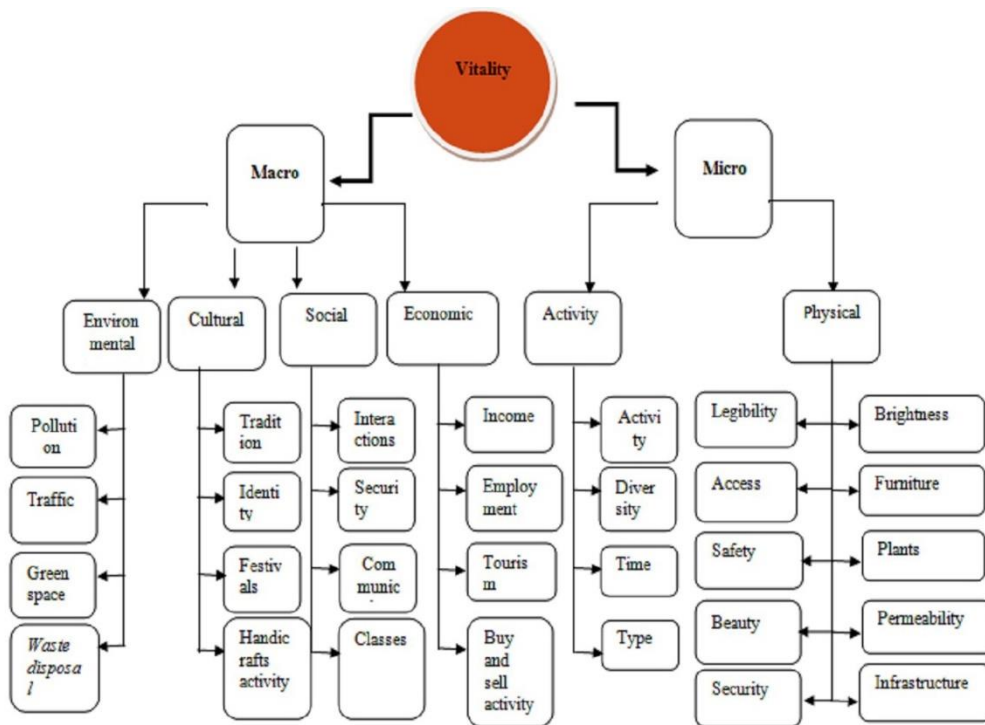


Fig. 2. The conceptual model of research based on literature review

This study analyzes the influence of cultural-artistic centers on the vitality of citizens in terms of microcomponents (from an internal view). Although some activity components may overlap with the components of social, cultural and even

economic (macro) vitality, these components only after Wisdom is evaluated. For a list of two categories of physical components and practical activities in creating vitality are studied, see Table 2.

Table 2. The effectiveness of physical components in creating vitality from the micro viewpoint based on literature review

Factors	Components	Vitality (Micro)
furniture-- safety-security-access- legibility-beauty-brightness - permeability infrastructure-comfort	Physical	
- attractive activities - the variety of period of activities - variety of activities- the variety of land uses-	Activity	

2.6 Cultural Spaces

All the spaces that people can access and use are called public spaces. Carmona et al. believe that public spaces include outdoor public spaces, indoor public spaces, and semi-public indoor and outdoor spaces. Cultural spaces are part of indoor public spaces. Indoor public spaces include libraries, museums, city theaters, and similar spaces [46]. Public spaces will be helpful if they provide the needs of people if the social analysis is done in their planning process [47]. According to the above definitions and the placement of cultural spaces in the category of indoor public spaces, the characteristics of survival in such spaces are social interactions [48], attracting people in disturbed groups [49], social security, more socialization [50] and active and vital space [51].

3. Materials and Methods

The method used in the current research was descriptive-inferential. The statistical population included those referring to the Khatam Al-Anbia Art and Culture Center in Rasht. Based on the observation during office and non-office time, three different days of the week, and interviews conducted on three different days per week, the maximum and minimum visits were estimated

between 300 and 1000. This considerable range of visits can be related to concerts, theatre performances, festivals, and cultural and artistic conferences over the year. Meanwhile, there were more visitors from 5 to 8 PM in the same period. The sampling method is random. The sample size was calculated by employing Cochran's unknown population formula, the reliability coefficient of 1.64, and a range of 650. A total of 163 people are selected. The required information was virtually extracted from the respondents by administering an electronic questionnaire (Table 1) using an online form with several sections, including demographic characteristics and influential components in creating vitality. Also, the observations and interviews were carried out in a field survey during the week to calculate the number of visitors to the complex. The research was conducted in February 2020.

3.1 Case Study

Khatam Al-Anbia Arts and Culture Complex (Figure 3) is one of the biggest and most cultural and artistic complexes in Rasht. This building is located downtown at Sharhrdari Square. It comprises a conference hall, amphitheater, Marlik Gallery, book fair, library, literary and artistic associations offices, mosque affairs, and a

Basij HQ and buffet. The Avanesiyan Historical House, located on the western side of the complex, has been added to Khatam Al Anbia Complex. It dates back to the Qajar period and was registered in 2007 as a national monument [52]. Today, only the grounds of this historical house are used as the parking lot of the Khatam al-Anbia complex.



Fig. 3. Khatam Al-Anbia Arts and Culture Center (Google)

3.2 Data Analysis

The inferential analysis was conducted in the SPSS 22 environment. Friedman and correlation tests were used to answer the research questions. The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The obtained alpha coefficient value was 0.889.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Results

Among the total statistical population, 57.9% were female, and 42.1% were male. The frequency of participants' age with 58.7% was between 20 and 30 years. Regarding the educational status, 2.2% had Ph.D., 47.8% had a master's degree, 34.8% had a bachelor's degree, 2.2% had an associate degree, 2.2% had a diploma, and 13% were undergraduates. 67.4% of the respondents were single, and 32.6% were married. According to the observations and interviews about the different functions of the Khatam al-Anbia Center, the employees use the building daily based on the audience's activities in different periods. Customers in several

departments, library members, members of music and theater groups, secretaries and associations, and visitors of Marlik Gallery visit the center every week. Besides, the enthusiasts of arts, scientific conferences, festivals, and concerts visit the complex on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis (Figure 4).

As studies indicate, physical components, including access, security, and light, have a more significant influence on creating vitality, while the influence of appearance, index, inviting quality of the entrance, and furniture quality is less significant (Figure 5).

Our observations indicate that the two components of security and access have a higher percentage among the influential physical components in creating vitality of citizens in the cultural-artistic complex of Khatam al-Anbia (Figure 6).

Given the results of studies regarding the promotive influence of green space, natural elements, waterside, recreational activities, and the variety of activities, such as the presence of business-service centers in creating vitality of citizens in cultural-artistic centers, diversity of activities and engaging activities as well as the Hodges Festival are more influential components in creating vitality in Khatam Al-Anbia Cultural-Artistic Center.

4.2 Analytical Findings

4.2.1 The Friedman Test

In order to investigate the effect of each physical and activity component in creating vitality, the Friedman test was used based on the second question of the article. The findings indicate that the average rank of diverse activity, green space, and absorbing activities (activity components) is more influential than other activities. According to the results, the level of significance is less than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between cultural and artistic centers and citizen vitality (Table 3).

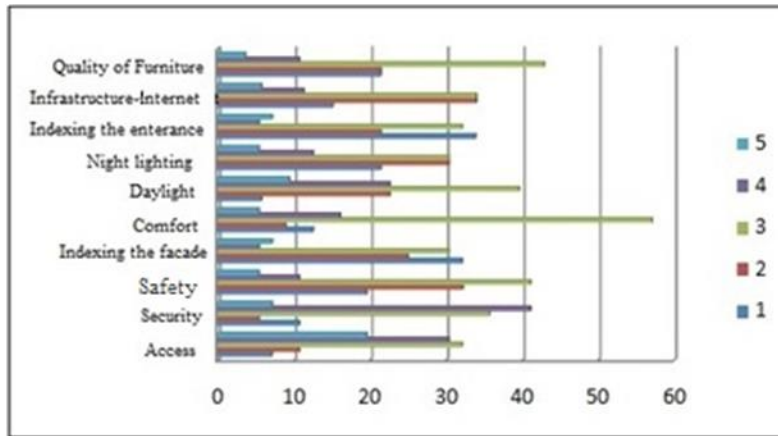


Fig 4. The influential physical components in creating vitality

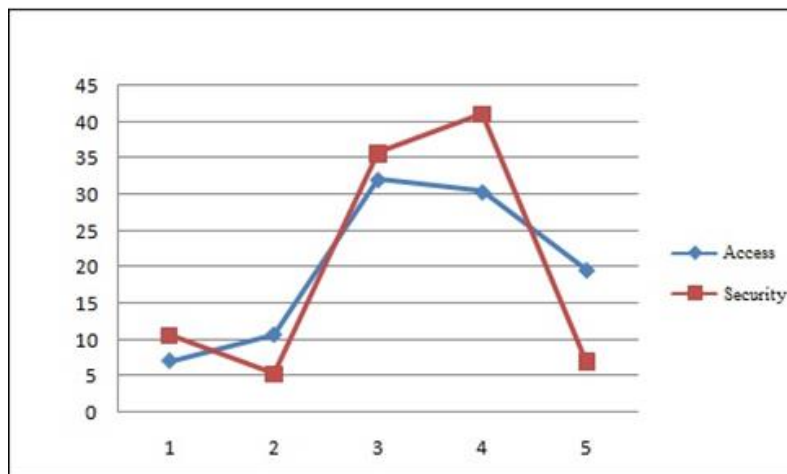


Fig. 5. The influential physical components on vitality

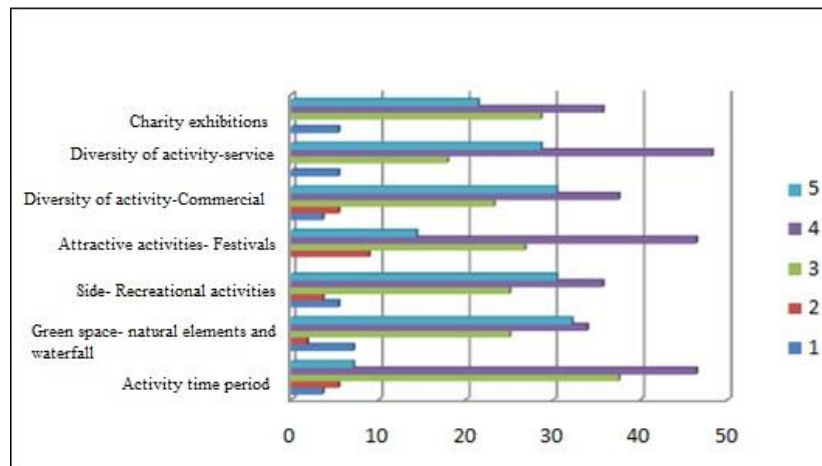


Fig. 6. The influential active components in creating vitality

Table 3. Mean rank of influential components of vitality

Row	Vitality Components	Average Rank
1	activity time period	11.37
2	attractive activities-festivals	12.80
3	diversity of activity-business	13.68
4	diversity of activity-service	13.33
5	side-recreational activities	12.00
6	charity exhibitions	11.72
7	green space- natural elements and waterfall	13.15
8	security	10.89
9	access	12.29
10	safety	6.10
11	furniture quality	5.40
12	infrastructure-internet	6.52
13	daylight	5.30
14	night lighting	6.72
15	comfort	8.39
16	indexing the facade	5.83
17	indexing the entrance	4.91

4.3 Discussion

Cultural and artistic centers have a remarkable role in society and can accommodate a wide range of people from different promote the culture and dynamism in the society. With the increasing pressure of urban on citizens, creating vitality among different segments of society is one of the critical goals of planners. Meanwhile, dynamic arts and culture centers can increase vitality, improve quality of life, and improve social health.

The results indicated that activity components played a more significant role than physical components on the vitality of citizens when

entering the Khatam al-Anbia Arts and Culture Complex. Factors such as security and access to physical components, variety of activities, engaging activities, and festivals (components of activity) had a more influential role in creating vitality for citizens.

Unlike previous studies on the impact of security, [1,4,10,17,30], access [1,9,10,30], engaging activities [1,9,17], art festivals [53], social festivals [30], this research innovatively evaluates the citizens' vitality using physical and activity components in arts and culture centers. This is because previous studies have examined the components of vitality in public space. As the studies show, people tend to attend local celebrations and ceremonies and charity exhibitions, which can promote the vitality of citizens.

5. Conclusion

The conducted research on the study sample indicates that the Khatam al-Anbia Cultural and Artistic Complex is influential in promoting the vitality of citizens. Appropriate access, acceptable security, variety and attractiveness of activities and festivals, and natural elements are among the factors with a more influential role in creating vitality of citizens. Regarding the green space and natural elements and diverse activities, which have a remarkable influence on the vitality of citizens, it is recommended to convert Avanesian Historical House, a nationally registered monument added to this center, into a traditional café or a similar space. In this design, clients can also use the green space and natural elements to develop citizens' vitality when attending this complex.

The findings show that arts and culture centers have a remarkable role in creating vitality. With the tensions of modern-day life, these centers can be employed as essential lively places. Also, the results of this research can guide planners, urban designers, and architects to improve citizen vitality. Considering the public tendency to

attend native ceremonies and celebrations, studying the influence of indigenous ceremonies and celebrations on the vitality in future research is recommended.

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