International Journal of Architectural Engineering & Urban Planning, Volume 33, Number 3, 2023
DOI: 10.22068/ijaup.666

Research Paper

Distributing Urban Services and Feeling of Poverty: An Analysis of the Relationship between Urban Quality of Life and Poverty Feeling in Shiraz Historical Districts [1]

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Received: May 2022, **Revised:** December 2023, **Accepted:** December 2023, **Publish Online:** December 2023

Abstract
The realization and sustenance of spatial justice within urban environments encounter substantial hurdles arising from the imbalanced expansion of cities and ensuing socioeconomic crises. According to available statistical data on Iranian cities, these crises and challenges have contributed to an escalation in the number of urban inhabitants perceiving a state of impoverishment. Many researchers believe that the indices measuring the development and welfare of a city serve as indicators of its overall quality of life. The objective of this investigation was to examine how the urban quality of life, as facilitated by access to urban services, influences the perception of poverty among urban residents. Considering that objective urban quality of life transforms into subjective urban quality of life through individual perception, and recognizing that the sense of poverty is also a subjective phenomenon, it becomes imperative to explore the interconnection between these two aspects. Initially, the study formulated its conceptual model. Subsequently, the historical district of Shiraz City was chosen as the sample for examination. A structured questionnaire was devised and disseminated among the residents of this specific district. The collected data were subjected to analysis utilizing SPSS 23. The findings revealed that within the residents of the historical district of Shiraz City, the perception of poverty is influenced by three key factors: "employment and economy," "housing," and "recreation and entertainment." Furthermore, the results indicated that proficient urban management, particularly in the provision of urban services, holds substantial potential for alleviating the sensation of urban poverty.

Keywords: *Urban poverty, Urban quality of life, Urban services, Historical section of Shiraz City.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of early urban civilizations, cities have grappled with a myriad of challenges, with social inequality, polarization, poverty, and the tangible expressions of these issues, such as disparate access to urban resources, standing out as particularly significant. In response to these challenges, scholars and policymakers initiated discussions surrounding the concept of justice in urban planning. In due course, the pursuit of justice and the mitigation of injustice emerged as central objectives within the field of urban planning (Niksic and Sezer, 2017).

Although the advancement of urbanization and the expansion of cities have, to some extent, enhanced the well-being and security of urban inhabitants, they have also engendered adverse outcomes. These include the proliferation of urban poverty and socioeconomic disparities. Insufficient access to urban facilities and amenities fosters dissatisfaction and

[1] This article is taken from the doctoral dissertation of urban planning in Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch (Faculty of Art and Architecture) entitled "Explaining the Spatial Justice Framework with Urban Poverty Reduction Approach" by Samira Abbasi, Supervised by Dr. Zahra Sadat Saeideh Zarabadi And the advice of Dr. Hamid Majedi

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diminishes motivation for collective action. Furthermore, numerous invaluable social assets, such as public trust and community commitment, undergo a decline (Kings, Ålund and Tahvilzadeh, 2016).

Over the past few decades, various entities, including countries, governments, professional organizations, international institutes, and local authorities, have undertaken the measurement of quality of life on global, transcontinental, national, and local scales through the utilization of objective, subjective, and mixed methodologies. Some have adopted the Scandinavian approach, relying on economic, social, environmental, and developmental statistics (secondary data). In this approach, critical aspects such as the economy, society, environment, and others are selected, and their evaluation is conducted through the definition of specific indicators and micro-indicators. The initiatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) fall within this category (Mirgholami et al., 2019; Wadi and Furlan, 2017; Wey and Wei, 2016).

The diversity among institutions, scales, local cultures, and levels of political and economic development underscores the multitude of models and frameworks employed to assess quality of life. These models are as varied as the projects and studies conducted worldwide to evaluate quality of life at different scales[1]. Such initiatives differ in their scales, domains, and measurement methods. Despite the array of methods employed in various studies, a comprehensive framework for assessing quality of life in an integrated and holistic manner, encompassing physical, spatial, and social characteristics, has yet to be established (Habibi et al., 2020; Tiran, 2016; Kamp et al, 2003).

The primary objective of this study was to examine the correlation between the concepts of urban quality of life and the perception of poverty. Specifically, the study aimed to address the fundamental question: Does the urban quality of life, as influenced by the availability of urban services, impact the sense of urban poverty? If so, what are the underlying mechanisms of this influence? The historical section of Shiraz City, situated in District 8, was chosen as the study sample due to the myriad challenges it faces. These challenges encompass deficiencies in public parks, green spaces, educational centers, and cultural-sports facilities, among others. Concerning the economic landscape, over 35% of the residents are simple workers, while 30% are employees and salespersons, indicative of low incomes and economic disparities. Regarding education, more than 30% of residents are illiterate, reflecting educational inequalities. These disparities have contributed to the decline of this city district since 1956.

Following a comprehensive examination of concepts associated with urban quality of life and poverty in relation to the distribution of spatial services, the study proceeds to elucidate its conceptual model. Subsequently, the study delves into the findings derived from a survey conducted through questionnaires. Finally, the study offers conclusions based on the results obtained.

1.1. Urban Quality of Life and Urban Poverty

Urban poverty is a multidimensional concept that extends beyond mere food deprivation. Various definitions of poverty can be categorized into two main groups: (1) those put forth by international and national organizations, including the World Bank, the UNDP, the statistical centers of individual countries, dedicated poverty foundations, among others, and (2) academic definitions.

Poverty is characterized by the deprivation of fundamental capacities, human rights, freedom of choice, and equal opportunities. It manifests in various forms, encompassing low income, hunger, substandard living conditions, insufficient access to basic services, vulnerability, social exclusion, political disenfranchisement, and insecurities, among others (World Bank, 2016). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines poverty with a focus on quality of life, identifying three key indicators: income, health, and education (UNDP, 2016). Similarly, urban poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon imposing numerous limitations on individuals. Challenges associated with urban poverty may include restricted access to employment opportunities, engagement in unhealthy and harsh working environments, and insufficient access to housing, urban services, social security services, health care, and education.

Residing in impoverished cities entails navigating an economy where the primary objective of production is survival rather than progression. Urban poverty represents the propagation of a macroeconomic shock, typically manifesting through the labor market and job loss. A city experiencing poverty is frequently marked by low skill levels, meager wages, a high incidence of unemployment, a prevalence of informal employment, a dearth of insurance coverage, youth unemployment emerging as

[1] In addition to the numerous models and frameworks, there are also conceptual models that assess similar concepts such as quality of place, welfare, livability, standard of living, residential satisfaction, life satisfaction, etc.

a significant social issue, and ultimately, a deficiency in social security provisions (Hatami Nejad et al., 2012; Nouri, 2016). Characteristic features of impoverished cities include densely populated slums, deficient infrastructures, inadequately constructed buildings, restricted access to essential services, and the prevalent issue of illegal land acquisition (Lloyd-Jones, 2014; Parkhurst, 2014). Emphasizing the shortcomings of the "income poverty" perspective, Sen (1990) contends that poverty extends beyond mere income inadequacy. Therefore, surpassing the poverty line in terms of income does not necessarily ensure freedom from poverty (Alitajer et al., 2013; Joshi, 2014: 65).Broadly construed, the economic dimension of poverty denotes a shortfall in access to indispensable means of subsistence, encapsulating the requisite income level necessary for the maintenance of one's livelihood (Shahidi, 2013; Asayesh, 2006).

The descent into poverty can be attributed to a multitude of factors. Individuals experiencing poverty frequently share common attributes such as low literacy levels, a dearth of expertise, and limited access to capital. Although the origins of poverty vary across contexts, these factors are interconnected and often operate synergistically within a closed cycle (Mortazavi Kakhki et al., 2015).

Furnishing a comprehensive definition for the concept of "urban poverty" proves challenging due to its expansive scope and intricate connections with economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions. Notably, there exists no unanimity among sociologists, economists, and other experts regarding the parameters and implications of poverty, contributing to divergent interpretations that vary across countries. In accordance with the UNDP 2015 report, human development at all levels necessitates three fundamental factors: the pursuit of a prolonged and healthy life, the acquisition of knowledge, and access to the resources requisite for maintaining a decent standard of living.

Hence, poverty emerges as a culmination of a constellation of conditions rather than a singular factor. Some proponents posit that these conditions form a cyclical pattern, with the initial link intricately linked to the final one. When this cycle envelops an individual, their family, or their community, breaking free from its confines becomes an arduous task. Figure 2 illustrates the vicious circle of poverty.

When a child is born into this Vicious cycle and undergoes their formative years within such circumstances, it is inherent for them to adopt certain physical and cultural attributes reflective of these conditions. While alterations to one's appearance may be conceivable, modifying sociocultural characteristics demands both time and resources, elements that are frequently scarce for individuals grappling with poverty (Muriuki et al., 2009). Nevertheless, numerous researchers posit that environmental factors significantly influence an individual's perception of their own poverty (Naghdi et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2013).

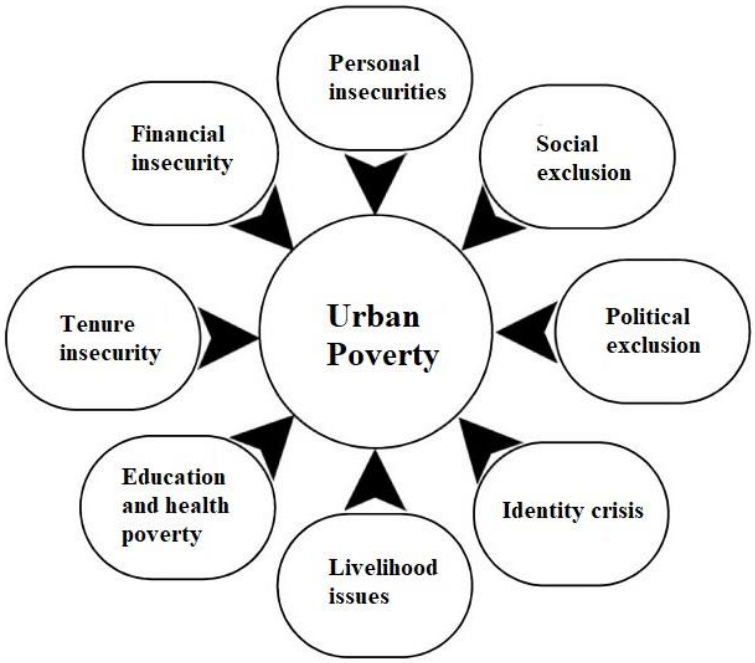

Fig 1. Urban Poverty as a Multidimensional Phenomenon (Source: Mausom and Choudhary, 2017)

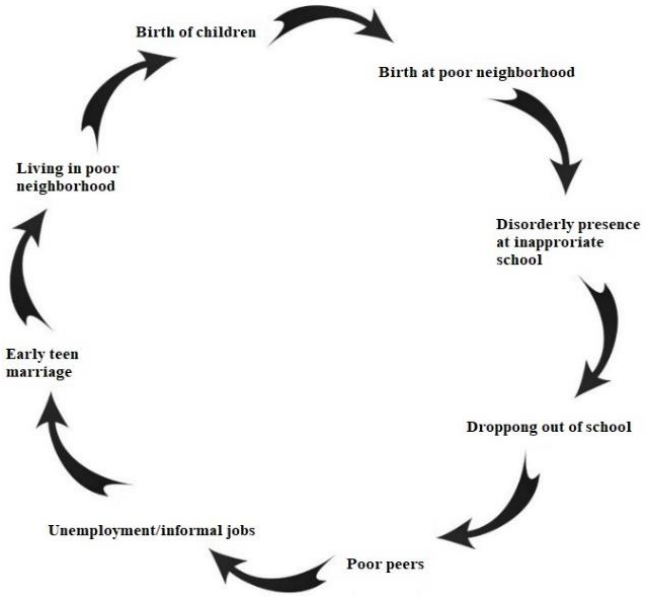

Fig 2. The Vicious Circle of Poverty
(Source: Muriuki et al., 2009)

1.2. Distribution of Urban Services and Urban Quality of Life

One of the discernible repercussions of the rapid urbanization witnessed in recent decades is the upheaval of general urban service distribution systems, leading to the emergence of disparities among urban residents in their access to these services. Consequently, a paramount objective for urban planners and administrators should be the establishment of equitable opportunities for diverse segments of urban societies, aiming to mitigate conflicts in accessing these services (Dadashpour and Rostami, 1390). In the absence of a judicious distribution of urban services and facilities in accordance with appropriate criteria, the provision of necessary services to citizens becomes inherently disproportionate. Consequently, a misalignment arises between the population distribution of a city and the requisite services (Sheikhi, 2013).

The urban quality of life is intricately linked to access to urban services, with theories and empirical studies on quality of life notably scarce in developing countries. The diversity of perspectives on a suitable macro-framework for conceptualizing quality of life, coupled with the prevalent emphasis on subjective approaches in current studies, complicates the selection and presentation of a singular conceptual framework for assessing quality of life in Shiraz City. Consequently, a comprehensive review of existing conceptual models was deemed necessary. This examination revealed a broad spectrum of models and definitions applied in the realms of environmental quality, quality of life, and sustainability. Michelle et al. (2000) have proposed a model for the examination of urban quality of life (Figure 3), incorporating components such as health (both mental and physical), the physical environment, natural resources, goods and services, social and political dimensions, personal development, and security.

Although scholars have extensively explored various dimensions of quality of life, a substantial number of researchers assert that the foundational underpinning of this concept lies prominently in our perceptions of health. An illustrative instance of this perspective is evident in Blum's model (1974), wherein health is construed as an outcome influenced by genetic factors, the nature and quality of health services, individual behaviors, lifestyle, and the quality of the physical and sociocultural environment (Rahmani et al., 2013; Kamp et al., 2003).

Another noteworthy conceptual model, introduced in 2000 by the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), positions health and livability as the central dimensions of quality of life, constituting integral facets of a dynamic process. This model integrates quantifiable spatial, physical, and social elements of the environment with the cognitive perceptions of these elements. Notably, this perception extends beyond the objective features of the environment and encompasses individual and contextual aspects (Serpoush et al., 2017; RIVM, 2000). Serving as a conceptual framework, this model offers a broad perspective, refraining from rigidly specifying the interrelationships among various elements. Figure 4 illustrates this model.

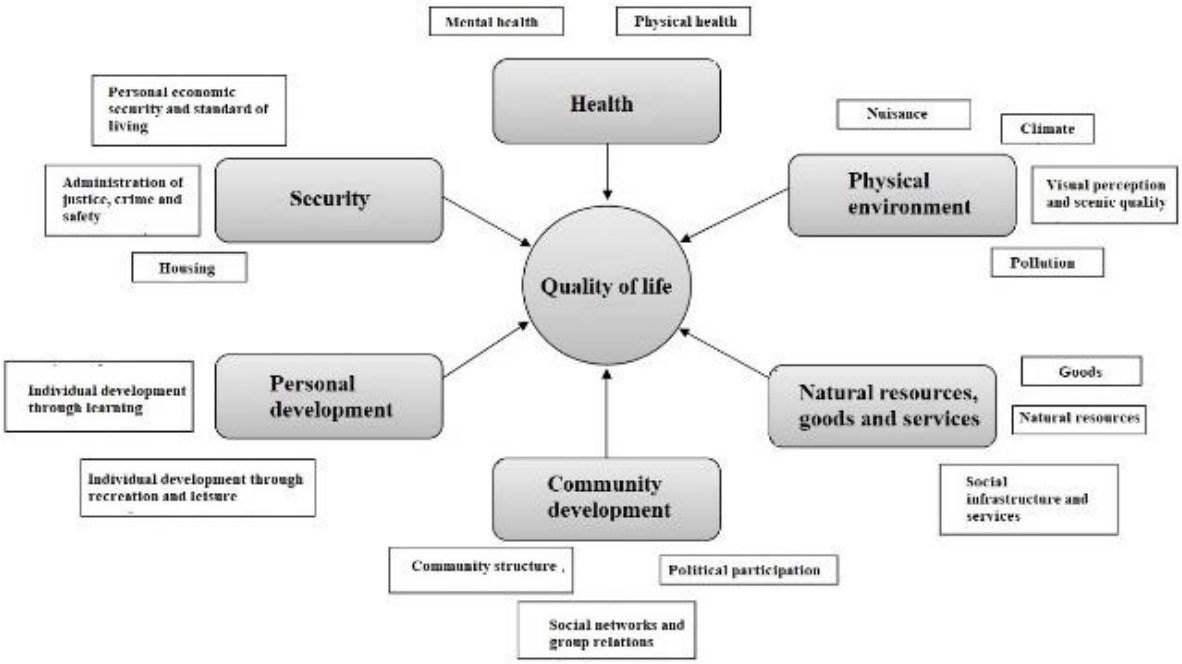

Fig 3. The components of urban quality of life
(Source: Mitchell, 2000)

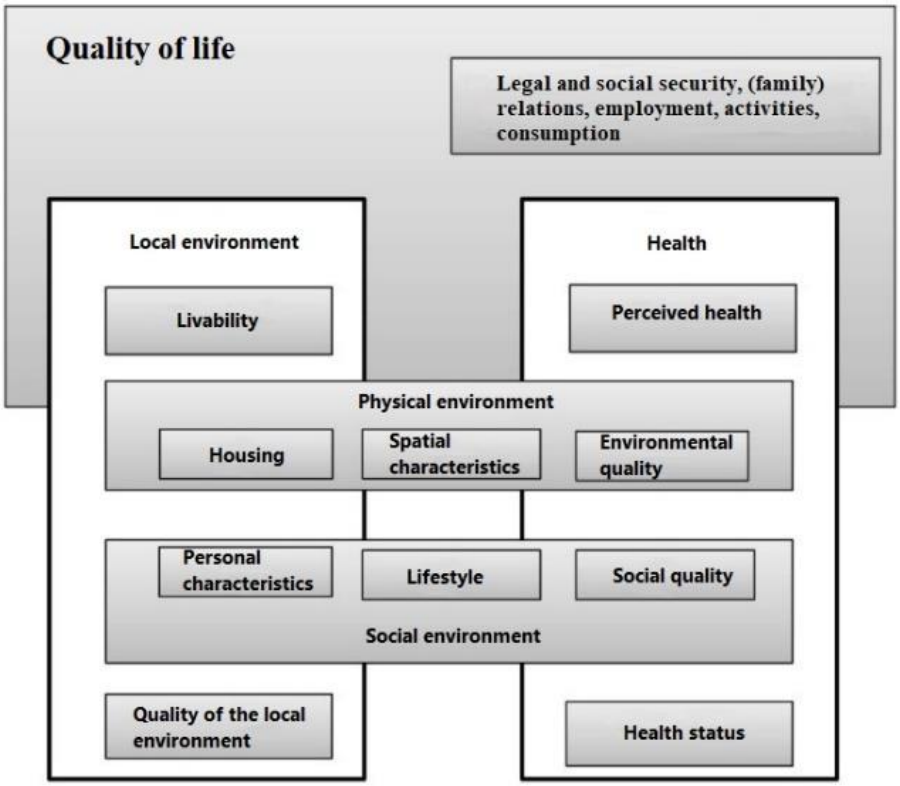

Fig 4. The main components of quality life, health and daily life environment
(Source: RIVM, 2000)

The model introduced by Schafer et al. (2000) represents an additional endeavor to conceptualize the quality of life, akin to Hancock's model. This model explicitly delineates the interplay among different dimensions of quality of life and elucidates the relationships between the concepts of livability, quality of life, and sustainability. livability is posited as a consequence arising from the interplay between physical and social dimensions, whereas sustainability is portrayed as an outcome stemming from the

interaction between economic and physical dimensions. The amalgamation of these interactions forms the overarching construct referred to as quality of life. While there are apparent similarities between Schafer et al.'s model and the one proposed by Hancock et al., the available literature review did not conclusively establish it as a direct interpretation of Hancock's model. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that Schafer et al.'s model does exhibit some distinctions when compared to Hancock et al.'s conceptualization. The latter suggests that the outcome of the interactions between the environment, local community, and economy is "health" while the former refers to it as "quality of life". Schafer et al. (2000) use the term "dynamic" to describe favorable economic conditions, but Hancock et al. employ the term "prosperity". While Hancock et al. underscore the egalitarian nature of the local community, Schafer et al. emphasize its accessibility. Schafer et al. (2000) have expounded on the relationship between sustainability and quality of life, basing their model on a comprehensive review of various facets of human ecology and sustainable local communities. Their model strives to identify the relationships among the principal components of a locale concerning economic, social, and physical realms. It posits that quality of life is a product of ongoing interactions involving the quality of the local community, environmental quality, and economic quality. The concept of the local community encompasses social support networks and individuals who actively participate in and contribute to their local community. The physical environment, within this framework, is positioned as a supportive means for fostering sociability in the local community and cultivating a healthy and livable environment. Schafer et al. advocate for an egalitarian local community, where members are treated justly and equally, their primary needs are met, and they enjoy equal economic opportunities (Khanian et al., 2018; Schafer et al., 2000).

Costanza et al. (2008) have endeavored to present an integrated approach to the measurement of quality of life. They propose that quality of life is the degree to which objective human needs are met in connection with personal or group perceptions of subjective well-being. Basic human needs such as subsistence, reproduction, security, and affection are considered in this framework. The evaluation of subjective well-being can be conducted through individual or group responses to inquiries about happiness, life satisfaction, utility, or welfare. According to Costanza et al. (2008), the relationship between specific human needs and the perceived satisfaction with each need can be influenced by factors such as mental capacity, cultural context, information, education, and temperament. Moreover, the relationship between the fulfillment of human needs and overall subjective well-being is contingent upon the significance individuals, groups, and cultures attribute to meeting each human need relative to the others.

Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Model of the Study :The conceptual model of this study was formulated and refined in alignment with the research objective, following an extensive review of the literature on urban quality of life, accessibility to urban services, and urban poverty. The intricacies of this model are illustrated in Chart 1.

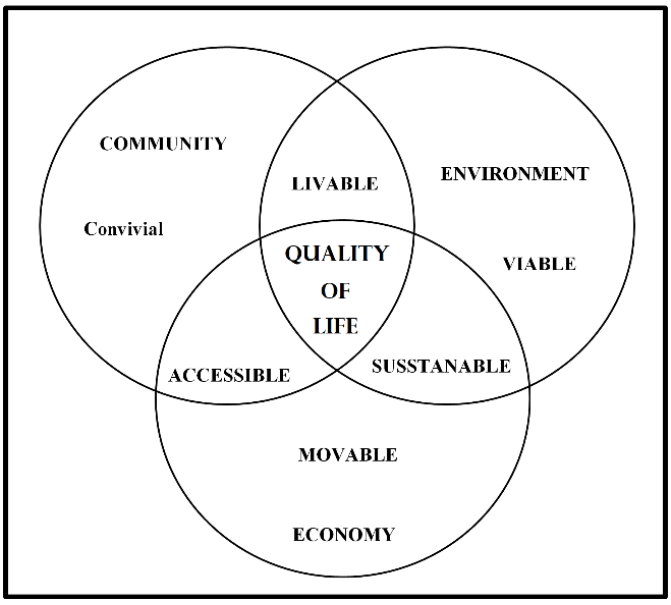

Fig 5. A conceptual model of the factors that contribute to the quality of life of local communities from the perspective of human ecology (Source: Shafer et al., 2000)

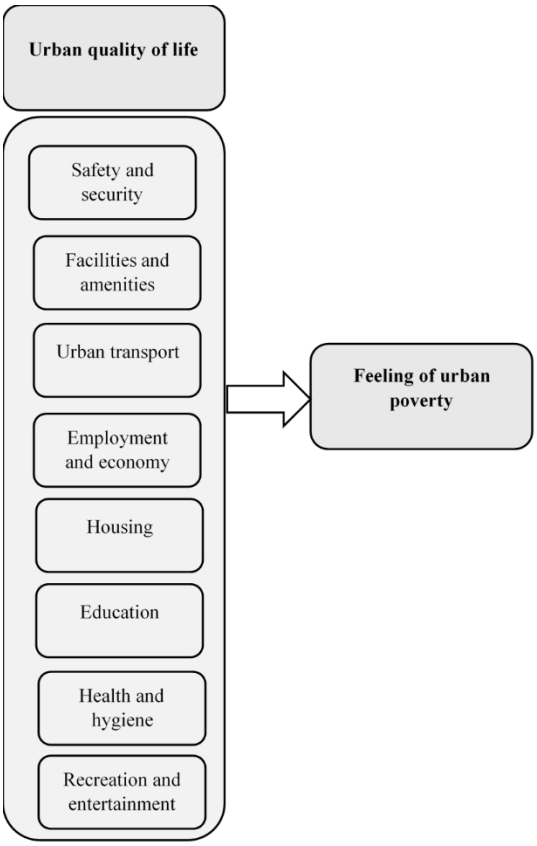

Fig 6. The conceptual model of the study

As depicted in the research's conceptual model, the eight objective independent variables, namely "safety and security," "facilities and amenities," "urban transport," "employment and economy," "housing," "education," "recreation and entertainment," and "health and hygiene," exert an influence on the perception of urban poverty in individuals. Following the development of the conceptual model, a Likert scale questionnaire, structured in accordance with the components of each variable, was designed and subsequently distributed among the selected sample population.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

This research was conducted as an applied development study, aiming to investigate the topics of "urban quality of life" and "urban poverty." The study also measured the relationship between these two subjects. The statistical population for this research encompassed all permanent residents of District 8 in Shiraz City. The rationale behind selecting these residents lies in their direct involvement with issues related to urban services, poverty, and urban justice within the neighborhood.

The determination of the sample size for this study utilized Cochran's formula, as outlined by Houman (1994). Given the absence of information regarding the characteristics of the sample group, the maximum percentage of 0.5 was chosen to account for the presence or absence of attributes and features in the sample population. Additionally, a margin of error of 0.05 was selected to address measurement error. Consequently, a total of 375 individuals were selected as the sample size for this study.

Respondents were chosen through simple random sampling, with concerted efforts made to ensure representation from different strata of society and diverse personal characteristics. The administration of questionnaires took place on-site and on various days of the week.

The questionnaire, designed based on the indicators of the conceptual model, included a total of 79 distinct questions aligned with the study's objectives. Explorations of urban quality of life and urban poverty were conducted through numerous questions across different areas. As the primary aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between these two variables, the statistical analysis employed the multiple regression method.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Study Area and Its Features: The historical fabric of Shiraz, commonly known as Old Shiraz, represents the ancient fabric of the city predating its subsequent development and expansion. In the municipal

delineation of Shiraz, this historical area corresponds to District 8, which is bordered by Districts 1, 2, and 3. District 8 shares the majority of its boundaries with District 2, encompassing the South, West, and East sides. Historically, Old Shiraz was enclosed by walls and ditches. In the contemporary context, this district is demarcated from surrounding areas by Ferdowsi Street to the North, Keshavarz and Zeinabieh streets to the East, Sibouyeh Boulevard to the South, and Sa'di, Touhid, and Qa'ani streets to the West. Notably, this boundary is marked by nine gates, connecting Old Shiraz to the newer districts. These gates, alongside squares and plazas, serve as conduits linking the historical fabric to the modern districts. The interconnection between the old and new segments of the city, coupled with the cohesiveness of the transport system, facilitates movement between districts. Despite its historical significance as the core of Shiraz, District 8 currently stands as the smallest district in the city. Figure 7 provides a geographical depiction of the historical fabric, i.e., District 8, of Shiraz City.

Findings: The data obtained from the questionnaires distributed among 375 residents in the study area were coded and entered into SPSS 23 software for analysis. Initially, the reliability of the research questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha.

The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.927 indicates that the study exhibits high reliability. Subsequent to establishing the reliability of the research questionnaire, the data were collected and analyzed.

In the next stage of the research, the regression analysis test was employed. This test was used to explore the relationship between the variables of urban quality of life and the perception of urban poverty from the perspective of residents in the historical section of Shiraz City.

The Model Summary Table, an output of the multiple linear regression test, presents the correlation coefficient between the variables and the adjusted coefficient of determination.

The value of 0.794 in Table 2 indicates a very strong correlation between the set of independent variables and the dependent variable of the research. Furthermore, the adjusted coefficient (R Square) value suggests that 62% of the total changes in the perception of urban poverty are attributed to the variables related to urban quality of life. The goodness of fit in the study was assessed using the ANOVA method.

Based on the result of the F-test (11.4), it can be inferred that the regression model, encompassing "recreation and entertainment," "environment," "facilities and amenities," "employment and economy," "health," "housing," "education," "urban transport," and "security and safety" as independent variables, and the "feeling of poverty" in the historical section of Shiraz City as the dependent variable, is deemed acceptable. The independent variables in the model contribute to explaining the residents' perception of poverty. Subsequently, a coefficients table was generated to illustrate the effect of each variable in the model.

As indicated in Table 4, the significance levels of "employment and economy," "housing," and "recreation and entertainment" are less than 0.05. This implies that there is a significant relationship between these factors and the feeling of urban poverty.

However, no significant relationship was found between the other variables, namely "security and safety," "facilities and amenities," "education," "urban transport," and "health and hygiene," and the feeling of urban poverty among the citizens of the historical section of Shiraz City (District 8).

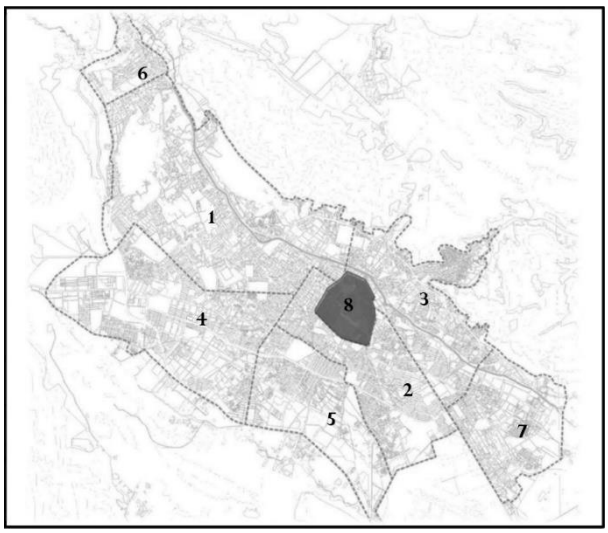

Fig 7. The geographical location of the historical fabric (District 8) of Shiraz City
(Source: Review of the detailed plan of District 8 (historical section) of Shiraz City: Recognition and analysis of the current condition by Pardaraz Consulting Engineers (2013))

Table 1. The Reliability of the Research Questionnaire

Item No.	Cronbach's Alpha
52	0.927

Table 2. The Model Summary of the Research

Model	R value	R Square value	Adjusted R Square	Standard error of estimate
1	0.794	0.625	0.625	0.325

Table 3. ANOVA

Model	F value	Significance level
Regression	11.45	0.000

*Dependent variable: Subjective Quality of Life

Table 4. The Relationship between the Components of Quality Life and the Feeling of Poverty in the Historical Section of Shiraz City

Analytical Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	Significance Level
	B Value	Standard Deviation	Beta Value	
Safety and Security	0.213	0.105	0.198	0.09
Facilities and Amenities	0.412	0.236	0.354	0.236
Employment and Economy	0.859	0.158	0.835	0.000
Housing	0.773	0.163	0.756	0.000
Education	0.174	0.215	0.135	0.368
Urban Transport	0.369	0.195	0.348	0.284
Recreation and Entertainment	0.245	0.136	0.214	0.03
Health and Hygiene	0.276	0.142	0.259	0.112

4. CONCLUSION

Urban poverty has garnered significant attention from researchers and experts in recent decades. The importance of this issue is underscored by ongoing efforts from various organizations worldwide to reassess suggested policies and solutions. Many of these proposed strategies center around the equitable distribution of urban services and the enhancement of urban quality of life and well-being.

This study aimed to explore the impact of urban services, specifically related to the quality of life, on individuals' perception of urban poverty in the historical section of Shiraz City. In pursuit of this objective, a conceptual model was formulated following a thorough review of poverty and urban quality of life concepts. Subsequently, a research questionnaire was developed based on this conceptual model and was distributed among a specific group of citizens selected as the sample population. The gathered data were then entered into SPSS 23 software for analysis, employing the multiple regression technique to examine the presumed relationships.

The findings indicate that, among the factors considered, only "employment and economy," "housing," and "recreation and entertainment" have a discernible impact on the perception of urban poverty from the perspective of residents in the historical section of Shiraz City. Conversely, factors such as "safety and security," "education," "urban transport," "facilities and amenities," and "health and hygiene" show no significant effect on this perception.In identifying the factors contributing to their sense of poverty, the residents of this district have highlighted aspects that are less government-centric but are directly linked to their personal lives. For instance, employment and the economy, identified as the most influential factor in shaping the feeling of poverty, largely hinge on the background, lifestyle, and job skills of these residents. A similar pattern is observed in the case of housing, as well as recreation and entertainment, where personal factors play a substantial role.

Given that urban management in all Iranian cities, including Shiraz City, is generally similar concerning the provision of urban services, residents of Shiraz may not perceive tangible differences in factors related to urban services impacting their urban quality of life. For instance, the accessibility to education, health services, and urban facilities and amenities in District 8, inhabited by low-income citizens, is notably comparable to that of other districts in Shiraz City.

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HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Abbasi, S,. Saeideh Zarabadi, Z .S., Majedi, H. (2023). Distributing Urban Services and Feeling of Poverty: An Analysis of the Relationship between Urban Quality of Life and Poverty Feeling in Shiraz Historical Districts. *Int. J. Architect. Eng. Urban Plan,* 33(3): 1-11, https://dx.doi.org/ijaup.666.

URL: http://ijaup.iust.ac.ir