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Urban Wellbeing in Bursa: A Salutogenic Reading of Sacred and Commercial Environments

*** [1] Nazlı Taraz Varışlıaslan**
[1] Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Bursa Technical University, Bursa, Türkiye
[1] E-mail: nazli.taraz@btu.edu.tr
[1] ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2800-3508

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Abstract

Historic urban environments frequently possess spatial qualities that support human well-being through environmental comfort, social interaction, and cultural meaning. Accordingly, this study examines the salutogenic potential of urban spaces in Bursa, Türkiye, focusing on the relationship between commercial and sacred environments within the historic city center to explore how traditional urban morphologies contribute to well-being in the built environment. The research adopts a qualitative case-study approach combining urban morphological analysis, spatial observation, and an interpretive evaluation of public-space use. The analysis addresses the historic bazaar network of the Khans District together with the sacred setting of the Grand Mosque of Bursa. The findings indicate that courtyard-based commercial structures, pedestrian circulation networks, and monumental religious spaces collectively form environments that promote spatial clarity, environmental comfort, and cultural meaning. The study emphasizes the continuing relevance of historic urban morphologies for contemporary discussions on urban well-being.

Keywords: Salutogenic architecture; Urban well-being; Bursa; Historic urban morphology; Sacred space.

1. Introduction

Considering the psychological and social pressures stemming from rapid urban transformations, contemporary debates on urban design increasingly emphasize the relationship between the built environment and human wellbeing. Therefore, the concept of *salutogenesis*, introduced by Antonovsky in 1979, provides a useful theoretical framework by shifting attention from pathogenic factors to environmental factors that promote health, coherence, and resilience in urban spaces. In addition to their functional and economic values, urban spaces were ascribed the ability to foster a sense of orientation, belonging, and continuity. Furthermore, when such spaces are integrated into historic urban fabrics, they display multi-layered spatial configurations shaped by enduring socio-cultural practices and cultural identity. These environments frequently possess tacit knowledge concerning human wellbeing, manifested through walkable scales, spatial hierarchies, and integrated social functions. In general, such qualities arise from the coexistence and interaction of various urban typologies, including sacred and commercial spaces, which collectively compose physical and symbolic dimensions of urban life (Norberg-Schulz, 1980). This perspective is consistent with emerging heritage studies that position historic places not merely as objects of conservation but also as resources that support individual and collective wellbeing (Sayer, 2024). Hence, the interdependence of those spatial domains contributes to structuring an experiential richness that contemporary urban spaces find challenging to replicate. More broadly, contemporary built-environment research suggests that health and wellbeing emerge through complex interactions between spatial qualities, environmental comfort, social experience, and cultural meaning, all of which are evident within Bursa's historic urban fabric (Andalib et al., 2024). Similar perspectives have been reported in recent systematic reviews indicating that heritage-related environments and activities contribute to wellbeing by strengthening community identity, participation, and long-term social sustainability (Brooks et al., 2023).

As one of the earliest capitals of the Ottoman Empire, Bursa provides a compelling context for examining those dynamics with its multi-layered historic city center, which consists of a sophisticated integration of economic, social, and religious structures where the Khans District (*Hanlar Bölgesi* in Turkish) and the Grand Mosque (*Ulu Cami* in Turkish) form a spatial and cultural continuum. Bursa's historic urban form is largely defined by its commercial structure, which developed around a linear trade axis and inward-oriented courtyard buildings. This spatial organization reflects the city's long-standing role as a center of production and exchange, particularly following its integration into wider trade networks during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when Bursa emerged as a key location along the Silk Road (Eray & Kutlu, 2021). Then, the commercial core, characterized by bazaars and khans, coexisted with residential areas shaped by Ottoman

urban traditions, where narrow streets, cul-de-sacs, and an organic layout structured everyday life (Cerasi, 1999). Importantly, this urban configuration dates back to the early Ottoman period, beginning with the conquest of Bursa in 1326 under Orhan Gazi, when the first settlement was established within the fortified Hisar region. As the city expanded beyond its defensive boundaries, religious, educational, and commercial buildings such as mosques, madrasas, and khans gradually formed new neighborhoods and contributed to the layered structure of the city (Dörtok Abacı, 2007).

Followingly, in the nineteenth century, Bursa underwent a new phase of transformation within the broader context of the Tanzimat reforms, which introduced administrative, social, and spatial restructuring across the Ottoman Empire (Enlil, 1999). During this period, Ahmet Vefik Pasha played a central role in directing urban interventions aimed at redefining the city as a modern provincial center (Köprülü Bağbancı, 2007). These interventions involved the widening of main arteries, the construction of new public institutions, and the reorganization of urban space according to more formal planning principles. While such initiatives improved accessibility and administrative functionality, they also led to partial disruptions within the historic urban fabric, particularly in the traditional core (Keleş Eriçok, 2013). On the other hand, the nineteenth-century transformation of Bursa was not only driven by administrative reforms but also shaped by a series of destructive events, particularly fires and earthquakes. Recurrent fires in the early and mid-century caused extensive damage across the urban fabric, leading to changes in construction practices and a gradual reduction in the use of timber structures (Kumaş, 2020). Likewise, the earthquakes that occurred between 1855 and 1860 intensified the need for more systematic planning approaches and more resilient urban solutions. In response to these conditions, new tools and methods of urban regulation began to emerge. Among them, the Suphi Bey Map stands out as one of the earliest cadastral representations of Bursa, providing a structured basis for subsequent planning interventions (Kumaş, 2020). This shift toward planned development improved infrastructure and accessibility across the city. However, it also introduced a more formal spatial order that diverged from the previously organic, incremental structure of the Ottoman urban fabric.

Bursa became a critical site where the construction of a modern national identity intersected with a long-standing urban heritage, following the establishment of the Republic. Its Ottoman past positioned the city as a representative historical center within the emerging ideological framework of the new state (Ulusoy, 2018). In line with these transformations, urban planning initiatives were introduced through the work of planners such as Carl Christoph Lörcher, Henri Prost, and Luigi Piccinato, who helped reshape Bursa in accordance with modern planning principles (Dostoğlu & Oral, 1999). In parallel with these spatial interventions, industrialization emerged as a key driver of urban development. Accordingly, the establishment of major production facilities signaled a shift toward a modern, industry-oriented urban economy (Türkoğlu Önge, 2019). However, this period of transformation was also marked by disruptive events, particularly the 1927 earthquake and the 1958 fire, which caused significant damage to the city's historic fabric. In response, preservation-oriented planning strategies began to take shape, aiming to protect the historic commercial core while allowing for the expansion of administrative and public functions in its periphery (Köprülü Bağbancı, 2007). Through this dual process of conservation and development, Bursa acquired a layered urban structure in which Ottoman spatial patterns and Republican interventions continue to coexist.

Today in Bursa, the historic interconnected courtyards, narrow streets, and prominent landmarks of the area's urban layout create a setting where movement, encounters, and reflection are closely intertwined. This arrangement encourages reconsideration of how urban spaces can promote wellbeing through clear spatial organization, environmental comfort, and cultural understanding. From this perspective, this study investigates the salutogenic potential of Bursa's historic urban fabric through a focused analysis of commercial and sacred environments. To demonstrate how traditional urban morphologies continue to inform contemporary understandings of urban wellbeing, this study examines the spatial relationships, patterns of use, and experiential qualities of the area. Accordingly, this study aims to contribute to ongoing discourse in architectural and urban theory by conceptualizing historic environments as active frameworks of fostering human-centered urban life.

2. Materials & Methods

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive methodological framework to develop a theoretically structured understanding of urban space through the lens of salutogenesis. Fundamentally, the methodology aims to construct a conceptual discourse on the significance of historic urban environments for human wellbeing, and the historic urban fabric of Bursa is perceived as a multifaceted, meaning-generating context, molded by spatial, cultural, and sacred realms that coexist within a densely interconnected urban framework. Building on Antonovsky's (1987) idea of the sense of coherence, this study examines how urban environments enhance the sense of coherence through spatial experience. It also discusses phenomenological views on atmosphere, perception, and embodiment in architecture, highlighting that wellbeing emerges from sensory and emotional interactions with space (Pallasmaa, 2005). Accordingly, the Khans District, especially the Koza Khan, and the Grand Mosque are valued as complementary spatial landmarks that collectively shape everyday urban experience with their functional and symbolic aspects. Thus, this study primarily employs urban morphology as a conceptual framework to understand the formation and persistence of spatial patterns over time. Courtyards, passages, street networks, and thresholds are analyzed as major morphological components that have the capacity to structure movement, encounter, and spatial perception within their interrelated relation (Conzen, 1960; Moudon, 1997). In this way, this study integrated an observational sensitivity to everyday spatial practices by focusing on how users inhabit and navigate the urban environment, thereby supporting contemporary observations as contextual insights to enrich the interpretative lens. Therefore, a multi-layered interpretation of the historic urban fabric of Bursa is proposed as a lived and continually re-shaped phenomenon through daily use.

3. Spatial Coherence, Meaning, and Everyday Urban Life: A Salutogenic Interpretation of Bursa's Historic Core

The salutogenic approach provides a broad framework for understanding how urban design impacts wellbeing by focusing on the interaction between people and their environments in the present. As Antonovsky's (1987) idea of sense of coherence underlines that comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness are vital for maintaining health in daily life, these factors illustrate how spatial arrangements can either support or obstruct human experiences in the built environment (Golembiewski, 2022). Likewise, Lynch's (1960) concept of imageability emphasizes how visible urban features help individuals create clear mental maps of a city. From a different perspective, Norberg-Schulz (1980) centers on the existential qualities of place, where spatial layout contributes to feelings of orientation and belonging. These perspectives demonstrate that urban settings can be viewed as structured fields of perception and meaning, and thus, Bursa's historic core exemplifies this view, with its spatial order gradually formed through recurring patterns, material consistency, and cultural practices. Within the Khans District, space is articulated through courtyards, passages, and thresholds, creating a layered spatial sequence that echoes Lynch's focus on paths and nodes, alongside Norberg-Schulz's distinction between movement and destination. Here, streets serve as connective elements, while courtyards act as hubs for social and commercial activity. On a broader scale, this hierarchical layout promotes spatial clarity aligned with the salutogenic idea of comprehensibility, and users can easily foresee transitions, identify patterns, and orient themselves through embodied experience. This environment minimizes cognitive effort and promotes intuitive navigation, a feature increasingly rare in fragmented modern urban areas. Furthermore, the district's layout enhances manageability with human-scale proportions and environmental responsiveness. Recent urban health research demonstrates that coherent and legible environments contribute to reduced stress levels and stronger perceptions of safety and belonging (Mouratidis & Poortinga, 2020). Accordingly, shaded courtyards, narrow streets, and semi-open spaces create microclimates that increase comfort and encourage pauses, social interactions, and retreats. These elements exemplify Brunelli, Smith & Woolrych (2022)'s concept of integrating spatial, social, and material resources in salutogenic urban design, in which wellbeing stems from accessible, functional environments rather than isolated features. As a result, the district operates as a flexible spatial system that supports different usage patterns, allowing individuals to engage with the urban landscape on their own terms.

From this perspective, Koza Khan's courtyards and passage layouts significantly shape pedestrian movement by naturally gathering people in shaded areas and fostering informal interactions (Figure 1). The spatial design of the Khan supports multiple functions simultaneously: visitors walk through corridors, take breaks at seating zones, and interact with vendors. Consequently, the courtyard features a layout in which circulation and gathering occur side by side within a clearly defined architectural framework. On the other hand, the central open space acts as a focal point, guiding movement toward the surrounding arcades while also accommodating stationary activities. Users navigate along visible pathways defined by the structures' geometric edges, fostering a clear sense of direction and accessibility. This arrangement enables uninterrupted entry, crossing, or staying within the space, reinforcing a seamless relationship between motion and rest. Beyond its practical use, the courtyard fosters a social atmosphere rooted in proximity, visibility, and climatic comfort. Shaded seating zones and semi-open edges promote informal encounters and extended stays, creating a layered pattern of activity throughout the day. Thus, the combination of spatial enclosure and ground-level permeability establishes a balanced environment where people feel both oriented and relaxed. This setup reflects a coherent spatial arrangement where daily practices evolve through repeated interactions with an environment that is both understandable and welcoming.

Figure 1. Koza Khan courtyard showing pedestrian circulation and social interaction.
(Source: Photograph taken by the author, 2026.).

The passageways of Koza Khan create linear pathways that direct pedestrian traffic and define commercial zones along their sides (Figure 2). These corridors serve as transitional spaces, connecting courtyards and entrances and forming a continuous network that enables smooth movement. Shops lining narrow paths establish a clear rhythm in space, with thresholds between inside and outside softened by open facades and direct sightlines. This setup allows people to interact with commercial activities without disrupting circulation, while the passageways enhance the area's sensory and environmental qualities. Their smaller scale, filtered lighting, and uniform materials produce a controlled environment that moderates external conditions. Moving through these spaces involves gentle changes in light, enclosure, and sound, creating a sequential spatial experience. These features promote easy navigation and strengthen the link between spatial design and daily urban life.

Figure 2. Koza Khan passageway used for commercial activity.
(Source: Photograph taken by the author, 2026.).

Additionally, the areas of rest within shaded courtyards show how architecture creates micro-environments for relaxation, socializing, and reflection (Figure 3). These shaded zones provide spatial conditions that support rest, observation, and social interaction through architectural elements such as arcades, overhangs, and trees, which control exposure to sunlight and create comfortable micro-settings. Users naturally gather in these areas during pauses, forming temporary clusters that reflect informal use. The placement of seating and openness of surrounding spaces allow individuals to stay connected to the larger environment while engaging in local activities. These pauses add rhythm to the environment by creating intervals amid movement. The ability to stop, sit, and interact boosts the space's usability beyond simple circulation. In this way, these conditions foster a balanced urban experience where activity and stillness coexist. Micro-environments enhance the link between physical comfort and social presence, emphasizing how architectural design influences daily behavior. Here, combining courtyards and passages improves the environment's clarity and navigation, aligning with Lynch's (1960) ideas of paths and nodes. In this way, people can intuitively anticipate spatial transitions, ease mental effort, and increase comfort. The observed activities support that well-being results from integrating spatial, social, and material resources (Brunelli, Smith & Woolrych, 2022). Research on restorative urban environments also indicates that opportunities for pause, observation, and refuge are essential components of positive urban experiences (Menatti & Casado da Rocha, 2016). Accordingly, Koza Khan demonstrates that historic commercial spaces function as adaptable systems, supporting diverse interactions that strengthen orientation and experiential richness.

Figure 3. Visitors pausing and interacting in shaded courtyard spaces.
(Source: Photograph taken by the author, 2026.).

Within the study area, the Grand Mosque creates a clear spatial hierarchy that highlights its symbolic importance and the collective identity of Bursa. Its prominent architectural features make the mosque a landmark in the urban landscape, anchoring the city both visually and experientially. Additionally, the mosque's interior qualities, such as scale, lighting, and materials, cultivate an environment aligned with phenomenological views of architecture as a medium for sensory and emotional connection (Pallasmaa, 2005). The shift from the crowded commercial zones to the calmer sacred spaces marks a change in perceptions and ways of engagement. Also, the close physical proximity of these areas encourages ongoing interaction involving activity, reflection, and exchange. Accordingly, as Antonovsky notes about wellbeing, the coexistence of the Khans District and the Grand Mosque forms a fundamental urban conjunction.

From a different perspective, Alexander's (2005) concept of wholeness describes environments where all components are interconnected within a living structure that promotes human well-being. These spaces are distinguished by differentiation, hierarchy, and smooth transitions, enabling users to perceive the area as a unified whole instead of being separate urban and architectural elements. In this context, meaning isn't just an abstract concept but is woven into daily practices, social interactions, and cultural rituals within these spaces. As recent studies on salutogenic urbanism indicate, historic settings often embody these integrative qualities, where architecture, infrastructure, and social life are closely intertwined. Moreover, the bazaar street features a dense, continuous flow of pedestrians navigating an urban corridor as a key link within the historic fabric, connecting various commercial hubs while maintaining a consistent spatial form (Figure 4). Building facades create a well-defined edge, directing movement along a familiar route and aiding orientation through repetition and alignment. The lack of vehicles allows pedestrian activity to take precedence, resulting in smooth, uninterrupted circulation. Beyond movement, the street fosters diverse social and commercial interactions. The close proximity of traders, displays, and spectators promotes both exchange and observation. In this way, the spatial density encourages encounters while preserving order through its linear layout. This environment exemplifies an urban space where vibrancy does not cause disorientation but instead enhances a structured and lively public realm. Walkable historic environments have likewise been identified as important settings for promoting physical activity, social interaction, and perceived quality of life (Cerin et al., 2017).

Figure 4. Bursa bazaar street with dense pedestrian flow.
(Source: Photograph taken by the author, 2026.).

The transitional corridor functions as a spatial mediator between the commercial fabric of the bazaar and the more contemplative environment of the Grand Mosque (Figure 5). Its linear form directs movement while gradually modifying the spatial atmosphere through changes in scale, light, and daily sounds. As users pass through this corridor, the density of commercial activity begins to diminish, allowing a perceptible shift. This sequence establishes a clear yet gradual transition that connects distinct urban domains without abrupt separation. The corridor also supports a layered experience of movement by framing views and guiding attention toward the approaching landmark. Architectural components such as arches, canopies, and material continuity contribute to a sense of progression, reinforcing the relation between direction and destination. This spatial condition enables users to recalibrate their engagement with the environment as they move forward, reflecting a composition that integrates physical movement with changing experiential qualities.

Figure 5. Transitional corridor linking commercial and sacred spaces.
(Source: Photograph taken by the author, 2026.).

At the Mosque entrance, where social interactions and ceremonial movements happen simultaneously, highlighting a seamless urban experience across different zones (Figure 6). Around the entrance of the Grand Mosque, a convergence of social, commercial, and symbolic activities occurs within a shared spatial setting. The open approach area allows for gathering, circulation, and pauses, enabling diverse uses to coexist peacefully. Visitors entering or leaving the Mosque interact with nearby vendors, creating a dynamic interface between sacred space and everyday life. The spatial layout promotes visibility and accessibility, facilitating smooth transitions between various activities. This coexistence results in a layered urban experience where symbolic presence intersects with daily practices. The Mosque's architectural

prominence provides clear reference points within the environment, while surrounding activities connect with the broader urban fabric. The overall condition reflects an integrated spatial system where proximity, use, and repeated interactions reinforce meaning, shaping an environment that supports both collective identity and routine life. The contrast between busy streets and quieter, symbolically meaningful spaces near the Mosque allows users to shift between activity and reflection, aligning with Antonovsky's (1987) concept of meaningfulness. The visuals also parallel Pallasmaa's (2005) view that architecture's sensory and material qualities influence emotional and perceptual responses. Overall, the area demonstrate how spatial coherence and cultural importance are embedded in daily practices, showing how historic urban forms foster well-being through intentional movement, pauses, and symbolic features.

Figure 6. Commercial and social activities near the Grand Mosque entrance.
(Source: Photograph taken by the author, 2026.).

Clearly, urban wellbeing is linked to spatial continuity and cultural context. The health-beneficial qualities of Bursa's historic core are recognized as the outcome of a long process of spatial development influenced by social practices and symbolic meanings. This challenges conventional urban design approaches focused on measurable metrics or standardized solutions for wellbeing by promoting a localized view in which wellbeing emerges from the alignment of spatial structure, daily routines, and collective memory. Accordingly, Bursa's example offers a valuable opportunity to rethink current urban design paradigms. Thus, the historic fabric of the city demonstrates that environments supporting wellbeing are not necessarily those optimized for maximum efficiency or visual cleanliness, but rather those that preserve coherence across different experiential dimensions. The integration of commercial and sacred spaces, continuous pedestrian networks, and spatial hierarchies fosters an urban setting that is comprehensible, adaptable, and meaningful.

4. Results

This study delineates a spatial pattern distinguished by continuity, hierarchy, and elevated connectivity among various urban functions within Bursa's historic urban core. The Khans District and the Grand Mosque are notable for their unique architectural and symbolic significance, serving as interconnected components of a cohesive urban network. This interconnectedness is evidenced through movement trends, spatial configurations, and environmental conditions within the area. Accordingly, the area comprises a network of narrow passages, interconnected courtyards, and semi-enclosed thresholds that establish a layered system governing circulation and social interactions. Here, movement involves transitions between publicly accessible spaces and more enclosed areas while creating a rhythm of activity and pause. On the other hand, courtyards function as focal points for gathering, commerce, and social interaction, providing spaces conducive to lingering, engagement, and spatial negotiation. The continuity of pedestrian flow throughout the district fosters a pronounced sense of spatial coherence, with routes seldom obstructed by vehicular traffic, thus enabling seamless movement. Visual qualities such as building alignment, material uniformity, and spatial enclosure facilitate intuitive navigation, thereby reducing reliance on signage. This environment supports orientation through embodied experience and recurring spatial patterns. Conditions within the study area, such as a dense built fabric, narrow streets, and inward-facing courtyards, generate shaded microclimates that alleviate heat during warmer periods. Features like arcades, overhangs, and reflective surfaces contribute to a moderated sensory environment that filters light, sound, and temperature, encouraging extended stays and diverse activities, ranging from traversing spaces to social pauses. Conversely, the Grand Mosque provides a spatial atmosphere characterized by openness, scale, and symbolic prominence. It functions as a key landmark for visual orientation and movement guidance. Transitioning from the dense Khans District to the Mosque's expansive interior signifies a perceptible change in spatial quality. The Mosque's interior, distinguished

by verticality, controlled lighting, and cohesive materials, cultivates an atmosphere of calmness and concentration. The relationship between the Khans District and the Grand Mosque exemplifies a complementary functionality and experiential relationship. Pathways linking these areas are actively utilized, reflecting ongoing movement between commercial and religious zones. This dynamic urban relationship fosters an environment where different spatial experiences coexist, blending commercial activity with moments of reflection and retreat, thus facilitating navigation through varying spatial intensities. Overall, Bursa's historic center operates as a cohesive spatial system wherein built form, environmental conditions, and usage patterns collectively support diverse urban experiences. The integration of commercial and sacred spaces enhances clarity, adaptability, and experiential richness within the area.

5. Discussion

This study highlights a form of urban coherence that goes beyond physical layout to include experiential and cultural continuity. From a salutogenic perspective, the spatial features of Bursa's historic center align with Antonovsky's (1987) criteria for promoting wellbeing. Accordingly, the environment is designed to be understandable, easy to navigate, and meaningful, indicating that well-being derives from the relational qualities of space rather than isolated design elements. Thus, the clarity of Khans District, supported by its hierarchical structure and repeated spatial patterns, reflects Lynch's (1960) concept of imageability. As a result, visitors can create mental maps through direct interactions, guided by spatial sequences and familiar features like courtyards and streets. This spatial clarity enhances the environment's comprehensibility, making urban logic accessible without cognitive overload. In modern cities where spatial fragmentation prevents orientation, such coherence is vital for supporting daily wellbeing.

The sense of manageability is evident in Bursa's historic core through human-scale design, climate responsiveness, and spatial permeability, which allow users to control their interactions with the environment. The same system facilitates movement, resting, and socializing, offering flexibility for various uses. This aligns with recent ideas in salutogenic urban design that focus on accessible, adaptable environments promoting health and well-being (Golembiewski, 2022; Brunelli, Smith & Woolrych, 2022). Thus, Bursa's historic fabric creates meaning by blending sacred and commercial spaces, and within this urban site, the Grand Mosque serves as a symbolic anchor connecting the city's cultural and historical identity. By embodying Norberg-Schulz's (1980) idea of the existential dimension of place, where architecture fosters belonging and identity. The proximity of the Mosque to the lively Khans District encourages ongoing dialogue between daily life and collective significance. This challenges modern urban trends that often separate functions or prioritize efficiency over experience. Many contemporary developments isolate commercial, social, and cultural zones, resulting in environments lacking cohesion and depth. Bursa offers an alternative by demonstrating how diverse functions can enhance rather than fragment urban space, creating a richer and more versatile urban experience that benefits individual and community well-being.

At a theoretical level, the findings reinforce the importance of phenomenological approaches to architecture, especially in understanding how atmosphere, materiality, and spatial sequencing influence human experience (Pallasmaa, 2005). The transition from the bazaar's density to the Mosque's tranquility shows how changes in spatial form can recalibrate perception, attention, and emotional states. These changes significantly impact balance within the urban environment. The study also highlights the limitations of methods that try to quantify well-being through standardized metrics. While such methods provide useful data, they often overlook the relational and experiential qualities that shape how space is actually inhabited. The salutogenic perspective developed here offers a complementary view, emphasizing interpretation, context, and lived experience as key components of urban analysis. In this way, Bursa's historic center serves as a dynamic example of how urban environments can support well-being through spatial coherence, environmental responsiveness, and cultural continuity.

6. Conclusion

Historic urban environments often exhibit spatial patterns that foster human wellbeing, influencing movement, interaction, and cultural connections. This research explores the health-promoting potential of Bursa's urban spaces, focusing on the relationship between commercial and sacred areas in the city center. By analyzing Khan's District, particularly the Koza Khan and the Grand Mosque as interconnected spaces, the study investigates how traditional urban forms support coherence, comfort, and a sense of belonging. Using a qualitative, interpretive approach, it emphasizes experiential and relational aspects rather than quantitative spatial modeling, viewing urban morphology through courtyards, streets, and thresholds that govern movement, pauses, and social exchanges. Daily observations inform a phenomenological understanding guided by Antonovsky's salutogenic framework, highlighting comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness. Results indicate that Khan's District facilitates intuitive navigation, environmental comfort, and social interaction through its hierarchy of courtyards, shaded streets, and human-scale passages. Meanwhile, the Grand Mosque provides cultural and symbolic grounding, fostering calm and reflection that complement commercial activities. Together, these environments create a balance between activity and contemplation, illustrating how historic layouts integrate function, perception, and cultural meaning to promote wellbeing. By focusing on experiential and relational aspects, the study suggests that urban wellbeing stems from spatial continuity, richness of experience, and cultural resonance. Accordingly, these findings highlight the role of historic urban forms as models for creating coherent, resilient, and meaningful modern urban spaces.

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