Article

Tweets of Transformation: Investigating Tactical Urbanism and Social Interactions in Jeddah’s Colorful Corniche Initiative

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Abstract: This qualitative study aims to explore the applicability of Twitter as a valuable data source for research on public spaces, with a particular focus on public spaces within the context of Saudi Arabia. The study’s primary objective is to demonstrate Twitter’s efficiency in providing data that would otherwise require substantial time and resources using conventional research methods. Additionally, the study aims to highlight Twitter’s role in monitoring the progress and success of a local urban project. Furthermore, it examines how individuals utilize Twitter to share their experiences and interactions with public spaces, specifically examining content related to a local placemaking initiative in one of Saudi Arabia’s largest cities. To achieve this, a convenience sample of 113 consecutive tweets associated with the local initiative was collected from Twitter. The tweets were then subjected to a thorough thematic analysis framework, yielding three overarching themes: (1) Positive impact and community engagement; (2) Enhancement of the city’s visual landscape; and (3) Community collaboration through volunteer work. These categories provide a comprehensive framework to explore and comprehend the multifaceted dimensions of public space discourse on Twitter. The research presented in this study contributes significantly to the expanding body of knowledge concerning the utilization of social media data for urban research and offers valuable practical implications for planners, designers, and policymakers involved in the development and enhancement of public spaces.

Keywords: urban research; public spaces; tactical urbanism; color intervention; urban well-being; Twitter posts; thematic analysis; qualitative study; Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

Urban environments are complex and ever-evolving spaces that significantly impact the well-being and quality of life of their inhabitants. Central to the success of urban development are public spaces, which encompass parks, plazas, streets, and public buildings, playing a fundamental role in shaping the social fabric and cultural vibrancy of cities [1]. These public spaces provide opportunities for social interactions, community engagement, and the promotion of a profound sense of belonging, ultimately contributing to overall happiness and well-being [2,3]. As urban populations grow and cities expand, the importance of well-designed and well-managed public spaces becomes paramount in creating thriving, inclusive, and sustainable urban environments.

The benefits of public spaces extend beyond social and cultural aspects to encompass positive health outcomes, environmental sustainability, economic development, and social cohesion. Research has demonstrated that these spaces offer substantial health advantages both physically and mentally, providing attractive environments that encourage physical activity, relaxation, and connection with nature, thereby contributing to people’s overall well-being [1,4,5]. While green spaces, such as parks, are widely recognized for their
positive impact on health [4], hard-surface spaces, like brick plazas and paved walkways, also play a significant role, especially in areas with limited green spaces [6]. Understanding the diverse benefits of public spaces is crucial for urban planners and policymakers, as these spaces can serve as powerful tools to promote public health, social integration, and community well-being.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in studying and assessing public spaces driven by the concept of “placemaking,” which is a collaborative movement that engages citizens in revitalizing and activating shared urban spaces [7,8]. Placemaking emphasizes bottom-up approaches [9], involving local communities in the planning, design, and activation of public spaces to foster a stronger connection between individuals and their surroundings [10]. By actively involving residents and stakeholders in the placemaking process, cities can create more vibrant, inclusive, and people-centric urban environments that reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of their urban residents [11]. Placemaking initiatives, such as tactical urbanism, have emerged as promising strategies to address urban challenges swiftly and cost-effectively while empowering local communities and encouraging collaboration [12]. Additionally, tactical urbanism projects have incorporated evidence-based color interventions to revitalize public spaces and create visually captivating environments that enhance the overall livability and allure of the city [13].

The rising prominence of placemaking and tactical urbanism on a global scale has prompted a growing interest in their implementation and outcomes, yet their applicability and effects within the context of Middle Eastern urban studies, notably in countries like Saudi Arabia, remain relatively unexplored. Moreover, the integration of social media data, specifically the utilization of platforms like Twitter (now called X), has emerged as a pivotal instrument in urban research, offering unparalleled insights into the public’s viewpoints and encounters concerning public spaces [14–16]. Due to Twitter’s widespread adoption within Saudi Arabian society [17], it presents an exceptional avenue for investigating real-time urban public sentiments and interactions. This platform not only enables the analysis of engagements but also acts as a catalytic medium for initiating ventures, monitoring their evolution, gauging their achievements, and procuring feedback. By scrutinizing content linked to local initiatives, such as the Jeddah Color Walk (JCW) in Saudi Arabia, researchers can attain profound insights into public perceptions pertaining to public space undertakings and delve into the ways individuals utilize social media platforms to share their experiences and interactions within evolving public spaces. The outcomes of such analyses hold the potential to assist local urban authorities in formulating more finely targeted projects, which are aimed at engaging residents in the conception and execution of these initiatives, employing contemporary methods such as those offered by Twitter.

This pioneering study embarks on a nuanced exploration of the intricate nexus between public spaces, urban well-being, and the dynamics of community interactions. It takes a focused approach, zooming in on the innovative integration of tactical urbanism and empirically driven color interventions. These elements collectively contribute to the nurturing of vibrant and inclusive urban domains. By deftly weaving together the principles of urban planning with the analytical prowess inherent in social media data, this research endeavors not only to enrich the terrain of public space design and management in Middle Eastern urban contexts but also to pioneer a fresh perspective on Twitter’s role. Twitter is no longer perceived merely as an information repository; it is now a powerful tool for actively engaging individuals in urban initiatives.

Through this multifaceted lens, our study seeks to unveil the transformative potential of tactical urbanism in shaping public spaces, fostering a distinctive sense of place identity and nurturing robust community engagement. The incorporation of social media data further extends the study’s reach, aiming to unearth deeply ingrained public perceptions. These insights, in turn, are poised to inform urban planning and design strategies that are primed for the creation of thriving, human-centric urban environments.

The subsequent literature review undertakes a comprehensive evaluation of prior research conducted within urban contexts. This includes an exploration of themes such as
the relationship between public spaces and urban well-being, which is an examination of tactical urbanism and color intervention strategies that feature global and local case studies, as well as an analysis of the role of social media in comprehending spatial dynamics. Section 3 intricately elucidates the processes involved in data collection, with a special emphasis on the wealth of public sentiments contained within Twitter. Key discoveries stemming from the analysis of Twitter data are candidly disclosed in Section 4. Subsequently, Section 5 effectively situates these findings within a broader research framework. This adds significant value to the discourse on urban spaces, thereby propounding several pragmatic recommendations for urban authorities and stakeholders.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Public Spaces and Urban Well-Being

Public spaces, such as parks, plazas, streets, and public buildings, play a pivotal role in shaping urban life and society, contributing significantly to a profound sense of belonging, cultural vibrancy, and overall happiness and well-being. These spaces offer a plethora of benefits for community well-being, encompassing positive health outcomes, environmental sustainability, economic development, and social cohesion [2,3]. Notably, public spaces provide substantial health advantages both physically and mentally, offering attractive environments that encourage physical activity and relaxation, thereby contributing to people’s overall well-being [1,4]. While green spaces, such as parks, are well-known for promoting physical activity, a connection to nature, and opportunities for exercise [4,5], hard-surface spaces, such as brick plazas and paved walkways, also positively impact well-being, especially in areas with limited green spaces [6].

Moreover, research has demonstrated that well-designed and well-managed public spaces enhance individual well-being and social capital, providing positive social, economic, and environmental value [2,18]. The significance of hard public spaces in fostering social interaction and strengthening social cohesion has been emphasized in urban studies [18–21]. The integration of public artwork, for example, plays a pivotal role in drawing visitors and facilitating connections among residents, fostering socialization in open spaces [19]. Professional design practices by urban designers, landscape architects, and city planners are instrumental in creating public spaces that attract people and enhance their personal and interpersonal experiences [22]. Indeed, while Mehta’s [23] establishment of a comprehensive public space index is a noteworthy contribution to the assessment of public spaces, it is essential to recognize that survey methodologies and indexes represent just one facet of evaluating these spaces. Encouragement exists for the exploration of more imaginative and innovative approaches to comprehensively appraise and enhance the quality, functionality, and overall experience of public spaces. Such inventive methods might encompass immersive ethnographic studies, participatory urban design workshops involving the community, digital mapping and visualization tools, or even emerging technologies like virtual reality simulations. These versatile approaches can provide a more holistic understanding of how public spaces are used and perceived, thereby fostering a more nuanced and inclusive approach to their design, management, and improvement.

2.2. Tactical Urbanism and the Power of Color Approaches

The growing interest in studying and assessing public spaces aligns with the concept of “placemaking,” which is a collaborative movement involving citizens in revitalizing shared public spaces to strengthen the bond between individuals and their surroundings [7,8]. Engaging in critical placemaking enables individuals to develop a sense of place identity, engage in dialogue, and contribute to personal and community narratives [11]. By recognizing the fundamental importance of well-functioning public spaces and actively involving communities in the placemaking process, cities can create thriving and inclusive urban environments that foster a more connected, harmonious, and vibrant urban fabric.

Additionally, urban environments are constantly evolving, presenting both challenges and opportunities for planners, designers, and communities. In response to the demand
for more flexible and participatory urban development approaches, the concept of “tactical urbanism” has emerged as a promising strategy [12]. This approach emphasizes bottom-up planning and design, focusing on short-term, low-cost interventions to address urban challenges and enhance urban spaces [9]. Guided by key principles and objectives, tactical urbanism aims to empower local communities, encourage collaboration between residents and stakeholders, and tackle specific urban issues in a swift and cost-effective manner [10]. Furthermore, Lydon and Garcia [10] argued that tactical urbanism offers various benefits for cities and communities. Firstly, it activates underutilized spaces, transforming them into vibrant and functional areas, fostering a sense of ownership and pride. Secondly, it promotes community engagement and social interaction, creating opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and building social capital [24]. Additionally, it can serve as a catalyst for larger-scale urban transformations, demonstrating the potential of ideas and paving the way for more permanent changes in urban policies and infrastructure [25].

One crucial aspect that has gained prominence in tactical urbanism projects is the strategic use of evidence-based color interventions. These methodologies hold considerable significance in tactical urbanism endeavors as they possess the capacity to revitalize public spaces, elevate aesthetics, and establish visually captivating environments [13]. Sydney’s color intervention project [13], for instance, exemplifies small-scale color interventions in Australia, evaluating the effectiveness of various color designs in urban environments. The project aims to calm traffic, prioritize pedestrian traffic, support safety initiatives, and enhance the urban environment. Using a two-stage survey methodology and presenting visual stimuli (color intervention designs) to participants through a variant of the Latin-square technique, the study revealed clear preferences for specific color intervention designs. For instance, one design (termed as Design D), featuring six high chroma contrasting color dots and photoluminescent white stripes, received the highest attention and recognition in the urban environment. Another design (termed as Design F), consisting solely of photoluminescent white stripes, was closely followed by the second-highest rating. These findings underscore the significance of color choices and design configurations in tactical urbanism projects.

Another exemplary illustration of tactical urbanism in action is the “Calle Consciente: Un Jardín de Colores” (Conscious Street: A Garden of Colors) initiative in Colombia [26], transforming an urban environment into a safer, visually appealing, and inclusive space through colorful and architectural interventions. It was a collaborative effort involving the Municipality of Rionegro, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Lab, and the PINTUCO Foundation. The initiative aimed to address urban mobility challenges near the San Juan de Dios Regional Hospital through short-term, collaborative, and low-cost interventions. By incorporating vibrant geometric flower patterns and colorful elements into the landscape, the project transformed the urban environment strategically. The use of color and architecture aimed to create a safer, visually appealing, and inclusive space that fosters community engagement and active transportation. This tactical intervention showcased the power of tactical urbanism in revitalizing public spaces, encouraging sustainable mobility and enhancing residents' quality of life.

Amid the inherent challenges of public spaces and tactical urbanism in Middle Eastern cities like Cairo, noteworthy success stories have emerged. The Al–Sa’ada project in Cairo stands out, transforming a neglected alley into a vibrant public space through cost-effective measures like captivating murals, seating, lighting, and cultural events [27]. Spearheaded collaboratively by residents, artists, nonprofits, and volunteers, this initiative notably enhanced the quality of life, attracting both visitors and investments while fostering local community pride and ownership. However, challenges persist, including limited government support for tactical urbanism, rigid land development codes, the upkeep of deteriorating public spaces, the demise of social and cultural spaces, and the identification of priority sites requiring attention. Collaboration with informal entities like citizens and nonprofits, as well as navigating bureaucratic processes with municipal authorities,
conducting post-implementation evaluations, and ensuring ongoing maintenance and investment for sustainability, remain crucial [27].

In recent years, there has been a notable surge in interest and investment in local tactical urbanism projects in Saudi Arabia. These projects continue to flourish, symbolizing a growing commitment to reshaping and revitalizing urban environments. A standout illustration of successful tactical urbanism within Saudi Arabia is the Jeddah Color Walk (JCW), often referred to as the Colorful Corniche Initiative (CCI). Situated along the Corniche, a popular waterfront promenade in Jeddah offering breathtaking views of the Red Sea, this ambitious project commenced in February 2021. Spanning a length of 3.4 km and approximately 5 m in width, it was completed in 23 phases over approximately 7 months. The initiative brought together citizens, creative planners, and designers in Jeddah, uniting them to paint and infuse vibrant colors into the main pathways of the Jeddah Waterfront (JW) walkway as part of the urban beautification plan proposed by the Jeddah Municipality (JM). The initiative was led by four core teams, comprising the executive team (11 members), the male team (59 members), the female team (43 members), and the photographers’ team (10 members), managing a community of over 5120 volunteers. Sponsored by the Oyoun Jeddah Charity Association under the supervision of the Governorate of Jeddah and JM, the initiative engaged a total of 7413 participants, collectively contributing 23,428 working hours to the project [28].

The primary objective of the JCW initiative was to enhance the urban landscape through community involvement, aligning with Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 quality-of-life initiatives. Employing fundamental geometric forms, the once mundane JW was transformed into a dynamic canvas of colors, adding a new dimension to the urban environment with bright hues such as blues, yellows, pinks, and greens. These colorful facades depict diverse themes, ranging from local heritage to contemporary art, revitalizing the area and becoming a sought-after backdrop for photography and a source of local pride. As reported by local news [29], the initiative profoundly impacted the overall atmosphere and experience of the promenade, exuding joy and hospitality, attracting more visitors, fostering community engagement, and spurring economic development. The JCW initiative exemplifies the potency of color in tactical urbanism endeavors, creating a visually resplendent and culturally enriched environment that enhances the overall livability and allure of the city, reflecting a promising and transformative approach to urban development. By incorporating evidence-based color interventions and engaging in collaborative co-creation processes, urban public initiatives serve as compelling examples of how tactical urbanism can revitalize public spaces, fostering a strong sense of identity, community engagement, and sustainable mobility, ultimately shaping more vibrant, inclusive, and people-centric urban environments for generations to come. Conducting evaluations of public perception regarding similar initiatives is crucial.

2.3. Social Media Data in Urban Studies

Social media platforms, particularly Twitter, have witnessed extensive usage in Saudi Arabian society, especially with the rapid proliferation of mobile devices. The penetration rate of Twitter among internet users in the country is among the highest globally, with an annual growth rate of approximately 45%, resulting in nearly 150-million tweets generated per month and an increase of around 7-million users [30]. As a result, social media platforms have become prominent tools for communication and information sharing, a trend that has further increased during home quarantine measures implemented by the Saudi Arabian government [17]. This impact and expansion of Twitter’s use as a means of exchanging experiences among the public continued both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, providing valuable insights into individuals’ perspectives and experiences related to various fields of study, including public perspectives on mental health [17] and urban planning [15].

The use of social media data has shown promise as a supplementary and conventional method for collecting data on individuals’ perspectives and experiences related to various
Twitter has emerged as a valuable research tool in the field of urban studies in the global context, exploring diverse aspects of urban landscapes, planning, design, and public opinions [15,16,22,32,35]. However, there remains a scarcity of studies using Twitter to assess public space utilization and dynamics of public interactions in the Middle Eastern urban research context, including Arabic countries such as Saudi Arabia. Conducting such research in the region would provide valuable insights into urban citizens’ activities, emotions, and interactions with urban planning initiatives, contributing to the enhancement of public space design and management.

Indeed, this study marks a pioneering endeavor in the Saudi Arabian urban context. It uniquely employs qualitative methods to delve into public perceptions of public space initiatives, harnessing the efficiency and richness of Twitter data as both a valuable source and a catalyst for the initiatives themselves. Through an in-depth analysis of content tied to a local initiative, this study aspires to unravel the ways in which individuals utilize Twitter as a platform to disseminate their experiences and interactions throughout the evolution of such initiatives, particularly as they relate to transformations in public spaces within a prominent Saudi Arabian city.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Sampling and Data Collection

A convenience sample comprising 113 consecutive (Arabic and English) tweets was collected from Twitter between February and November 2021, specifically focusing on content related to the JCW. The tweets were identified using the Arabic and English hashtags #Color_Corniche (كورنليش الألوان), #Jeddah_Colorwalk, and #Color_Walk (يالون). Twitter’s advanced search function was used to limit the sampling frame to posts specifically related to the city of Jeddah, where the JCW was implemented. The Twitter Streaming Application Programming Interface (API) was utilized for daily data collection, using the specified hashtags as the search and streaming keywords. The researcher assistants (urban planning students) were responsible for collecting the tweets, ensuring coverage of both Arabic and English posts containing the targeted hashtags. The selected time frame for tweet collection encompassed the entire duration of the JCW (see Figure 1). Prior to the collection process, the first author and researcher assistants determined that only tweets containing textual content and attached images would be included for analysis, while commercial and inappropriate tweets were excluded. Over a span of 10 months, our research team diligently tracked the relevant hashtags. Data collection ceased when no new tweets were being generated, ensuring the capture of comprehensive information. As illustrated in Figure 1, the initial posts emerged in February, with nine tweets coinciding with the commencement of the initiative on February 25. The bulk of the tweets, totaling 59, were concentrated in March, a period when Jeddah’s residents and volunteers were actively and fervently participating in the coloring activities. In the subsequent months, from May to November, tweet frequency decreased notably. During this period, the majority of tweets were posted by professionals or news sources. Subsequently, all tweets containing the targeted hashtags were imported into password-protected Excel files for further analysis. To ensure the anonymity of Twitter users, their handles (usernames) were removed during the data-processing stage. To conduct a preliminary analysis of the tweets, a word cloud was generated to identify the prevailing categories based on word frequency, providing an initial overview of the most-used words in the tweets (see Figure 2). The initial analysis conducted by the first author and research assistants reveals that the phrase “enhancing the visual landscape” is the most frequently used, followed by “colorful Cornish,” and then the words “Jeddah,” “crosswalk,” “initiative,” and “waterfront,” emerge as the most common terms.
After preparing the data and scanning tweets for analysis, copies of Excel files were distributed between the first author and research assistants. The analysis was guided through performing a six-phase thematic analysis (TA) framework proposed by Braun and Clarke [36]. The TA framework encompassed the following phases: (1) Becoming familiar with the data; (2) Generating initial codes; (3) Identifying overarching themes; (4) Reviewing and refining the themes; (5) Defining the final themes and sub-themes; and (6) Composing the final report. The collected tweets were subjected to rigorous visual inspections by the research assistants (individually) to identify recurring terms (Step 1 of TA). Subsequently, a thematic coding scheme was developed to organize the data, utilizing a hierarchical structure that included descriptive headings and subheadings (Steps 2 and 3 of TA). As suggested by Turpin et al. [37], the structure of themes was independently reviewed by both authors and an external expert. Through extensive deliberation and refinement from the research assistants, 95% agreement was reached on the final themes and sub-themes among all members of the research team (Steps 4 and 5 of TA). The remaining 5% were subjected to some discrepancies between the team members regarding the classification of themes. Following this consensus, both authors finalized the first draft of the study.
findings (Step 6 of TA) and commenced manuscript preparation, adhering to the six-phase thematic analysis process. See Figure 3 for a flow diagram of the study methodology. For a comprehensive understanding of the coding scheme and the definitions associated with each classification, please refer to Table 1.

![Flow diagram of the study methodology](image)

**Figure 3.** Flow diagram of the study methodology.

**Table 1.** Themes with description and the number of tweets in each category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description of Themes</th>
<th>Number of Tweets (%)</th>
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| Theme 1: Positive impact and community engagement | • Discuss the positive impact and community engagement of the CCI. The tweets highlight how residents’ participation has transformed their experiences and improved the community’s visual attractiveness.  
• Reflect a sense of pride, admiration, joy, and a strong community spirit resulting from the initiative. | 41 (36.30%) |
| Theme 2: Enhancing city’s visual landscape | • Discuss the initiative’s goals to improve Jeddah’s artistic attractiveness. The tweets cover the project’s establishment, collaborations with charitable organizations and the JM, as well as the involvement of urban design experts.  
• Reflect the initiative’s aim to transform public spaces and the waterfront into visually vibrant environments, enhancing quality of life and shaping the city’s identity. | 37 (32.74%) |
| Theme 3: Community collaboration through volunteer work | • Discuss the transformative power of community engagement through volunteer work in enhancing JW. The tweets highlight the collective effort, appreciation, and sense of community and enthusiasm generated by the initiative.  
• Reflect the positive impact of volunteerism, fostering collaboration and pride among participants. | 35 (30.96%) |
| Total | | 113 (100%) |
4. Results

4.1. Classification of Users

We successfully obtained sufficient information from diverse users to classify their user types. The user categories comprised public accounts (43.36%), professionals in relevant fields such as public space planners and designers (31.85%), formal accounts like governments and charitable organizations (15.06%), and news entities (9.73%), as depicted in Figure 4. This distinction in user types underscores the observation that, on average, placemaking-related tweets that reach a wider audience are predominantly shared by organizations and professionals engaged in urban planning (56.6%), rather than individual users (43.4%).

![Figure 4. Types of users sharing information about the initiative on Twitter.](image)

4.2. Generated Themes and Subthemes

After conducting a rigorous analysis of the tweets, we implemented a systematic classification system, encompassing three broad categories, encompassing a total of 10 subcategories. The identified categories are as follows: (1) Positive impact and community engagement; (2) The enhancement of the city’s visual landscape; and (3) Community collaboration through volunteer efforts. Each category delves into unique facets of the tweet discourse, providing a comprehensive framework for the exploration and comprehension of the diverse dimensions inherent in the discussion.

4.2.1. Theme 1: Positive Impact and Community Engagement

In total, 36.30% (41) of the 113 tweets analyzed are encompassed within this prominent theme. The theme distinctly revolves around the concept of “community engagement,” which is readily evident through the explicit usage of the word “beautiful” in some of the tweets. Terms like “enjoyable experience,” “participation,” and “pride” also emerge as prevalent, further reinforcing the theme’s focal point on the positive impact and community engagement derived from the initiative. It notably accentuates the transformative effect of the initiative on residents’ experiences and their zealous involvement in the vibrant walk along JW. The theme underscores the collective commitment of residents towards enhancing the visual landscape and overall quality of life within the community. The tweets showcased therein aptly exemplify residents’ sense of personal liking and admiration for the idea of colors, along with the remarkable improvement in the artistic allure and vibrancy of the JW area. Overall, this theme conveys an unmistakable sense of enjoyment and fosters community spirit that stems from the initiative.
The overarching theme can be further subcategorized into three distinct subthemes:

1. Positive impact on residents’ experiences: Approximately 56.09% of the analyzed tweets (23 out of 41) eloquently reflect the positive influence of the initiative on residents’ experiences. These tweets prominently emphasize the residents’ enthusiasm and delight as they engage in the colorful walk along Jeddah’s waterfront. A representative example of such a tweet is illustrated below:

“The #Colors_Corniche initiative delights the onlookers in Jeddah”

The tweet suggests that the initiative has a delightful and enjoyable effect on the onlookers, implying that it brings joy and happiness to those who witness it.

In another tweet, the participant expresses genuine admiration and appreciation for the concept of colors.

“I really liked the idea of colors”

The tweet indicates that the idea of colors has left a positive impression on the author, and they find it appealing and interesting.

2. Residents’ engagement and participation: Around 29.26% of the tweets (12 out of 41) effectively demonstrate the high level of engagement and active involvement of residents in the initiative. These tweets vividly express personal involvement, pride, and admiration for the ingenious concept of incorporating colors into the initiative. Additionally, they underscore the residents’ active participation in enhancing the visual landscape of the waterfront area, thereby highlighting the importance of their community-driven efforts towards the visual enhancement of the city. A representative tweet is as follows:

“My participation in the Colors Walk initiative in Jeddah #Colors_Walk”

Another tweet further highlights the significance of community involvement by mentioning “participation in coloring” as a “new and innovative initiative.” This indicates that people are actively engaged in the process of creating the mural, adding a sense of creativity and collaboration to the event. The tweet is as follows:

“. . . today, at the Colors Walk, there was and still is a wonderful painting on the ground. Participation in coloring is a new and innovative initiative to create a beautiful mural on the walkway . . .”

3. Residents’ perspective on visual appeal and transformation: Approximately 17.07% of the tweets (7 out of 41) feature captivating words and shared pictures that notably emphasize the visual appeal and transformation instigated by the initiative. These tweets artistically showcase the vibrant scenery, engaging environment, and significant strides made towards accomplishing the initiative’s objectives, all from the perspective of the residents. An illustrative example of such tweets is as follows:

“The Colors Walk in Jeddah is an artistic masterpiece and a visual feast”

The tweet’s positive language and the use of descriptive adjectives like “artistic” and “visual” emphasize the strong positive impression that the project has made on the participant. Enthusiastically shared photographs capture residents’ favorite vibrant colors in the JW, exemplified in Figure 5. Such visual representations serve as striking illustrations of the residents’ sentiments and perspectives on the initiative’s visual appeal and its overall transformation of the city’s landscape.
1. The city’s visual enhancement: A majority of the analyzed tweets, amounting to vibrant and aesthetically pleasing Corniche.

4.2.2. Theme 2: Enhancement of the City’s Visual Landscape

Among the 113 tweets analyzed in this theme, a substantial proportion, accounting for 32.74% (37 tweets), prominently conveyed the sentiment of “enhancing the visual landscape.” This notion was explicitly articulated through terms such as “quality of life” in several tweets. Additionally, frequent usage of terms such as “aesthetic panel,” “collaboration,” and “partnership” underscored the initiative’s strong focus on enhancing the aesthetic appeal and visual allure of Jeddah city. These tweets encompassed various aspects, ranging from the inception of the project to collaborative efforts between charitable organizations, JM, prominent figures, and urban design professionals. The shared objective of these tweets was to transform local public spaces and the waterfront areas of Jeddah into vibrant, visually captivating environments that not only enhance the overall quality of life but also contribute significantly to the city’s identity.

The theme can be further categorized into three subthemes:

1. The city’s visual enhancement: A majority of the analyzed tweets, amounting to 51.35% (19 out of 37), explicitly highlighted the primary aim of the initiative, which is to enhance the overall visual landscape of Jeddah city. These tweets specifically praised the effective utilization of colors, artistic panels, and innovative approaches to create an aesthetically pleasing environment along the waterfront promenade. To illustrate this perspective, here is a selection of illustrative quoted tweets:

   “Jeddah Municipality adopts the initiative for enhancing the visual landscape and #Colors_Corniche.”

The tweet conveys a sense of collaboration and community partnership between the JM and the initiative, emphasizing their collective endeavor towards creating a more vibrant and aesthetically pleasing Corniche.

Figure 6 showcases the captivating and refined artistic vision of the project as it comes to fruition along the walkway. The image provides a vivid representation of the final visual appearance of the initiative, capturing the impressive transformation and the intricate details that have been meticulously crafted to create an aesthetically pleasing and visually enchanting environment.
2. Collaboration and support: Approximately 35.13% of the tweets (13 out of 37) accentuated the significant collaboration between key entities, including the Jeddah Oyoun Jeddah Charity Association, JM, officials, urban planners, and artists. This subtheme underscored the paramount significance of collaboration, community partnership, and the backing of crucial stakeholders in the successful implementation of the initiative. It accentuated the collective efforts and shared responsibility that contributed to the positive outcomes achieved. An illustrative instance of quoted tweets is provided below:

“The invitation to all artists to contribute to the #Colors_Corniche in the city of Jeddah, in collaboration between Oyoun Jeddah Association, Municipality, and under the auspices of the Governorate, aiming to improve the visual landscape in the city.”

The use of the word “invitation“ suggests an inclusive and open call to artists from all backgrounds and expertise levels to participate in the initiative, encouraging a diverse and varied representation of creative inputs. In addition, the mention of “collaboration“ underscores the importance of community partnership and collective action in achieving the initiative’s goals.

3. Prominent quality-of-life initiatives: 13.51% of the tweets (5 out of 37) underscored how the project positioned Jeddah among the prominent quality-of-life initiatives in Saudi Arabia. They emphasized the significance of the initiative in enhancing the overall quality of life for residents and attracting positive attention to the city. This subtheme also included tweets aligning the initiative with Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030, emphasizing how the initiative is part of broader efforts to enhance the urban landscape in line with the national vision. Here is an illustrative instance of quoted tweets:

“The ‘Colors Walk’ initiative positions Jeddah among the largest quality of life initiatives in the Kingdom.”
By describing the initiative as one of the “largest quality-of-life initiatives,” the tweet emphasizes its scale and impact on improving the overall living conditions and experiences of residents in Jeddah. It suggests that the initiative is not only visually appealing but also contributes to the well-being and satisfaction of the community. The tweet also implies that Jeddah’s involvement in such a prominent quality-of-life initiative demonstrates the city’s commitment to creating a vibrant, inclusive, and people-centric urban environment.

Another tweet described the initiative as the largest of its kind, implying its significant scale and impact, which conveys a positive and enthusiastic tone, showcasing the importance of this charitable endeavor for enhancing the visual landscape and public experience in Jeddah as follows:

“. . . a charitable initiative, the largest of its kind, contributing to the creation of the ‘Longest Colored Walkway in the World’ on Jeddah’s Corniche . . .”

4.2.3. Theme 3: Community Collaboration through Volunteer Work

Out of the 113 tweets analyzed, a substantial portion, accounting for 30.96% (35 tweets), conveyed a prevalent focus on the significance of voluntary work. This sentiment was explicitly articulated through the usage of terms like “volunteer work” in various tweets. Furthermore, terms such as “gratitude” and “achievement” were commonly employed, underscoring the transformative potential that community engagement through volunteer work possesses. These findings highlight the profound impact and positive outcomes that can be achieved through the dedication and active participation of volunteers in such initiatives. The theme also encompasses the appreciation and recognition of these efforts, the documentation of the vibrant transformation through visual media, and the overall sense of dedication and team spirit that arises from such volunteer initiatives. It showcases the positive impact that community engagement and volunteerism can have on a city, fostering a spirit of commitment and honor among its volunteers.

The theme is classified into four subthemes:

1. Volunteer dedication and companionship: An impressive portion of the tweets, accounting for approximately 34.28% (12 out of 35), underscores the active involvement and unwavering commitment of diverse stakeholders and volunteers in the initiative. This includes individuals, prominent figures, institutional organizations, and university students who generously dedicated their time and efforts to contribute to the project’s success. The following selection of quoted tweets serves as an illustrative example:

“Today, I participated with my fellow volunteers in the #ColorWalk initiative on Jeddah’s Corniche. We completed 200 m, and the goal is 2 km, InshaAllah. Jeddah deserves it.”

The tweet captures a personal experience of the participant, who participated in the initiative on as a volunteer. The tweet expresses a sense of companionship with fellow volunteers, indicating a shared commitment to the initiative.

2. Recognition and appreciation: A noteworthy proportion of the tweets, comprising 25.71% (9 out of 35), specifically recognizes the invaluable contributions made by prominent figures and institutions, thereby fostering a deep sense of appreciation and gratitude within the community. These tweets encompass expressions of gratitude and admiration for the initiative, highlighting the collaborative efforts between JM and individuals who played pivotal roles in the initiative. Presented below is an illustrative collection of quoted tweets that further exemplify this sentiment:

“. . . Great accomplishment filled with creativity, passion, vitality, and a spirit of giving. As a volunteer team, we experienced a tremendous amount of enthusiasm, a sweet spirit, and cooperation despite the fatigue and effort . . .”

The tweet emphasizes the creative and giving nature of the team, portraying them as a group of individuals who wholeheartedly contributed to a significant endeavor.
3. Documentation of visual transformation: A significant portion, accounting for 22.58% (8 out of 35) of the tweets, focuses on capturing and documenting the visual impact brought about by the initiative. This documentation allows the community to witness and appreciate the remarkable positive changes that have taken place. The tweets incorporate various forms of media such as photos and aerial drone shots, vividly showcasing the vibrant and colorful transformation of the waterfront area. The following quoted tweets serve as an illustrative example:

“My aerial drone shot of the Colors Walk on Jeddah’s waterfront.”

Another tweet describes the individual’s coverage of the initiative at the Jeddah waterfront. It implies that the person is actively engaged in reporting or documenting the event and its activities as follows:

“My coverage today of the #Colors_Corniche initiative at the Jeddah waterfront.”

Additionally, the volunteers eagerly shared mesmerizing photographs that truly reflect their admiration and pride in their work for the JCW. Figure 7 showcases a remarkable illustration of these captivating images.

![Figure 7. An illustrative example of pictures captured by volunteers (used with permission).](image-url)

4. Sense of community and enthusiasm: A notable portion of the tweets, comprising 17.14% (6 out of 35), accentuates the vibrant subtheme that encapsulates the collective spirit and enthusiasm prevailing within the volunteers. This subtheme underscores a sense of unity and shared goals among them, reflecting the strong bonds forged through their involvement in volunteer work. It emanates a palpable sense of boundless enthusiasm towards the volunteer initiatives and the transformative impact they bring to Jeddah. Presented below is an illustrative collection of quoted tweets that vividly exemplify this sentiment:

“A tour of the #Colors_Walk hashtag reveals the happiness and pride of the participants and volunteers who left their mark in their beloved city, Jeddah. It is
beautiful in the eyes of its admirers and becomes even more beautiful with their ideas and efforts.”

The tweet discusses the exploration of the mentioned hashtag, which provides insights into the emotions of happiness and pride expressed by participants and volunteers who actively contributed to the event in their beloved city, Jeddah.

5. Discussion

This study conducts an extensive exploration into the pivotal significance of public spaces within urban environments, unraveling their profound impact on community well-being and the intricate tapestry of social dynamics. What sets this study apart is its unique focus on the Saudi Arabian context, making it the first of its kind in this specific domain. With a focused lens on the JCW initiative as a local model of tactical urbanism, this research endeavors to glean invaluable insights into community engagement while aligning with the principles of placemaking and Saudi Arabia’s visionary goals for 2030 [28].

Employing a convenience sampling approach, the study methodically curated a dataset of 113 consecutive tweets associated with the JCW initiative in Jeddah, which was discerned via distinct hashtags. Unlike conventional methodologies utilized in studies of tactical projects [27], this research innovatively leveraged Twitter as an interactive instrument for both engagement and continuous monitoring of the initiative’s progression over a span of 10 months. Additionally, the thematic analysis unearthed three predominant themes: (1) Positive influence and community engagement; (2) Augmentation of the city’s visual tapestry from a professional vantage point; and (3) Communal synergy fostered through volunteer endeavors. These findings seamlessly resonate with earlier scholarship that accentuates the paramount significance of public spaces in shaping the very essence of urban well-being and communal existence. Beck [2] and Love and Kok [3], for instance, underscore the intrinsic links between public spaces and profound sentiments of belonging, cultural vibrancy, and overall life satisfaction. Correspondingly, our meticulous analysis of the JCW initiative illuminated residents’ expressions of profound pride and enjoyment, elucidating the initiative’s affirmative impact on their daily lives. This harmonious alignment unequivocally underscores the consistent nexus between thoughtfully crafted public spaces and their innate ability to elevate the collective quality of life for the residents they serve.

Furthermore, in the face of challenges commonly encountered by urban initiatives in Arab cities [27], our findings notably illuminated the JCW initiative’s distinct capacity for organized and methodical implementation, effectively cultivating a culture of communal collaboration through voluntary involvement. This process engendered a profound sense of camaraderie and unwavering dedication among the initiative’s participants. This revelation harmonizes with prior research [18–20], which vigorously underscores the significance of robustly designed public spaces in facilitating social interaction and fortifying the very fabric of social cohesion. The JCW initiative vividly exemplifies how tactical urbanism, enriched by vibrant hues, possesses the potency to forge an all-embracing and hospitable domain conducive to communal interaction, seamlessly aligning with the core tenets of placemaking [8]. Moreover, our findings amply demonstrate the efficacy of tactical urbanism in breathing new life into public spaces, thereby elevating the level of community involvement. The JCW initiative stands as a local exemplar, vividly illustrating how concise, budget-friendly interventions can utterly metamorphose an urban landscape into a visually captivating haven replete with cultural wealth. This resonance parallels the insights of Lydon and Garcia [10], who accentuate the prowess of tactical urbanism in revitalizing underutilized spaces, fostering profound community engagement, and ultimately catalyzing grander-scale urban metamorphosis. In the case of JCW, the infusion of dynamic hues and artistic panels played an instrumental role in beckoning visitors, nurturing community pride, and catalyzing economic growth. Moreover, our study adroitly harnessed the trove of social media data, specifically tweets, to penetrate the community’s perceptions and involvement in the JCW initiative. The ascendancy of social media as a tool in urban studies continues to burgeon, providing invaluable insights into public sentiments.
and experiences [15,16,22,32,35]. Through a judicious analysis of these tweets, our study effectively illuminates the residents’ perspectives, unveiling their fervor, gratitude, and pride in the metamorphosis of the JW waterfront.

5.1. Strengths and Limitations

Acknowledging the limitations of this study, certain aspects deserve consideration. Firstly, our analysis focused exclusively on tweets related to the JCW initiative, potentially excluding perspectives from individuals who do not use Twitter. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of initiatives like the JCW, future research endeavors could adopt mixed-method approaches. Incorporating site observations and conducting interviews with a diverse range of community members would provide a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the initiative’s effects on various stakeholders. Secondly, while our study explored the positive impact and community engagement surrounding the JCW initiative, it did not delve into potential challenges or negative perceptions. Understanding drawbacks or areas for improvement would be valuable for guiding future urban development initiatives. Additionally, the study’s focus on a single case limits the generalizability of findings to other tactical urbanism projects in different contexts. Furthermore, as with any social media analysis, there is a potential for misinterpretation or misrepresentation of tweets due to the brevity and informal nature of such posts. Lastly, reliance on publicly available data may restrict access to certain layers of information that could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the initiative’s impact.

Despite these limitations, the study possesses notable strengths. Our research significantly contributes to the existing body of knowledge concerning public spaces, tactical urbanism, and the utilization of color interventions. The analysis of 113 tweets conducted by the research team has yielded a profound understanding of the discourse surrounding the JCW initiative, facilitating an exhaustive exploration of primary and secondary themes. The efficacy of our classification system in categorizing tweets has provided a systematic framework for the analysis and interpretation of diverse content. Furthermore, the inclusion of illustrative examples throughout the analysis has enhanced the credibility and depth of the discourse.

The affirmative community response, the transformation of the city’s visual landscape, and the evident spirit of collaborative community engagement epitomized by the JCW initiative underscore the remarkable potential of tactical urbanism in shaping dynamic, inclusive urban environments centered around the needs of the people. This initiative serves as an exemplar, showcasing how urban spaces can be rejuvenated through the strategic infusion of colors and the active participation of residents in the placemaking process. As cities continue to evolve, our study emphasizes the paramount importance of creating spaces that nurture identity, communal pride, and shared stewardship, thereby contributing to a more sustainable and thriving urban trajectory.

5.2. Implications for Researchers and Authorities

The implications of this study extend to both researchers and urban authorities. For researchers, this study demonstrates the effectiveness of utilizing social media platforms, particularly Twitter, as an innovative tool for understanding public sentiments and interactions within urban initiatives. It opens avenues for future research in urban studies to incorporate real-time social media data analysis to gain deeper insights into community perceptions and engagement.

For urban authorities, the findings underscore the potential of tactical urbanism initiatives like JCW in fostering community collaboration, enhancing the urban environment, and promoting economic development. The study suggests that urban planners can benefit from integrating vibrant and inclusive elements into public spaces to attract residents and visitors. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of engaging the community in the design and execution of urban projects, ultimately contributing to more thriving and people-centric cities.
6. Conclusions

This study provides valuable insights into public perceptions and engagement with the JCW initiative, highlighting the transformative potential of tactical urbanism and community collaboration in enhancing public spaces. The thematic analysis identifies themes underscoring the initiative’s positive impact on residents’ experiences, the visual landscape of the city, and the significance of community engagement through volunteer work. By conducting a comprehensive analysis, this study significantly contributes to our understanding of tactical urbanism and its role in creating vibrant, inclusive, and human-centric public spaces. The findings align with previous studies emphasizing the importance of well-designed public spaces, professional involvement, and the benefits of community engagement and volunteer work in placemaking endeavors. Policymakers, planners, designers, and communities can draw valuable guidance from these insights to enhance the overall quality of life for residents and visitors. For urban planners and designers, understanding the positive impact of community engagement and volunteer work can inform future placemaking initiatives, leading to more inclusive and people-centric urban environments. Future research could explore the long-term effects of the JCW initiative on community well-being and its contributions to urban transformation.

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