

Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

The preliminary study of the possible relationship between urban open space system and residents' health outcome

- **Format:**

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

In recent decades, many studies had claimed that green spaces have positive effects on human health, and thus more and more cities around the world began their pursuit of the greatest possible amount of green space within urban areas through urban planning approach. Nevertheless, only a few studies managed to provide empirical evidence regarding the actual relationship between “providing” green space and “improving” human health at the city level. There is also lack of evidence of direct positive improvement of health by increasing the amount of green space. For urban planning professional, it is important to understand citizens' usage behavior towards green space as a critical evidence for future planning and design strategies. There is a research need to further investigate the amount of green space, user behavior of green spaces and the health outcome of urban dwellers.

To this end, we would like to find out other important factors for urban dwellers' usage behaviors of green spaces. "Average green spaces per person" is one of the National Well-being Indicators in Taiwan as in many other countries. Through our preliminary research, we collected and analyzed the official data of planned open space coverages, average life expectancy, exercise frequency and obesity ratio in all cities of Taiwan. The study result indicates an interesting finding that Kaohsiung city, the second largest city in Taiwan, tells a completely different story. Citizens in Kaohsiung city have more open spaces than any other city through urban planning, yet have the relatively unhealthy condition in contrary. Whether it pointed out that the amount of the open spaces per person has would not direct to the health outcome. Therefore, the pre-established view which states that open spaces must have a positive effect on human health should be examined more prudently. Hence, this paper intends to explore the relationship between user behavior of open spaces and citizens' health conditions by critically analyzing past related literature and collecting selective data from government health database in 2015. We also take Kaohsiung city, as a case study area to conduct statistical analysis first followed by questionnaire survey to gain a better understanding. Finally, we aim to feedback our findings to the current planning system in Taiwan for better health promotion urbanized areas.

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