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Editorial: Assessment of users' satisfaction in public spaces

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Editorial on the Research Topic

Assessment of users' satisfaction in public spaces

Public spaces are either urban open spaces including parks, streets, sidewalks, public green spaces, and footpaths, or public facilities and other spaces accessible to all without restriction such as markets, government facilities, and service facilities. They play a key role in the organization of the city and the collective life; they offer the citizens places of meeting and conviviality, a base of social and cultural activities in addition to their various effects on the person, the society, and the environment (Moravcová et al., 2020). These spaces are conceived to fulfill the expectations of the citizens regarding functions, services, aesthetics, safety, and comfort. Therefore, several forms and vocations of public spaces exist, and original designs are proposed to satisfy the users. However, these spaces still suffer from many problems causing user dissatisfaction, other design dimensions should be considered (Noda, 2021). Therefore, it is a question of thinking about the conditions allowing to answer the diversity of individual expectations, ensuring better cohabitation. The users frequent these spaces for different purposes: crossing, rest, entertainment, meeting, leisure, etc. The satisfaction of users of public spaces depends on several factors, their comfort of use, and climatic, psychological and visual depend on the qualities of these spaces.

Therefore, this Research Topic entitled "Assessment of Users' Satisfaction in Public Spaces" has been proposed to highlight the latest achievements and research in the field. Focusing on the novelties in tools and methods to assess the satisfaction of users in public spaces, the influent parameters, and potential solutions to enhance their degree of satisfaction. Most of the proposed papers used on-site surveys and questionnaires to assess users' satisfaction, considering several aspects of the public space. Governmental public facilities are part of public spaces in which citizens are frequently confronted with several factors affecting their daily activities. So, the study of Moteki investigated the key factors affecting user satisfaction with services at the counters of ward offices, the front line of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. This research used an online survey targeting female users of the ward offices. A two-step statistical analysis comprising PCA, and multiple regression analysis compared to the author's surveys, was conducted at the Osaka City Ward Office (Moteki, 2021a) and Higashi Hiroshima City Hall (Moteki, 2021b). Ten survey questions and two screening questions were used to assess respondents' conformity to the

physical aspects of facility equipment, counter-staff responses, and service delivery conditions. All those studies share that the physical aspects of public facilities are not the most critical factors for user satisfaction and reveal the usefulness of the satisfaction scale for local public administration in the three categories of questions presented by the author. Furthermore, this study shows that 1) indoor atmosphere, 2) ease of following the layout of the floors and offices inside the building, and 3) ease of understanding the building's locations and entrances at the site of the ward office, are important factors for overall satisfaction at the ward office.

In their article, [Aleha et al.](#), highlighted some of the profound factors relating to urban voids and their potential use in design interventions, with the purpose to ensure space quality and user satisfaction by improving space performance, develop a new design of the urban open space through the assessment of users' expectations during the utilization stage, and the investigation of the reasons for dissatisfaction during the occupancy stage. The research proposed the active participation of the community to reclaim urban voids and change them into useful public gathering spaces. The method is based on the identification of physical conditions and surveys, which depend on user ratings. 280 participants (118 females and 162 men) rated the technical, functional, and aesthetic performance of the proposed urban voids. The survey aims to find out the impact of space's performance and quality on the users' happiness and dissatisfaction with the identified spaces focusing on their political (administrative), economic, social, and ecological benefits.

[Iqbal et al.](#) did a comparative study of user's preference between shopping centers and open street bazaars in Karachi, Pakistan. For this research, the case study approach is employed. A traditional bazaar and a recently constructed shopping center in Karachi, Pakistan, are the subjects of data gathering through an online survey. The findings demonstrate that factors like atmosphere, safety, accessibility, and people's leisure activities typically have an impact on the success of shopping centers. Consumers mainly visit traditional open-air bazaars for low-priced goods and items. These bazaars can be easily accessed by public transport. However, it has been observed that users avoid visiting traditional bazaars because of their congested, constrained, and poorly maintained environments, lack of parking and restrooms, and crowded nature. On the other hand, the number of shopping centers is growing in the city. These shopping malls are preferred by a majority of the public due to their accessibility, parking, amusement, and leisure facilities, in addition to the availability of a variety of goods and products under one roof. In the end, the authors have provided recommendations for both open street bazaars and shopping centers in Karachi.

Urban planners are more focused on societies that are becoming industrialized. Leisure time is valuable because it influences people's mental health and wellbeing. In their study, [Hasanpour et al.](#), looked

at the importance of the quality of the leisure environment for young adults in Torghabe and Mellat parks in Mashhad, Iran. The study focused on the preferences of youth for both natural and man-made features and variables in the parks. The traditional Delphi method was applied to identify the study variables. User preferences were extracted through photo surveys, study environment simulation, and conjoint analysis was performed to calculate the relative use and Part-Worths with the complete design approach. The results helped to identify the most and least significant variables for recreational areas among the youth, i.e., "Shape" (32.61 percent) and "solid/void patterns" (5.96 percent). The other influential variables considered by youth in leisure environments are facade orientation, dimension/size of the space, materials, water (such as ponds), plantation, etc.

The results obtained through the cited research open several prospects for future studies to complete the understanding of the satisfaction mechanisms of the users in public spaces, a satisfaction that may be projected on the quality of use, therefore the quality of life in those spaces. Among the future research perspectives that aim to deepen the knowledge in this field that are strongly suggested, the impact of the configuration of the public space on the wellbeing of the users, the intelligent urban furniture serving the comfort of the users, and the impact of the external urban comfort on the use of public spaces. These three axes complete each other in the sense that the use of public spaces depends on several factors, including those mentioned above, their combined impact should have an important effect on the attitudes of the users.

Author contributions

All authors listed, have made substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

Conflict of interest

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