

## Chapter 74

# Providing an Attractive Environment for People to Engage in Health Activities: Serving With Landscape

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### ABSTRACT

*Parks and green spaces have been allocated for city residents to offer them healthier natural environments. However, people living in cities may have less opportunity to engage with the natural environment since parks seem to be passive locations of activity. We investigated how to proactively enhance the attraction of green space to improve people's health. First, we surveyed how 683 city residents were engaged in physical activities. From them, 30 people were recruited for depth interviews. Results showed that the park environment and the health activities that feature 'inner-attraction' could enhance the frequency and persistence of the city residents to engage in healthy activities. We also evaluated the service experience and attraction of 40 users in a 3-month program in the Daan Forest Park of Taipei City in Taiwan. Using the culture probes method, we found that the experience cycle and the use of social media enhanced the park's inner and inter attraction, and that the role of the park was transformed from a passive green space provider to an active service operator.*

### INTRODUCTION

Urbanisation is a global issue with strong implication for human health. Following the growing population and building in cities, particularly in the last years, urbanisation has broken the association between citizen and urban green space. Furthermore, urbanisation led to poorer health and decreased quality of life (Maller et al., 2008; Byomkesh et al., 2012). These are reasons of increasing demand for afforestation and outdoor leisure areas in an urban space. Accessing to green space has been regarded as important in urban planning. Urban green space is valued as places that facilitate physical activity and improve

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human health (Wilhelm-Stanis et al., 2010) by providing citizens opportunities for social interaction and enjoyment of nature (Townsend & Weerasuriya, 2010; Weber & Anderson, 2010).

To attract more people to be closer to nature, understanding the factors of the use of green space is helpful. Over the last few decades, a great number of papers have been devoted to find out the attractive design factors for green space. For instance, residential proximity to parks (Giles-Corti et al., 2005), parks with specific features such as trails (Kaczynski et al., 2008) and aesthetic appeal and safety (Bedimo-Rung et al., 2005; Giles-Corti et al., 2005) appear to be important factors. These factors have to be accumulated and offer to landscape architects who design and manage solutions for better green space. A substantial body of research focuses on the importance of designing green space. However, there are still relatively few studies that have provided activities to promote or help people to use or even immerse themselves into green space in daily life.

This paper has three aims:

1. To survey some phenomena of using green space currently
  2. To construct a service experience cycle of green space
  3. To identify attractive factors and users' needs which influence their perception and final decision.
- Through reaching these aims, city service systems could be smarter to deduce and provide suitable activity to citizens. Avenues for further research will also be suggested.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Benefits of Green Space**

Urban green space has been discussed extensively and proved its benefits to citizens' health and well-being (Chiesura, 2004; Hartig et al., 2003; Maller et al., 2008; Moore & Driver, 2005; Townsend & Weerasuriya, 2010). The associations between green space access and health are stronger in more urban areas (Babey et al., 2008; Maas et al., 2008; Nielsen & Hansen, 2007). It is also given the evidence that there may be potential health benefits to living and working in neighbourhoods which have good availability of public green areas.

Green space recreation is a panacea for public health. It is associated with not only reducing negative emotions, but also improving better energy levels and attention span (Bowler et al., 2010). There is evidence of the mental health benefits of physical activity (Penedo & Dahn, 2005, Peschardt & Stigsdotter, 2012) and additional benefit from exercise in green space (Thompson et al., 2011). These personal psychological benefits include personal development and growth, mental health and maintenance, and personal appreciation or satisfaction (Moore & Driver, 2005). Besides, there are also wider social potential benefits of green space (Lee & Maheswaran, 2010), such as community satisfaction, family bonding, reduced crime, and social cohesion promoting by providing areas for people to participate in group activities (Moore & Driver, 2005; Maas et al., 2008).

Not only psychological benefits, activity in green space also have benefits to physical, such as blood pressure reduction (Hartig et al., 2003), vitamin D absorption from sunlight exposure (Holick, 2004), depression and incidence of disease reduction, and perceived quality of life improvement (Moore and Driver, 2005). Green space access has been shown to increase physical activity levels in urban populations (Kaczynski & Henderson, 2007; Sugiyama & Thompson, 2008). The convenience access to green

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