

## Chapter 10

# Green Space Development in Academic Libraries: A Case Study in Hong Kong

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the recent green development in the main library of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and the construction of the library's new wing and the students' opinions on its green development. This study adopted a qualitative research method to collect information from 10 users about the green features implemented and their influence. Another interview with the campus development office project manager responsible for the library facilities was also included to explore the current and potential future green practices. These methods aim to evaluate the green development in an academic library from three perspectives, including (1) the library's role in green development in terms of library facilities, (2) users' demand relating to greening the library, and (3) the influence caused by the greening activities of the library.*

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## INTRODUCTION

“Going green” and constructing a sustainable society is commonly accepted as a global trend. As part of society, libraries also take part in this trend. Although the nature of libraries is environmentally friendly in sharing content, many green innovations are feasible for better services and fewer damages to the environment (Sahavirta, 2013). Since the early 1990s, the Green Library Movement emerged, including libraries from various backgrounds committed to reducing environmental impacts (Antonelli, 2008). Green libraries have a mission to minimize negative effects on the external environment and maximize internal environment quality (Qutab, 2017) because libraries have the social role and responsibility to contribute to environmental sustainability during their services to satisfy user demands (Qutab, 2017). The Taipei Public Library in Taiwan is one of the classical examples (Tseng, 2008; Jiang et al., 2019). Many academic libraries have also followed the trend of green libraries for more than ten years (Bohuski, 2020; Biswas, 2021; Soroya et al., 2021).

In Hong Kong, the “going green” concept has become more prevalent in recent years (Chung et al., 2020). However, as a dense metropolis, Hong Kong faces many challenges in greening. Physical limitations such as lack of land, natural resources, public awareness, and lack of related professionals are vital issues. Moreover, researches and practices related to green library development in Hong Kong or Asia are limited. However, green development in academic libraries has become more prevalent in recent years. In 2016, a two-day conference, “Academic Librarian 4 – Sustainable Academic Libraries: Now and Beyond,” addressed issues on sustainability in academic libraries (HKUST Library, 2016).

The study selected the CUHK Library (CUHKL) because of its award-winning green library extension and general green environment as an academic library in Hong Kong. The library building itself has been open for more than 40 years. In 2012 after renovation, the new extension building and Learning Garden won several green awards, including the “FuturArc Green Leadership Award 2016 (Merit Award - Institutional) Platinum standard” in Hong Kong Building Environment Assessment Method (HK-BEAM), “Indoor Air Quality Certificate (Excellent Class)” in Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department (CUHK Library, n.d.). This study focuses on the new wing construction containing most green features.

Green development is a popular global trend, and academic libraries face many challenges and opportunities. By studying the practice and user feedback in the CUHKL, this study evaluates the possibilities of green development in academic libraries and ultimately realizes the importance and benefit of green development. Previous research shows general user demands to go green, and users can benefit from green development in academic libraries. However, scant studies focus on the details of green library development from users’ perspectives, especially in Hong Kong and Asia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The green library, also known as sustainable library, is “a library designed to minimize the negative impact on the natural environment and maximize indoor environmental quality through careful site selection, use of natural construction materials and biodegradable products, conservation of resources (water, energy, paper), and responsible waste disposal (recycling, etc.)” (Reitz, 1996). Some key terms are first clarified to facilitate subsequent discussions.

*Green*, is a concept “related to the protection of the environment,” with other synonyms, including environmentally friendly and sustainability. The term “*go green*” means “to do more to protect nature

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