

EXPLORATION OF URBAN GREEN SPACES' INFLUENCE ON COMMUNITY WELL-BEING AMONG URBAN RESIDENTS

Dr. Tayyaba Hanif¹, Tooba Nasir Khan², Shifa Fatima³, Qurat-ul-Ain⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Department of Humanities, COMSATS University Islamabad

¹tayyabahanif@comsats.edu.pk, ²toobanasirk@gmail.com, ³sh4202351@gmail.com, ⁴aniee6320@gmail.com

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Corresponding Author: *
Dr. Tayyaba Hanif

Abstract

Green spaces in cities are considered a basic need for healthy living at the city level. They provide more benefits than their aesthetic looks. This qualitative study highlights different effects that urban green spaces can have on the well-being of a community by exploring five major objectives: stress reduction, promotion of physical activity, community feelings, life satisfaction, and a conduit of social interaction. The study used purposive sampling to interview demographically diverse urban dwellers between the ages of 20 and 30 years old. An informative, purposeful sample has been selected from various backgrounds who have relevant experience. A rich and trustworthy data set ensured that new themes would not emerge after data collection had ended. Findings indicated that green space in the city significantly reduces psychological stress, promotes healthy lifestyles, enhances social bonding, and creates overall life satisfaction. Informed consent, anonymizing data, and respecting the right to withdraw protected the privacy and autonomy of the participants. This study was methodologically consistent through standardized interviewing and analytical methods clearly described, thereby enhancing credibility plus applicability. This study is crucial for urban planners, policymakers, and health officials who are getting on board in creating healthy environments.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, green spaces in urban areas have become increasingly recognized as valuable components of healthy urban living, serving many purposes beyond aesthetics. Urban populations require multiple functions from these spaces, such as parks, community gardens, and green corridors. Their contribution to public health and social cohesion goes beyond improving environmental quality. It has been established that facilitating opportunities for physical activity is facilitated by providing accessible and well-maintained urban green spaces, particularly in dense urban areas

where private outdoor space is limited (da Schio et al., 2021).

In 2021, the World Health Organization states that "urban green spaces, such as parks, playgrounds, and residential greenery, can help urban residents achieve mental and physical wellbeing, reduce morbidity and mortality, and promote psychological relaxation, relieve stress, promote social cohesion, and promote physical activity while reducing air pollution, noise, and excessive heat exposure". Research consistently identifies a number of health and social benefits associated with urban nature exposure. The impact of natural environment on mental wellness has been

well established by studies (Hunter et al., 2021). Green spaces also offers a welcoming setting for recreation and interaction that aids in establishing social bonds and a sense of community attachments, which can lower rates of neighborhood disorder, anxiety, and depression, the U.S. reports (Environmental Protection Agency, 2025). Green space presence can enhance physical health through the promotion of activities outside like walking, jogging, or sports. They also help to reduce air pollution and urban heat islands, among other environmental advantages. Green spaces integrate social, mental, as well as environmental advantages, hence making them critical elements of healthy, more integrated communities. The United Nation (n.d.) indicate that “expanding the quantity and quality of green areas has potential to reduce short-lived climate pollutants, which can save energy and enhance city climate quality,” as well as contribute indirectly to the happiness of residents. Urban green spaces’ effects on psychological, physical, and social well-being are poorly understood, although benefits are well understood. In 2021, the World Health Organization states, “Evidence on the health benefits of green spaces in urban environments is still limited, and further research is needed to understand the mechanisms and quantify the effects.” (WHO,2021).

The aim of this research is to investigate in depth the connection between urban green spaces and community well-being. In addition, the research examines how urban green spaces help to reduce stress, social engagement, feeling of belonging to community, and feeling of satisfaction with life. The research also seeks to examine frequent interaction with green spaces, which affect the life of urban residents and leads to building healthier, more resilient communities by looking at these spaces.

Theoretical Framework

As applied in this theoretical approach, urban green spaces are considered multidimensional spaces that contribute positively to the overall health and well-being of people by encouraging physical health, recovery in terms of mental health, social cohesion, environmental enhancement. There is a need to ensure equal access and inclusive planning so as to benefit all urban dwellers maximally, as brought out in the study. The aim is to make infrastructure, services, and public space accessible to individuals of the abilities, ages, and socio-economic status. Inclusive planning also encompasses the integration of varied communities in decision-making to meet their specific needs and priorities, thereby creating a sense of belonging and equity in urban design.

Figure 1

Figure 1

Conceptualizing Urban Green Spaces and Community Well-being



Figure 1 demonstrates a conceptual framework that describes the contribution of urban green spaces to well-being of communities through the interaction of three interrelated domains. Urban green spaces directly promote mental and physical well-being through a range of avenues, which involves psychological restoration, promotion of physical activity, social unity, and environmental benefits. Secondly, consideration for accessibility and equity-

Rationale for the Study

Urban green areas have now become more recognized as indispensable elements of healthy city living, and their significance goes far beyond mere aesthetics. Urban green spaces like parks, gardens, green rooftops, and recreation grounds, are the core elements in improving mental well-being, promoting physical activity, facilitating social interaction, and playing a major role in the overall satisfaction of urban dwellers (Xu et al., 2025; Hunter et al., 2021). Although interest is increasing, the complex and diverse effects of urban green spaces on multiple aspects of well-being are still not well understood. This presents a major challenge to urban planners, public health practitioners, and policymakers who seek to advance urban environments for healthier living. Mechelli (2024) points out that “people who live near green spaces struggle with mental health issues” confirming the positive association between nature and wellbeing. The study investigates in depth the impact of urban green spaces on various interrelated aspects of well-being of the community, including relief from stress, exercise, sense of community belonging, life satisfaction, and social connections. Understanding these correlations is essential since cities are increasingly threatened by rapid urbanization, environmental deterioration, and increasing mental and physical health issues among urban residents (Hunter et al., 2021).

From rich qualitative information in the daily lives of urban youth, the current research focuses on filling the evidence gap for what pertains to characteristics of urban green space as related to tangible mental,

geographical equity, socioeconomic accessibility, and cultural appropriateness—underscore the need to ensure equitable and inclusive access to these spaces. Countless engagement, sustainability, and policy coordination, promotes effective development and upkeep of green spaces. Connecting these elements enables community well-being to be enhanced all-round.

physical, and social health outcomes. In addition, the study highlights participatory planning and equitable access a key in theory. Disparities in provision a quality of green areas may widen social and health disparities, hence the importance of ensuring that green areas benefit all groups of people (American Bar Association, 2024). Due to this, this study responds to the call for urban planning approaches that prioritize community needs and promoting equitable access to green areas.

In summary, the rationale supporting this research is that it addresses a vital knowledge gap through an explanation of the mechanisms by urban green areas increase comprehensive community well-being. Its qualitative character and detailed scope will hopefully offer insightful findings needed for informing sustainable city planning and public health initiatives that promotes mental, physical, and social well-being in diverse urban populations.

Method

Research Objectives

1. To explore urban green spaces and self-reported stress levels among urban dwellers.
2. To investigate the role of green areas in urban cities in the physical activity of urban residents.
3. To investigate the contribution of urban green spaces towards nurturing a sense of belonging to community among residents in urban areas.
4. To assess the relationship between the availability of urban green spaces and the overall life satisfaction reported by urban residents.

5. To determine the impact of urban green spaces on promoting social interactions among residents in urban communities.

Research Design

This study explored the influence of urban green spaces affect community well-being, focusing on the stress reduction, physical activity, social interaction, life satisfaction, and a sense of belonging. In the current study, an exploratory research design was utilized. This approach was selected to allow flexibility in exploring the research problem, enabling the collection of diverse data without being limited by predefined hypotheses. It allowed the researchers to adjust their methods as new insights appeared, ensuring a thorough understanding of the subject. The researcher may use this method to select individuals who have direct experience with the phenomena under study and may provide rich, relevant, and diverse data on the phenomenon under study.

Participants

The study involved 12 participants, even though it was intended for 20. This still allowed for saturation of the themes in the study. This study selected participants using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly used in qualitative research. A total of 50% of the participants were males and 50% were females. The age group of our participants ranged from 20 to 30, of which 45% had ages between 20 and 25, while 55% had ages between 25 and 30. A total of 99 percent of the participants were unmarried, and only one percent was married. They were pursuing their bachelor's degree, some were pursuing their master's degree, and some of them were working. The data was gathered by conducting semi-structured in-person interviews in parks until thematic saturation was reached (Naeem et al.,2024).

Instruments

The interview protocol was carefully designed to ensure consistency and clarity, enhancing validity. Content validity was established by aligning interview questions with research

objectives stress levels, physical activity, community belonging, life satisfaction, and social interactions. Though expert review and pilot testing were not explicitly mentioned, the structured format and thematic saturation suggest a robust validation process. Construct validity was supported by translating theoretical concepts into focused questions, enabling the capture of the relevant lived experiences. A standardized interview protocol minimized extraneous variation, and thematic saturation further indicated strong construct validity (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Procedure

In previous research, the positive impact of urban green spaces on the health of individuals and communities has been consistently demonstrated. Environmental green spaces can strengthen social cohesion in communities and improve mental health. Research that explores these effects from the perspective of urban residents remains needed. The study used semi-structured interviews to address this gap. Diverse age and community perspectives were sought in selecting participants for the study. Various urban locations were used for recruitment, particularly parks and green spaces. The study was done face-to-face, and individuals were invited. It was informed to the participants beforehand that participation was voluntary before conducting each interview. Most participants agreed and provided reflective comments. Face-to-face interview were conducted using a set of series of questions that explored participants' use of the green spaces within the urban environment and their perceived effects on their mental, physical, and social well-being. To ensure accuracy, interviews were recorded using mobile device and later transcribed. Data collection continued until the saturation point, where no new themes or significant information emerged from the next interviews. The approach allowed us to garner rich, descriptive data covering a rich diversity of lived experience relating to urban green spaces and the influence on communal well-being.

Ethical Considerations

The moral standards were followed very strictly within the research. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants, and utter confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing all data, erasing every identifying information, and keeping all documents secure. Participants were informed that their interviews would be recorded for transcription purposes and additional analysis. The participants had the right to withdraw at any time, and we respected their right to refuse to participate. As O'Brien et al. (2021) emphasize “ethical

research conduct is not merely a question of adhering to guidelines, but about instilling respect, trust, and integrity in the research process” (p.553). We also prioritized the validity of our findings by following a consistent interview structure and maintaining transparency throughout the data collection and interpretation process.

Analysis Scheme

Following the transcription of data, the themes were identified, analyzed, and the present patterns within the data were analyzed thematically.

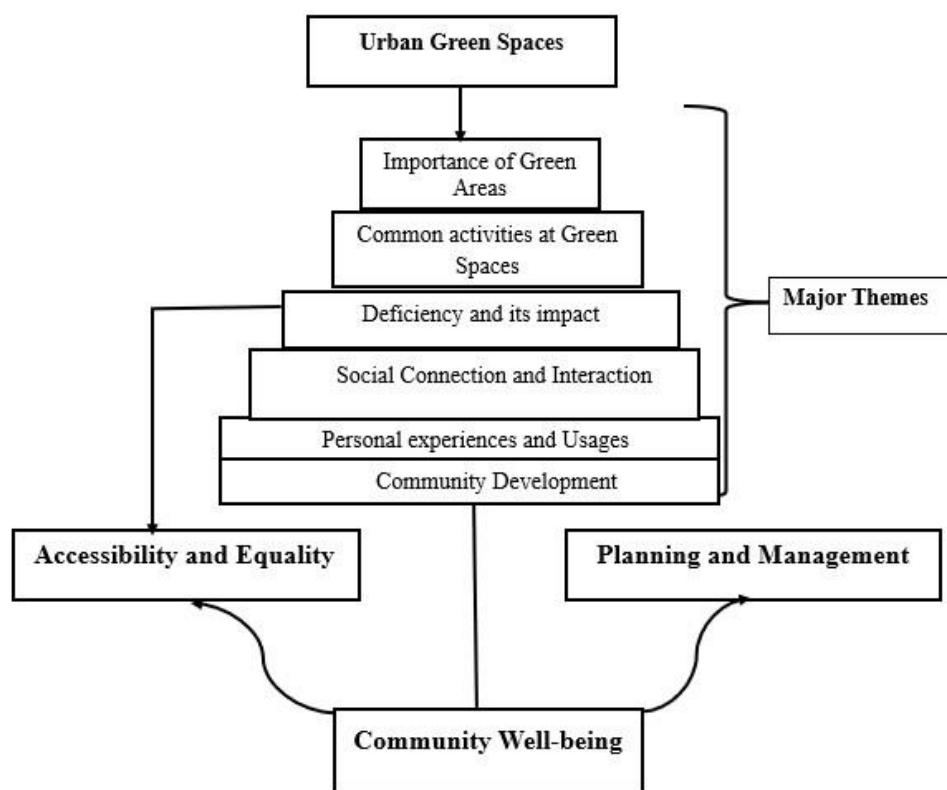


Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Note: The conceptual framework highlights how different thematic elements contribute to community well-being in urban green spaces. It starts by defining the core idea of urban green spaces. Then, it identifies key themes such as the importance of green areas, common activities, social interactions, shortcomings, personal and experiences. two critical dimensions, accessibility and equality, and planning and management, play a major role in affecting urban community health.

Ensuring fair access to green spaces and proper management, shaped by community involvement and usage patterns, is essential for improving overall health, connection, and quality of life in communities.

Results

Table 1

Thematic Findings of Importance of Urban Green Areas as a Major Theme (n=12).

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	Responses to Terms of Code	Verbatim	
			Male	Female
Importance of Green Areas	Environmental Benefits	Air purification Pollution Control	Islamabad mein halya salon mein fazai aloodgi zyada rahi hai... agar shehron mein zyada darakht aur sabza ho to oxygen ki miqdaar behtar hogi.	Ye na sirf sehat ke liye zaroori hain balkay ye shehron ki khubsurti mein bhi izafa karte hain.
	Aesthetic Values	Beautification, Urban Appeal	Sum bohat acha ha	Har cheez bohat pari ha
	Mental health	Emotional, Stress Relief	Jab mein sabza zar mein jata hoon to meray dimag ko sukoon milta hai.	

Table 1 illustrates the importance of green spaces. There are also sub-themes dealing with environmental benefits, aesthetic values, and mental health. The codes are also shown according to their verbatims.

Table 2

Thematic Findings of Common activities at Green Spaces as a Major Theme (n=12).

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	Responses to Terms of Code	Verbatim	
			Male	Female

Common activities at Green Spaces	Physical and Recreational	Walking, Exercise, Playing, Jogging, Leisure Picnics, Reading, Relaxation Sunbathing	Log aam tor par aisi sargarmiyan karte hain jo khuli jagon mein ki ja sakain, jaise khel kud, chahal qadmi, aur warzish	Zyada tar log wahan baith kar kitaab parhtay hain, dhoop senktay hain.
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Table 2 illustrates the Common activities at Green Spaces. The codes are walking, exercise, playing, jogging, leisure, picnics and reading, relaxation, sunbathing are also shown according to their verbatims.

Table 3

Thematic Findings of Deficiency and its impact as a Major Theme (n=12).

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	Responses to Terms of Code	Verbatim	
			Male	Female
Deficiency and its impact	Environmental Consequences	Increased Pollution, Temperature rise	Agar kisi ilaqay mein sabz jaga kam ho jaaye to wahan ke logon ko bohat masail ka samna karna parta hai.	
	Physical and Mental Well-being	Health Decline, Oxygen Deficiency, Stress		Agar koi open space na ho... to ye depressing ho sakta hai.

Table 3 illustrates the deficiency and its impact as a major theme. The environmental consequences and physical and mental well-being identified as a sub-theme. The codes are showing according to verbatims.

Table 4

Thematic Findings of Social Connection and Interaction as a Major Theme (n=12).

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	Responses to Terms of Code	Verbatim
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			Male	Female
Social Connection and Interaction	Friendship and Social Bonding	Making Friendship Community Interactions	.	Ye maqamat logon ko aik dosray ke qareeb lanay mein madad detay hain.
	Reducing Isolation	Anti-loneliness Socialization	Ye maqamat tanhai ke shikar afrad ke liye bohat madadgar sabit ho saktay hain.	

Table 4 illustrates the social connection and interaction as a major theme. Friendship and social bonding and reducing isolation are identified as a sub-theme. The codes are showing according to verbatims.

Table 5

Thematic Findings of Personal experiences and Usages as a Major Theme (n=12).

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	Responses to Terms of Code	Verbatim	
			Male	Female
Personal experiences and Usages	Psychological Relief	Relaxation, Routine break	.Mein subha ke waqt jogging karna pasand karta hoon	
		Memorable Nostalgia, Moments Childhood memories	Meray mamu k puranay tarz k ghar mein bohat saray darakht thay... jab bhi green space ki baat hoti hai, to wahi ghar yaad aata hai.	

Table 5 illustrates the personal experiences and usages as a major theme. The psychological relief identified as a sub-theme. The codes are relaxation, routine break, memorable nostalgia, childhood memories showing according to verbatims.

Table 6

Thematic Findings of Community Development as a Major Theme (n=12).

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	Responses to Terms of Code	Verbatim	
			Male	Female
Community Development	Community Participants	Tree planting, Awareness drives, Events		<i>Hum community satah par fundraising, volunteer work kar saktay hain.</i>
	Health and Well-Being	Active Lifestyle, Child growth		<i>Ye bachon ki nashonuma mein madadgar sabit hoti hain</i>
	Maintenance and Awareness	Cleanliness and management Staff, Proper maintenance system		<i>Sab se important cheez aik munazzam management system hai</i>
	Public Awareness	Education, Trainings, Campaigns	<i>Awareness bohat zuroori ha</i>	<i>Awareness program shuru ki ja saktay hai. jaise hajj ki tarbiyat di jaati hai.</i>



Table 6 illustrates community development as a major theme. The community participants, health and well-being, maintenance and awareness, and public awareness identified as a sub-theme. The codes are according to verbatims.

Discussion

According to the results of the study, green spaces in urban areas have a multitude of benefits for community wellbeing on several levels. According first objective, participants consistently reported that access to green spaces significantly alleviated stress and improved emotional balance. Research has shown that exposure to natural environments can reduce mental fatigue and enhance emotional well-being. It was evident that green spaces had a positive effect on levels of physical activity in the second objective. The participants stated that accessible green areas encouraged regular exercise, such as walking and jogging. The findings of

studies that demonstrate that urban green spaces can increase physical activity among residents are consistent with this observation. It has been shown that urban greenspaces can provide a variety of health benefits to human physical health by promoting physical activity (Garca de Jalón et al., 2021, p.5).

One of the research participant said: *Log aam tor par aisi sargarmiyen karte hain jo khuli jagon mein ki ja sakain, jaise khel kud, chahal qadmi, aur warzish*

In exploring the third objective, the role of green spaces in fostering a sense of community belonging was highlighted. Participants expressed that communal green areas serve as gathering points, facilitating social interactions and strengthening community ties. Such spaces have been recognized for their capacity to enhance social cohesion and support networks within urban settings. One other participant gives his view that *Ye maqamat tanhai ke*

shikar afrac ke liye bohat madadgar sabit ho saktay hain.

The fourth objective examined the link between being close to green spaces and overall well-being. The people who lived near tidy green places were found to have higher levels of life satisfaction. It has been argued that living near urban green spaces is associated with a greater degree of happiness and well-being. Urban green space is thought to contribute to citizen happiness by promoting physical and mental health (Kwon et al., 2021).

Another participant adds his point of view that *Ye bachon ki nashonuma mein madadgar sabit hoti hain*

Lastly, in regard to the fifth objective, the study found that green spaces played a pivotal role in enhancing social interactions among urban residents. Participants observed that parks and communal gardens provided venues for socializing, thereby enhancing social well-being. This aligns with findings that urban green spaces contribute to social interaction and community engagement. Despite these positive outcomes, challenges such as unequal distribution and maintenance of green spaces were identified, potentially limiting their benefits. These findings suggest that while urban green spaces hold significant potential for enhancing community wellbeing, addressing issues of accessibility and quality is crucial for maximizing their impact.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

There are a number of limitations and suggestions to this research, which provides great insight into the use of urban green spaces in improving community well-being. Over-reliance on self-reported information could lead to bias, and the absence of longitudinal data may hinder the comprehension of long-term effects. Furthermore, the study is not representative of residents of different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, as well as residents of areas with limited access to green spaces. Future studies should utilize larger and more diverse samples by age, socioeconomic status, and cultural background, as well as mixed methods or longitudinal methods. It is anticipated that this approach will contribute to social equity, improve public health, and foster a sense of belonging among residents. It is possible to create

environments that are both functional and welcoming by prioritizing inclusivity. Creating accessible spaces, ensuring equitable access to resources, and fostering a sense of belonging are all part of this process. The development of cities should prioritize inclusivity as a means of promoting social cohesion, improving quality of life, and supporting sustainable growth for all residents.

Implications

This study has major implications for urban design, public health, policy making, and future research in these fields. According to the research, urban planning should include more approachable and multifunctional parks in cityscapes, since they are beneficial to the mental, physical, and social well-being of citizens. Urban planners ought to incorporate green spaces into their work in an equitable way so that all, irrespective of their socioeconomic level or locality, can take advantage of them. Public health policy may also benefit from them comprehending urban green spaces as an essential tool for stress relief, physical activity participation and participation in community activities. A policy maker ought to think of green spaces as part of the public health infrastructure, imposing quality and accessibility, and promoting community engagement in planning and maintenance activities. Lastly, this research depicts the importance of qualitative lived experience data in expressing the social environment interaction dynamics, thus laying a foundation for future research that explore such dynamics in a variety of settings and groups. The research study on urban green spaces and community well-being was a collaborative effort, in which each member contributed equally to all stages. In crafting open-ended interview questions, which were refined and approved with guidance from the instructor, to conducting in-person interviews and securing participant consent for audio recordings, every step was accomplished with the utmost care and commitment.

Conclusion

A green space in an urban setting is important for mental, physical, and social well-being. The

presence of green spaces cultivates trust, a sense of belonging, and a sense of community identity among individuals, ameliorating feelings of loneliness and social isolation. These activities relieve stress, promote healthy living, and strengthen community ties. According to the participants' insight, better maintenance, accessibility, and community involvement are necessary. The planning and policy for green spaces must be prioritized in order to fully benefit urban populations. The results of future research with larger samples may provide valuable guidance for improving the design of urban spaces and public health.

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