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THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

TO EXAMINE URBAN OPEN SPACE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
IN CANDADICY FOR
THE DEGREE OF
BACHELR OF SCIENCE IN SURVEYING

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BY
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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Benefits of open space to neighbourhood have been widely documented in literature. In a community, different groups of people have different needs on recreation due to the differences in cultural, social and economic backgrounds. A successful recreation planning for community should fully consider the interests, desires and abilities of the different group of people in a community. Various professional knowledge should be involved to allocate resources in the most efficient ways to response to the needs. So that through actual provision of open spaces, people can acquire maximum satisfaction.

In Hong Kong, though the government aware the importance of recreation planning and it is found that the provision of open spaces is keep increasing. However, there are stills open spaces facing problems of under-use and improper of use. These problems are generated from how people perceive the open spaces and hence making recreation decision.

This dissertation aims to investigate the factors affecting the decisions and behaviour of park users. Case study research method is used to carry out the research. Three case studies on sitting-out areas locate in a different community are conducted. The findings will show how people perceive the sitting-out areas, and how different group of park users perceive differently and hence making different recreation decision.

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I would also like to thank the respondents in the case studies for giving their invaluable time to provide information for this study.

Lastly, I would give gratitude to my friends and family for providing me with their continuous support and encouragement.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this University or to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1   Background

In the last few decades, the process of urbanization repeated in different less developed countries. The scale of urbanization is becoming larger and in a faster pace. In the future, larger and denser cities are going to be found. The living environment in these cities is more and more compacted. It is reasonable that land will be a luxury in future. Therefore, effective use of land to ensure sustainability is an important issue. It is important that the provision of land should be able to meet the needs of the urban inhabitants.

Hong Kong, with a population of 6.8 million confined to an urban area of $200km^2$, is a hyper-dense city. However, in such a compacted city, it is found that there are many urban parks and open spaces in New Towns and Metro Area (Woo, 1996). Therefore, it is an important issue that the provision of urban parks and space is fulfilling its role in the community, otherwise it is a loss of resources from two sides. Firstly, if the parks are not enhancing the life of citizen, there is a loss of opportunity cost as it may be better for the land to be use in another way. Secondly, since the needs of citizen are not satisfied, the citizen loss the chance to retreat but which is supposed to be achieved.

Therefore, this research is carried out to see whether the current provision of urban parks and space are able to meet the community needs. Merely merely providing a piece of land will not satisfy the needs of the people, the recreation site should be properly designed and managed.

In this research, the perceptions of people to the urban parks and open spaces were investigated. Furthermore, the factors that affecting the recreation decision of park visitors will be studied. As a result, the answers to "how the park users perceive the current recreation option?" and "how they make the recreation decision?" received from this research is going to help the future recreation planning.

1.2 Aim

The aim of this dissertation is to carry out a research to investigate the relationship between the park visitors' behaviour and their perception to the parks.

1.3 Objectives

1. To review the existing recreational planning process and policies in Hong Kong

2. To identify the factors that affect the recreation decision of park visitors

3. To understand the relative importance of different factors that affect the recreation decision of different park visitors.

1.4 Methodology

The central question of this research is the factors that affecting the recreation decision made by park visitors. The methodology of this dissertation is carried out in two ways – literature review and case studies.

The research is started with reviewing related literature as the sources of background information. Firstly, literature regarding the current recreation planning policies and process in Hong Kong will be reviewed to familiarize the issue. Secondly, common factors that affecting the recreation decision of park visitors will be acquired. Afterwards, a theoretical framework stating the role of perception in recreation decision-making will be shaped.

Later on , case studies are done in three sitting-out areas. They are locating at Caine Road (Hong Kong Island), Mei Foo (Kowloon) and Yuen Long (New Territories). Park visitors in these three sitting-out areas are interviewed about their perception and satisfaction on the recreation sites. Factors that affect the choice of park visitors and their level of satisfaction to the sitting-out areas are explored. Finally, the reasons that affect the decision and behaviour of park visitors at each sitting-out area will be compared and analyzed. For the sake of acquiring more reliable and accurate data open-ended questions were asked to collect information about the factors that affect perception and recreation decision. It is because if the respondents were given with a list of factors as choices, they will be confined to the given materials and as a result, the data become less accurate and reliable. Therefore, sufficient freedom was given to respondents to express freely.

Finally, the facotrs that affect the decision and behaviour of park visitors at each sitting-out area will be compared and analyzed by the reviewed literature.

1.5   Outline of the dissertation

There are altogether eight chapters in this dissertation

The dissertation begins with an introduction. Chapter 2 is the literature review. Literatures regarding the relationship between environment and human perceptions are reviewed. The role of urban parks and open spaces in community is also reviewed through previous literature. Furthermore, the common factors that affect park visitors' perception and recreation decision are also reviewed. Afterwards, theoretical framework can be generated and applied for data analysis.

For Chapter 3, an overview on the recreation planning and provision of urban parks and open spaces in Hong Kong will be given. Besides, major planning process and landuse control for recreational developments will also be mentioned.

For Chapter 4, the hypothesis to be tested in this research will be discussed. Besides, reasons for choosing particular types of research methods will be illustrated.

Since questionnaire interview were adopted to collect data. In Chapter 5, the approach used in the construction of the questionnaire is discussed.

The data obtained from case studies are shown and analyzed in Chapter 6. In this chapter, an individual report is produced for each case. Theories generated from the review literature are applied to analyze the collected data. Factors affecting the park visitors' perception and their recreation decision are discussed.

A cross-case analysis is then carried out in Chapter 7 to use a different manner to analyze the cases together. Cases are compared among each other and compared with the theoretical framework formed in Chapter 2.

Finally, a conclusion of this dissertation is provided in Chapter 8. Limitations of this dissertation and suggestion for further study are also discussed.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

This chapter aims at reviewing literature relating to the provision of urban open spaces and the recreation decision made by park visitors. Firstly, the literature about recreation planning is studied to have understanding about the concepts of recreation planning and benefits of open spaces in society. Secondly, the decision theories of park visitors are discussed for later examination. Thirdly, the major factors considered by park visitors to make recreation decision are investigated. To start with, terms relate to this research are defined.

2.2   Definition of terms

Definition of Urban

To examine the urban public spaces in Hong Kong, the term urban public spaces

should be first defined. According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, "Urban" is an adjective with the meaning "of or in a city or town".

Eiser *et al* (1993) pointed urban areas are locations where opportunities are provided for different living style and living environment, with social and cultural relationships undergo within the area. Therefore, "urban" is not necessary to be town or city

In Hong Kong, urban areas are defined as Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Towns which are intensively developed (HKPSG, 2007).

Definitions of Open Spaces

The definition of "urban" gives the boundary of the research and in the following, public spaces would be defined. The Master Schedule of Notes to Statutory Plans (2007) issued by Town Planning Board gives a definition to public spaces. It defines open space as:

> "Any land with the minimum of building
> structure which has been reserved for either
> passive or active recreation and provides
> major or minor recreational facilities, which
> may be of local or district significance, which
> is for the use and enjoyment of the general
> public"

For another metropolitan city, the New York City, a more simple definition to open

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space is given. The City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR, 2006) of the New York City Department of City planning acts as an environmental regulation for any project involve nature impacts, provides the definition. It stated:

> "Open space may be publicly or privately owned and may be used for active or passive recreational. Open space is defined as facilities open to the public at designated hours on a regular basis and is assessed for impacts under CEQR rules. A open space is determined to be active or passive by the uses which the design of the space allows."

Foreign urban planners noted open spaces as parks, plazas, playgrounds and grounds of public buildings, being open and available to the public with unique recreational opportunities. Furthermore, open spaces in the city are usually considered as the areas for recreation and there are spaces devoted primarily to active playgrounds for children, youth and adults, and there are also spaces for adults' passive relaxation (Eiser *et al* , 1993 ; Deasy and Lasswell , 1985). Recently, open space is interpreted as a common ground for social interaction and communication. Thus, it is a stage for social learning, personal development and information exchange (Carmona et al, 2003).

As mentioned above, open space can be active or passive. HKPSG gives explanation on both terms, as noted in chapter 4 S 1.6(1),

"Active open space is recreation open space contains outdoor recreation facilities, mainly for the core activities including games facilities. Passive Open Space is landscaped parks, gardens, sitting-out areas, waterfront promenades, paved areas for informal games, children's playgrounds, jogging and fitness circuits etc., where people can enjoy the surroundings in a leisurely manner. Games facilities are normally not provided."

Definition of Urban Public Spaces

According to the definition to public spaces mentioned above, from Hong Kong Planning Department to Department of City Planning of New York City and also urban planners from America and Europe. It is found that their understandings to urban public spaces do not show great difference. The term "Urban Open Spaces" in this dissertation refers to all urban areas with minimum building structure and accessible to the general publics for wither acive or passive recreational uses with local, district or regional significance. They include parks, gardens, children playgrounds, rest gardens and sitting-out areas.

2.3   Concept of Recreation Planning

Today, public open place planning is one of the important isuues in urban planning (Woolley, 2003). Recreation planning is a process that relates people to leisure time and spacae (Gold, 1973). Through recreation planning, certain benefits are bought to the society (Woolley, 2003).

The community-based approach or user-based approach adopted in recreation planning provides full connection between planning goals and community needs (Lancaster, 1987). These approaches emphasize on social objectives, qualitative measurement of satisfaction from recreation, formulation of alternatives of plan, continuous planning and review exercises, decentralization and flexibility of planning process (Lau, 1995). Through these approaches, government advocates neighbourhood's interests and is responsive to the needs of the general public (Davidoff, 1965).

Recreation Planning is a professional subject that required multi-disciplinary knowledge. From urban planning, landscape architecture, management to psychology, sociology etc (Bannon, 1976) Figure 2.1 shows the parties involved in recreational planning.

Figure 2.1 The Parties Involved in Recreational Planning

Source: Modification from Bannon, J.J. (1976)

2.4   Benefits of Open Space to Society

Many benefits and opportunities are provided by the existence of open spaces in urban areas According to Woolley, it is because open spaces provide opportunities for certain activities, such as play, watching and walking. The benefits associated with such activities might relate to improved mental or physical health (Woolley, 2003).

There is agreement that open spaces are of benefit in the urban situation. Ontario Federation of Parks and Recreation identifies for categories of benefits of parks and recreation as being personal, social, economic and environmental. Driver and Rosenthal (1978) identified social benefits of open spaces as:

" - Developing, applying and testing skills and abilities for a better sense of worth;

- Exercising to stay physically fit; Resting, both physically and mentally;
- Associating with close friends and other users to develop new friendships and a better sense of social place;
- Gaining social recognition to enhance self-esteem;
- Enhancing a feeling of family kinship or solidarity
- Teaching and leading the others, especially to help direct the growth, learning and development of one's children
- Feeling free, independent and more in control than is possible in a more structured home and work environment;
- Learning more about nature, especially natural processes
- Exploring and being stimulated, especially as a means of coping with boring, undemanding jobs and to satisfy curiosity and the need for exploration"

The Department of the Environment of United Kingdom grouped the benefits of open spaces and greening urban areas into three main categories. They are economic regeneration, environmental and educational and social and cultural (UK Department of the Environment, 1986). The Council of Europe describes open space as a public living room for the locality (Council of Europe, 1986) The Council of Europe identifies open space and its importance that:

"-   Open space is an essential human heritage

-    strong architectural and aesthetic element

-    play an important educational role

-    ecologically significant

-    important for social interaction

-    foster community development

-    support economic objectives and activities

-    helps and redure the inherent tension

-    important role in providing for the recreational and

leisure needs of a community

-    has an economic value in that of environmental enhancement"

Council of Europe also states that besides recreational and leisure role, open space has an educational role, is of ecological significance, is important for social interaction and provides opportunities for community development through giving

management responsibilities to individuals. To conclude, the benefits of open space fall into four main categories, they are Social, Health, Environmental and Economic benefits. In for following, each categories of benefits will be discussed briefly.

For social benefits, it includes children development through playing in the open spaces (Greenhalgh and Worpole, 1995; Dennett *et al*, 2002; Noschis, 1992).; opportunities for rest and relaxation through passive activities (Morgan, 1991; More, 1988); social connection building through active activities (Collins, 1994; Sainsbury, 1987); attract number of people as a community focus (Greenhalgh and Worpole, 1995; Hoyles, 1994) ; as a cultural focus for religious and cultural group and educational opportunities ((Hutchison, 1987; Teagle, 1974; Morgan, 1974).

For health benefits, it includes contribution to physical health through opportunities for exercise (Bundred *et al*, 2001; Jacobson and Kulling, 1989); contribution to mental health through restorative effects of nature (Ulrich, 1981; Herzog et al, 1997); an experience for people of near nature that difficult to be found from urban life (Taylor, 1994; Gilbert, 1991); opportunities for aesthetic appreciation hence a good quality external environment (Bradley and Milward, 1986; Kuo *et al*, 1998).

For environmental benefits, it includes climate and environmental amelioration like amelioration of airflow, radiation and reduction of air pollution, air temperature, noise pollution (Dodd, 1988; Francis *et al*, 1984; Heisler, 1977; Hitchmough and

Bonugli, 1997); wildlife opportunities for habits (Sukopp and hence, 1988; Nicholson-Lord, 1987).

For economic benefits, it includes increasing property values (Hoyles, 1994; Danzer, 1987); providing direct and indirect employment opportunities (Tregay and Gustavsson, 1983; Dunnett *et al*, 2002); attract tourist from other regions (Rugg, 2000, Dunnett *et al*, 2002)

Though open spaces offer different benefits, yet these benefits and opportunities are not always discrete experiences and the use of an urban open space for one primary reason may result in a secondary benefit (Woolley, 2002). This can be understood as people take children to play in an urban open space, time spent in this way also provide the opportunity to get away from hustle and bustle of domestic or work issues or the stress of unemployment for mental restoration or catching up with community news from other adults and children met along the way.

2.5 Decision Theories of Park Visitors

As mentioned above, open spaces provide social, health, educational and economic opportunities. The opportunities that park visitors acquired formulate their park experience. Lucas (1964) found that visitors' experience affects the decision of choosing a site for leisure and recreation activities. An experience is shaped by

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landscape, enviroscape and psychoscape (Schulte-Fortkamp, 2000). Figure 2.2 shows how one's recreation experience is shaped.
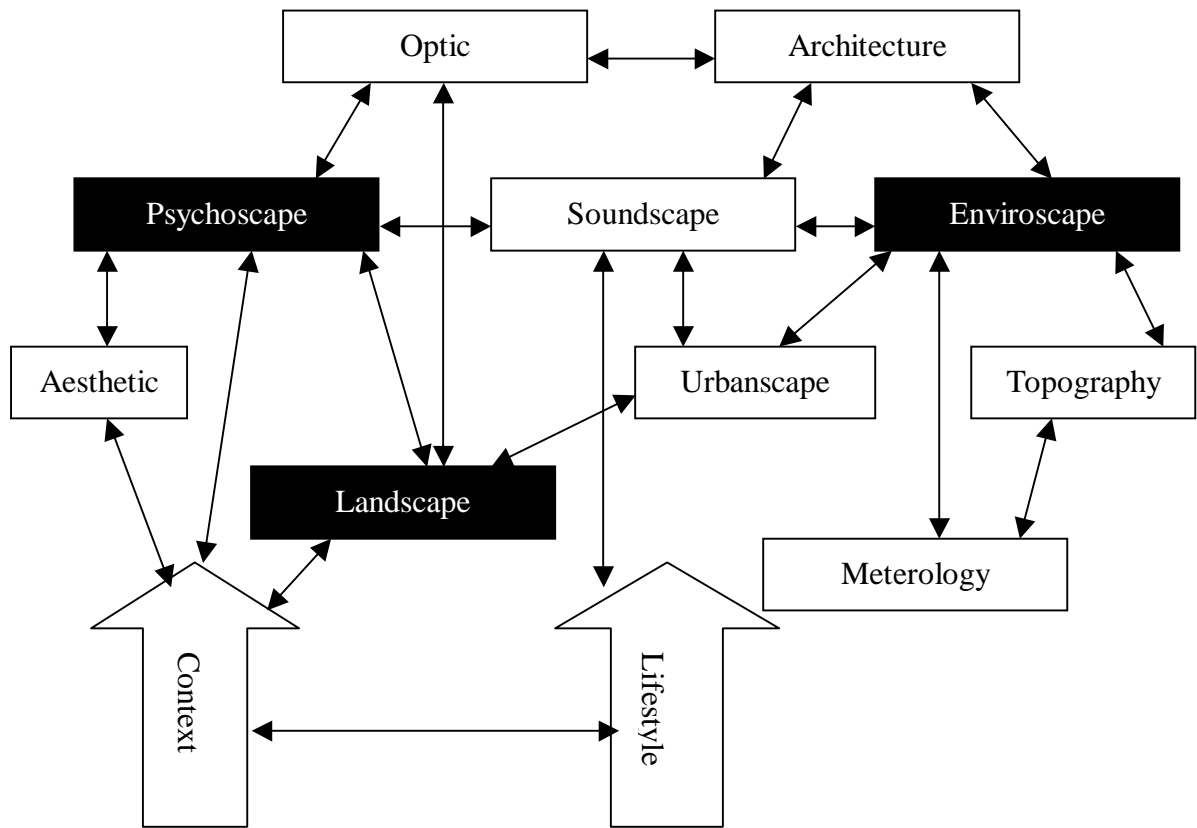
Figure 2.2: Factors Shaping Parks Experience

Source: Schulte-Fortkamp, 2000

With the knowledge of how park experience is shaped, in the following session, the question of "how experience affect park visitors' decisions?" is investigated. Besides findings of Lucas, Hatry (1977) found that park utilization is closely related to factors including the level of enjoyment, crowdedness, physical attractiveness, safety and accessibility as perceived by park visitors. Hayward (1980) further suggested that personal perception of the available recreation opportunities defined

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by their knowledge, attitudes and intentions of park visitation affect recreation decision. The schematic model (Figure 2.3) by Hayward and Weitzer shows the relationship between personal perception and experience to recreation decision and park visitor behaviour.

```
                    ┌──────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
                    │ Environment and  │─────▶│ Past experience  │────┐
                    │ People in the Park│      │                  │    │
                    └──────────────────┘      └──────────────────┘    │
┌──────────────────┐        │      ╲                    │             │
│Recreational Interest│─────┤      │  ╲                 ▼             │
└──────────────────┘        │      ▼    ╲     ┌──────────────────┐    │
                    │       ┌──────────────────┐│ Decision to visit the│   │
                    └──────▶│ Perception/ Image of│──▶│ park             │   │
                            │ the Park         │    └──────────────────┘    │
                            └──────────────────┘                            │
                                │           ╲                               │
                                ▼            ╲                              │
                    ┌──────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────┐           │
                    │ Decision not to visit the│ Park Visitor     │◀─────────┘
                    │ park             │    │ Behaviour        │
                    └──────────────────┘    └──────────────────┘
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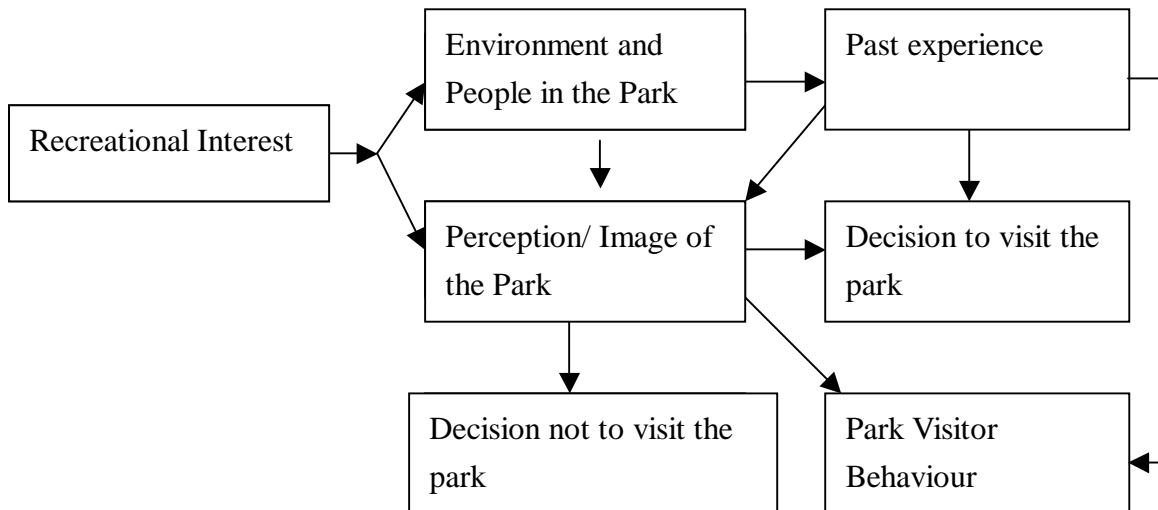
Figure 2.3: The Schematic Model of Decision Making by Park Visitors

Source: Hayward and Weitzer, 1984

From the schematic model, past park experience and perception to the park affects the visitor's decision and behaviour in the park. As mentioned above, the literature that relates to shaping of past experience is reviewed. In the last session of this chapter, the factors that affect the visitors' behaviour and decision are reviewed.

2.6   Factors affect park visitors' behaviour and decision

As one's perception and image to a park affect his/her decision and behaviour, literature is reviewed to find these motivating factors. Leighton (1968) proposed ten "essential striving sentiments" ranging from Physical Security to Sense of Blongings to Moral order. Maslow (1987) further condensed the idea of Leighton into four elements. They were Food and Drinks Needs, Security and Safety Needs, The Need for Afffection and The need for Self-Actualization. Under this framework of needs, though Food and Drinks Needs and Security and Safety Needs are suggested to be the strongest and therefore more basic needs, while The Need for Afffection and The Need for Self-Actualization are the weakest. However, neither all of these motivating factors are of equal importance nor do they have the same priority at all stages of life. As suggested by Woolley (2003), different communities at different parts of the world exist at different level in the framework of needs.

Deasy and Lasswell (1985) ascertained this as below.

> "If the imperative needs for food and drink become more difficult to satisfy, there will be little concern for such abstract matters as self-actualization. In societies where food and security are more or less assured, the needs for affection and self-actualization become much more important"

Another local research further found that Hong Kong people were attracted by parks because of seven attributes (Lam *et al*, 2005). They were Tranquility, Cleanliness, Water Structure, Fresh Air, Accessibility, Recreational Facilities and Greenery. There were also five attributes that the Hong Kong people dislike in the parks and they were Poor Air Quality, Noisiness, Lack of shading, Dirtiness and Inadequate recreational facilities. For these motivating factors, it is found that environment condition is also a source of motivating factors to affect visitors' decision and behaviour.

To summarize, there are 6 categories of factors that affecting people's decision and behaviour. They are:

a) Friendship Formation;

b) Personal Space;

c) Personal Status;

d) Personal safety.

e) Physical attractiveness

f) Environmental Conditions

In the following, the meaning of each motivating factor will be studied.

a) Friendship Formation

Friendships are formed on the basis of shared interests and backgrounds; hence contact is an indispensable part of the process (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985). Therefore,

physical closeness is important to create contacts and hence interaction among people (Stoneham, 1996). To develop social contacts in parks, the park should attract more park visitors. It is found that park visitors are attracted to parks because they are interested in certain activities being provided in the parks (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985). Therefore, if there is children playground in a park, many parents like to bring their children there and undertake the passive activity of watching children play while socializing themselves (Greenhalgh and Worpole, 1995). As a result, social contacts among parents are started due to the children playground being provided in the park. Furthermore, if there are jogging tracks in park, while jogging is one of the most favoured activities in open spaces. It attracts joggers to go to the park and therefore simply a provision of resting benches creates social contacts among different joggers (Collins, 1994).

All people from a diverse ethnical and social backgrounds use parks because they offered greenery and recreational opportunities for people and their children (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995). Therefore, parks are a neutral ground where people tolerate a wide range of activities and people, it is a place of freedom within the city (More, 1988). Ethic of care, being a model of moral development, is exhibited during the process of toleration. This ethic of care may relate to caring for children, older relatives, friends and even strangers and it is found that women exhibit more than men. Yet, no matter which groups of people exhibit this ethic of care more or less, bonding among people is formed (Day, 2000).

It is also identified that in UK, one-third of people visit parks alone, while another third visit with a friend and the final third visit parks with large group of people

(Greenhalgh and Worpole, 1995). Therefore, familial and friendship groups use parks for meeting each other for children to play, informal games, walking etc. (Woolley, 2003). For the single visitor, who goes to parks for meeting friends, making friends or pursuit of caring from the others (Greenhalgh and Worpole, 1995). Therefore, friendship formation is one of the motivating factors because open space offers the chances to chat with people, to make new friends and with proper design arrangement that create contacts among different people (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985).

b) Personal Space

Personal space is important in the issues of privacy and physical contact (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985). People from different cultural background have different feelings about personal space (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995). For example, minority activities like skate-boarding are important to some young people, predominantly young men, who form social ties with like-minded people while undertaking this very physical activity in outdoor spaces, which they claimed as their own spaces (Woolley and Johns, 2001).

Another example is that in Chicago, a study investigated the impact of an open space on neighbourhood ties and the sense of community. The location of the open space was a community of mainly African Americans in an age-integrate public housing development. It is found that they like to hang out and have parties in the open space, they possessed the open space for parties and set up temporary structure (Kweon *et al*, 1998). This shows that different cultural groups have different concept in using

spaces in an open space. A research by Hutchison on the leisure patterns of Black, White and Hispanic groups shows that Black and White groups had a preference to have mobile activities while Hispanic groups preferred stationary activities. Therefore, the needs of space possession by stationary activities were higher than that of mobile activities.

Furthermore, previous research found that in open space, main behaviours in early evening were affection (eg, holding hands and kissing) and conversation (More, 1988). Therefore, these users required isolated space to provide privacy for personal discussions, intimate behaviours etc (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985).

As identified that people may visit parks alone, with a friend or with large group of people (Greenhalgh and Worpole, 1995). Therefore, it is important for these groups of people to have suitable seating in the open spaces so that an isolated environment is provided for discussions and activities (Whyte, 1980). It is because people are usually intended to avoid physical contact with strangers. They consistently avoid public seating that puts them uncomfortably close to others. Therefore, it is not efficient to provide long seats in open spaces but short and movable seats are park visitors' favourite.

People from different cultural backgrounds have different needs on personal space in open spaces, they need personal space to enjoy freedom and privacy, therefore personal space is an motivating factors to affect the decision and behaviour of park visitors (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985).

c) Personal Status

Human beings employ a variety of techniques for affirming their own self-definitions (Maslow, 1987). Through the image or status that an open space communicates to a viewer, it determines what status it gives the visitors and hence how the visitors perceive the space ((Deasy and Lasswell, 1985). The use of physical artifacts to affirm personal status is mostly happened in private space (Maslow, 1987). For example, the corporate headquarters buildings rising higher and higher in metropolitan centers. Personal status is difficult to be shaped from the physical artifacts of open spaces because all visitors are enjoying the same design features and areas. Therefore, personal status is not shaped through the design features of open spaces but through another direction (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985).

The personal status of park visitors is shaped through the perception of the other viewer (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985). As mentioned, parks are a neutral ground where people tolerate a wide range of activities and people; it is a place of freedom within the city (More, 1988). Therefore, part of the viewers' perceptions comes from the park users ranges and the activities carried out by them (McNeish and Roberts, 1995). As a result, some parks are perceived as better, while some are perceived as worse. The reasons for perceiving an open space as a worse one are mostly because of safety problems. People fear of strangers, drugs, bullying and dogs and their perception even get worse with the incidents reports of media or discussion among neighbours (McNeish and Roberts, 1995).

Lam (2003) illustrated how an open space may affect personal status and hence affect visitors' decision as follow. With such a low reputation open space in the community, schools would recommend their students not go to these open spaces as they worry the status of their students, hence the reputation of the schools will be affected. Parents would also restrict their children to go to these open spaces as they worried their children to be lured by the bad things (e.g. drugs, bullying) in the open space and also be treated as the bad children. The Image of park in community and also the outsiders' perception to the park affect the personal status of park visitors, therefore personal status is one of the motivating factors affect decision and behaviour of park visitors (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985).

d) Personal Safety

Personal Safety is a characteristic that is universally considered in human nature. People will not knowingly take risks unless there are some rewards involved, either in the form of some material gain or some psychological reward (Maslow, 1987). To provide personal safety, the most effective method is to provide concentrate activities in a limited number of areas. Therefore, more people being together ensure a more surveillance place (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985). Furthermore, parks may even provide shortcut to bus stop, shopping district and school to generate more foot traffic so that more people walk pass the open space to ensure higher safety (Hoyles, 1994).

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Research shows that people would think a park is not safe because of the low visibility in the park (McNeish and Roberts, 1995). Therefore, besides acting as shortcuts and provide concentrate activities in a limited space, surveillance can be improved by making the open spaces being visible from boundary streets to interior. Lights were also provided so that evening activities can be carried out safely (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985). The park users' groups, activities carried out by different users and suitability of protection for small children are also the factors considered by park users regarding personal safety (Sainsbury, 1987). Protection for small children is a concern to park users, mostly parents, because children are small in size, The play areas for children should be fenced off to protect them from the rough play of older children and convenient and comfortable seating should be provided for their parents to have better watching (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985).

e) Physical Attractiveness

Physical attractiveness is the physical attributes of open spaces. Cleanliness, water structure, natural views, greenery, shading, recreational facilities and accessibility are the physical quantities that affecting park visitors' perception (Lam *et al* 2003). For the provision of water structure, greenery and shading, they affects people's peception because natural settings can provide opportunity for restoration from fatigue and it is faster to recover from stress through nature rather than urban environment (Herzog *et al*, 1997; Ulrich *et al*, 1991). Furthermore, it is found that the most favourite places by people are mostly places with greenery, water and of scenic quality (Korpela and Hartig, 1996). It is also noted that park visitors favour parks with shading areas

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because the shading areas provide a comfortable environment for carrying out passive activities (Kaplan, 1995).

For accessibility, it is important that the open spaces locate at a convenient location. So that it is convenient for elderly and children to go to these open space without traveling too far away from home (Hart, 1979). For recreational facilities, they should be suitable and in good order. As a result, suitable facilities for community can attract wide range of park users (Rishbeth, 2001). Moreover, suitable facilities provide park users the opportunities to develop feelings of well-being, self confidence, relaxation and independence (Sainsbury, 1987). For example the provision of facilities for people with disabilities can inspire enthusiasm, provide pleasure and confidence (De Potter, 1991; Jackson, 1991). Recreational facilities in good order also ensure the safety of park users so that risk of being suffered from facilities is reduced, and it is important to attract more park visitors with a safer park perception (McNeish and Roberts, 1995).

Nature encounter is important to park users because it is found that the presence of chances to near the nature in urban contribute to the quality of life for humans through the opportunity for the sensuous pleasure of touch, sight, smell and sound (Gilbert, 1991). It is also important to recover from stress in daily life through the restorative effects of nature (Ulrich, 1979, 1981). Besides, people have a preference for natural settings and elements over man-made or urban elements (Kaplan and Wendt, 1972). Open Spaces, being close to community, provide a variety of naturalistic conditions so that people can have contact with the natural world without going far (Goode, 1997).

f) Environment Condition

Improving the urban environment is purported to be one of the key functions of open spaces (Woolley, 2003). The attributes of environmental condition in an open space include air quality and noise level (Lam *et al*, 2003). One function of open spaces is that of helping to improve the quality of the air in a neighbourhood (Francis *et al*, 1984). During this process, carbon dioxide is taken up by vegetation and oxygen and released into the air. Research has revealed that substantial amount of carbon dioxide generated by man can be absorbed by the plants in open spaces (Cotton and Pielke, 1995).

For control of noise level in open spaces, research of Heisler(1977) stated the relationship between open space and noise level. His study first stated that trees couldn't reduce a high level of noise unless a wide barrier of trees was used. Secondly, the rustling of leaves and associated birds and other wildlife affect human perception of the noise source, reducing it by masking it. Thirdly, trees act as psychological barrier that a visual vegetation scrren make people less conscious of the noise source (Heisler, 1977). Therefore, open space provide a sense of peacefulness and tranquility through the demanded environment condition (Kaplan, 1983) and hence, environment condition is being considered as an influencing factor to affect decision and behaviour.

The above six items are the motivating factors that affect the park visitors' decisions and behaviour. The understanding to these factors will be used to analyze the data collected from questionnaire interview.

2.7   Conclusion

To conclude, related literature gives definition to the terms required in this research. Furthermore, the concept of recreation planning is reviewed through literature and the benefits of open spaces are also reviewed as the background knowledge of this research. From the literature regarding environment and human perception, the decision theories of park visitors and factors affecting recreation decision and behaviour are reviewed. As a result, foundation is built up from literature review to construct the methodology, questionnaire and help analyzing data

Chapter 3

Overview on the Recreation Planning in Hong Kong

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an overview on the recreation planning and provision of urban parks and open spaces in Hong Kong will be given. Besides, major planning process and landuse control for recreational developments will also be mentioned.

3.2 Planning and Provision of Urban Parks and Open Spaces

Hong Kong is a dense and compact city, with population of 6.8million concentrates in urban area of slightly over 200km^2, the population density of Hong Kong is one of the highest in the world (Lam *et al*, 2005). Though the total land area of Hong Kong is much larger (1000km^2), yet urban development covers Hong Kong, Kowloon and a number of new towns in the New Territories only. Lands situate beyond the urban boundary are country parks, water gathering grounds or undeveloped rugged or steep areas (Cheuk, 1991).

As what Woo (1996) noted, there are many urban parks and open spaces within the Metro area (Area around Victoria Habour in Hong Kong and Kowloon) and New Towns. Provision of outdoor recreational open spaces in urban areas has experienced changes over past ten years. Figure 3.1 shows that there have been increase in the total area of urban parks and public open spaces in the past ten years. The types of

urban parks and open spaces also varied from small rest gardens with simple benches to multifunctional parks.

Figure 3.1 The Provision of Urban Parks and Public Spaces in Hong Kong
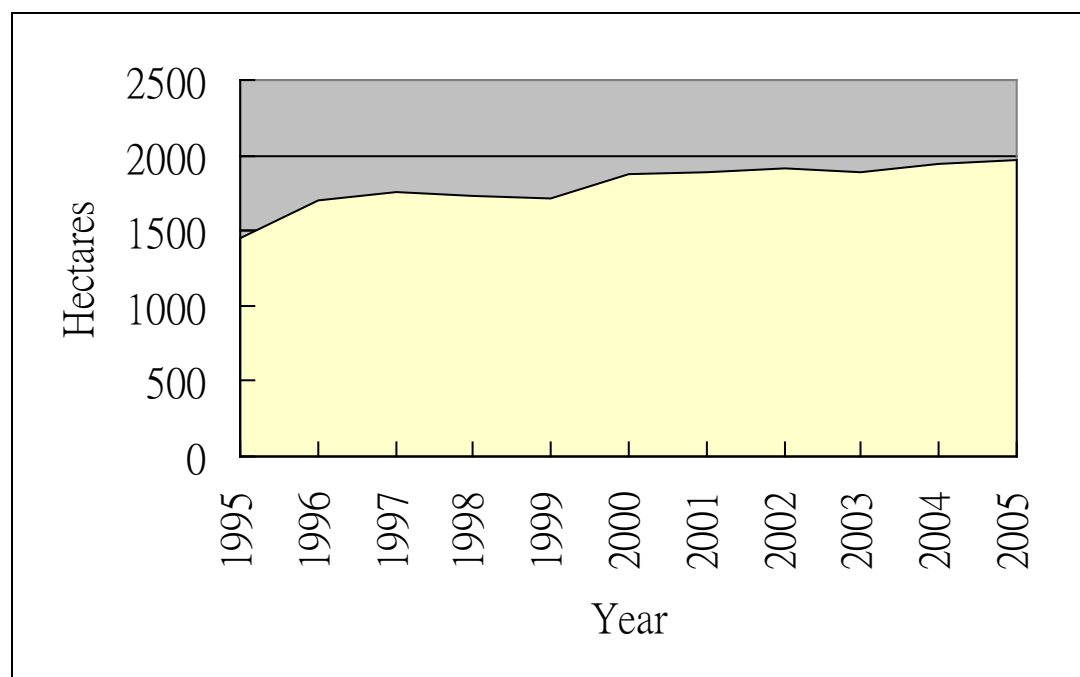
Source : Hong Kong Annual Digest of Statistics (1996-2005)

Started from 1980s, provision of outdoor recreational facilities in urban areas kept on increasing. More and More large-scale projects like Lai Chi Kok Park were finished to provide leisure opportunities for the public. Besides, there was a tendency to provide more sports facilities for the public. As in year 1995, there were 67 sports centers and 49 jogging tracks, while both number of sports centers and jogging tracks increased to 85 in year 2005 (Statistics Department, 1996, 2006).

Hong Kong is a compact city; it will be more difficult to provide recreational facilities through land allocation in future (Gilges, 1998). Therefore, more effective use of land will be the major direction. For example the provision of sports centres in multi-use

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buildings and provision of jogging tracks in marine areas (Planning Department, 2007). Moreover, planning standard and guidelines help planning and distribution of recreation facilities and open spaces in new development. While those old developed areas will be improved through urban renewal.

3.3   Planning Process for Urban Parks and Open Spaces

3.3.1   Classification

Urban outdoor recreational areas in Hong Kong could be divided into three categories. They are regional, district and local, according to the serving thresholds and types of facilities provided (HKPSG, 2007).

1) Regional Open Spaces

Regional open spaces are on the top level of the clarification system. They serve the whole territory. They are the largest ones in terms of size. Unique and specific recreational facilities will be provided. Active and Passive recreational facilities provided in Local and District Open Spaces are also offered (HKPSG, 2007).

Kowloon Park in Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong Park in Admiralty and Victoria Park in Casuseway Bay are the example of Regional Open Spaces.

2) District Open Spaces

The sizes of district open spaces are usually larger than the local open spaces with

more active recreational facilities provided. The district open spaces also serve the function of local open spaces. The number of district open spaces in each community is usually smaller than local open spaces. District open spaces attract all residents living within the district to go there for sporty and active recreational activities. People visit this type of recreational sites less frequent than local open spaces due to the relatively longer walking distance. Large soccer pitches and sports grounds are common district open spaces in the communities (HKPSG, 2007).

3) Local Open Spaces

Local open spaces are the smallest in size in comparing with others. They usually attract user from surrounding neighbourhood and provide simple facilities mainly for passive recreational activities. The number of local open spaces in a community is usually the largest one in comparing with the other two categories of open spaces. Kids and elderly are the major users of this type of open spaces because of their close proximity to home and simple facilities provided. People visit these areas frequently with shorter duration (HKPSG, 2007).

3.3.2   Major Parties involved and Planning Process

Major Parties

Major parties involving in the planning and provision of urban parks and open spaces are shown in Figure 3.2. Planning Process of recreational landuse is a complicated process involving multi-disciplinary knowledge, expertise and smooth coordination among various actors (Lau, 1995). Therefore, it is impossible to show all parties

involved and the linkages among them. The parties mentioned below are the major ones with significant influence on the planning process of recreational open spaces in terms of policy formation, land use control and implementation.

There is no sole authority to supervise the planning policies for recreational developments . Today, Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (SHPL), Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (SETW), Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA), Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (SHWF) and Planning Standard Sub-committee (PSSC) are major authorities working together to structure planning policies for recreational developments and to allocate land resources for recreational and cultural matters.

For Town Planning Board, Planning District Offices of Planning Department (Plan D), Planning Standards Sub-Committee (PSSC) and Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) turn the strategies from higher level into planning programmes for implementation. District Board and other voluntary agencies help promoting the recreational activities and act as advisory bodies for execution.

Management of facilities comes after implementation of policies. Departments under Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works, Leisure and Cultural Services Department and also the District Board take up the major responsibilities for actual provision and managerial works.

Figure 3.2 Major actors involve in the planning and provision of urban parks and open spaces
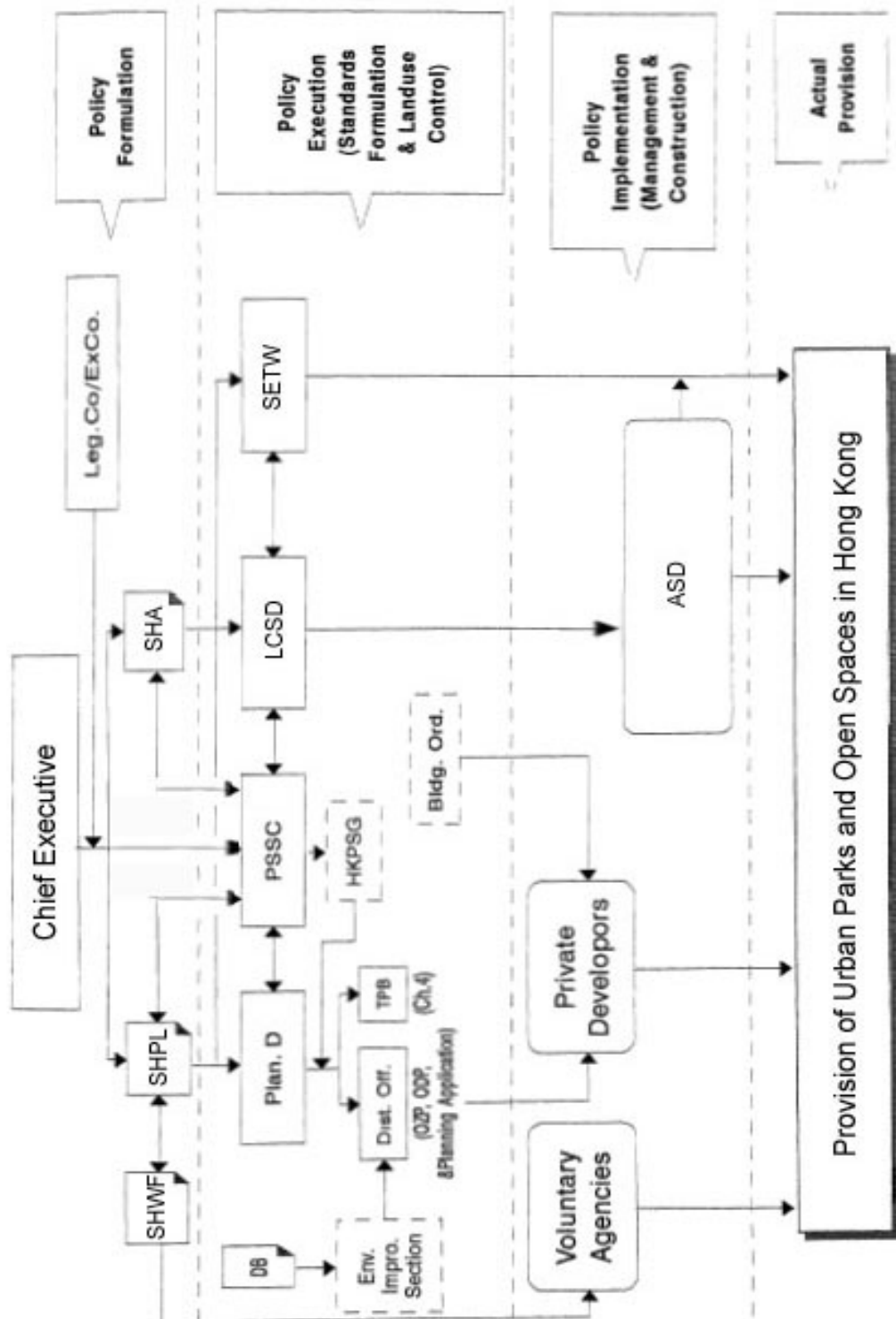
Source: Modified from Lau (1995), Cheung (2001), Planning Department (2006), Town Planning Board (2006)

Planning Process

3.3.3 Policy Formulation

Chief Executive has ultimate power to approve or reject any plans and important policies (Cheung, 2001). Departmental secretaries, governmental committee, agencies and civil servants have the responsibilities to follow and undertake the decisions endorsed by the Executive Council(ExCo) and Ordinances approved by the Legislative Council (LegCo).

Under the policy formulation system, the Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (SHPL) takes up the reasonability to suggest and carry out policies related to the planning aspects of landuse development and environmental conservation in Hong Kong. The Planning Standard Sub-committee (PSSC) is a working committee consists of various departmental secretaries. They consider and coordinate to ensure that all planning policies relate to landuse development have long term benefits to the Territory.

The role of Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) and Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (SHWF) are more indirect on recreation planning when compare with SHPL and PSSC. SHA and SHWF are responsible to connect the community needs to the recreation planning. SHA focuses on the development of territorial-wide strategies for the cultural and recreational activities and SHWF responsible for welfare of public in the aspect of recreational opportunities. For example they carried out the Foundation Study for a Recreation Land Use Strategy in 1992 to understand the recreation

preferences of people, so that the community interests can be brought into recreation planning. Moreover, they are responsible for promoting recreational activities in the community.

For SHPL and PSSC, they concern more about issues of planning and coordination of various landuse developments among governmental departments. In a planning process, many secretaries, departments and agencies are involved and none of them specialized in the field of recreation planning on the policy formulation level. Therefore, the coordination among themselves work through the planning process (Lau, 1995).

Regular meetings and closed communications are undergone to formulate the long term and broad scale landuse policies for the cultural and recreational developments (Planning Department, 2007). Meetings can be held to discuss emergent events. For example, if the SHA found an increasing demand for jogging tracks, such issue can be raised in the PSSC. If the issue is accepted, landuse policies could be adjusted to satisfy the recreational needs of the public.

For general recreation planning, the decisions made in policy formulation level are general and territorial. Yet, if the policies formulation is specific like provision of regional open spaces or provision of open spaces for specific target, professional knowledge of recreational planners is taken into consideration (Lau, 1995, Planning Department 2006).

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Policy Execution

3.3.4   Planning Control

Existing planning control for the development of urban open spaces in Hong Kong could be divided into 2 major components. They are statutory control and non-statutory control (Figure 3.3). The statutory control refers to legal support and binding for the designation and control on open spaces uses. For the non-statutory control, there are other administrative measures like negotiation, cooperation and planning gain to be used by planners to control and encourage the developments of recreational open spaces.
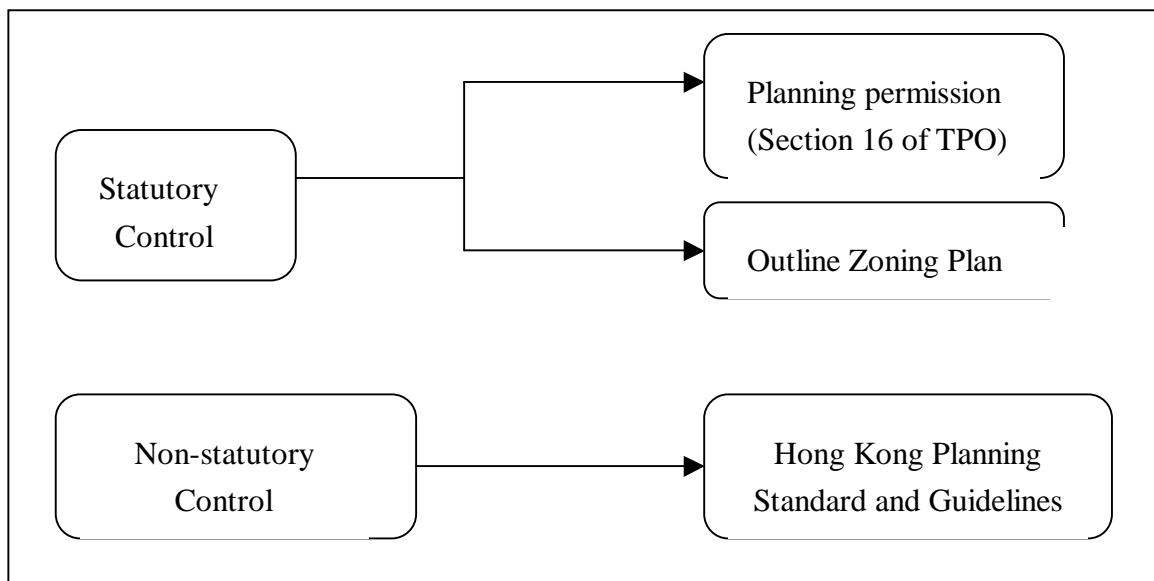
Figure 3.3 Planning Control of Open Spaces in Hong Kong.

Source : Modified from Lau (1995), Planning Department (2006), Town Planning Board (2006)

Statutory Controls

In Hong Kong, the most efficient and commonly adopted legal advice for landuse control on open space is the Town Planning Ordinance (TPO) (Lau, 1995). TPO is enacted to ensure community convenience and promote community health and safety.

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TPO authorizes the TPB to prepare statutory zoning plans and execute development control regarding landuse developments, including urban parks and open spaces uses.

Outline Zoning Plans (OZP)

In Hong Kong, Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs) are statutory town plans used to indicate the future development pattern and to guide the landuse in local scale. They are prepared under the provision of TPO and under the direction of TPB to allocate and reserve suitable land for various landuse (Cheung, 2001). If the land lease of a land suitable for open space development is expired, the TPB would amend the concerning OZP and rezone the site for open space uses after consultation with other departments and District Boards (Lau, 1995). Under the covering notes of the schedule of statutory plans (Figure 3.4), the uses listed on column one are always permitted while uses listed on column two are also permissible with or without conditions and require planning application for permission from the TPB. The procedures in preparing OZPs are illustrated in Figure 3.5.

Planning Permission

Section 16 of the TPO empowers the TPB to grant with or without conditions or to refuse planning application of any development which is not in accordance with the zoned landuse in respective statutory zoning plan. Developers have to apply for an planning permission from the TPB if they intend to develop or redevelop a piece of land other than the designated uses in the zoning plan. Under section 16(1)(5) of the TPO, the TPB can add any conditions with the planning permissions as "the Board thinks fit" (Town Planning Ordinance, Cap. 131, 2005)

OPEN SPACE

Column 1 Uses always permitted	Column 2 Uses that may be permitted with or without conditions on application to Town Planning Board

Ancillary Car Park
Aviary
Changing Room
Park and Garden
Plant Nursery
Playground/Playing Field
Public Convenience
Refreshment Kiosk
Zoo
	Barbecue Spot
	Cable Car Route and Terminal Building
	Cooked Food Centre
	Exhibition or Convention Hall
	Fast Food Shop
	Flat
	Government Refuse Collection Point
	Government Use (not elsewhere
	  specified)
	Hawker Centre
	Market
	Mass Transit Vent Shaft and/or Other
	  Structure above Ground Level other
	  than Entrances
	Office
	Place of Public Entertainment
	Place of Recreation, Sports or Culture
	Public Car Park
	Public Swimming Pool
	Public Transport Terminus or Station
	Public Utility Installation
	Religious Institution
	Restaurant
	Retail Shop
	Service Reservoir
	Utility Installation for Private
	  Project

Figure 3.4 Covering Notes of the Schedule of Statutory Plans (Open Space)

Source : Schedule of the Draft Yuen Long Outline Zoning Plan No. S/YL/16

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The New Plan-making Process
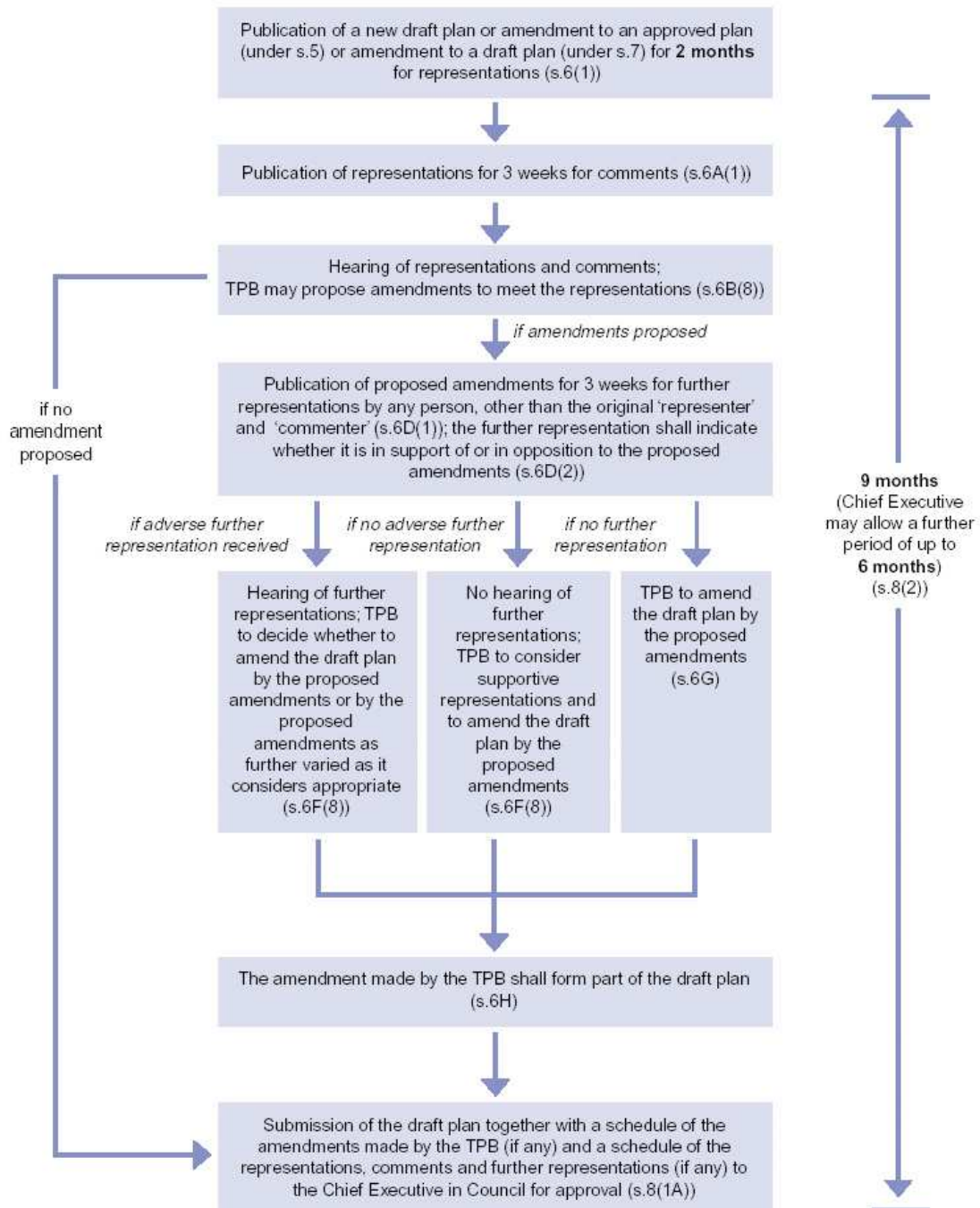
Figure 3.5 Major Steps in the Preparation of Statutory Plans

Source : Town Planning Board (2006) Town Planning in Hong Kong

Non- Statutory Control

Apart from the statutory controls mentioned above, there are other administrative means adopted in Hong Kong for the planning control of open spaces in urban areas.

Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guideline (HKPSG)

Hong Kong Planning Standard and Guidelines (HKPSG) is a planning manual for government to state out standards on the scale and amount of provision of various landuses and public facilities (Lau, 1995). It is one of the most important administrative controls of open space planning in Hong Kong. Today, all planning standards for urban parks and open spaces and recreational facilities are stated in the Chapter 4 of the HKPSG.

The planning standards stated in Chapter 4 are population-based ratio for the provision of various open spaces and facilities. For example, the provision of open space is suggested to be 20 hectares per 100,000 persons with 10 hectares for district open space and 10 hectares for local open spaces (HKPSG, 2007). The government also suggests a 3:2 active to passive ratio to be applied in District Open Space to provide space for active and passive recreation activities.

The Planning Standard Sub-committee (PSSC) is responsible for the formulation and review of the HKPSG. This committee is a governmental working committee to coordinate and administer policies related to all planning standards in Hong Kong. It meets on demands to review the planning standards whenever necessary(Lau, 1995; Cheung, 2001) . For any amendment, formal approval by the ExCo is essential. Major

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Stages involved in the preparation of Open Space Standards if illustrated in Figure 3.6.
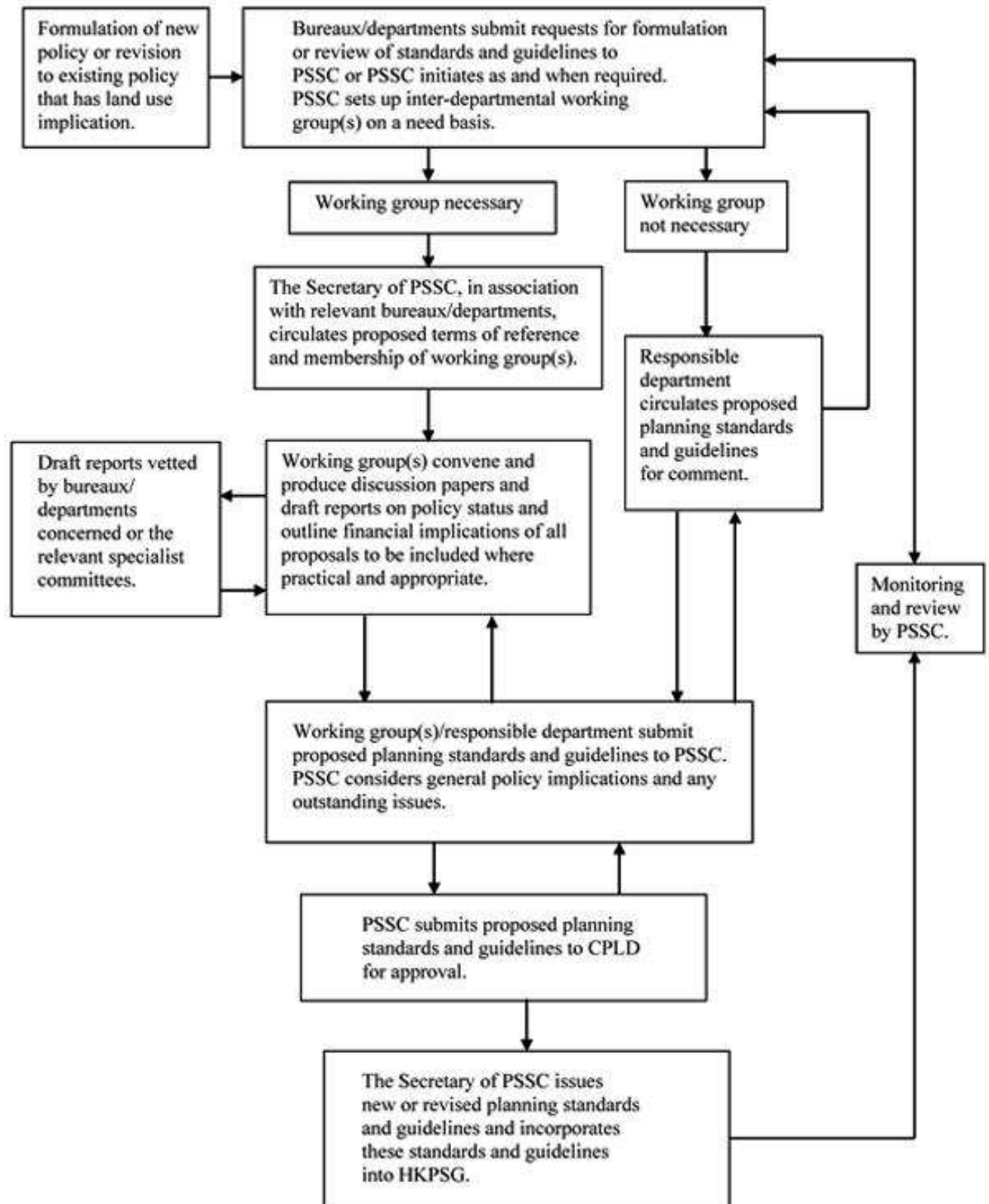
Figure 3.6 Formulation and Review of Planning Standards and Guidelines

Source : Planning Department (2007) Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines

Recreation Planning Control through District Boards

At present, before amendment on statutory plans are submitted to the TPB for consideration, seeking for comments from the concerned District Boards and persons affected are required (Planning Department, 2007). District Boards could raise objections, reflect the concern of local people and fight for the interest of local residents (Lau, 1995). In other words, opportunities for public participation are given indirectly through their representations in District Boards to influence the development and lanuse control of urban parks and open spaces.

3.3.5   Policy Implementation

The District Planning Offices and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) take up the responsibilities of implementing recreation planning policies. The LCSD seldom take the first step to require land from the District Planning Office for open space developments or demand to rezone a piece of land for "Open Space" uses. The practice is that, for there is a site suitable for the development of public open spaces, the concerning District Planning Office will consult the LCSD about the location and function of the proposed open space. If LCSD is interested with the development, the site will be zoned as open space uses on the OZP. When the lease of the site expires or become available, the Planning Department will inform the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and allocate the site to LCSD. A layout plan will be prepared by LCSD for the proposed open space development. Architectural Services Department (ASD) will be responsible for the landscape and architectural design.

3.4   Conclusion

From this chapter, it is found that the amount of provision of urban park and open spaces has increased for the past ten years. The trend also shifted the passive recreational sites to active recreational facilities with greater variety of choices and up to stadium and games hall with international standard.

All of the open spaces in Hong Kong can be classified into Regional, District and Local ones according to their serving areas and functions of facilities provided. SETW, SHPC, SHWF, SHA and PSSC are major actors for recreation planning in the policy formulation level while TPB and Planning Department and District Boards are the major parties to execute the recreational strategies being formulated. Upon implementation, LCSD, ASD and voluntary agencies are responsible for fulfilling planning objectives through provision and management.

OZP and planning permission are major means of statutory controls on open spaces while HKPSG is the non-statutory means to control the development of open space uses.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1   Introduction

This chapter aimed to address the research questions posed in Chapter 3. Reasons for choosing particular types of research methods will be illustrated. This chapter is the foundation of the questionnaire survey and the surveying results will be discussed in Chapter 6 and 7.

4.2   Inspiration of this Research

Though the provision of opens spaces is more than adequate in Hong Kong, yet they are not fully utilize and enhance to urban living of people (Gilges, 2001). Since Hatry (1977) found that park utilization is closely related to factors including the level of enjoyment, crowdedness, physical attractiveness, safety and accessibility as perceived by park visitors. Hayward(1980) further suggested that recreational interests are partially affected by a person's image of the available opportunities defined by their knowledge, attitudes and intentions of park visitation. Therefore, it is reasonable that visitors would ask "how do I get there", "who else will be in the park', and "are there adequate benefits from going there". Different park visitors with different knowledge, attitudes and intentions are likely to have different factors to affect their perception and behaviour in a sitting-out areas. The schematic model suggested by Hayward and

Weitzer (1984) about decision making process by park visitors structured the
hypothesis in this dissertation. The schematic model is given below.

Figure 4.1 Schematic Model of Decision Making by Park Visitors
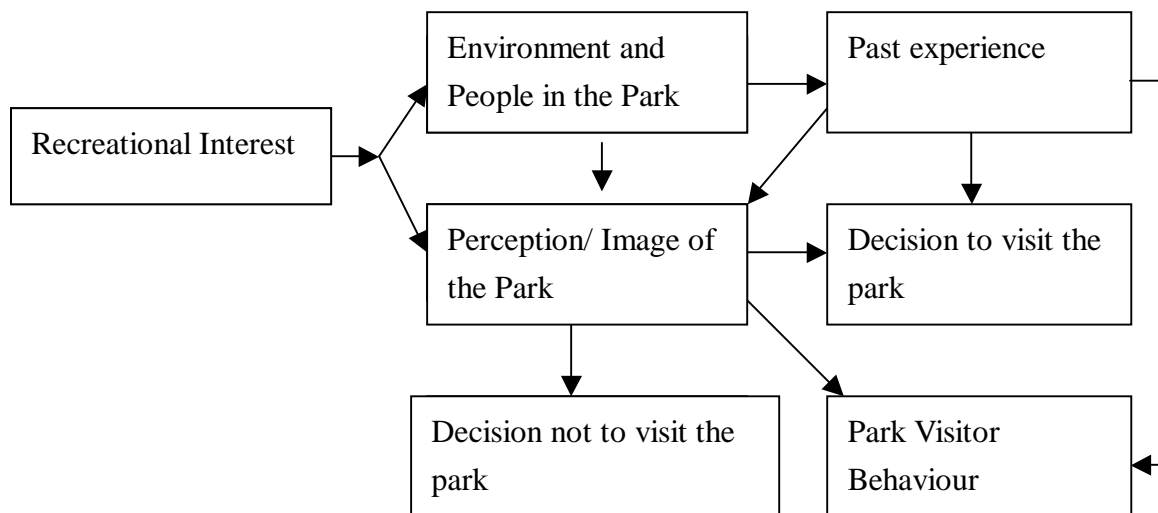
Source: Hayward and Weitzer (1984)

Since the decision made by park visitors are depending on their perception and past
experience. This research is going to further explore the factors that affect people's
perception to open spaces and hence affect their recreation decision and behaviour.

4.3   Types of Research Methods

According to Yin (1994), there are five major research methods to help research

studies. They are: a) Experiments, b) Surveys, c) Archival analysis, D) Histories and E) Case studies. Yin (1994) also noted 3 types of research studies; they are descriptive, explanatory and exploratory. Therefore, certain types of research require particular data that corresponding research methods should be used. In other words, logic of study, objectives and practical limitation determine the choice of research methods.

4.4   Choice of Research Strategies in this Study

To achieve research objectives and test the hypothesis of this study, qualitative research method, which is suitable for explanatory research is used. It is used to gain insights and understand people's perceptions of some issues. (Fellows and Liu, 1997). In this study, the relationship between people's perception to sitting-out areas and their behaviour in it will be studied. Therefore, case study approach is used as the research questions concerning "why" or "how" (Yin 1984). Furthermore, case studies help investigating people's opinions and views of the research questions and yield deep but narrow results (Fellows and Liu, 1997).

4.5   Components of case study's research design

There are five components of case study's research design, they are:

1) A study's question;

2) It's propositions

3) Its unit(s) of analysis;

4) The logic linking the data to the propositions; and

5) The criteria for interpreting the findings.   (Yin, 1984)

1) A study's question

The question of "how park visitors' decision and behaviour relate to their perception" is examined in this study.

2) Its propositions

For this exploratory study, a proposition is not given. Yet, the purpose of this study is to find out the factors affecting the decision and behaviours of park visitors. This research that start to explore what factors are being considered by local park visitors and hope that the findings will help the planning and design of open spaces

3) Its unit(s) of analysis

Three sitting-out areas located at Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and New Territories are the cases of analysis. At each selected park, questionnaire interview was undertaken. Case studies are done to identify factors that park visitors like and dislike about each case. Furthermore, factors affecting their recreation decision and behaviour will be investigated.

4) The logic linking the data to the research purpose

According to literature review, the age range, cultural, socio-economic backgrounds of park visitor are very broad. Also, the decision about which park to go and reason to go is made individually. Therefore, all park visitors are suitable targets to be interviewed to identify the factors affecting the people's perception and behaviour and hence achieving the objectives of this research.

5) The criteria for interpreting the findings

Since sitting-out areas locate at different places serve different group of park visitors, the influencing factors to affect decision and behaviour can be very different. To find the relationship between people's perception and their behaviour, multiple-case studies are adopted so that cross-cases analysis can be carried out to understand how people with different background decide and behave differently.

Overview of Research Method

The research is started with reviewing related literature as the sources of background information. Afterwards, a theoretical framework stating the conditions under which a particular phenomenon is likely to be found as well as the conditions when it is not likely to be found is generated. In this research, the theoretical framework is that park visitors make recreation decision based on past experience and perception to a recreational site. Therefore, different factors would cause different perceptions to parks and as a result park visitors' decision and behaviour varied.

Case studies are done in three sitting-out areas. They are locating at Mid-level (Hong Kong Island), Mei Foo (Kowloon) and Yuen Long (New Territories). Park visitors in these three sitting-out areas are interviewed about their perception and satisfaction on the premises. Factors that affect the choice of park visitors and their satisfaction to the sitting-out areas are explored. Finally, the reasons that affect the decision and behaviour of park visitors at each sitting-out area will be compared and analyzed.

4.6   Data collection of case studies

Although thousands of people use urban parks for leisure and recreation everyday,

only a small amount of them is known about the visitors' perception, impression, interest and intentions concerning the use of these areas (Lam *et al*, 2005). There is also no known systematic study of the usage pattern of these parks and open spaces in Hong Kong so as the study of visitors' profile. Therefore, such information is important for recreation planning, design and management.

In each selected park, questionnaire interview was undertaken with visitors. Questionnaire interview was selected as the data collecting method instead of mailed questionnaire or online-questionnaire because of the following reasons. Firstly, the actual identity and ethnicity of the one who fills in the questionnaire cannot be confirmed. The questionnaire may be filled in by someone who does not have any park experience; as a result the quality and accuracy of the data and information are in doubt. Secondly, online questionnaire or mailed questionnaire lack flexibility. Since it is not a face-to-face interview, interviewer is not able to make adjustment on questions according to the respondent's reply. The data collected from this way will not be comprehensive enough, as the respondents are less easy to express under the fixed questions structure. Thirdly, complicated or conceptual questions cannot be asked, as it is difficult for the respondents to construct a picture that same as the interviewer in mind through the words on questionnaire.

After deciding the data collection method, it is needed to select cases for this study. According to Yin (1984, p.49), "two to three cases are used to show the literal replications, whereas four to six cases are designed to pursue two different patterns of theoretical replications." In this research, three case studies are carried out for analysis.

Case studies are carried out on Caine Road Sitting-out area (Hong Kong Island) with surrounding population around 4500, Yau Sun Street Sitting-out area(Yuen Long) with surround population around 4800 and Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out area (Kowloon) with surround population around 5200. For the above three case studies sites, they are all sited in residential areas with markets and stores nearby. The sitting-out areas with different location, similar population and size are suitable cases to carry out in-depth study about people's perception on sitting-out areas and their behaviour in the park.

Two weeks were used for interviewing park visitors in three selected parks. In each interviewing day, each park was visited at a different time period. Since each interview day was separated into 3 sessions, they are morning, afternoon and evening, the selected parks were visited at different periods in a day. Therefore, after two interview weeks, a broad range of park visitors were picked for interview. For the questionnaire, both close-ended and open-ended questions were asked. The first part of the questionnaire asked information about gender, age group, occupation, frequency and time of visitation, place of origin and time of visitation. The second part of the questionnaire was open-ended questions and asked about

1) The feeling of visitors towards the sitting-out areas, what they like and what they dislike about the sitting-out areas.

2) The factors that affect their recreation decision

Face-to-face interview between interviewer and park visitors can generate more in-depth information on the park visitors' perception and behaviour. Interviewer and park visitors can communicate so that both parties have a better understanding of the

questions and answers. Clarification was made immediately during interview to reduce the chance of collecting inaccurate data. Besides, interviewer can ensure all required information or answers to be collected.

However, there are still some limitations for questionnaire interview. Firstly, since an interview require a longer time than completing a questionnaire and there is only one interviewer. Therefore, the number of interviews conducted was not in large number under time constraint. Secondly, the quality of data depends on the communication ability of both parties and the willingness to cooperate.

4.7 Data Analysis

Although factors that affect people's perception and behaviour to parks are identified from previous literature and studies. In the questionnaire interview, respondents were not guided to think about the factors identified from literature, instead, more open-ended questions were asked to understand their feelings and perceptions.

After collecting data from park visitors, these case study data was analyzed. The analyzing technique is to compare the frequency of different factors. Therefore, in each case, the relative importance of different factors can be studied. Afterwards, replication logic is used to analyze the frequencies of each factor separately in cross-case analysis. The method of the case study analysis is shown in the figure 4.2 below.

In this research, both literal replication and theoretical replication are used. Literal replication means case study data are similar to the particular phenomenon stated in

theoretical framework, for theoretical framework stated the conditions to cause such phenomenon to be found. Theoretical replication means case study data are in contrary to the theoretical framework but for predictable reasons (Yin, 1984).

Multiple case study was conducted to test whether the conditions are similar to the theoretical framework or produce contrary results but for predictable reasons. As mentioned above, the theoretical framework is that park visitors make recreation decision based on past experience and perception to a recreational site.

Figure 4.2 Case Study Method
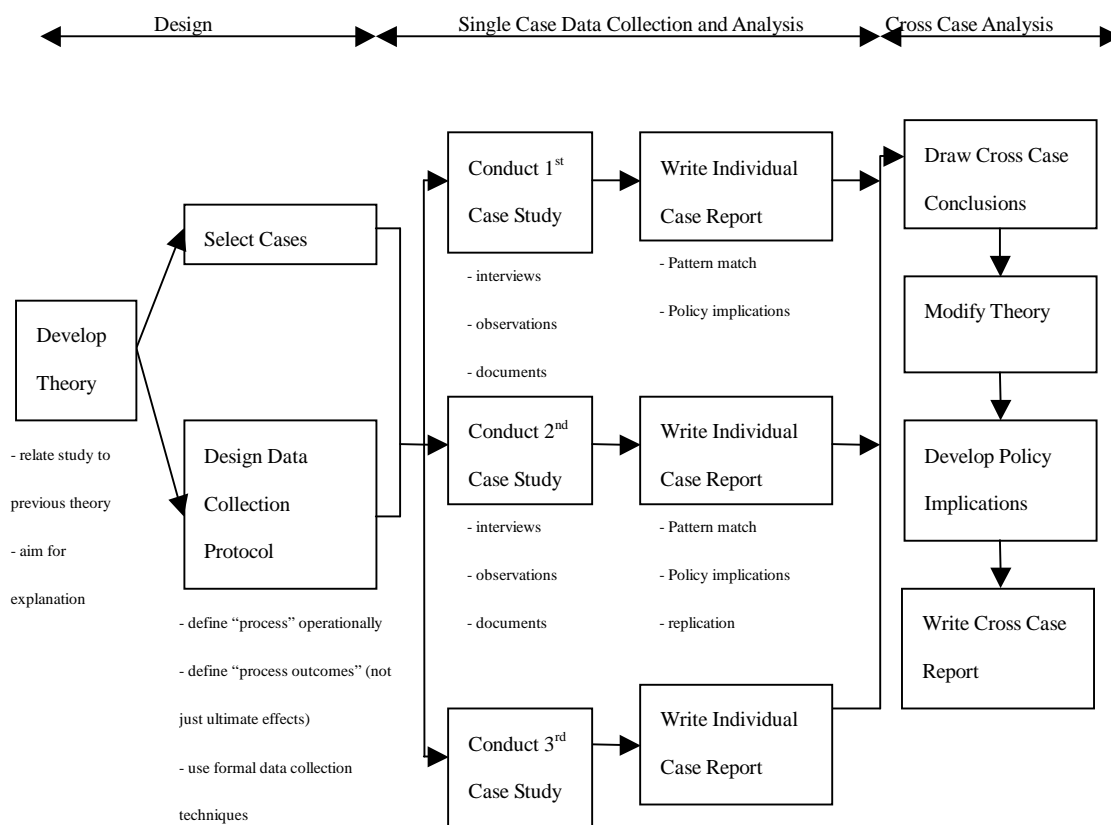
Source: Yin (1984) Case Study Research, p.51

Therefore, with the developed theoretical framework, cases were selected and specific measures were defined for design and data collection process. Individual case report was written for each case and finally, cross-case analysis can indicate the extent of the replication logic (Yin, 1984).

4.8   Conclusion

To answer the research question "the relationship between people's perception to recreation decision and behaviour", multiple case studies approach was adopted. The frequencies of different factors in each case can be compared and analysed according to the findings of literature. Afterwards, the frequencies of those influencing factors in the three cases will be compared separately and explained according to the literature findings. In next 2 chapters, the questionnaire that helped the data collection and the data collected will be discussed.

Chapter 5

Questionnaire

5.1   Introduction

The data used for analysis for the Study are collected in form of questionnaire. The approach used in the construction of the questionnaire is discussed in this chapter. The data collected in the questionnaire are used to determine the factors that affect the park visitors' decision and the relative importance of them.

5.2   Construction of the Questionnaire

5.2.1   Layout of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire contains questions to ask about general information of the park visitors. Firstly, the age group, gender and occupation of the respondents are asked. Time of visitation, frequency of visitation, place of origins and activities that respondent carried out in the sitting-out areas are also asked to familiarize the level of experience of the respondents.

Therefore, some respondents may have negative image to a sitting-out area due to the

persons they met in the parks or they may have positive experience due to the activities they carried out before (Woolley, 2003).

The second part of the interview concerns about the park visitors' perception and the factors affect their decision about which park to go. Though there are certain factors identified from previous literature about what people usually like or dislike, yet these factors are not given to respondents as guidance on the answers. Open-ended questions are asked and respondents can denote any answers that they think to be suitable. The reason for using open-ended questions is to allow respondents to answer more complicated questions. Respondents are required to add factors that they considered as important that influence them. This approach makes the questionnaire more flexible and avoids any bias if there is a preset list.

This part of the questionnaire obtained information about what do people like and dislike about the sitting-out areas and it also collects information about the factors affecting people's decision on which park to go. The framework of this part of questions is generated from the schematic model proposed by Hayward and Weitzer that past experience and perception affect decision. Therefore, same flow of questions can be asked in part two for each respondent. Furthermore, the respondents are allowed to express freely.

Yet, there are some drawbacks for using open-ended questions. Firstly, it is more time consuming to answer the open-ended questions; this may discourage the respondents to reply. As a result, it makes the collection of useful data become more difficult and reduces the accuracy of data.

5.3　Factors identified from Previous Literature

The second part of the questionnaire is about the attributes that the respondents like and dislike for the sitting-out areas and also the factors affecting their decision about which park to go. According to previous literature and studies, factors that affecting people's perception to parks can be identified and they are likely to be the attributes that respondents like and dislike about. Deasy and Lasswell (1985) derived eight factors as environmental factors which affect human behaviour. Lam *et al* (2005) found that Hong Kong people were attracted to parks because of seven attributes. There were also five attributes that the Hong Kong people dislike in the parks. To summarize, there are 6 categories of factors that affecting people's decision and behaviour. They are:

a) Friendship Formation;

b) Personal Space;

c) Personal Status;

d) Personal safety.

e) Physical attractiveness

f) Environmental Conditions

After collecting data from part two of the questionnaire, the factors suggested by the respondents will be kept as the frequency according to the categories that those factors belong. For example, if a respondent thought that air quality is the attractive attributes of sitting-out area A, then air quality should be one of the factors under category of Environmental Condition. Then at the end, we will know the number of respondents thought Environmental Condition as influencing factor and hence the

relative importance of Environmental Condition among the six categories of factors can be studied. The data collected is mainly used to:

- identify the factors that the park visitors like and dislike about the sitting out areas and the factors that affect their decision about which park to go
- study the relative of importance of different factors

The factors affecting the park visitors' perception and decision was classified into 6 categories and shown in Table 5.1.

Category	Factors
Friendship Formation	1. Make new friends 2. Chat with friends 3. Seating arrangement for small group
Personal Space	4. Degree of privacy 5. Possession of space 6. Personal space for freedom
Personal Status	7. Park image in the society 8. Outsiders' perception to the park users

Personal safety	9. Light
	10. Visibility from outside
	11. Park users' groups
	12. Activities of other users
	13. Protected area for small children
Physical attractiveness	14. Cleanliness
	15. Water Structure
	16. Accessibility
	17. Recreational facilities
	18. Greenery / Shading
	19. Nature Encounter
Environmental Conditions	20. Air quality
	21. Noise Level

Table 5. 1 Factors Affecting the Park Visitors' Perception and Decision

For these identified factors, they were not given to respondents as preset list of choice but used by the interviewer only. Interviewer matches the answers of respondents with the categories of factors that the answers belong.

5.4 The relative importance of factors

Since different park visitors, hence respondents carry different cultural backgrounds; therefore they have different views on influencing factors (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995).

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As a result, the major concern of the park visitors in sitting-out area A may not be similar as that of B. The respondents at each selected sitting-out areas indicate the relative importance of different the factors. For example, the results in site "A" shows that most of the respondents considered Friendship Formation as the influencing factor. Therefore, friendship formation is most important for people to make recreation decision in this district. Since different cases would show different results, comparisons can be made and studied among cases. These data will be analyzed in next chapter.

5.5   Conclusion

For this research, data are collected from questionnaire. The construction of questionnaire followed the decision model as reviewed from literature. Furthermore, though a list of factors are identified from related literature. Yet, these factors were not given to respondents during interview, but instead, the respondents are allowed to express freely. The identified factors are used by interviewer to match the answers of respondents to the corresponding categories of factors for data analysis so that to produce the data about the relative importance of factors. Data analysis is carried out afterwards and the results are discussed in Chapter 6 and 7.

Chapter 6

Case Study Data Analysis

6.1   Introduction

The case studies concentrate on the assessment of the factors that park visitors' like and dislike about the sitting-out areas and also the factors affecting their decision about which park to go. Finally, the relative importance of the factors to affect people's decision and behaviour will be analyzed.

6.2   Case Studies Data Collection Method

Regarding the case study research method, Caine Road Sitting-out area (Hong Kong Island), Yau Sun Street Sitting-out area(Yuen Long) and Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out area (Kowloon) are the selected cases for data collection. In each site, park visitors were interviewed to provide information about their visitation behaviour, perception to the sitting-out areas and factors affect their recreation decision.

Since respondents are the park visitors, therefore the information that provided should be the result of actual park experience. Therefore, the data about visitation behaviour and perception are reliable and realistic.

6.3   Individual Case Report

In this section, each individual case is analyzed. The information of the sitting-out area and a brief summary of the questionnaire interview will be discussed. As in the questionnaire, the visitation behaviour and perception of park visitors were the focuses. The factors mentioned by the respondents that affect their decision and behaviour will be matched up with the seven categories of factors that summarized from previous literature. Therefore, in each selected site, we will know the relative importance of each category of factors that influence the decison and behaviour of park visitors.

6.3.1   Case 1 : Caine Road Sitting-out Area

Area: 2975 m^2

Surrounding population: 4500 persons

Number of Interviews taken: 42

Interface Characteristics: Park – Road Interface

Description on Caine Road Sitting-out Area

Caine Raod Sitting-out area is located at the Mid-level of Hong Kong Island. Buses, Mini-buses and walk are the common ways to go there and there is no car park nearby. In the Caine Road Sitting-out area, only passive recreation facilities are provided. Therefore, park visitors cannot enjoy active recreation activities. As what observation tells, most of the park visitors are children and elderly. In the recreation site, there are

one entrance and one exit. Both entrance and exit are located at the same side of the site. Furthermore, female and male toilets are provided in the sitting-out area. It is the only site that provides toilets in three selected cases.

The interface characteristic of Caine Road Sitting-out Area is park-road interface. According to Lam *et al* (2005), this interface is common among neighbourhood parks, public sports grounds and city parks. They are usually bounded by major roads and linked to nearby residential areas by walkways or road crossings. As noted in Figure 6.1, Caine Road and Seymour Road bound the Caine Road Sitting-out Area, therefore, it is a park-road interface. The residents from surrounding 4 residential blocks can go to the Caine Road Sitting-out Area on foot within 15 minutes. Furthermore, the population of those 4 residential blocks is about 4500 persons, which is the major source of park visitors to the site. It is because as noted in the HKPSG S.1.12.4,

> "Local Open Space should be located within short walking distance from the residents it intends to serve, preferably within a radius of not more than about 0.4 km."
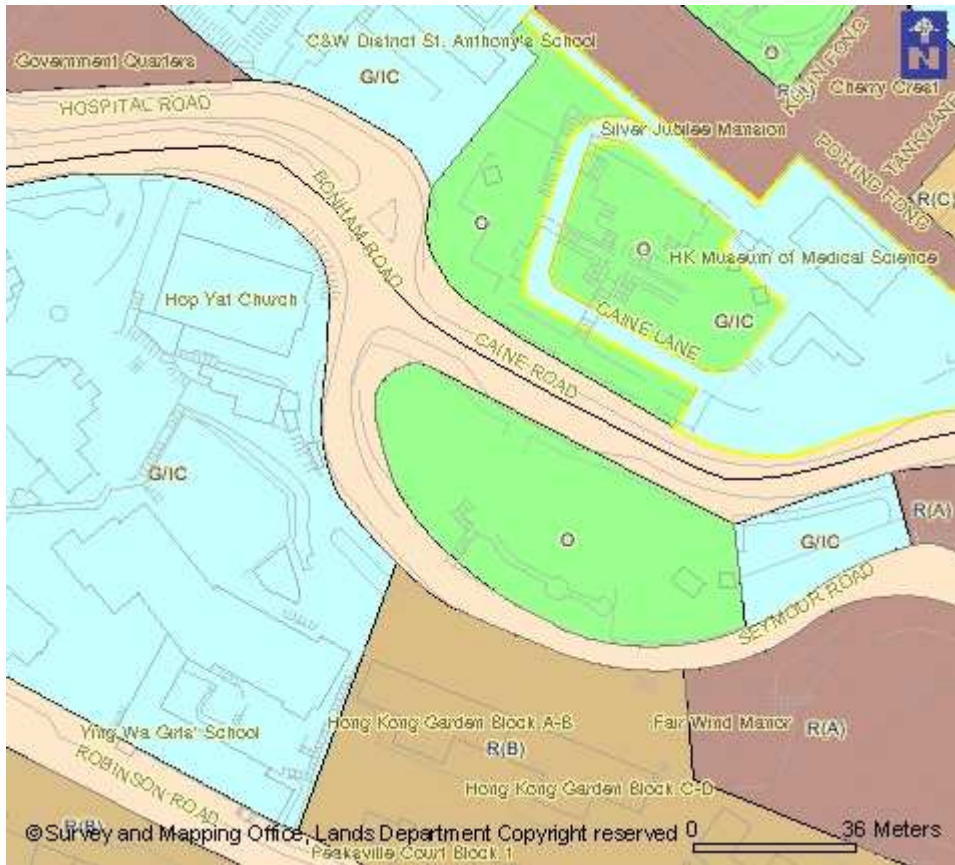
Figure 6.1   Location of Caine Road Sitting-out Area.

Source : Outline Zoning Plan (2007), Town Planning Board

Empirical Findings

Results of the questionnaire survey (Table 6.1) show that those aged above 40 and above make up over half of the respondents. Visitors in these age groups were mostly retired people. Teenagers contributed to one-sixth of the visitors and they were mostly students from nearby schools. Most of the park visitors (88%) came from nearby residences and another 12% came from the places or wok and schools. Because of the close proximity of the sitting-out area to their residences, places of work or schools,

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95% of the respondents went to the site on foot while the remaining 5% of respondents went to the site by public transport.

Age	Gender			Occupation					
	Male	Female	Total	Student	House wife	Blue collar	White collar	Unem-ployed	Retired
<12	4%	7%	11%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
12-17	0%	4%	4%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
18-24	0%	4%	4%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
25-39	0%	12%	12%	0%	0%	12%	0%	0%	0%
40-55	17%	20%	37%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	17%
>55	10%	22%	32%	0%	10%	0%	0%	0%	22%
Total	18	24	42	8	13	5	0	0	16

Table 6.1 Profile of interviewed park visitors (Cain Road Sitting-out Area) (N = 42)

Park visitors coming directly from home or working place usually went to the park in the morning (0800-1200) or late afternoon (1400-1800) as shown in Figure 6.2. Retired and housewives dominated the morning session and late afternoon session. Students and working class visit the park in late afternoon, mostly after working and schooling hours.

Results also show that more than half of the respondents visit the sitting-out area more

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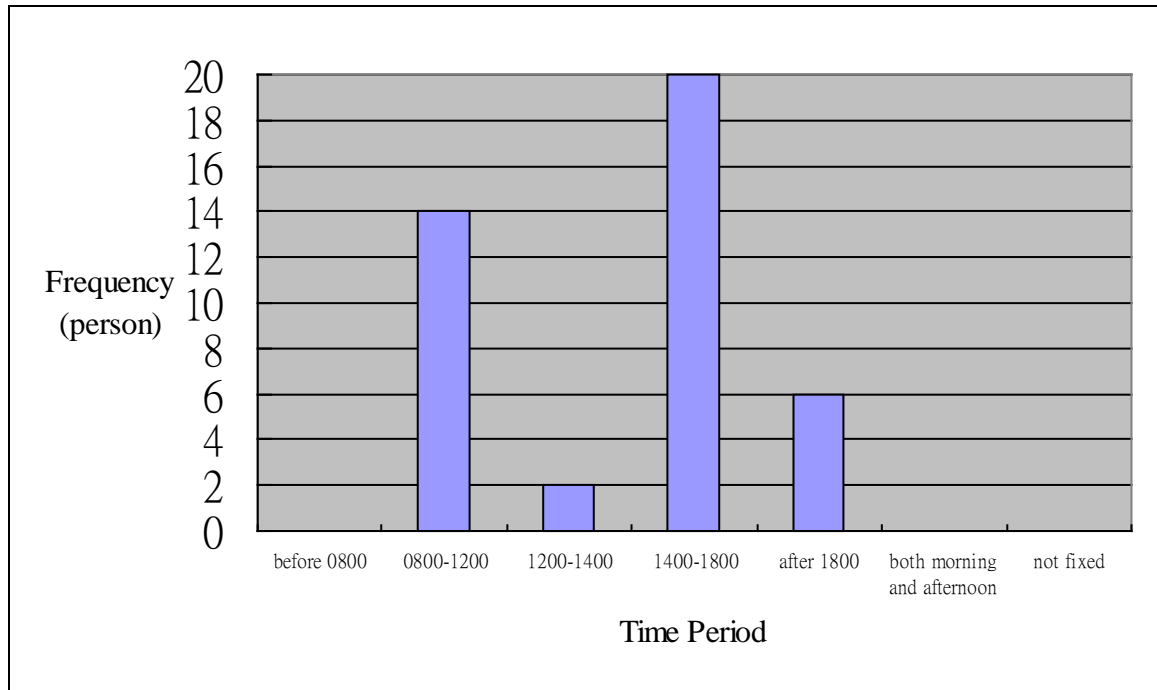than 20 times a month and 25 % of these respondents visit the site 11-20 times a month.

Figure 6.2 Time of Park Visitatoin (Caine Road Sitting-out Area)

Figure 6.2 Frequency of Park Visitation (Caine Road Sitting-out Area)

Concerning the activities carried by park visitors, it can be seen that the most popular activity of the park visitors is rest and chat. Exercise is also a favoured activity and carried out by 33% of the respondents. Table 6.2 shows the activity carried out by the respondents.

Age	Exercise	Rest and Chat	Reading	Chess and Card Games	Others
<12	4%	7%	0%	0%	0%
12-17	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%
18-24	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%
25-39	0%	7%	0%	0%	5%
40-55	15%	17%	0%	5%	0%
>55	14%	15%	3%	0%	0%
Total	33%	54%	3%	5%	5%

Table 6.2 Activities Carried Out by Respondents (Caine Road Sitting-out Area)

Park Visitors' Perception of Caine Road Sitting-out Area

From the interviewing results (Figure 6.3), It is found that park visitors perceived the sitting-out area as the place for friendship formation (45%), with good environmental condition (25%) and physically attractive (20%). This means that the sitting-out area provides something that could not be found at home. This finding just meet the opinion of Morphet, who noted that urban parks and open spaces should not be merely spaces, they should rather be designed and managed as the place for social and recreational activities (Morphet, 1990a).

It seems that most visitors being interviewed were generally satisfied with the sitting-out area. When asked on the aspects that they disliked, it is found that 90% of park visitors reported that they were happy with the sitting-out area as they did not have any particular aspect that they were dissatisfied with, as noted from Figure 6.4. However, there are 10% of respondents felt that the noise level of the sitting-out area was high but this aspect was not reducing their motivation to go to the site.

The respondents were further asked whether they would choose staying in home or going to park when they have spare time. About 90% of the respondents preferred to go to park than to stay at home (10%). Some respondents suggested that parks provide the chances to get close to nature, and it also provides an environment to relax so that they could get away from the life pressures. Some also pointed that parks provide good environment to make new friends.

To have further investigation, the respondents were asked about the factors that affect they decision to choose which park to go. The results are shown in Figure 6.5. It is found that 35% of the respondents chose a park that favour friendship formation. 35% of them chose to go to a park with good environmental conditions and 20% of them noted that they chose the park that with physical attraction. For people who decide to go to a park that provide friendship formation, which means they like a park that provide opportunities to make new friend and chat with friends. Park users who decide to go to a park with physical attractiveness because they like the parks with greenery, water structure, provision of certain facilities or easy to access. For people who treat air quality or noise level as important factors would think environmental conditions are the issues to affect decision.

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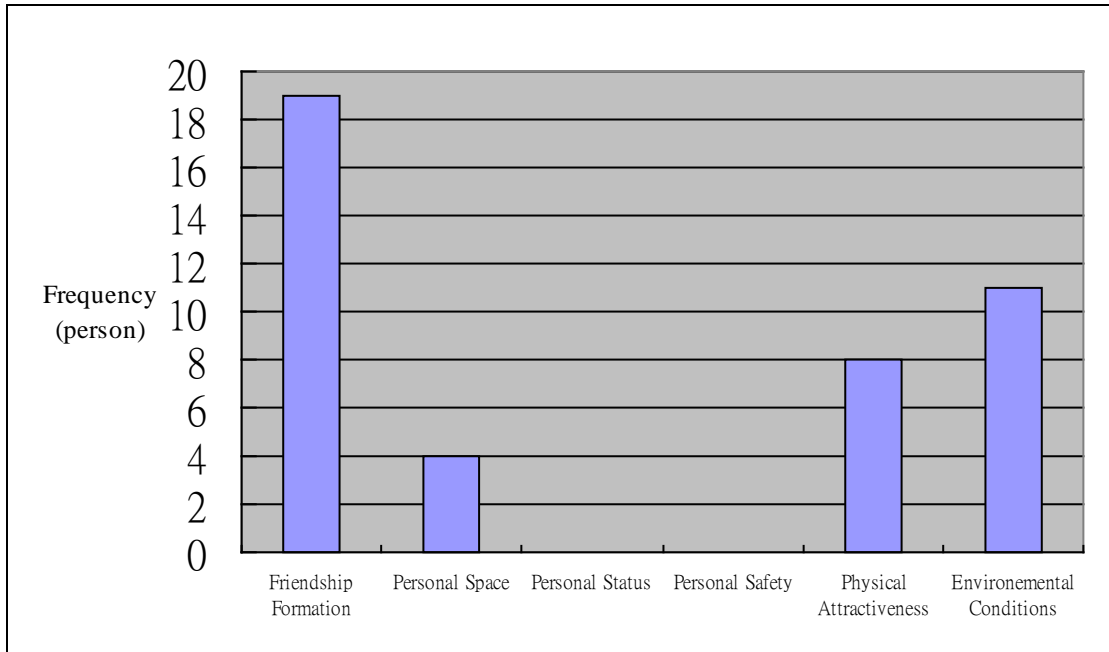
Figure 6.3 Factors that respondents like about the Caine Sitting-out Area
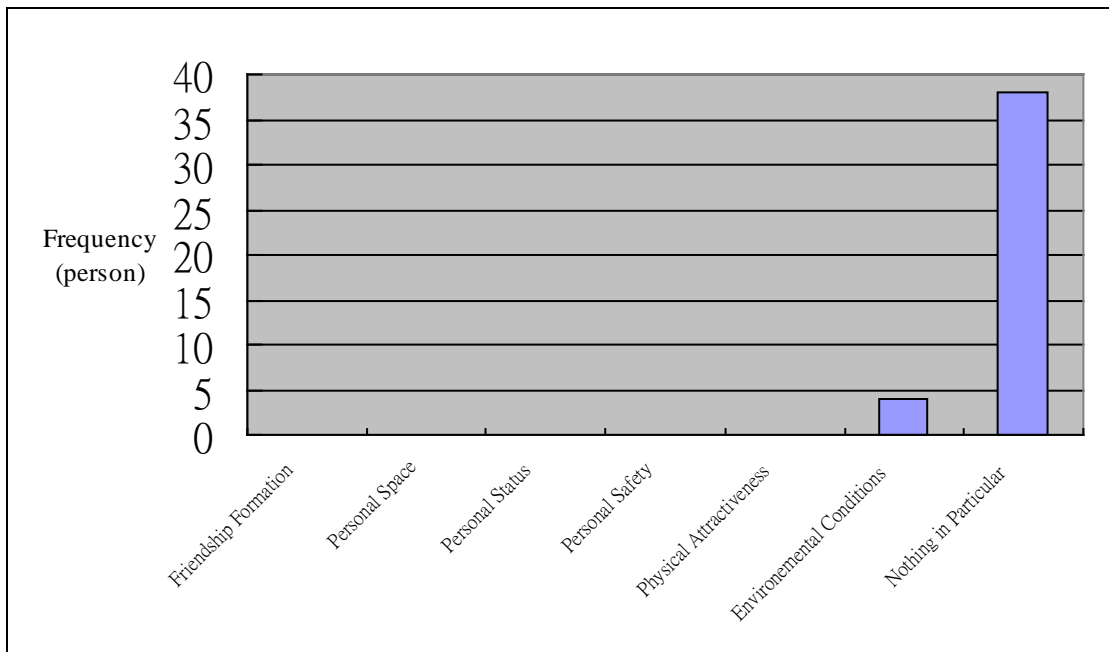
Figure 6.4 Factors that respondents dislike about the Caine Sitting-out Area
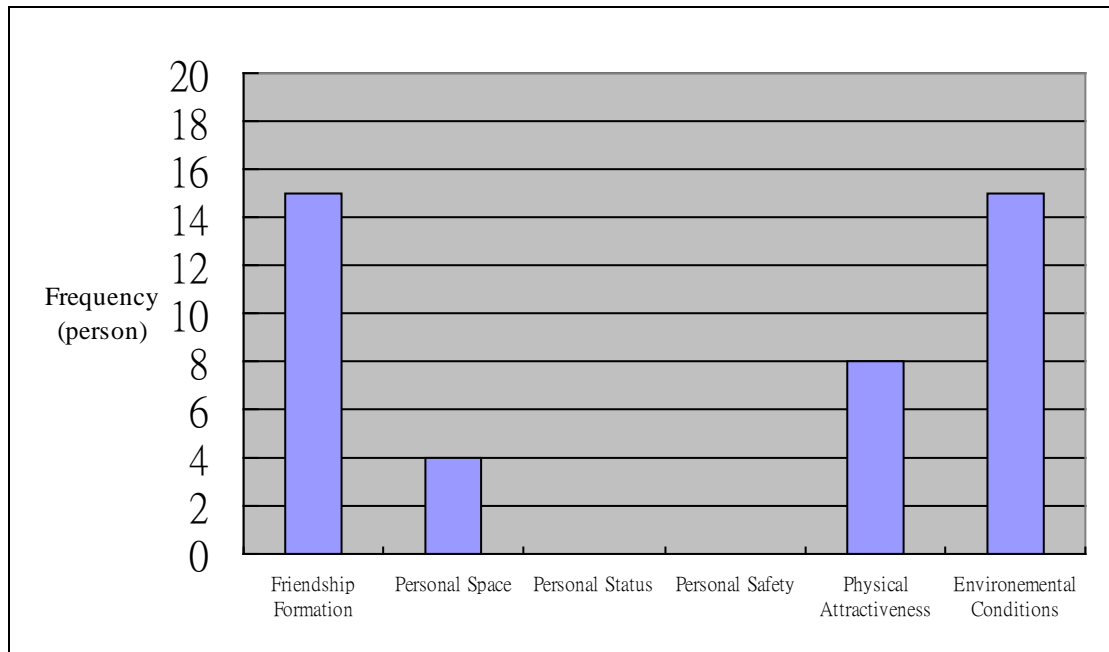
Figure 6.5 Factors that affect the decision of park visitors about which park to go (Caine Road Sitting-out Area)

Analysis on the Case

In the case of Caine Road Sitting-out Area, 42 questionnaire interviews were conducted to collection information about the people's decision and behaviour. It is found that this site attracts the group of people with age above 40. Within this group of people, most of them are retired. They have a habit to visit the site frequently, some even visit the site for more than 20 times a month.

Most of the park visitors are satisfied with the site and they like it for different reasons. Some felt that it is a place for social activities, to make friends and to chat with friends. As half of the respondents are aged over 40 and many of them go to the sitting-out areas alone while some come with their grandchildren. They are sharing similar backgrounds actually, for example they are retired, living in the same district

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and hence facing similar living issues and this facilitate the contacts of people (Greenhalph and Worpole, 1995). Furthermore, there are many short seats provided under shading in the site so that allow people to meet and discuss comfortably in small group (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985).

Some like the site as it provides the chance to get close with the nature and which is unachievable if staying at home. It is because shorts scrubs are planted as the screening from the Caine Road and with some tall trees in the site. Therefore, green is the major colour being observed in the site. It is verified as the finding that park visitors favours parks with greenery (Kaplan and Wendt, 1972) to recover from stress in daily life (Ulrich, 1981).

Some like it as a place to provide space with privacy so that visitors can get away from disturbance and enjoy with friends within the space. Respondents like to have personal space and have meetings with friends. They pointed that Caine Road Sitting-out Area offers a large space that they can get away from the disturbance of other visitors.

It is noted that people do not perceive personal safety and personal status as the factors to affect they recreation decision. As mentioned by respondents, it is because seldom do they hear of recreation experience that is not safe, and also the crime rate in the district is low. Therefore, personal safety is not what they concern if they are living in a peaceful place. According to Deasy and Lasswell (1985), who noted in the societies where security is assured, the needs for affection and self-actualization become much more important. Therefore, park visitors in this area decide to go to a park that provides the opportunities to make new friends or green environment that

cannot be acquired in home.

Same reasoning can be applied to analyze why personal status is not one of their concern when deciding which park to go. It is because in the district, there are not much parks as choices. The remaining parks in the district carry good images in the community and their status will not be affected no matter which park they decide to go (Lam *et al*, 2005). Therefore the personal status is not a key factor to influence decision.

In the case of Caine Road Sitting-out Area, "Friendship Formation" is relatively most important factors for the park visitors in this case to make recreation decision. "Environemnt Condition" and "Physical Attractiveness" come with the second and the third.

6.3.2   Case 2 : Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area

Area: 2975 m^2

Surrounding population: 4800 persons

Number of Interviews taken: 50

Interface Characteristics: Building Block – Park – Road Interface

Description on Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area

Yau Sun Street Sitting-out area is located at Yuen Long Town, near the Hope Yick Market. Buses, Mini-buses and walk are the common ways to go there and there are 50 car parking spaces nearby.   Only passive recreation facilities are provided in Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area. Therefore, park visitors cannot enjoy active recreation

activities. As what observation tells, park visitors are of broad range. Students, children, people in 30-40 and elderly are attracted to the site. In the recreation site, there are one entrance and one exit locating at the same side of the site. These entrance and exit are facing the Yau Sun Street. Unlike Caine Road Sitting-out Area, toilets are not provided and people have to go the wet market nearby if they want to have a wash.

The interface characteristic of Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area is building block-park-road interface. Under this category, major roads or residential blocks bound this site on different sides Lam *et al* (2005). As noted in Figure 6.6, Yau Sun Street and 6 residential blocks bound Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area. Therefore, it is a building block-park-road interface. The residents from surrounding 6 residential blocks can go to the site on foot within 15 minutes. Furthermore, the population of those 6residential blocks is about 4800 persons, which is the major source of park visitors to the site. It is because as previously noted, the HKPSG noted that local open space serve the community within a radius of not more than 0.4km.

Figure 6.6   Location of Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area.

Source : Outline Zoning Plan (2007), Town Planning Board

Empirical Findings

Results of the questionnaire survey (Table 6.3) show that the age group distributions of respondents are quite even. There was no age group to dominate in the site. Different age groups contribute a similar portion in the questionnaire. Students and housewives made up of one-third of park visitors each. Retired people (18%) were also attracted to the Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area. Less than half of the park visitors (40%) came from nearby residences and 32% came after shopping in the town and all of the students visit the site after school. Because of the close proximity of the sitting-out area to the schools and market, most of the visitors are housewives and

students. 100% of the respondents went to the site on foot and it will be explained in later session.

Age	Gender			Occupation					
	Male	Female	Total	Student	House wife	Blue collar	White collar	Unem-ployed	Retired
<12	4%	6%	10%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
12-17	10%	10%	20%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
18-24	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
25-39	0%	24%	24%	0%	10%	8%	0%	6%	0%
40-55	10%	14%	24%	0%	10%	0%	0%	4%	10%
>55	10%	12%	22%	0%	14%	0%	0%	0%	8%
Total	17	33	50	15	17	4	0	5	9

Table 6.3 Profile of interviewed park visitors
(Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area) (N = 50)

Park visitors coming directly from home usually went to the park in the morning (0800-1200) and afternoon (1400-1800). A large portion of park visitors went to the park after shopping and school, therefore afternoon (1400-1800) was their favorite period to visit as shown in Figure 6.2. Some retired people and the unemployed ones do not have a preference about time of visit. About half of these two groups of visitors even go to the site in both morning and afternoon.

Results also show just about one-third of the respondents visit the sitting-out area more than 20 times a month about half of these respondents visit the site 11-20 times a month.

Concerning the activities carried by park visitors, it can be seen that the most popular activity of the park visitors is rest and chat. More than half of the visitors go to Yau Sun Street for rest and chat. Exercise is also a favoured activity and carried out by 20% of the respondents. Some of the respondents like to play chess and card games in the site. Table 6.4 shows the activity carried out by the respondents.
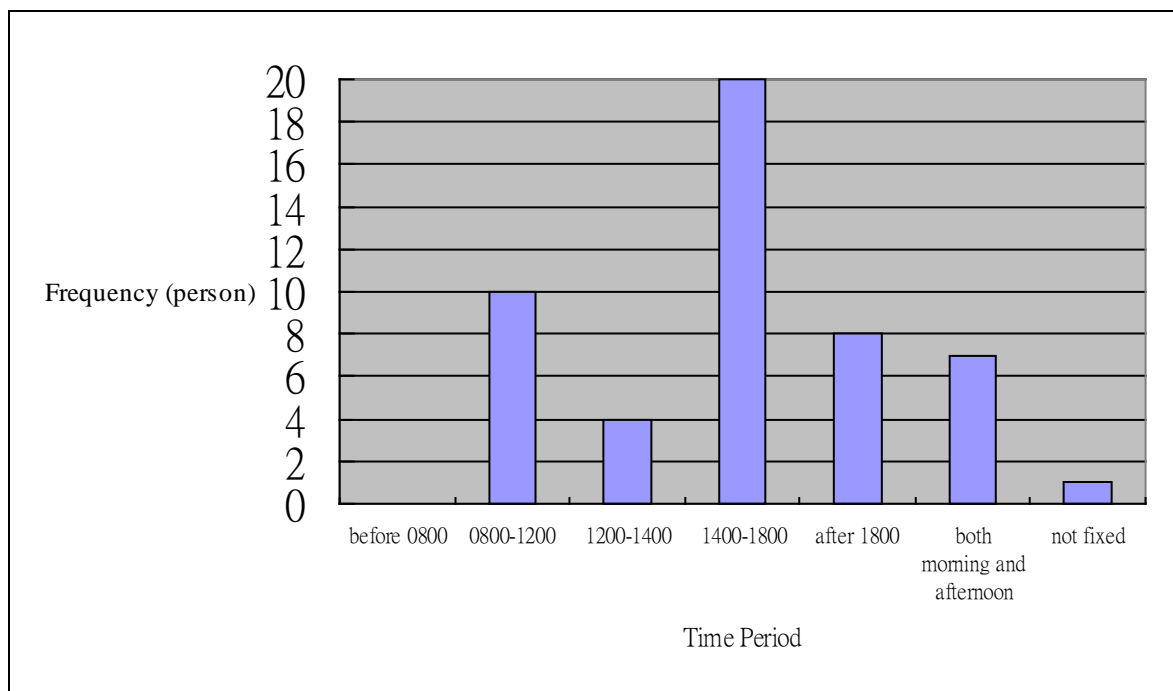
Figure 6.7 Time of Park Visitation (Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area)
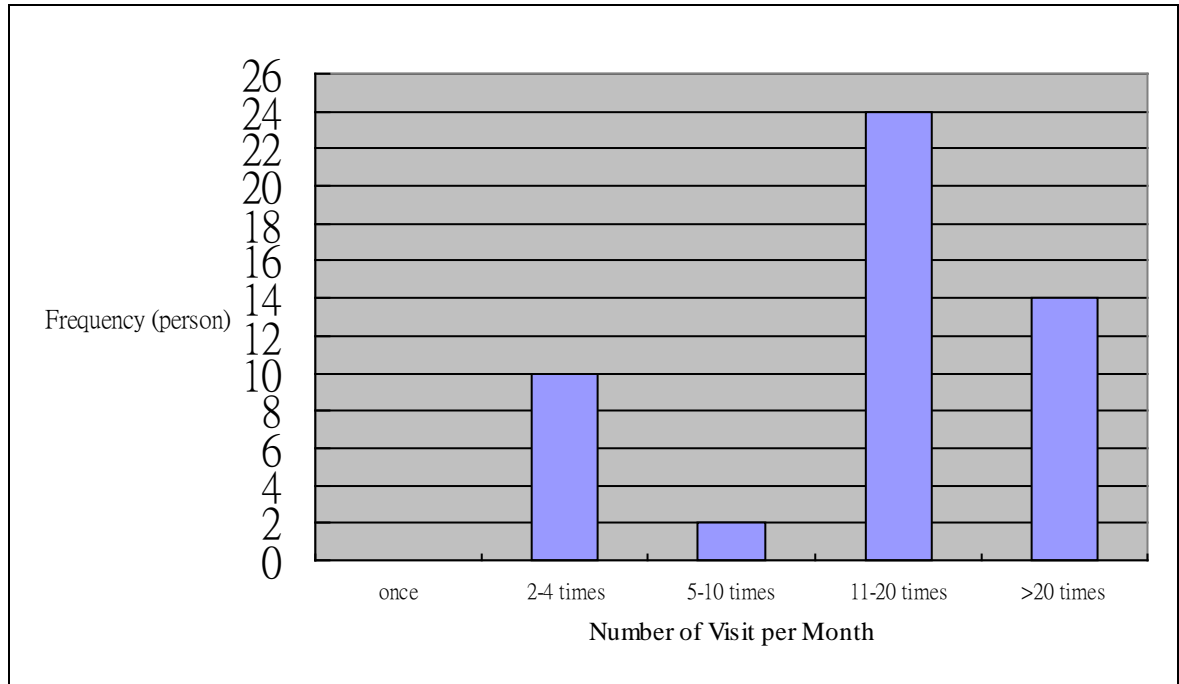
Figure 6.8 Frequency of Park Visitation (Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area)

Age	Exercise	Rest and Chat	Reading	Chess and Card Games	Others
<12	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%
12-17	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%
18-24	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
25-39	0%	18%	0%	0%	6%
40-55	6%	10%	0%	8%	0%
>55	4%	15%	0%	3%	0%
Total	20%	63%	0%	11%	6%

Table 6.4 Activities Carried Out by Respondents (Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area)

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Park Visitors' Perception of Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area

From the interviewing results (Figure 6.9), It is found that park visitors perceived the sitting-out area as a physically attractive (30%) place and the place for friendship formation (70%). This means that the sitting-out area is important to provide social connection in the community. Park visitors like to interact in the site and it is a dominating factor to draw people to go to the site.

Visitors being interviewed were generally not that satisfied with the sitting-out area. When asked on the aspects that they disliked, it is found that 40% of park visitors reported that they were happy with the sitting-out area as they did not have any particular aspect that they were dissatisfied with, as noted from Figure 6.10. Which means more than half of the park visitors dislike the park in certain aspects. Firstly, there are 20% of respondents felt that the sitting-out area was physically unsatisfactory. It was because they thought the site was quite dirty and the recreation facilities are unsuitable. Especially, there is no protection for the children in the playground. There is no fencing to protect the children from other park visitors, therefore, children may get hurt from the activities carried out by other visitors.

For almost one-fifth of the respondents disliked the site because of personal safety. It was because of three reasons, the respondent said that the lights in the site are not strong enough, and they felt unsecured when the sky goes dim. Secondly, some respondents thought that the visibility from outside to the site is low. Therefore, they worried that the park visitors are at risk if someone commits crime in the site. Thirdly, respondents noted that several crimes were committed in the surrounding areas before, and it made them losing sense of security. Therefore, most of the park visitors would

visit the park in the afternoon with better sense of security.

It is noted that some respondents disliked that site because it affect their personal status. 20% of the respondents thought that the site was not perceived good in the community because of the crime committed in surround areas. Furthermore, they worry that the outsiders' perceive the park users to be bad too, therefore the negative image of the site made them reluctant to visit the park and also not suggesting their children to go to the site. Personal safety and personal status are the factors to reduce motivation to go to Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area.

The respondents were further asked whether they would choose staying in home or going to park when they have spare time. About 60% of the respondents preferred to go to park than to stay at home (40%). Those who preferred to go to park suggested that parks provide the chances to relax through chatting with friends and doing exercise. For those respondents who prefer staying at home noted that their homes provide a more comfortable environment and the nature experience in parks is not something big deal in New Territories.

To have further investigation, the respondents were asked about the factors that affect they decision to choose which park to go. The results are shown in Figure 6.11. It is found that 50% of the respondents chose a park that favour friendship formation. 30% of them chose to go to a park with good personal atatus and 20% of them noted that they chose the park that with physical attraction. For people who decide to go to a park that provide friendship formation, which means they like a park that provide opportunities to make new friend and chat with friends. Park users who decide to go to a park with physical attractiveness because they like the parks with suitable

recreational facilities and convenient location. People who treat personal safety as important factors need sense of security. Therefore, they need clear instruction and signs from the parks and also provision of adequate safety measures (eg. Lights).
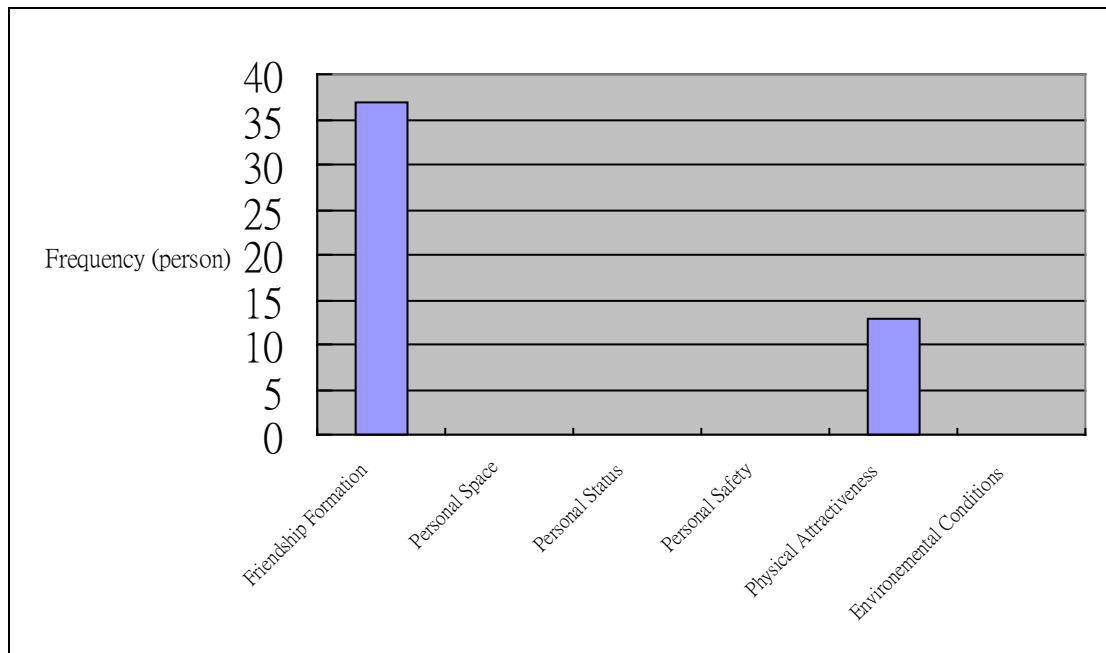
Figure 6.9   Factors that respondents like about the Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area
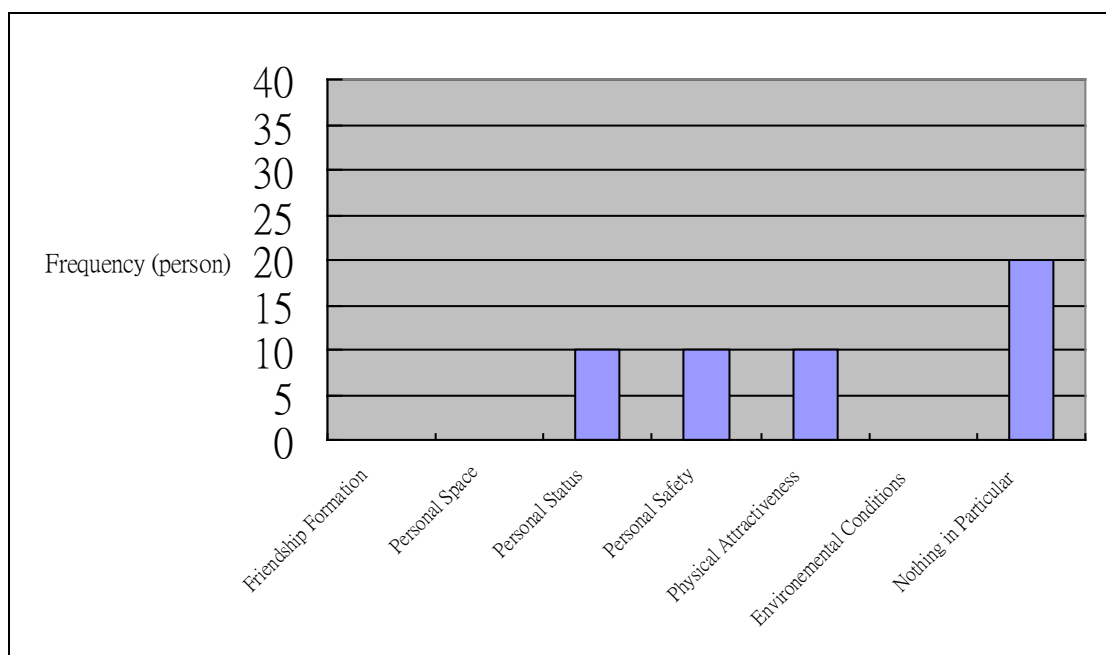
Figure 6.10 Factors that respondents dislike about the Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area
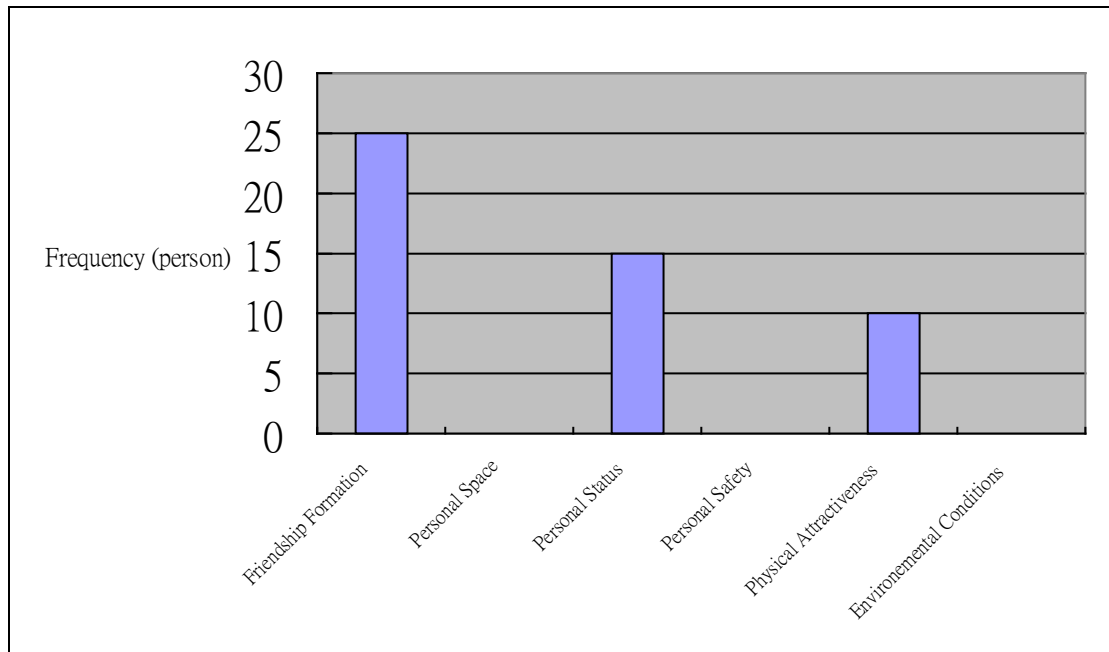
Figure 6.11 Factors that affect the decision of park visitors about which park to go (Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area)

Analysis on the Case

In the case of Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area, 50 questionnaire interviews were conducted to collection information about the people's decision and behaviour. It is found that this site attracts people from different age group. It is due to the geographical location of the site, since the site is located in the Yuen Long Town, especially next to the Wet Market. It attracts people to go to the site and have some rest and chat after shopping. Furthermore, students from nearby schools come to the site after school. Therefore, it is seen that most of the respondents visit the site during afternoon (1400-1800).

As noted that the respondents disliked the site for the reasons of unsuitable lighting, dirty, low visibility from outside, inadequate physical attractions, and the poor image

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in society. However, with such disadvantages, the site can still attract quite a number of park visitors. That means, the park should have some advantages that override the disadvantages. 30% of the respondents like it for its physical attraction, convenient location is one of those attractions, while water structure and numerous benches are also what users like.

As noted by Woolley (2003), women like to visit open spaces with children after shopping. Therefore, since the site is next to a wet market, therefore, it attracts people to visit the site after shopping in the wet market and stores in the area. Water structure is also an attraction to people because it provides the opportunity for sensuous pleasure of touching the water and hearing the water flow (Gilbert, 1991). Therefore, people recovered from stress after get near of the naturalistic conditions (Goode, 1997) and hence it attracts numerous park visitors. And there are many short seats provided in the site so that allow people to meet and discuss comfortably (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985).

Furthermore, the 70% of respondents like the site for friendship formation indicate that more people in this district treat parks as the space to make friends and chat than the place for relax from urban life. As noted by respondents that it is because greenery and nature experience are easier to be found in Yuen Long. Therefore, social interactions are what they treasure in the park.

It is noted that people perceive personal safety and personal status as the factors to affect they recreation decision. As there are many choices for recreation sites in Yuen Long. Some sites were commented as bed of crime, like the sitting out area in Kin Yip Street (at the right hand side of the site, as shown in the map above). Therefore,

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personal safety should be a factor being considered by park visitors in making decision, as people will not knowingly take risks unless there are some rewards involved (Maslow, 1987). Yet, there are still many people to visit the site under such a concern. It is because Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area provides concentrated activities hence it attracts park visitors to be together. As a result, more users in the open space ensure higher surveillance (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985). Therefore, Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area is actually a safe open space as the high number of visitors ensures surveillance.

People do not want their personal status being affected by a recreation experience. They would take the others' perception into consideration of recreation decision because they like to go to a place where their friends or family like to go too (Tuan, 1974). Therefore, personal status is another factors that affect their recreation decision.

In this case, park users decide to go to a recreation site because of the environment for social interactions, and the image of the site in community and the physical attractions in the site. The chances to get close to nature and have greenery enjoyment are not influencing their decision.

6.3.3   Case 3 : Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out area

Area: 2750 m^2

Surrounding population: 5200 persons

Number of Interviews taken: 30

Interface Characteristics: Building Block – Park Interface

Description on Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out area

Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out area is located at podium of Mei Foo West Rail Station. Walk is the only way to go there. Park visitors can only enjoy passive recreation activities in the site without provision of active passive recreation facilities. Unlike other sitting-out area, park visitors are mostly people in 30-40. In the recreation site, there are one entrance and one exit locating at the opposite side of the site. These entrance and exit are connected to the concourse of the Mei Foo West Rail Station. Toilets are not provided and people have to go the station if they want to have a wash.

The interface characteristic of Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out area is building block- park interface. Under this category, the recreation site is situated in housing estates Lam *et al* (2005). As noted in Figure 6.12, Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out area is situated in Mei Foo Sun Tsuen. Therefore, it is a building block-park interface. The residents from closest 6 residential blocks can go to the site on foot within 15 minutes. Furthermore, the population of those 6residential blocks is about 5200 persons, which is the major source of park visitors to the site. It is because as previously noted, the HKPSG noted that local open space serve the community

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within a radius of not more than 0.4km.

Figure 6.12   Location of Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out area

Source : Outline Zoning Plan (2007), Town Planning Board

Empirical Findings

Results of the questionnaire survey (Table 6.5) show that the age group distributions of respondents are not even. The age group of 25-39 (70%) dominates in the site while other age groups contribute a smaller portion in the questionnaire. Especially and the retired group (above 40) who suppose to be the major users in sitting-out area was less attracted to the Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area. It is surprised

that there was even no children and elderly user in the site during the interviewing period. Students (20%) and white collar (70%) made up the major portions of park visitors. Retired people (10%) were less attracted to the site. It is interesting to found that most of the respondents do not come to the site from home but instead, after traveling by West Rail (80%). The remaining 20% of respondents came from nearby residences or came after school. Because of the close proximity of the sitting-out area to the West Rail Station, park visitors were usually just took off from the rail and had a walk in the site before returning home. 100% of the respondents went to the site on foot and it will be explained in later session.

Age	Gender			Occupation					
	Male	Female	Total	Student	House wife	Blue collar	White collar	Unem- ployed	Retired
<12	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
12-17	10%	10%	20%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
18-24	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
25-39	40%	30%	70%	0%	10%	10%	50%	0%	0%
40-55	3%	7%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%
>55	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	16	14	30	6	3	3	15	0	3

Table 6.5 Profile of interviewed park visitors (Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out area) (N = 30)

Park visitors coming directly from home usually went to the park in the morning (0800-1200) and afternoon (1400-1800). A large portion of park visitors went to the park after works and school, therefore period after 1800 was the hot time to visit as shown in Figure 6.13.

Results also show that half of the respondents visit the sitting-out area for 3-10 times a month. For 20% of respondents visit the sitting-out area 2-4 times a month and there was no person to visit the sitting-out area for more than 20 times a month. In comparing with other two selected sites, it is the first time to see there was no respondent to visit the site more than 20 times a month. It means that the Mei Foo Sitting-out Area is not that successful to create a recreation habit when comparing with other two cases. The reasons to it will be given in later session.

Concerning the activities carried by park visitors, it can be seen that the most popular activity of the park visitors is no longer rest and chat. Less than half of the visitors go to Mei Foo Sitting-out Area Street for rest and chat. It is specially noted that the 60% of the respondents chose "others" as the activities that they carried out. When they were asked the kind of activities being carried out, the received answers were mostly "enjoying the scenic view". It is because the Mei Foo West Rail Station is located at the roof of the station tower; therefore, the park users enjoy an open view from the site. Table 6.4 shows the activity carried out by the respondents.
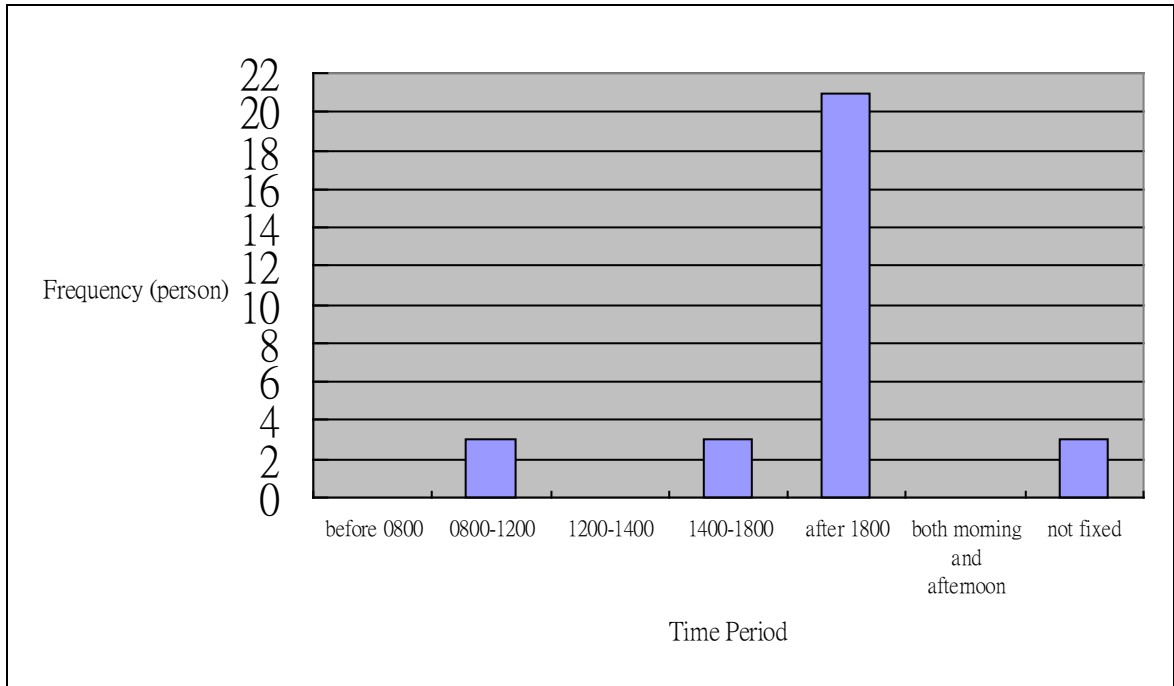
Figure 6.13 Time of Park Visitatoin (Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area)
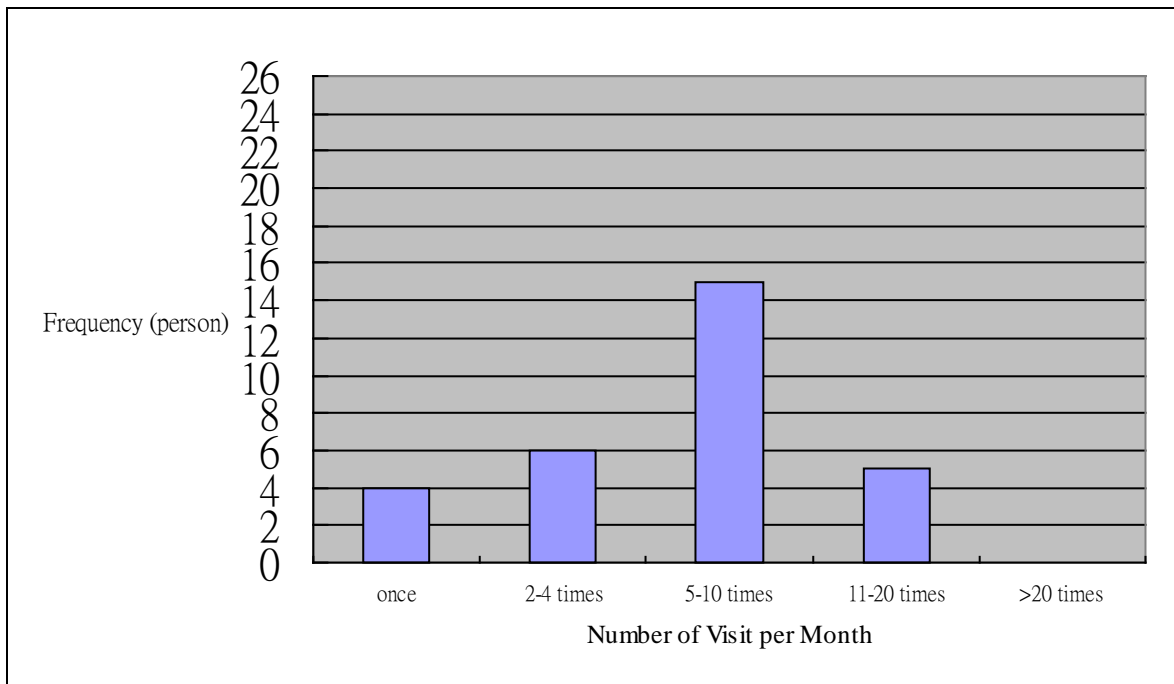

Figure 6.14 Frequency of Park Visitation (Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area)

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Age	Exercise	Rest and Chat	Reading	Chess and Card Games	Others
<12	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
12-17	0%	10%	0%	0%	10%
18-24	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
25-39	0%	20%	0%	0%	50%
40-55	3%	7%	0%	0%	0%
>55	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Total	3%	37%	0%	0%	60%

Table 6.6 Activities Carried Out by Respondents (Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area)

Park Visitors' Perception of Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area

From the interviewing results (Figure 6.15), It is found that park visitors perceived the sitting-out area as a physically attractive (56%) place, with good environmental condition (15%) and the place for friendship formation (29%). This means that the sitting-out area not only provides social connection in the community but it also provides a sense of peacefulness and tranquility through the physical facilities and the greenery. Park visitors like to interact and relax through getting close to nature; it is a dominating factor to draw people to go to the site.

It seems that most visitors interviewed were generally satisfied with the sitting-out area. When asked on the aspects that they disliked, it is found that 80% of park

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visitors reported that they were happy with the sitting-out area as they did not have any particular aspect that they were dissatisfied with, as noted from Figure 6.16. However, there were 20% of respondents felt that the site was not physically attractive in the aspects of facilities, location, accessibility and lack shading areas, but these aspects were not reducing their motivation to go to the site.

The respondents were further asked whether they would choose staying in home or going to park when they have spare time. About 73% of the respondents preferred to go to park than to stay at home (27%). Some respondents suggested that parks provide the chances to get close to nature, and it also provides an environment to relax so that they could get away from the life pressures. Since half of the respondents were working-class people, hence the recreation site that provides opportunities to retreat from urban living was favoured (Herzog *et al*, 1997; Ulrich *et al*, 1991)

To have further investigation, the respondents were asked about the factors that affect they decision to choose which park to go. The results are shown in Figure 6.17. It is found that 40% of the respondents chose a park that is physically attractive, 35% of them chose to go to a park with good environmental conditions and 25% of them noted that they chose the park that facilitates friendship formation. It is found that people in this area need parks to relief from urban stress than for social interaction. It is likely because the respondents are mostly working-class people. Therefore, what they need after work is the room to retreat. For people who decide to go to a park that provide friendship formation, which means they like a park that provide opportunities to make new friend and chat with friends.
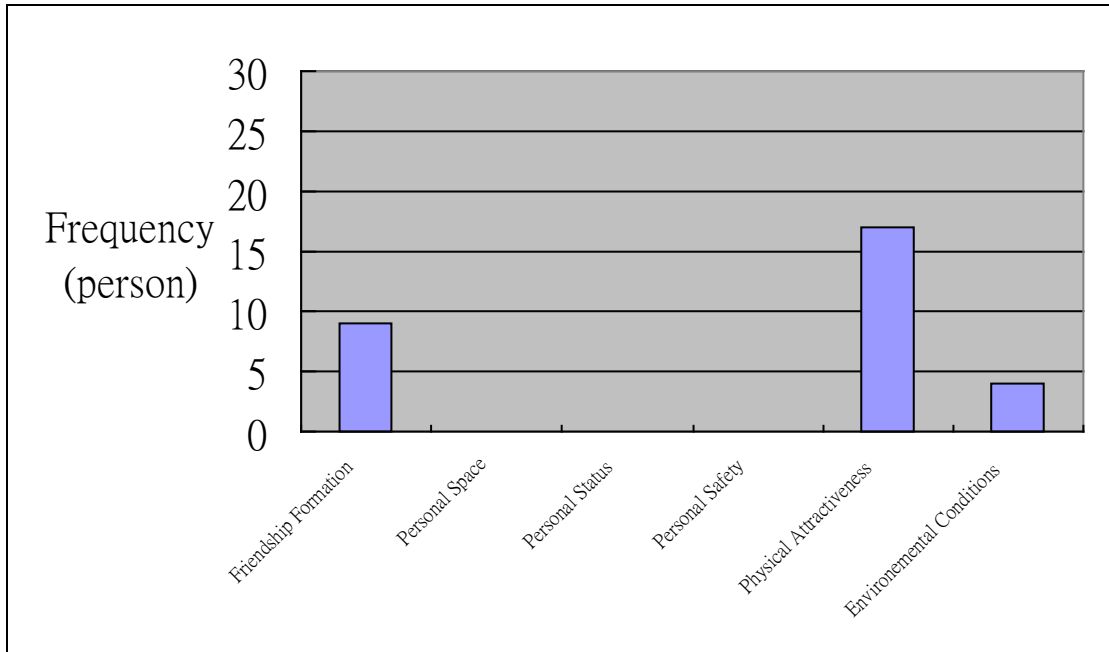
Figure 6.15 Factors that respondents like about the Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area
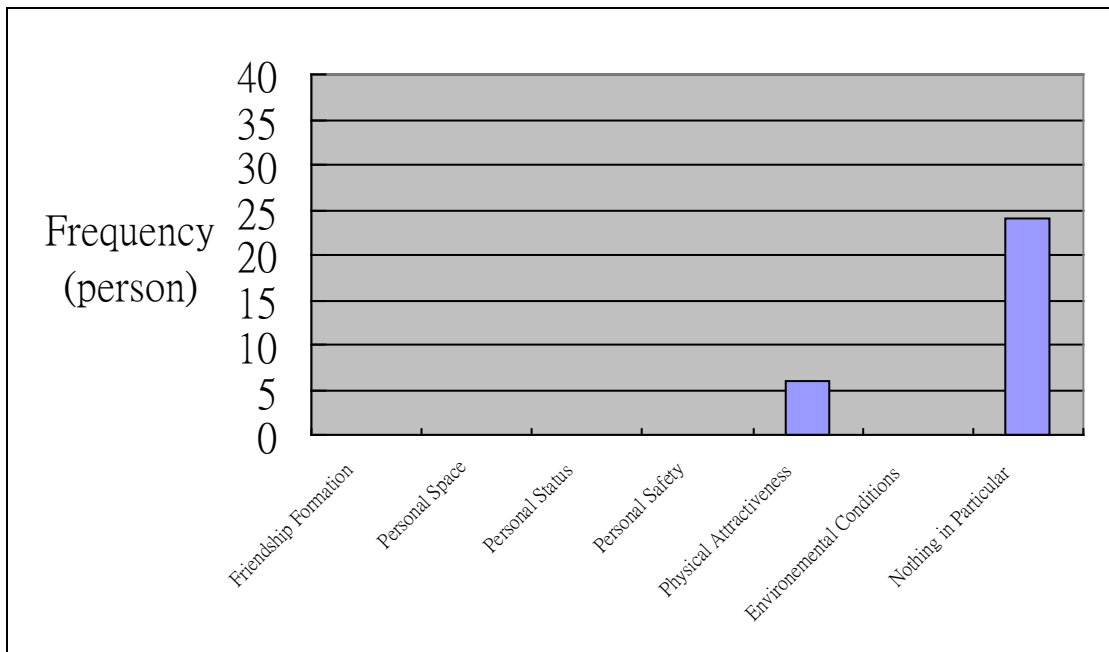
Figure 6.16 Factors that respondents dislike about the Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area
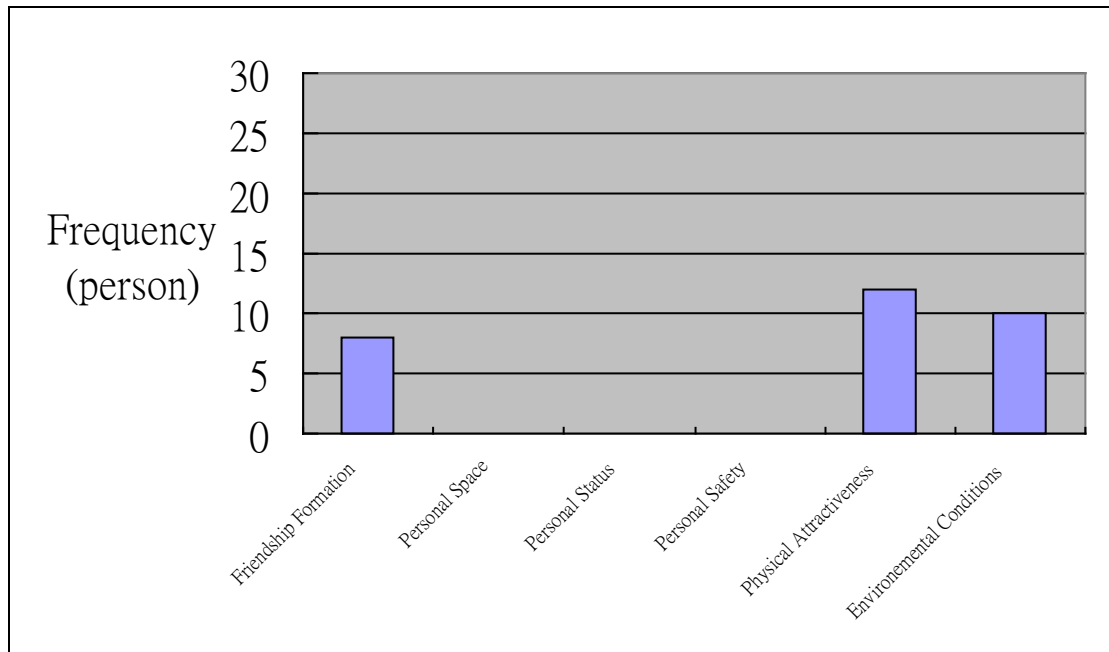
Figure 6.17 Factors that affect the decision of park visitors about which park to go (Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area)

Analysis

In the case of Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area, 30 questionnaire interviews were conducted to collection information about the peoples' perception and behaviour. It is found that this site does not attract people from different age group. It is due to the geographical location of the site, since the site is located in the Mei Foo Wes Rail Station. Though this site should likely to attract closest residences, which should be the Mei Foo Sun Tsuen. Yet, the residents take a longer journey to go to this site than go to the Lai Chi Kok Park. Concrening the walking distance, children and elderly who supposed to be the major users of the sitting-out area would choose the Lai Chi Kok Park than the Mei Foo West Rail Sitting-out Area.

Furthermore, respondents reflected that the site is physically unattractive in the aspects of lacking physical facilities, shading areas, inconvenience location and low

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accessibility. Therefore, nearby residents are less attracted to this site. As a result, the major users become the travelers of West Rail. It is the reason why most of the respondents chose the time of visitation to be after 1800. A large portions of respondents indicated that they come to the park for relax and nature enjoyment. It is working-class people under urban pressure need to refresh mind and body through the peaceful environment of the recreation site (van der berg *et al* 1998). Therefore, a short break at the Mei Foo West Rail Sitting-out area is the best option to retreat.

It is noted that people perceive physical attraction, environmental condition and friendship formation as the factors to affect they recreation decision in descending order. This is not difficult to understand, as the respondents of this site are mostly working- class people, the meaning of recreation site to them should be refreshment. Therefore, they need a space that is clean peaceful and with greenery features.

6.4   Conclusion

After analyzing the three cases, it is found that not all of the identified factors are being considered by park visitors in making the recreation decision. From the individual case reports, there is no factor to dominate in all of the three cases. However, the decision and behaviour of park visitors comply with the schematic model of (Hayward and Weitzer, 1984) that people make recreation decision because of perception to the open spaces and past experience. Since different park visitors have different recreation experiences and come from different cultural, socio and economic background (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995), therefore the influencing factors that affect their recreation decision varied.

For the case of Caine Road Sitting-out Area, the park visitors' decisions and behaviours do comply with the schematic model of Hayward and Weitzer. As firstly, most of the respondents in this case perceived the site as a site for friendship formation (45%). The data of activities that carried out by the respondents show that a similar portion of people engaged in "rest and chat" in the site. "Rest and Chat", being the activities that create contacts and hence making bonds among people (Stoneham, 1996) reflect that how people perceive the park affect their behaviour in the park. Secondly, highest numbers of respondents consider "Friendship Formation" as the influencing factors that affect the recreation decision is also complying the schematic model. Because as mentioned in individual report, major users are sharing similar backgrounds and hence the similar background facilitates contacts (Greenhalph and Worpole, 1995) and therefore, this experience create a perception to these park visitors that open spaces facilitate friends making and chatting. As a result,

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"Friendship Formation" is being considered as the influencing factor to make recreation decision.

For the case of Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area, a large portion of the respondents in this case perceived the site as a site for friendship formation (70%). The data of activities that carried out by the respondents show that a similar portion of people engaged in "rest and chat" in the site (63%). For "rest and chat", being an activity to create social contacts (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985) shows that the behaviour of park visitors is related to their perception as what is suggested by the schematic model of Haywad and Weitzer (1984). For the remaining respondents (30%) perceived the site as a physically attractive recreation site. It is mainly because the site has a location advantage. Not only the site is at "home range" that attracts surrounding residents, especially children and elderly to visit the site for passive activities (Hart, 1979), but also it is next to the wet market, hence attracts people to go to the site for resting and chatting after shopping.

It is noted that people perceived the site with safety problem and worry that the site affects their personal status. Such perception is therefore affecting their considerations in making recreation decision too. It is found that 30% of the respondents thought personal status as an influencing factor, hence they choose not to visit open spaces that carry bad image or perceived bad by other people to affect their personal status. Therefore, the data of this case comply with the schematic model of Hayward and Weitzer (1984) as both the behaviour and decision of park visitors are affected by different past experience and perception.

For the case of Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area, 40% of the respondents in this case perceived the site as physically attractive. The data of activities that carried out by the respondents show that 60% of the respondents choose to enjoy the scenic view rather than other activities. This comply with the schematic model of Hayward and Weitzer(1984) that perception affect behaviour of park visitors. More importantly, 40% of the respondents noted that "Physical Attractiveness" is the factor that affect recreation decision while it should be related to their past experience of enjoying the scenic view. With research shown that having the opportunity to be close with nature provides restoration from fatigue and stress (Herzog *et al*, 1997; Ulrich *et al*, 1991). Such restorative effect is very important and being treasured by people from working stress (Taylor, 1994; Gilbert, 1991). Therefore, the experience of restoration affects the perception of park visitors and hence they would think "Physical Attractiveness" is the factor to affect recreation decision. Therefore, the data of this case also comply with the schematic model of Haywad and Weitzer (1984).

The three case studies show that the park visitors' decisions and behaviours do comply with the schematic model of Hayward and Weitzer (1984). The detailed comparisons of the cases are shown in next chapter.

Chapter 7

Cross- case Analysis

7.1   Introduction

In this chapter, cross-case analysis is conducted to discuss the factors considered by park visitors that affect their recreation decision and behaviour. The relative importance of different factors at different cases will be explained through the reviewed literature.

7.2   Factors considered by park users to make recreation decision

To carry out cross-case analysis, the factors affecting the recreation decision of park users at different cases are summarized in Table 7.1. The Table shows the percentage of respondents in three cases that conside different factors to affect their recreation decision.

This table is formed for the cross-case analysis because in this part, each factor will be discussed separately. The comparison among different cases is based on the frequency stated in the table, hence based on the percentage of respondents to pick certain factor as influencing factor.

Cases Factors That Influence Decision	Caine Road Sitting-out Area	Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area	Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area
Friendship Formation	35%	50%	25%
Personal Space	10%	0%	0%
Personal Status	0%	30%	0%
Personal Safety	0%	0%	0%
Physical Attractiveness	20%	20%	40%
Environmental Condition	35%	0%	35%

Table 7.1   Summary of factors affect the recreation decision of park visitors at 3 locations

According to Table 7.1, it can be seen that some factors are taken into account by most of the park visitors when deciding which park to go. It is found that friendship formation, physical attractiveness and environmental condition are considered by most of the park visitors, while personal space and personal status are considered by users from particular area only. It is also noted that there is no visitor to consider personal safety as the factor to affect recreation decision. In the following, explanation will be made on the above findings.

Reviewed literature tells that urban parks and open spaces should be designed and managed as the place for social and recreational activities (Morphet, 1990) and for psychological retreat from urban living (Hayward and Weitzer, 1984). These two objectives of urban parks and open space are also the recreational interest of park visitors. In the following session, the logic of explanation will follow the schematic

model (Figure7.1) by Hayward and Weitzer about decision-making by park visitors
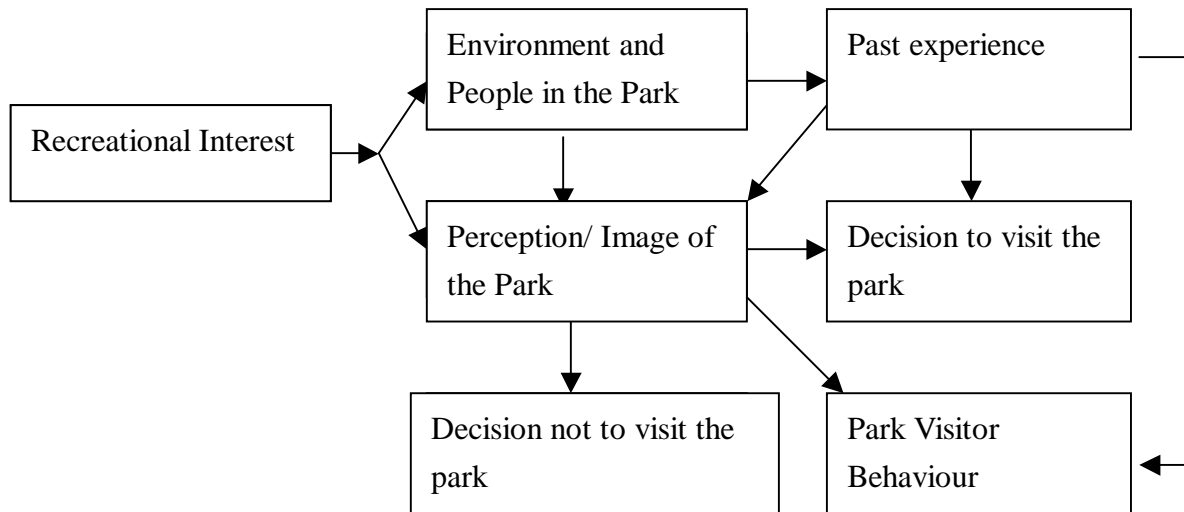
Figure 7.1 Schematic Model of Decision Making by Park Visitors
Source : Hayward and Weitzer (1984)

7.2.1   Assessment of Friendship Formation

Despite the respondents from Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area, the factor "Friendship Formation" is the most selected factor in each of the two cases. As reviewed from literature, people who regard attributes of friendship formation to be making new friends and chatting with friends in the park (Maslow, 1987). Furthermore, people like park with good seating arrangement for small group (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985).

For Caine Road Sitting-out Area and Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area, it can be seen that the major users of these sites are children, housewives, retired people and elderly. Therefore their intentions of going to parks are less likely to search for psychological retreat (Lau, 1995). Therefore, their intentions of going to parks are social and recreational activities. This is verified from the activities carried out by them, it is

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found that their activities in the sites are mainly "rest and chat", "exercise" and "chess and card games".

It is reasonable to understand why "friendship formation" is an important factors that affecting their recreation decision. Since these groups of people go to parks for meeting friends, making friends or pursuit of caring from the others (Greenhalgh and Worpole, 1995). So, they take recreation sites as the chances to satisfy their need. And these groups of people sharing similar backgrounds and hence the similar background facilitates contacts (Greenhalph and Worpole, 1995) and therefore, this experience create a perception to these park visitors that open spaces facilitate friends making and chatting. As a result, "Friendship Formation" is being considered as the influencing factor to make recreation decision as following the schematic model of Hayward and Weitzer (1984).

For the Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area, since the major users are the working-class people. They are enduring more burdens from the urban life. Therefore, they are more likely to go to the recreation sites for psychological retreat. These people went to the site for enjoying the scenic view. Therefore, when they were asked the factors that affect their recreation decision, "friendship formation" is reasonable to be not prioritized.

7.2.2 Assessment of Physical Attractiveness

In the selected cases, physical attractiveness of the parks and the environmental conditions in it are always the factors the affect the recreation decision besides "friendship formation". Despite the respondents from Caine Road Sitting-out Area, respondents in other two sites concern the physical attractiveness of the park more than the environmental condition. As reviewed from literature, people who regard attributes of physical attractiveness of the park to be cleanliness, water structure, accessibility, convenient location, recreational facilities, greenery and shading (Lam *et al* 2005; Deasy and Lasswell, 1985).

For Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area, it can be seen that the major users are children, housewives, retired people and elderly. Physical attractiveness of a park is also important because as mentioned above, their purposes of going to parks are acquiring social and recreational activities. Therefore, a proper designed managed place helped them to undergo these social and recreational activities. For example, children and elderly would choose parks with convenient location hence a home range open space, so that they do not need to travel much to reach the park (Hart, 1979). Besides, more suitable recreational facilities are provided, more satisfactory is the visit to parks (Bundred *et al*, 2001; Morgan, 1991). For recreational facilities, they should be suitable and in good order. As a result, suitable facilities for community can attract wide range of park users (Rishbeth, 2001). Moreover, suitable facilities provide park users the opportunities to develop feelings of well-being, self confidence, relaxation and independence (Sainsbury, 1987). For example the provision of facilities for people with disabilities can inspire enthusiasm, provide pleasure and confidence (De Potter, 1991; Jackson, 1991). Recreational facilities in good order also ensure the safety of park users so that risk of being suffered from facilities is reduced, and it is

important to attract more park visitors with a safer park perception (McNeish and Roberts, 1995).

Park visitors will therefore choose the sites to favour social and recreational activities. For example, a clean area is important for the health of children and elderly (Woolley, 2003); shading area favours rest and chat (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985).

For Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area, since working-class people are the major users. They go to parks for psychological retreat, therefore they choose the parks that provide clean environment and the chance to get close nature so that they can relief from the urban stress (Ulrich, 1981). It is reasonable for these park visitors to consider "physical attractiveness" as an influencing factor due to their past experience of enjoying the scenic view to restore from fatigue and stress (Herzog *et al*, 1997; Ulrich *et al*, 1991). Such restorative effect is very important and being treasured by people from working stress (Taylor, 1994; Gilbert, 1991). Therefore, the experience of restoration affects the perception of park visitors and hence they would think "Physical Attractiveness" is the factor to affect recreation decision. Therefore, the data of this case also comply with the schematic model of Haywad and Weitzer (1984).

For respondents from Caine Road Sitting-out Area, more people considered environmental conditions than physical attractiveness before they decide which park to go. This can be explained by the idea of Deasy and Lasswell (1985) :

"If the imperative needs for food and drink become more difficult to satisfy, there will be little concern for such abstract matters as self-actualization. In societies where food and security are more or less assured, the needs for affection and self-actualization become much more important"

Since in the Mid-level, urban parks and open spaces are clean, with suitable recreational facilities and green features. Therefore, the "physically attractiveness" among different parks are similar. Therefore, they are considering other factors like "environmental condition" as the influencing factor.

7.2.3 Assessment of Environment Conditions

Despite the respondents from Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area, the factor "Environment Condition" is also affecting the recreation decision of park visitors of other two cases. As reviewed from literature, people who regard attributes of environment conditions to be air quality and noise level (Lam *et al*, 2005).

The reason for the respondents of Caine Road Sitting-out Area to choose Environment Conditions as an influencing factor was explained in previous session. However, different reasoning was applied to the Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area case. More than one third of the respondents thought that "environment conditions" is affecting their recreation decision.

Before investigating the issues, the general environment condition in urban area was concerned. Studies by Lam *et al* (2005) noted that the air quality in Hong Kong urban parks is generally good and will probably not pose adverse health effects. Same studies also pointed that though the noise level of urban parks is high, yet it is still kept at a level that not affecting normal activities in parks. Therefore, tranquility was the concern of the respondents (Lam *et al,* 2005). From related literature, trees cannot reduce a high level of noise, while the rustling of leaves and the association of other wildlife can affect human perception of a noise source and furthermore, trees can act as psychological barrier that make people less conscious of the noise source (Heisler, 1977) therefore open space creates tranquility psychologically. As mentioned before that these respondents seek for psychological retreat from the park, therefore it is reasonable that "Environment Condition" is the influencing factor for their recreation decision.

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Therefore, it is reasonable that no respondents of the Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area thought environment conditions as the influencing factor. Not only because Yuen Long, being a district in new town, has a better air quality but most importantly, the park visitors go to the parks for social and recreation activities. Hence, tranquility is not needed by the park visitors in Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area.

7.2.4   Assessment of Personal Space

As reviewed from literature, people regard the attributes of "Personal Space" as degree of privacy, possession of space and personal space for freedom. People from different cultural background have different feelings about personal space. People need personal space to enjoy freedom (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985).

Thererfore, the difference in cultural background is the reason why some respondents concern about personal space before making the recreation decision. No respondent in the Mei Foo West Rail Station Sitting-out Area and Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area pointed that "Personal Space" is one of the influencing factor. The findings of Woo (1996) helped explaining this phenomenon. Firstly, the spaces of parks are adequate that under use, it is easy to find a space to enjoy freedom in the parks. Secondly, high degree of privacy was being enjoyed. As there is no CCTV in the parks and generally, park officials would not disturb the park users.

Thus, the 4 respondents of Caine Road Sitting-out Area noted "personal space" as an influencing factor were likely because of a different cultural background. Actually, these 4 respondents were housekeepers come from East Asia. They pointed that "personal space" is a factor to affect recreation decision because they go to open spaces on holiday and it is their culture that each small group of people occupying a space for social gathering. While in certain open spaces, they are not allowed to do so. For this group of respondents, "personal space" is in influencing factors to make recreation decision. This just follow the finding of Loukaitou-Sideris (1995) that

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people from different cultural background have different feelings about personal space. The past experience of enjoying a private space to carry out group activities made the 4 respondents to consider "Personal Space" as influencing factorsto affect recreation decision.

7.2.5   Assessment of Personal Status

From the reviewed literature, people regard the attributes of "personal status" as park image in the society and outsiders' perception to the park users. It is found that only the respondents of Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area noted "personal status" as a factor to affect recreation decision.

Personal status is a factor because some respondents do not want their social status being affected by a recreation experience (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985). In other words, they don't want to be perceived as bad guys after visiting a park. Therefore, these respondents concern about the image of recreation sites before decision is made.

This phenomenon not usually occurs unless there are parks in the district that carry bad image. For example the Kin Yip Street Sitting-out Area near the case (Yau Sun Street Sitting-out Area) carries bad image because it is a place that triad members associate. For negative social issues being discussed among neighbours will also generate negative perception (McNeish and Roberts, 1995). Therefore, people go to that Sitting-out Area will be perceived as bad and affect personal status (Lam *et al*, 2005). Otherwise, if all recreation sites in a district were perceived "good", there is no chance to affect one's personal status through a recreation experience. Therefore, no respondent in other two sites notes "personal status" as an influencing factor.

7.2.6   Assessment of Personal Safety

From the previous literature, people regard personal safety as communication with signs, light, visibility from outside, park users' groups, activities of other users and location of entrance and exit.

The data noted that there was no respondent to answer personal safety as the influencing factor for making recreation decision. This phenomenon is same as the situation that respondents in Caine Road Sitting-out Area did not consider environment conditions as an influencing factor. Since the crime rate in urban parks of Hong Kong is kept in low level, about 1000 cases each year (Hong Kong Police, 2007), and there are always park workers and other park users being available to help for any difficulties. Therefore, the safety risks that bear by park visitors are actually small. As a result, people do not answer personal safety as an influencing factor as it is something more or less assured.

It is important to note that people will not knowingly take risks unless there are some rewards involved (Maslow, 1987). Yet, in Hong Kong open spaces, concentrated activities are provided in a limited area. Hence it attracts park visitors to be together in a close area. As a result, more users in the open space ensure higher surveillance (Deasy and Lasswell, 1985). Therefore, high number of visitors ensures surveillance and makes the open space safer.

According to the schematic model of Hayward and Weitzer, it is the past experience to shape the future decision. From the past experience, park visitors were enjoying a safety recreation environment. Therefore, the sense of certainty made the respondents

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less concern about personal safety and hence do not consider personal safety as an influencing factor.

7.3   Conclusion

The objective of this chapter is to analyze the factors considered by different respondents before making their recreation decisions. The phenomenon of different respondents having different influencing factors to affect their recreation decision and behaviour is analyzed.

Though different groups of respondents have different influencing factors, yet the variations are generated from the same logic, hence the schematic model of (Hayward and Weitzer, 1984). Since different park visitors have different recreation experiences and come from different cultural, socio and economic background (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995), therefore the influencing factors that affect their recreation decision varied.

It is found that friendship formation, physical attractiveness and environmental condition are considered by most of the park visitors, while personal space and personal status are considered by users from particular area only. It is also noted that there is no visitor to consider personal safety as the factor to affect recreation decision.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1 Research Results

Three objectives have been set out in this research and conclusions to each of the research objective are discussed below.

Objective 1 : To review the existing recreational planning process and policies in Hong Kong

Objective 1 is achieved in chapter 2. It is found that in the past 10 years, in the total area of urban parks and open spaces have been increased. More and more large scale projects were finished and there was a tendency to provide more active facilities for the publics. For example more jogging tracks and indoor-ball games hall were finished in recent years.

Concerning the recreation planning process, it is found that 3 stages of works structured the planning process. They are policies formulation, policy execution and policy implementation. Recreation planning is a complicated process requires the cooperation of various government departments, experts, agencies and organizations. Major authorities (eg. SHPL, SHA etc.) working together to structure planning policies for recreational developments and allocate land resources for recreational and cultural matters. While parties like Planning Standard Sub-committee (PSSC) and

Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) to execute planning policies. Finally, departments that provide public services and the District Board take the major responsibilities for actual provision and managerial works.

For the first stage of recreation planning, regular meetings and closed communications are undergone among the major actors to formulate the long term and broad scale landuse policies for the cultural and recreational developments in the Territory. For the second stage of recreation planning, policies are executed under statutory and non-statutory control. Statutory control is the legal means to control recreation development. OZP and TPO are the legal supports to exert control on open spaces uses. Non-statutory control is the administrative means to control recreation development. HKPSG is the manual to set out the standards for recreation planning. The development of New Towns follows the standard of HKPSG, while the old areas will catch up the standard during urban renewal. For the final stage of recreation planning, implementation strategies are adopted for open space planning. The 4 strategies are reclamation to have new land, designation of comprehensive development areas for urban renewal projects, utilization of temporary sites and application for land resumption.

Objective 2 : To identify the factors that affect the recreation decision of park visitors.

This objective has been achieved in Chapter 2,6 and 7 in which literature review and three case studies have been carried out. The park visitors in the three selected sitting-out areas are interviewed to collect the data about the factors that affect recreation decision.

It can be seen that some factors (friendship formation, physical attractiveness and environmental condition) are taken into consideration by most of the park visitors when deciding which park to go. Users from particular area consider personal space and personal status. It is also noted that there is no visitor to consider personal safety as the factor to affect recreation decision.

The importance of this finding is that different factors being concerned by the park visitors represent different needs of the park visitors. For respondents who picked "friendship formation" as the influencing factors means that they need recreation experience for social activities. For respondents who picked "physical attractiveness" and "environment condition" as the influencing factors means that they need psychological retreat through the environment and facilities provided in the site.

For those people who consider "personal space" as the influencing factor, it is because of their cultural background. It is because they perceive space to be the most important factor as every social and recreational activities that they undergo start from the availability of space.

Objective 3 : To understand the relative importance of different factors that affect the recreation decision of different park visitors.

It is found that different respondents had different influencing factors to affect their recreation decision. These variations are generated from the same logic. Therefore, the intention of respondents to go to park determines the influencing factor. It is whether the respondents treat the recreation sites as the places for social and recreational activities or the places for psychological retreat.

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It is found that children need the place that is "physically attractive" and help "friendship formation". People of working-class treat "physical attractiveness" and "environmental condition" as the important factors because they need refreshment from the recreation experience. For groups of retired people, elderly and housewives, "friendship formation" and " physical attractiveness" are the influencing factors.

8.2   Limitations of the Study

In this study, the perception of respondents to the park and the factors that affect the recreation decision of park visitors are investigated. The major limitation of the study is time constraint. As to minimize the chance for bias sampling, all sites were visited on every interviewing day. However, the locations of these three places are far from each other, much time was taken for traveling. Therefore, the time left for interview is less. Furthermore, since the data was collected through questionnaire interview. It is quite time consuming, as each set of data requires interviewing time about 15-30 minutes. Furthermore, as there was only one interviewer, therefore, the progress of data collection is quite slow. Although face-to face interview is a time consuming method to collect data when compare with online or mailed-questionnaire, but the data collected this way is unique and did reflect the real perception of respondents. Since face-to face interview allow instant interaction, the interviewer can ask follow up question on interesting issues, for example during the interview with East-Asian housekeepers. It is truly realized how cultural background can make "personal space" to be an influencing factor. While if the questionnaire was done online, such detailed reply may not be obtained. Therefore, these data did add value to this research.

The second limitation is the variation in knowledge levels. Since this research is about perception and human behaviour. It seemed to be something abstract to some of the interviewees, though a brief introduction about this study was given to the respondents before the interviews begin. Yet, it might have chances that a portion of respondents was not reflecting the real feeling due to misunderstanding. Though the interviewer explained for every misinterpretation, yet there was still opportunity that the answers from respondents were inaccurate. Moreover, some of the respondents did not even think about why they would go to a recreation site, needless to speak of "factors". This interview induced such kind of thought may as a result affect the data accuracy.

The third limitation is the possibility of giving untrue answer. Since there was no contractual relationship between respondents and interviewer, the respondents did not have the responsibilities to reflect truly. Moreover, to prevent bias sampling, interviewer should not choose the interviewee by guessing whether a particular interviewee could give a true answer. Therefore, what an interviewer could do is to ask more follow up questions on answers that were not sensible rather than to accept every answer from the respondents.

The forth limitation is the reluctant response of park visitors. It can be seen that not much interviews were carried out. It is not only because the limitation of time, but also because park visitors are reluctant to interview. The age group of 18-24 is most difficult to reach in all the three cases. As a result, the perception and behaviour analysis for this group of people is not that representative since only a very small portion of aged 18-24 respondents were interviewed. However, retired people and housewives were very helpful that they answer wholeheartedly.

8.3   Recommendations on the recreation planning system

1) To have a Specialized Party for Recreation Planning

On policy level, the recreation planning in Hong Kong is still adopting a top-down traditional approach that emphasizes on the policy formulation on the administrative level. Although the government has claimed that there is interdepartmental coordination to formulate long tern strategy for recreational planning, yet this arrangement is still not effective enough. Since no specialized party to handle recreational development in the planning level, coordination among deparments become less efficient and hence lowing the efficiency of execution and implementation

2) Bettter Management and Supervision

Maintenance and management of urban parks and opens spaces are unsatisfactory in some urban districts. As only very small amount or even no patrolling is carried out in the urban parks and open spaces, some of these sites become the paradise for gangs and drug addiction. As a result, people who use these sites are disturbed or suffered and at the end. Therefore, the government may think of having more patrol or manager in the urban parks and open spaces to protect the recreation opportunities of the citizen.

3) Preparation of Master Layout Plan

Comprehensive planning strategy for open space developments on local level should be prepared by the Planning Department. Each district should have it own strategy for open space development based on the unique landuse and socio economics. District Offices of the Planning Department and also the Leisure and Cultural Services Department should involve in preparing master layout plans to illustrate the opportunities and constraints for open space developments in each district. The master layout plan should clearly show the planning intention and spatial arrangement among proposed urban parks, open spaces and other landuses within the district. The master layout plan should be served as guidance for future landuse development and recreation planning.

Incompatible open spaces should be avoided to prevent the provision of poor-accessible and under-use open spaces.

4) Frequent Evaluation

Frequent evaluation should be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the planning policies and make appropriate response to the change in community. For example, with the changes in the population structure, the type of recreation facilities provided should be different. Or if there is a change in leisure pattern of the residents, the planning direction should consider adjustment so that maximizing the role of recreation spots. The results of evaluation should be taken into consideration of adjustment in planning objectives and policies.

5)Public Consultation and Involvement

Besides written public consultation, more channels should be provided for public involvement during the planning stage. The local residents who know their needs and their community best should be invited to participate in planning their community. Their opinion and experiences would be useful indicators to assess the effectiveness of the planning policies and programmes. It is likely that a direct public involvement in the planning process and discussions can fully reflect what the community actually need. As a result, the provision of recreation sites will reach higher satisfaction.

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