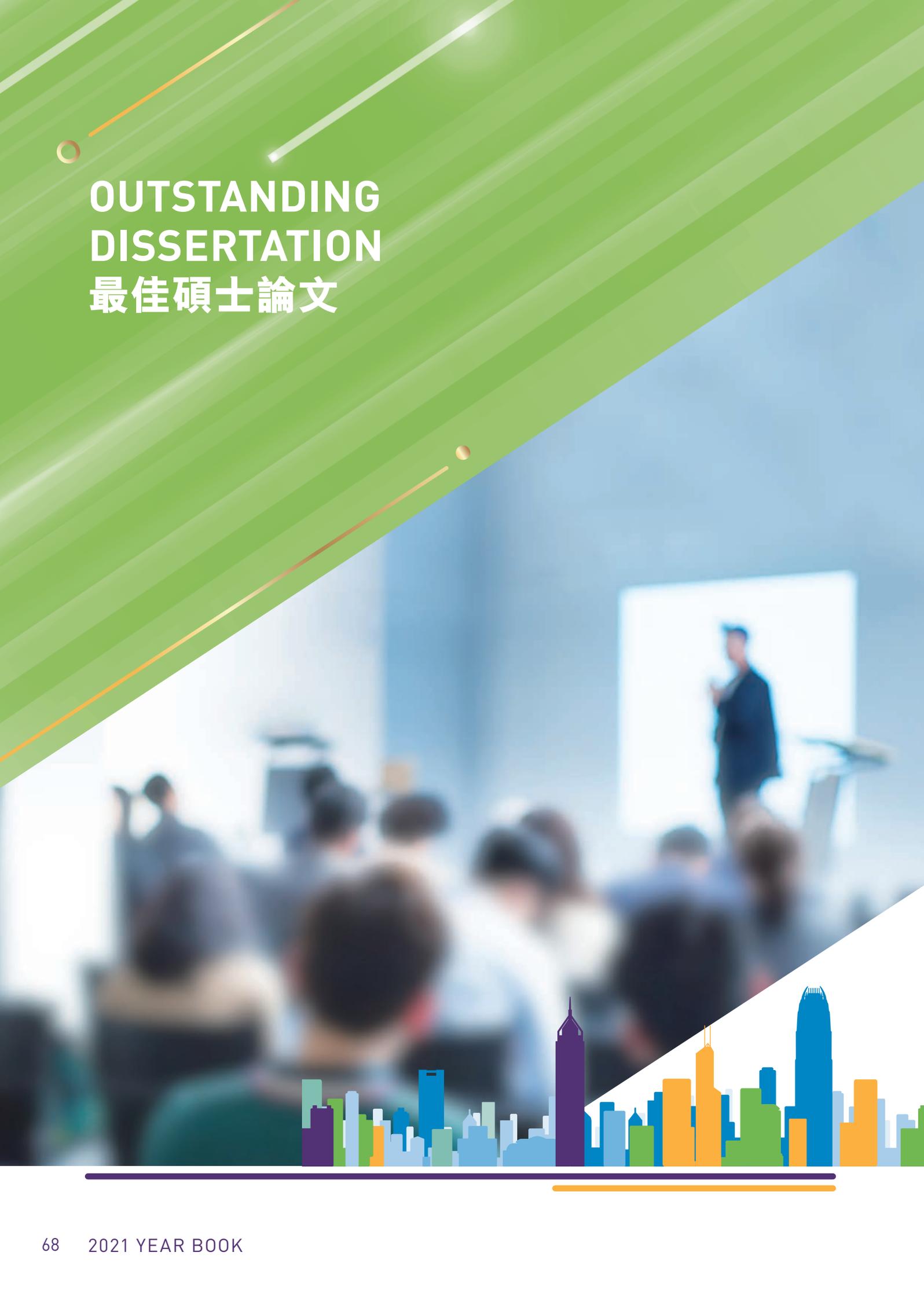


OUTSTANDING
DISSERTATION
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Being a community builder: Neighbourhood shopping centres' value beyond convenience



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Introduction

This research identified how neighbourhood shopping centres extend its role as a convenient retail space promoting community development (i.e. social capital, sense of community and community empowerment) and factors affecting their role in doing so. Recommendations were also provided on how neighbourhood shopping centres could further promote community development and suggested more emphasis should be placed in future research on neighbourhood shopping centres.

Shopping centres play a role in community development. Retail facilities are a social space for people to communicate hence promoting social capital (Cao et al., 2019) and an event space enhancing community participation (Wu and Lo, 2018). In particular, factors including a good layout (Watson, 2009), provision of clean toilets (Hagberg and Styhre, 2013) and high shops quality (Francis et al., 2012) promote re-visit, hence encouraging interactions and enhancing social capital.

Existing researches focused on shopping centres are mainly conducted in Western context and were not applicable to Hong Kong as layout of shopping centres could be very different. One example would be strip malls (Southworth, 2005), equipped with spacious carpark spaces for 'grab-and-go' purposes with no walkable access is not applicable in the case of Hong Kong. Besides, local researches on shopping centres lacked a focus on neighbourhood shopping centres (Wu and Lo, 2018), which played an important role during the

COVID-19 outbreak which people tend to stay at home.

This research filled the existing literature gap by conducting go-along interviews with residents living nearby three neighbourhood shopping centres to understand how personal factors including age, willingness to social with neighbours and tenants, perceived social status, level of community concerns and housing tenure could affect neighbourhood shopping centre's role promoting community development. It is hypothesized that the more willing residents are to social, the more attached they are to the community and hence a higher sense of community.

In addition, business objectives affect management effort on maintaining a clean shopping environment, constructing competitive tenant mix strategies or events and whether management allow social spaces such as atrium for external events were also studied by conducting semi-structured interviews with property management professionals and asset managers from the three selected sites.

Literature Review

Convenient neighbourhood shopping centres in Hong Kong

As this is a research focusing on community development and neighbourhood shopping centres in the context of Hong Kong, study sites were selected based on guidelines with high local relevance, i.e. Planning Standards and Guidelines issued by Hong Kong's Planning Department. Neighbourhood shopping centres are defined as located within walking distance from neighbourhoods including public and private estates, providing convenience goods, household retail, personal retail and dining services targeting the local population (Planning Department, n.d.). This definition fits the lifestyle of Hong Kong residents i.e. dining out and ordering delivery or take-away from restaurants, purchasing daily necessities from supermarket or wet market inside the neighbourhood shopping centres on a frequent basis.

There are also other definitions in Western context including Guy's (1998) proposal that neighbourhood

shopping centres are typically equipped with 20-40 shops selling convenience, house-hold and personal goods for a catchment area of 10,000 population. However, given the high-rise and high-building density nature in Hong Kong, most neighbourhood shopping centres equipped with over 40 tenants to serve a few neighbourhoods nearby and hence his definition was not referenced.

Convenience of neighbourhood shopping centres could affect their role in promoting community development, which may not be replicable in Western context. It was found by Grange and Yau in 2021 that residential satisfaction on physical layout including a close proximity to shopping facilities could build emotional attachment and hence a higher sense of community. On the contrary, other public spaces such as trees and glassed areas are better predictors of neighbourhood attachment than connectivity to facilities in a study of Australia suburbs (Abass and Tucker, 2017).

Neighbourhood and community

Neighbourhood is defined as a space for daily interactions where people have sense of ownership on, promoting neighbourhood-based engagement hence improving residents' quality of life (Talen, 2019). Community is characterized as a 'shared identity' that members perceive themselves belong to and develop norms within themselves. The sense of belonging with one another could affect individual's emotions and drive them to act according to the norms.

While neighbourhood is considered as a space (Talen, 2019), community refers to the emotional attachment and sense of belonging without considering the spatial element. One example would be the LGBTQQ community which an interviewee described the community as a 'mental place' where she could connect to others even the members live in different places (Sexton et al., 2017, p.138).

Neighbourhood and community level development is positively correlated. Hipp and Perrin in 2006 proposed increased weak informal ties in neighbourhood could facilitate community level cohesion. Given individuals in Hong Kong are living in gated communities and with the predominance of weak ties due to the 'sense of distance' culture (Grange and Yau, 2021, p.108), the assumption that neighbourhood level development promotes community level development is adopted.

Community Development

Community development in this research is composed social capital, of community empowerment and sense of community.

Social capital refers to building trust and cooperative relationships with members and mutual respect of outsiders with difference in age, ethnic groups and classes (Szreter and Woollock, 2004). It is also linked with material benefits (Szreter and Woollock, 2004), for instance members could gain resources for themselves from having a good relationship with institutions such as social workers and healthcare providers.

Community empowerment refers to members taking collective actions serving shared problems (Wu and Lo, 2018) for better quality of life.

Sense of community refers to spatial-emotional attachment, i.e. a sense of belonging to that place, a feeling of home (Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Dekker, 2007) and pride-taking of a place. It is also a promoter for community participation and hence empowerment. One example proposed by Dekker in 2007 was resident's identification with their neighbours (i.e. sense of membership) promoted participation in community affairs such as getting registered to vote.

Blue House is an example illustrating how retail settings like shopping centres could promote community development (Ng, 2018) in the aspects of empowerment, social capital building and a high sense of community. Massive objections were received from local residents to transform blue house into a shopping mall. With the help of civic organizations, it was finally redeveloped into a cultural heritage with existing architectural characteristics reserved and social enterprises ran by local community members.

Shopping centres promoting community development

Shopping centres promote re-visit and hence social interactions by providing a clean and ambient shopping environment (Hagberg and Styhre, 2013), offering civic spaces for interactions (Hagberg and Styhre, 2013 and Cao et al., 2019) and having a good physical layout such as good escalator design to entrances and connections to public transport (Watson, 2009, Hagberg and Styhre, 2013).

Apart from environmental factors, shopping centres could promote community development through organizing workshops (Wu and Lo, 2018) and providing higher quality of shops to promote re-visit and enhance its role as a social space (Francis et al., 2012). They could also empower local residents of community by providing job opportunities (Musil, 2011).

Qualitative research

Walk-along interview with 30 residents from three selected neighbourhood shopping centres were conducted. It was done by having the interviewer accompanying interviewees along their journeys in familiar environments (Carpiano, 2009), generating location-based response and feelings that semi-structured interviews could not. Cao et al's study in 2019 identifying factors promoting senior citizen's out of home behaviours in a high-density neighbourhood in Singapore justified use of walk-along interview in neighbourhood and retail context, with 12 participants were asked to walk from a neighbourhood destination to a common corridor of their homes.

Semi-structured sitting interview with 3 managers of the selected sites were conducted referencing studies conducted by Niemela et al (2019). Broad questions were first asked to stimulate the interviewee's thoughts, with new questions being brainstormed referencing to the answers of interviewees to get more data from them.

Results were analyzed using framework analysis proposed by Green and Thorogood in 2004. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify a list of common factors promoting community development, followed by identifying relationships between community development with business objectives and personal factors.

Analytical Framework

Previous researches already concluded how environmental, entertainment and consumption factors could promote community development. This research goes further to identify how business objectives affect effort spent on the above factors, hence promoting or discouraging community development. Besides, this research also studied how personal factors affect individuals' sense of community.

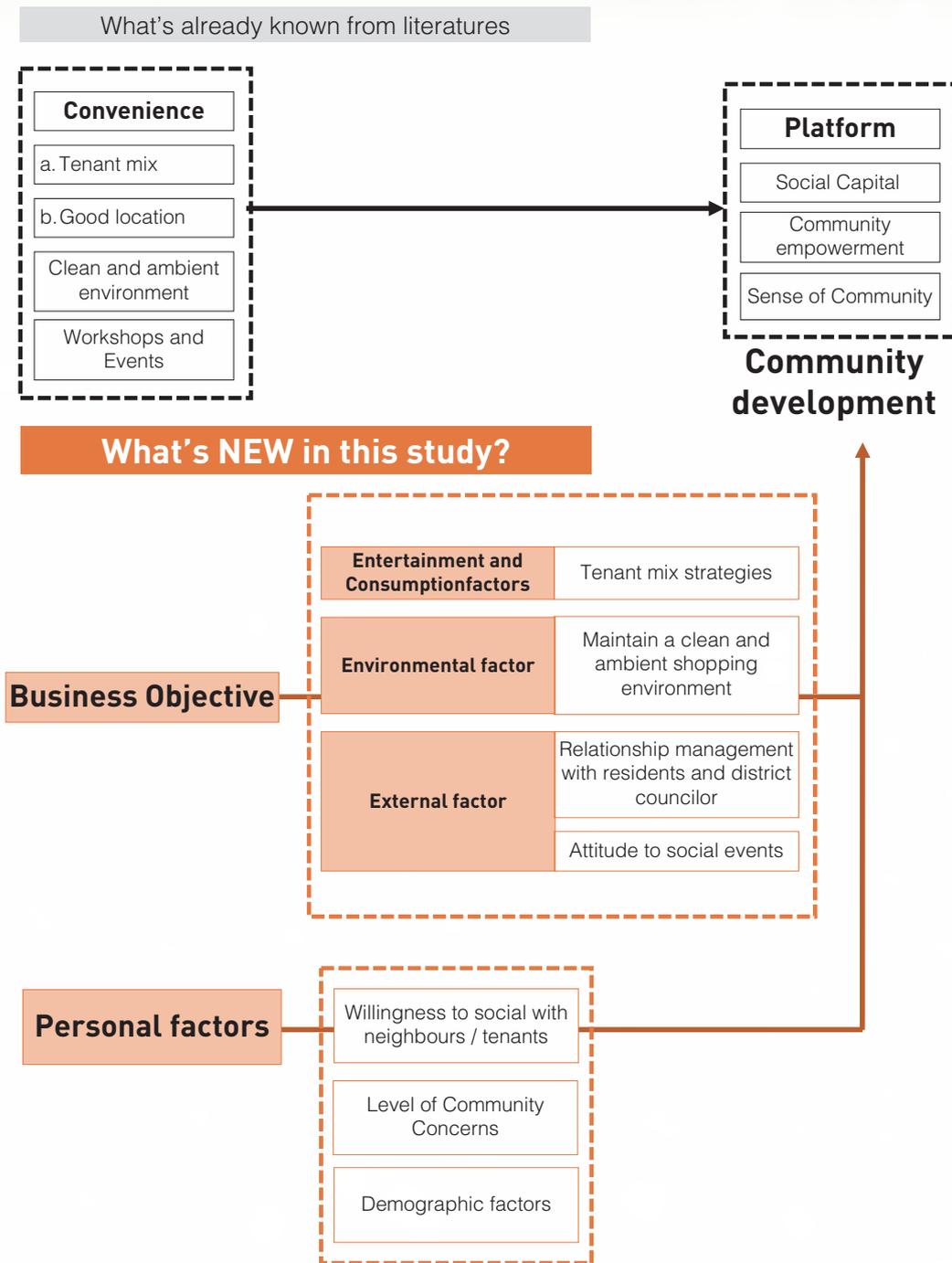


Figure 1: analytical framework

Methodology

Study sites

Three neighbourhood shopping centres chosen are located in different districts, managed by different organizations and equipped with different classes of residents to maximize personal differences. They were chosen based on the concept of 'older inner city, new town and middle-class estate' taking reference from literatures (Forrest et al., 2002; Grange, 2011).

The first neighbourhood shopping centre is managed by Housing Authority, located in Shek Kip Mei near public housing estates including Nam Shan Estate, Tai Hang Tung Estate, Tai Hung Sai Estate and Shek Kip Mei Estate, representing the lower-income group in the 'inner-city neighbourhood'. The second mall chosen is managed by Link REIT in Shatin near a mix of public housing estates, HOS flats and village houses including Hin King estate, Ka Keng Court and Ha Keng Hau Village, a new town with relatively wealthier residents comparing to the first. The last mall chosen is managed by Hang Lung Properties Limited in Taikoo, surrounded by private housing estates targeting middle-class households including Kornhill Gardens, Tai Koo Shing and Nam Fung Estate.

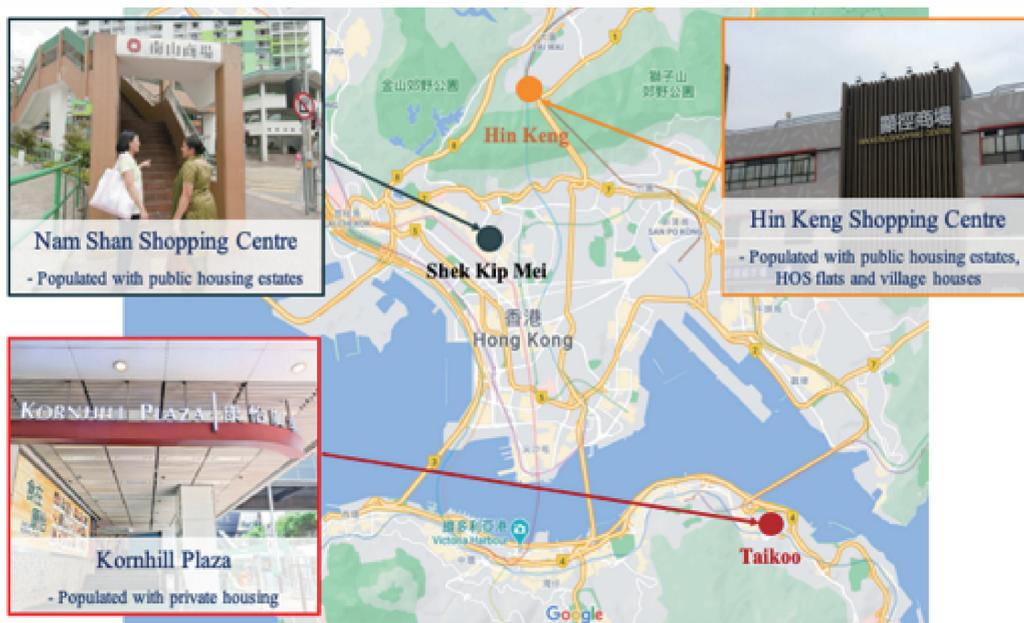


Figure 2: study sites chosen

Data Collection

Walk-along interview

30 residents living nearby were selected using convenience sampling to increase diversity and to prevent a biased sample. Criteria were set to limit interviewees as Hong Kong permanent residents aged over 18 who speaks Cantonese, residing in the nearby neighbourhood for more than 2 years and travelling to such shopping centre more than twice a week. It was set to ensure participants have a basic level of understanding on the neighbourhood and have a sense of belonging. Otherwise, data collected might be invalid as they do not belong to the neighbourhood and hence would not be eligible to comment on whether neighbourhood shopping centre as promoting community development.

All interviews were conducted in weekend afternoons to enhance the diversity of potential respondents. We participated the shopping journey of interviewees by following to where they go (e.g. supermarket or wet market) and ask questions as illustrated below:

- Define their neighbourhood boundaries and specify places included within;
- Report their shopping routine such as frequency and duration of visits to this shopping centre;
- Evaluate performance of neighbourhood shopping centre in terms of environmental, entertainment and consumption aspects;
- Report attentiveness in social events, community matters and relationships with others;
- Explain if neighbourhood shopping centres promote understanding on their community and
- Fill in basic demographic information (e.g. age, education level and housing tenure)

Semi-structured interview

3 professionals were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they all possessed certain knowledge of the managed shopping centre. They must be equipped with over 1 year of working experience in such neighbourhood shopping centre to get selected to ensure possession of site-specific knowledge. Property management professionals from Kornhill Plaza and Nam Shan Shopping Centre were recruited while asset manager overseeing Sha Tin area including Hin Keng Shopping

Centre was recruited. Interviewees were asked to share business objectives, management measures taken on environmental, entertainment and consumption aspects, relationship with stakeholders and attitude towards social events in late 2019.

Data Analysis

Framework analysis is adopted for data analysis. Factors identified from walk-along interviews, including willingness to interact with tenants and neighbours, level of community concerns, age, perceived social status and housing tenure were grouped under personal factors to comprehend how individuals' personal differences (e.g. age) could affect their level of community concerns and willingness to interact. Besides, comparison across interviews were done to identify location-based differences. Environmental, entertainment and consumption factors identified from semi-structured interview, including up-keeping a clean and ambient shopping environment, constant change in tenant mix, maintaining a good relationship with stakeholders such and a neutral attitude towards social events were grouped under business objectives. Comparisons were then made across different shopping centres to understand how business objectives affect the effort management and hence affecting level of community development.

Interview transcripts and screenshots from walk-along interviews were used as evidence to give colour to the analysis. Screenshots from walk-along interview footages helped visualizing how design factors affect interviewee's establishment of neighbourhood boundaries, for instance good connection from neighbourhood shopping centre to housing estate secured neighbourhood shopping centres as a part of the neighbourhood. In addition, video footages were also used to validate resident's personal statements in the interview transcripts. A friendly and sociable resident with a number of friends inside the neighbourhood shopping centre is expected to greet their neighbours or tenants when bumping into each other.

Discussion of major findings

Factors affecting neighbourhood shopping centres as a part of neighbourhood

A high connectivity between neighbourhood shopping centres and resident's homes determined their personal routine and explained their frequent visits, i.e. using neighbourhood shopping centre as a convenient route heading home and an everyday place for buying household products. One example illustrating connectivity is a covered walkway extending from Kornhill Plaza to Kornhill Gardens, as showcased in the following two figures.



Figure 3-4: Covered walkway from Kornhill Plaza to Kornhill Gardens

Neighbourhood shopping centre design with local participation is another factor determining definition of neighbourhood boundaries. The current study realized that participation in design helps residents defining neighbourhood boundaries, demonstrated by a comparison on the re-painting works with local participation at Nam Shan Shopping Centre and the façade upgrade at Hin Keng Shopping Centre without local participation. It was reported by interviewees from Nam Shan Shopping Centre that the bright green colour corresponds to Nam Shan neighbourhood. As observed from the two figures as below, bright green colour was used in shopping mall and building's façade. However, design was not reported by interviewees from Hin Keng neighbourhood as a factor to define their boundaries even the new façade design featured specialities and characteristics of Hin Keng area.



Figure 5-6: Bright green colour used in Nam Shan neighbourhood

Perceived status of neighbourhood and neighbourhood shopping centres are factors affecting construction of neighbourhood boundaries in the case of Kornhill. Taikoo Shing Residential Development and Cityplaza are located near Kornhill Plaza separated by King's road. Despite its close proximity, interviewees indicated that residents from Taikoo Shing Residential Development would not consider Kornhill as a part of their neighbourhood and vice versa. It could be accounted by the different perceived neighbourhood status, which Taikoo neighbourhood was considered more 'high-end' equipped with residents of higher income. However, such observation was not replicated in Hin Keng and Nam Shan neighbourhood.

Business objectives encourages re-visit

A revenue-based business player would take proactive measures in improving tenant mix and providing a comfortable shopping environment. This could promote shopper's frequency and duration of visits, hence enhancing its role as a social space promoting interactions and place attachment.

One surprising finding is that marketing events and promotions do not play a role in promoting re-visit and participation. None of the interviewees were able to give concrete examples of marketing events and promotions organized currently. In contrary with the lively examples provided by professionals during the semi-structured interviews, this might give a business insight that resources should be diverted elsewhere instead of organizing marketing events and promotions.

Business objectives determines social spaces provision

Shops could serve as social space. Long-term tenants have a close relationship with residents. Residents from Nam Shan Shopping Centre reported during walk-along interviews that they have been buying from the same tenant for decades and developed a close relationship with long-term tenants. Besides, property management professional from Nam Shan Shopping Centre reported certain tenants have nicknames that everyone knows, reflecting shops are not merely a place for transaction but could be a place for people to interact and build relationships.

Civic spaces are also social spaces for external events promoting social capital, community participation and sense of community. This research goes beyond existing literatures focusing on activities organized by shopping centres and study on social events initiated by public in late 2019. It was found out that if shopping centres forbid those activities initiated, its ability to promote community development could be reduced.

Neighbourhood shopping centres promote community participation

All three neighbourhood shopping centres promote community empowerment through actively communicating with stakeholders from EMAC, Institute of Owners and district councillors respectively. One surprising finding was all three neighbourhood shopping centres support community participation for different purposes.

In the case of Nam Shan Shopping Centre, EMAC is an established structure under Housing Authority and hence they must communicate with them accordingly for compliance purpose. For Hin Keng Shopping Centre, community participation is a barter trade, i.e. 'an exchange' or 'a deal' with the Institute of Owners for better commercial identity. One example is to revamp the public area in exchange for erecting a signage outside the licensed area of Hin Keng Shopping Centre. Last but not least, Kornhill Plaza communicate with residents and district councillors to maintain a good relationship with them and provide a positive image for long term and stable business development.

Personal factors affecting community development

Individual's willingness to social with neighbours or tenants affect how neighbourhood shopping centres promote sense of community. Despite the fact that there is a comfortable shopping environment with long-term tenants facilitating social interactions, level of communication is still dependent on individuals' personality.

During the walk-along interview, one interviewee reported a low willingness to chit-chat with tenants. Such unwillingness to social or communicate could be explained by "sense of distance" Chinese culture (Grange and Yau, 2021, p.108), which refers to the idea on residents concerning only on their own affairs and a lack of deep ties.

Different characteristics of Hong Kong and non-Asian countries housing environment

Neighbourhood design in Hong Kong emphasize on connectivity and convenience but it is not applicable in Western context. All three study sites have a neighbourhood design with one or more neighbourhood shopping centre(s) highly connected to housing estates with footpaths or footbridges. Besides, it is also equipped with good connection to public transport. In contrary with Hong Kong's context, neighbourhood shopping centres in non-Asian countries could be strip malls accessible only by driving without direct connections to them (Southworth, 2005).

The current research proposed shops and open spaces inside neighbourhood shopping centres as important social spaces promoting communication and social capital while Western literatures proposed other spaces as more important social spaces. Street parking spaces in neighbourhood could be better social spaces promoting neighbourhood attachment (Abass and Tucker, 2017) than neighbourhood shopping centres in an Australian suburb.

It is proposed that neighbourhood shopping centres promote place attachment, i.e. functional place attachment as the neighbourhood shopping centre could fulfil their functional needs and emotional place attachment as they developed a sense of belonging (Forrest and Kearns, 2001). However, there are other factors affecting place attachment in Western context. Highly visible garages in front façade of houses were found to be associated with a less pedestrian friendly environment and hence lowering neighbourhood attachment in a Houston Texas neighbourhood study.

Conclusion

The current research concluded neighbourhood shopping centres as a part of neighbourhood. It also supported business objectives and personal factors are vital affecting neighbourhood shopping centres' role in promoting community development. In order to improve neighbourhood shopping centres' role in promoting community development, it is recommended that management should actively communicate with residents to provide a tailor-made tenant mix and an ambient shopping environment.

The current research also give light to future housing studies. As discussed earlier, they serve as a convenient platform for residents to purchase daily necessities. In particular, such role enhanced as residents tend to stay home during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Residents may change their working style from working in office to work from home and hence more time would be spent in the neighbourhood shopping centres, promoting functional and emotional attachment towards it. On the other hand, in view of the current social distancing measures, fewer people is expected or allowed to gather in social spaces, which might weaken neighbourhood shopping centres' role in promoting social capital development. Housing studies in future are therefore recommended to suggest ways on retaining a high sense of community, community participation and social capital during this period.

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Anti-Social Behaviour Management Study in Public Rental Housing Estates — The Relationship between Sense of Community, Formation of Estate Management Advisory Committee and Marking Scheme for Tenancy Enforcement



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Introduction

Regarding anti-social behaviour (ASB) management, researchers mentioned different approaches including contractual, legal and incentive-based approaches. These approaches however may involve high reinforcement cost and yet be ineffective sometimes. Communitarian approach can be a good complement, however it relies much on resident participation.

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) applied the concept of acceptable behavior contract through the “Marking Scheme for Tenancy Enforcement” (“MS”) in public rental housing (PRH). This research studies the relationship between Sense of Community and the effectiveness of ASB management by the HA.

Literature Review

Definition of ASB

Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH, 1996, cited in Scott and Parker, 1998: 3) defined ASB as ‘behaviour that opposes society’s norms and accepted standards of behaviour’. Haworth & Manzi (1999) recognized marginalized groups not conforming to socially constructed norms.

Jacobs and Arthurson (2003) explained the emergence of ASB as an indicator of structural factors like poverty and unemployment. Haworth and Manzi (1999) recognized that policies abounded to address social inequality but focusing on individual behaviour. Policy implementation tended to emphasize self-responsibility (Flint, 2002).

ASB can be categorized as extreme behaviour; serious ASB; and nuisance situations. (CIH, 1996). Definitions assume that only one set of norms would be generally accepted (Scott and Parker, 1998). Millie A, & Jacobson, (2005) defined ASB as behaviour that “causes harassment, alarm or distress to individuals not of the same household as the perpetrator”.

ASB Management

Literature distinguishes different approaches. The New Labour Government in the UK emphasized welfare conditionality, and acknowledged the elements of living style, culture and choices of lower class (Deacon, 2004).

Responsibilization tackles ASB by shifting the responsibility back to individuals and families. In the view of new-liberal politician strategy, responsibility faded from the era of welfare state, being taken up by the authority agency or expert (Wakefield & Fleming, 2009) Flint (2002) suggested that the rise of responsabilization strategies indicated a broad trend to promote common values in society.

Welfare conditionality perspective attempted to explain recipients' welfare entitlement in return for obeying conditions (Deacon 2004).

Contractual approach suggests that authority engages in agreements with the residents. Sanction would be applied if residents breach terms. In the UK and Australia, this approach included lease termination, introductory or probationary leases, and acceptable behaviour agreements, etc (Crawford 2003 and Hunter 2005). White (White 2003, cited in Deacon, 2007) recognized that obligation arises when society offers people sufficiently generous sharing of social products.

Communitarian approach gives individuals an irrevocable identity permeating them through a series of duties and responsibilities in the society (Flint, 2006). The community would govern conduct and tackle incivility. Cantillon (2003) believed sense of community (SOC) and social interaction would be influential as a kind of informal social control. Yau (2014) stated that collectivism would generate mutual trust and cooperative norms to combat nuisance behaviour.

SOC and ASB Management

SOC is "the sense that one was part of a readily available mutually supportive network of relationship" (Sarason, 1974). McMillan and Chavis (1986) proposed four elements: membership; influence; integration and fulfilment of needs; and shared emotional connections.

Yung Yau (2014) suggested tackling ASBs through communitarian means. Social disorder can be mediated by enhancing SOC through collective actions. In general, a nuisance-free neighbourhood encourages mutual trust and social ties. According to Campbell, Hughes, Hewstone, and Cairns (2010), the likelihood of ASB could be relieved by a stronger SOC. It is more tangible to promote frequent mutual help among residents, which can motivate residents to conduct responsible manners in the community.

ASB Conditions in Hong Kong

Yau (2010) pinpointed the contingency of housing management as a vital factor to improve living conditions in Hong Kong. Yau (2012) further suggested the more important role of housing management over physical factors such as building design and construction. The improvement of ASB conditions would improve the living quality of Hong Kong residents.

Yau (2012) discussed the causes and ASB management in Hong Kong public housing. The MS is one control implemented since 2003 to tackle ASBs in PRH. According to the Subsidised Housing Committee (2020), there was an increase in the satisfactory level for estate hygiene after MS implementation. ASBs are also governed under different laws including Noise Control Ordinance (for noise nuisances) and the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness Offences) Ordinance (for littering problem) in Hong Kong (Yau, 2012). Yau (2014) discussed the role of communitarian approach in ASB management.

Marking Scheme

In the UK, MS policy was applied to tackle ASBs in the neighbourhood (Clapham et al, 1995). Before the SARS epidemic in 2003, ASBs were regarded as minor behavioral problems in Hong Kong. After that, the government has aroused awareness of environmental hygiene.

In 2003, MS was converted to the "Marking Scheme for Tenancy Enforcement in Public Housing Estate". Now, it covers 28 "misdeeds" including public safety-related matters and hygiene-related issues.

When a resident committed a prescribed misdeed, respective allotted points would be recorded for 2 years from the commission date. Notice To Quit (NTQ) will be issued to those PRH households which are being allotted 16 valid points within two years. Yau (2011) linked MS to Welfare Conditionality.

EMAC

EMAC Scheme was introduced in 1995 by HA (Cheung & Yip, 2003).

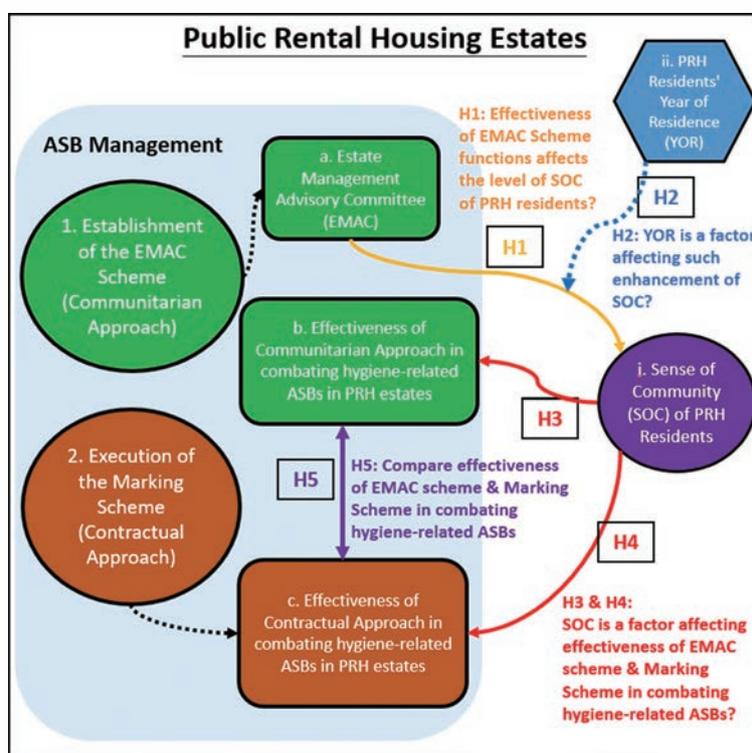
This scheme aims at initiating resident participation to enhance residents' sense of belonging and collective responsibility (Hong Kong Housing Authority, 2020). Composition of EMAC membership includes:

- ❖ Chairman (Housing Department representative)
- ❖ Members:
 - Representatives from Mutual Aid Committees;
 - Representatives from the estate's HA commercial tenants' association; and
 - Respective Elected District Council Member(s).

EMACs hold events covering different social- building themes (Transport and Housing Bureau, 2013, Transport and Housing Bureau 2014 and Subsidised Housing Committee, 2019). Through meetings, members advise on management issues and appraise the performance of estate service providers. EMACs promote through EMAC newsletters and Seminars (Hong Kong Housing Authority, 2020).

James Lee (2006) mentioned that EMAC restructured the public housing system through emphasis on “choices”, “participations” and “arm’s length management”. Yip, N. M. (2001) summarized stakeholders’ views, analyzed the impact and discussed potential issues. Cheung & Yip (2003) viewed EMAC as customerization strategies and reviewed its effect on customer and managerial power.

Conceptual Framework



Hypothesis are developed as followed:

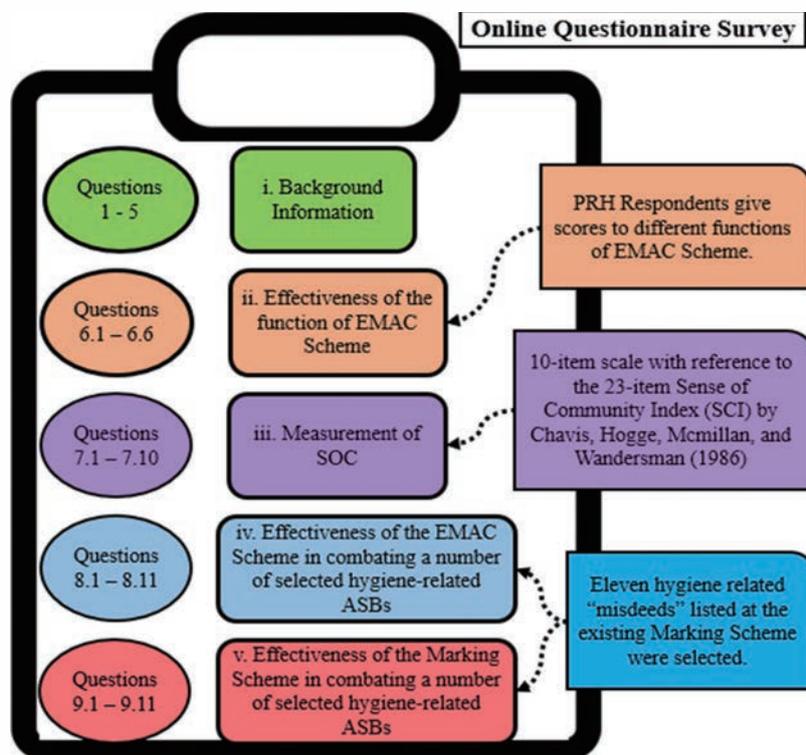
Hypothesis 1 (H1)	Does a higher effectiveness of the functions of the EMAC Scheme result in a higher level of SOC in PRH?
Hypothesis 2 (H2)	Do longer residence years of PRH residents affect the effectiveness of the functions of EMAC on enhancing SOC?
Hypothesis 3 (H3)	Do higher levels of SOC affect residents' perceived effectiveness of EMAC in combating hygiene-related ASBs in PRH?
Hypothesis 4 (H4)	Do higher levels of SOC affect residents' perceived effectiveness of MS in combating hygiene-related ASBs in PRH?
Hypothesis 5 (H5)	Is the perceived effectiveness of the MS in combating hygiene-related ASBs better than that of EMAC?

Methodology

This research integrates both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

Online Questionnaire Survey

An online questionnaire survey was conducted. The target group was PRH residents aged 18 or above. Convenience sampling and snowball sampling were applied due to the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Online survey was shared among social media and social forums related only to PRH estates. The questionnaire consists of five sections:



After data collection, we proceeded with the analysis and comparison of the results through chi-square test, correlation coefficient tests and T-test methods.

In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with two Housing Department Managers and a Property Manager of a Property Agent Company representing the managerial views, and three PRH residents representing the resident views to extract their views/opinions on SOC and ASB management issues.

Analysis

Hypothesis 1

Chi-Square test for H1

The perceived effectiveness of different EMAC functions and PRH residents with higher levels of SOC are found **dependent**.

Mean Scores for Effectiveness of EMAC Own Functions

Mean scores were higher amongst the “educational” functions surveyed (ranging from 3.1065 to 3.2781). The manager interviewees also asserted the importance of such functions. While for “functional” aspects, mean scores are close to the median (being 3.0237 and 3.0710). It reflects that residents generally do not agree or are not familiar with these aspects.

Mean Scores for SOC

For measurement of SOC, PRH residents generally gave scores close to or even below the median, showing low SOC of residents (see Table 1).

Residents gave higher scores to items related to the importance of and satisfaction with the estates (Items 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3).

However, they gave lower scores regarding their importance to the community (Items 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7). The scores for Items 7.9 and 7.10, relating to mutual trust and self-responsibility, were low too. Residents weigh themselves lighter and mentally contempt in regard of their influence on the community.

The effect of “Residence Year” on “SOC”

The sample was further regrouped according to residence years in Table 1. Following the increase in residence years, the increase in mean scores for Items 7.5, 7.6, 7.7 and 7.9 is much less than the others. For Item 7.10, the score even decreases against the increase in residence year.

This phenomenon reflects some elements of SOC improved slower or even grew weaker with longer residence year.

As mentioned in our literature review, SOC can be divided into four components (McMillan and Chavis, 1986). From our studies, the element, “influence” is probably the weakest aspect of SOC amongst PRH residents.

Table 1: Summary of Mean Scores for SOC Measurement

Questions from Online Survey	Mean Scores ¹	Residence Year ²	
		<7 years	>=7 years
7.1 I think the public housing estate is a good place for me to live.	3.6450	3.2400	3.7153
7.2 I expect to live in this public housing estate for a long period of time.	3.4793	3.0400	3.5556
7.3 It is very essential that I can continue to live in this public housing estate.	3.8935	3.4800	3.9653
7.4 People living in this public housing estate share the same values, similar needs and common goals.	2.9882	2.8000	3.0208
7.5 I think many neighbours recognize me.	2.7870	2.6000	2.8194
7.6 I can recognize most people who live in the same building.	2.9527	2.4800	3.0347
7.7 I have some influence in shaping others in the public housing estates I live in.	2.3609	2.2400	2.3819
7.8 People in this public housing estate usually get along well and care about each other.	3.0533	2.6800	3.1181
7.9 I trust people living in this public housing estate.	2.7337	2.5600	2.7639
7.10 People living in this public housing estate will take the initiative to solve the problems that occur in this place.	2.7456	2.8000	2.7361

¹ The scores represent the mean scores for the perceived sense of community of PRH residents quantified with a five-item scale adopted from the 23-item Sense of Community Index (SCI) (Chavis, Hogge, Mcmillan, and Wandersman, 1986)

² The scores represent the mean scores for the perceived sense of community of PRH residents quantified with a five-item scale adopted from the 23-item Sense of Community Index (SCI) (Chavis, Hogge, Mcmillan, and Wandersman, 1986) (from 1 point for strongly disagree to 5 points for strongly agree).

Hypothesis 2

Pearson's Correlation between SOC and EMAC Effectiveness

Figure 1: PRH Residents with 7 Residence Years or above ("Group 1")

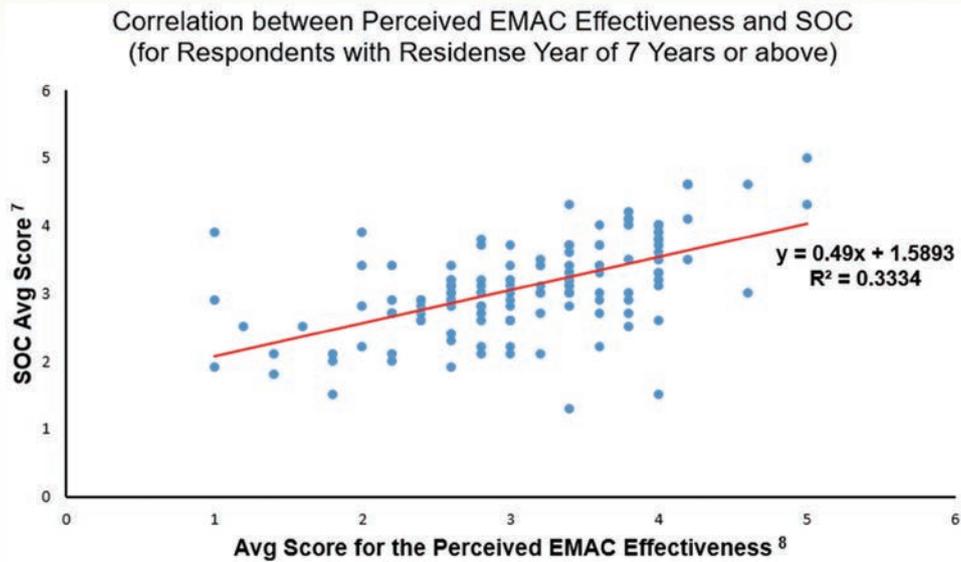
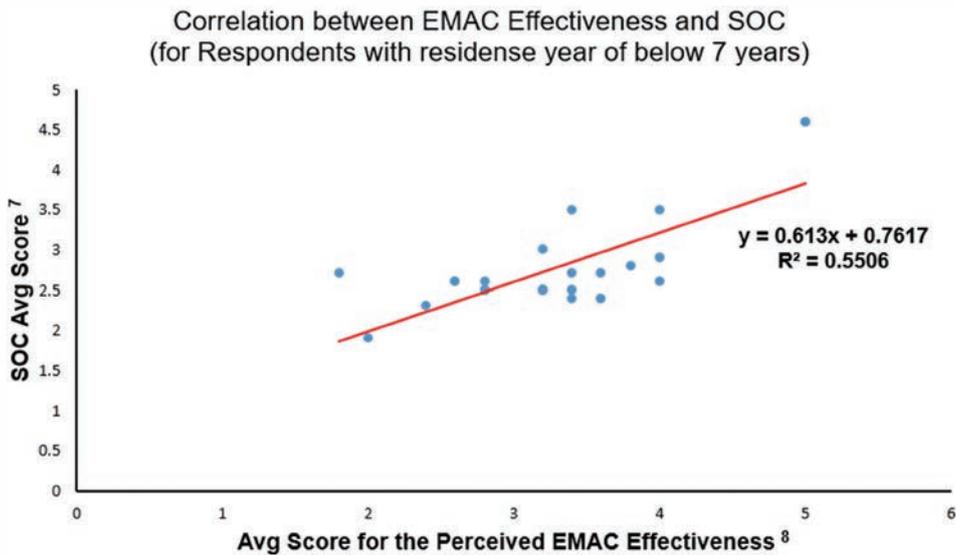


Figure 2: PRH Residents with below 7 Residence Years ("Group 2")



³ The "SOC Avg Score" represents the mean scores of "Sense of Community" of the PRH residents by a 5-point scale.

⁴ The "Avg Score for the Perceived EMAC Effectiveness" represents the mean scores for the perceived effectiveness of various functions of the EMAC by a 5-point scale (from 1 point for strongly disagree to 5 point for strongly agree).

In Figure 1, the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient for "Group 1" is 0.57, which shows a moderate positive relationship between the "Mean Scores of the Perceived Effectiveness of Various Functions of EMAC" and the "Mean Scores of SOC" ($p=3.54896E-14$).

For "Group 2", the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient is 0.74, which showed a strong positive relationship ($p=2.17864E-05$).

This indicates a possible "golden period" for the residents' SOC to influence their view on the effectiveness of EMAC, which is at their early years of residence in PRH estates.

Hypothesis 3

T- test for H3

T-test was performed to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of EMAC in combating ASBs and test the significant difference between two groups of PRH residents, i.e. with low SOC (average score ≤ 3) and with high SOC (average score > 3).

Table 2, Perceived Effectiveness of EMAC under T-test

Perceived Effectiveness of EMAC in Combating ASBs						
Low SOC ⁵		High SOC ⁶		t stat	t Critical two-tail	P two-tail
Mean ⁷	Standard Deviation	Mean ⁷	Standard Deviation			
2.55	0.71	3.46	0.87	6.67079894	1.97427095	3.57049E-10

P two-tail value is 3.57049E-10. The T-stat value is 6.67, greater than t Critical two-tail value of 1.97. There is a **significant difference** in perceived effectiveness of EMAC in combating ASBs between PRH residents with low SOC and high SOC. PRH residents with high SOC have greater recognition of the EMAC in combating ASBs.

Mean scores are 2.55 and 3.46 for residents with low SOC and high SOC respectively, indicating that the perceived effectiveness of EMAC in combating ASBs for residents with high SOC is higher.

⁵ The average SOC score is not greater than the median score of 3, a low SOC is determined.

⁶ The average SOC score is greater than the median score of 3, a high SOC is determined.

⁷ The scores represent the perceived effectiveness of the EMAC Scheme in combating ASBs by a 5-point scale (from 1 point for strongly disagree to 5 point for strongly agree)

Hypothesis 4

T- test for H4

P two-tail value is 2.20135E-07. The T-stat value is 5.41, greater than t Critical two-tail of 1.97. There is a **significant difference** in perceived effectiveness of MS in combating ASBs between PRH residents with low SOC and high SOC. This reveals that PRH residents with high SOC have greater recognition of MS in combating ASBs.

Mean scores are 3.07 and 3.87 for low SOC and high SOC respectively, indicating that the perceived effectiveness of MS for residents with high SOC is higher.

Interview findings generally agreed with the effectiveness of MS. The interviewees recognize the serious punishment of eviction under MS as a deterrent.

Table 3: Perceived Effectiveness of MS under T-test

Perceived Effectiveness of MS in Combating ASBs						
Low SOC ⁸		High SOC ⁹		t stat	t Critical two-tail	P two-tail
Mean ¹⁰	Standard Deviation	Mean ¹⁰	Standard Deviation			
3.07	1.04	3.88	0.78	5.4055094	1.974270957	2.20135E-07

SOC Effect on Perceived Effectiveness of Both Schemes in Combating Hygiene-related ASBs

Residents with high SOC have greater recognition of both schemes (see Table 4). Besides, the differences of mean scores in each scheme are 0.91 and 0.81 respectively, revealing the degrees of influence and substantiating the importance of SOC in ASB management.

Table 4: Mean scores for the perceived effectiveness of the EMAC and MS regarding SOC

	Perceived effectiveness of EMAC in combating ASBs ¹⁰		Perceived effectiveness of MS in combating ASBs ¹⁰	
	Low SOC ⁸	High SOC ⁹	Low SOC ⁸	High SOC ⁹
Mean Score	2.55	3.46	3.07	3.88
Difference of Mean Score between Low and High SOC	0.91		0.81	

⁸ The average SOC score is not greater than the median score of 3, a low SOC is determined.

⁹ The average SOC score is greater than the median score of 3, a high SOC is determined.

¹⁰ The scores represent the perceived effectiveness of the Marking Scheme in combating ASBs by a 5-point scale (from 1 point for strongly disagree to 5 point for strongly agree)

Hypothesis 5

Comparison of EMAC and MS for Effectiveness in Combating Hygiene-related ASBs

Mean scores of perceived effectiveness of MS are higher than those of EMAC. The viewpoints from the in-depth interviews are apparently agreeing with the effectiveness of the MS in easing ASBs. Our analysis suggests several reasons behind.

First, publicity of MS is sufficient in PRH. The reputation of the MS is higher than that of EMAC. Every PRH resident is introduced to the MS upon in-take of residence.

Second, there is a deterrent effect due to penalties like tenancy termination, thus a tangible effect on ASB of residents according to the degree of seriousness.

Third, the degree of participation in EMAC functions is highly subject to residents' self-willingness. If a resident is indifferent to estate affairs, the influence of EMAC is relatively indirect.

Detailed Mean Scores Analysis

For EMAC, the score for combating "Accumulated sewage causing mosquito infestation" is the highest amongst all ASBs (i.e. 3.2130). This typically fits its "educational" function. Such theory is supported by interviewees recognizing the function of EMAC in promoting positive messages through events and publications.

For other items, low mean scores ranged from 2.8343 to 3.0473. Possibly, the natures of these items were too general. Thus, residents were unsure whether EMAC's function on combating these items were effective.

For MS, the average scores for all items were generally close (from 3.2959 to 3.5444). This can be explained by the deterrent nature of MS. To residents, MS is to some extent equally effective in regard of different hygiene-related misdeeds.

Discussion

Comparison between EMAC and MS in ASB Management

The effectiveness of MS in combating the hygiene-related ASBs is better than that of EMAC in PRH residents' views. The punitive nature of MS plays a role.

Under MS, residents committing prescribed misdeeds would be penalized. Most resident interviewees expressed their wariness towards such penalties. This is supported by various analyses on mean scores. It aligns with the contractual theories of ASB that PRH residents as welfare recipients in return obey certain conditions. Paternalistic approach can also be explained in regard of PRH residents who require authorities imposing direction for rational decisions.

Meanwhile, management interviewees pointed to EMAC's educational role in ASB management. Mean score for EMAC's perceived effectiveness to combat "Accumulated sewage causing mosquito infestation" has a higher score amongst other misdeeds. Obviously, EMAC has a stronger image in providing educational events and easing ASBs indirectly.

Influence of SOC on the Effectiveness of Both Schemes

In nature, EMAC aims to enhance the tenant's SOC while MS regulates collective responsibilities. Our research uncovers SOC's essential role in the residents' participation and general views on EMAC and MS.

T-test results showed significant differences in perceived effectiveness of both schemes in combating ASBs between PRH residents with high SOC and low SOC. The scores on their effectiveness also improve with higher SOC. It can be explained by the concept in community psychology that SOC can raise the residents' involvement in the community.

For EMAC, residents with stronger SOC are more willing to understand their neighbours. Harmony can be built up to bring a sense of emotional support. Needs will be fulfilled and integration will be established, supporting the idea of sharing goods and values in the community. Eventually, residents would tend to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and keep a pleasant community environment. Consequently, the hygiene-related ASBs in PRH can be relieved.

For MS, living in a nuisance-free community is a collective good to the residents. Thus, collective actions tend to occur if the residents have strong SOC and social ties. The overall influence amongst residents then deters the happening of misdeeds.

Residence Year

Residence year is one factor influencing SOC. By comparing different groups of residents regarding living years, it is found that the residents generally require around 7 years to build up higher SOC. The Chi-square test result reflects that the relationship between effectiveness of EMAC and residents' SOC is significant when residence year is 7 or above. Fear and apathy might be the reason.

New tenants are unfamiliar with the community and neighbors, thus are reluctant to spend time on bringing neighbors together. Trust and emotional connection can hardly be set up at the beginning. Without mutual trust, residents hardly think that they are part of the community. They take longer time to settle down and make 'real' friends in estates.

Moreover, new tenants are less familiar with estate affairs and may participate less in community gatherings and meetings. It is difficult for them to foster a stronger SOC and develop a common set of community values in a short period of time.

Suggestions

Sense of Community

Existing EMAC Scheme is insufficient to encourage active resident participation in the community. The membership of EMAC is relatively low. Hence, most PRH residents feel they cannot influence their community through EMAC. The authority may consider increasing such membership and involving PRH residents in the preparation of estate affairs to enhance the level of SOC.

According to our analysis, SOC positively correlated stronger with the perceived effectiveness of EMAC's functions for PRH residents with less than 7 residence years. Here, a golden period to positively influence SOC may be uncovered (i.e the first 7 years). The researchers believe that the authority may strive to enhance their PRH residents' SOC at this golden period. Still, further research to verify this "golden period" is necessary.

Marking Scheme

According to the interviews, there is room to improve the efficiency of MS including proficiency in operation and providing more training to frontline staff for higher familiarity to avoid reluctance to implement the scheme. In fact, MS is well supported by the community.

Estate Management Advisory Committee

EMAC is a platform for the exchange of opinions and promotion of positive messages. EMAC's major function is its educational effects, not a direct means to combat ASBs. This can be reflected by the generally low mean scores for the perceived effectiveness of EMAC to combat ASBs.

From the survey results, residents agreed more with the "educational" aspects but agreed less with the "functional" aspects of EMAC. From the results of the in-depth interview, all three PRH residents reflected that there was not much publicity for EMAC. Such a low popularity of the scheme needs improvement.

Still, the researchers uncovered a higher mean score for one particular hygiene-related misdeed, i.e. “Accumulated sewage causing mosquito infestation”. This may hint that, when applying EMAC to combat ASBs, the authority should focus on major issues for which the topicality is enough to attract the residents’ attention. Over-promoting minor and general housing issues through EMAC should be avoided.

According to an interviewed manager, more stakeholders should be involved in EMAC. In particular involvement of various departmental authorities and agency representatives, where necessary, is essential for the success of the scheme.

Exploration of SOC Context

A more detailed relationship between SOC and both schemes is required. It will also be beneficial to determine the different critical factors that influence SOC.

Also, in future studies, a model of Eastern elements of SOC should be developed. Thus, the measurement of SOC can reflect a more comprehensive view of residents’ SOC in Hong Kong, typically in PRH.

Conclusion

This research brings potential benefits such as further enhancement of MS and the review of housing policies related to PRH residents’s SOC and ASB management issues in PRH.

It uncovers the relationship between SOC and EMAC, which may give some insight to the public and especially, the authority on how to enhance the housing policies in the ASB management regime. Through deeper exploration, a possible “golden period” of 7 residence years is also discovered which may be a key period to enhance PRH residents’ SOC. Besides, the authority may focus on the stronger educational aspect of the EMAC scheme in promoting its housing policies.

Furthermore, the paper explores the effectiveness of both schemes in the ASB management regime. MS is better with deterrent effects in PRH residents’ perception while EMAC is better in its educational functions. The authority should strive to improve its housing policies in combating hygiene-related ASBs and enhance PRH residents’ awareness.

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