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Urban Well-Being and Community Development: Investigating the Relationship Between Built Environments, Social Networks, and Quality of Life

Christina Trisnawati Setiawan[1], Rahaju Ningtyas[2]
[1] Politeknik Yakpermas Banyumas: csetiawan.366@gmail.com
[2] Politeknik Yakpermas Banyumas: ningtyasrahaju@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the dynamic interplay between the built environment, social networks, and quality of life in Bandung City's urban context, with a focus on urban community wellbeing and community development. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to comprehensively explore the relationships among these factors. The findings highlight the significance of access to green spaces, transportation options, and housing quality in influencing residents' quality of life. Moreover, strong social networks emerged as a crucial catalyst for community development, fostering a sense of belonging and social support. Integrating quantitative and qualitative insights, this research provides a nuanced understanding of how the built environment and social networks intersect to shape urban community wellbeing and enhance community development. The implications of this study extend to urban planning, policy development, and community engagement strategies, guiding efforts to create more livable and inclusive urban environments in Bandung City.

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Corresponding Author:

Name: Christina Trisnawati Setiawan
Institution: Politeknik Yakpermas Banyumas
Email: csetiawan.366@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is a global phenomenon that has led to significant changes in the physical, social, and cultural landscape of cities. This process has been driven by various factors, including economic growth, industrialization, technological advancements, and demographic shifts [1], [2]. As urbanization continues to accelerate, it has both positive and negative impacts on the environment, economy, and society. Urbanization has led to the expansion of cities and the transformation of rural areas into urban environments. This process has resulted in the construction of new infrastructure, such as roads, buildings, and public facilities, to accommodate the growing urban population [1], [2]. Additionally, urbanization has led to changes in land use and land cover, often resulting in the loss of agricultural land and natural habitats [2]. Urbanization has also brought about significant social changes, including shifts in demographics, lifestyles, and cultural practices. As people move from rural to urban areas, they often adopt new lifestyles and behaviors that are more suited to urban living [1], [3]. This process can lead to increased social interaction and the development of diverse communities, as well as the creation of new job opportunities and improved access to education, healthcare, and other public services [1], [2]. However, urbanization can also exacerbate social inequalities and contribute to issues such as overcrowding, crime, and poverty [1], [3].

The process of urbanization can also have profound effects on cultural practices and identities. As people from different backgrounds come together in urban environments, they often exchange ideas, customs, and traditions, leading to the development of new cultural practices and the blending of different cultures [3]. However, this process can also result in the loss of traditional cultural practices and the erosion of cultural identities, particularly in the Global South [3]. Urbanization has both positive and negative environmental impacts. On the one hand, urbanization can lead to the degradation of natural resources, such as water and air quality, and contribute to issues such as soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and climate change [2]. On the other hand, urbanization can also promote sustainable development through the adoption of eco-friendly technologies and practices, such as green infrastructure, energy-efficient buildings, and public transportation systems [2], [4]. Urbanization presents both challenges and opportunities for sustainable development. To address the negative impacts of urbanization, it is essential to promote sustainable urban planning and design, invest in public services and infrastructure, and foster social inclusion and cultural diversity [1], [3]. By leveraging the potential of urbanization, cities can become engines of economic growth, innovation, and social progress, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals [1], [5].

Rapid growth and transformation in cities have significant implications for the built environment, social networks, and the quality of life of residents. Understanding the complex interactions between these factors is crucial for promoting sustainable development in urban communities and improving the overall well-being of residents. Urbanization is happening at a rapid pace worldwide, with two-thirds of the world's population projected to be living in urban areas by 2050 [6]. This growth puts pressure on the supply of natural resources, leading to environmental impacts and the need for new ways to manage urban development [7]. In the context of South Africa, rapid growth and

transformation of cities have been observed, with similar challenges faced by other urbanizing regions [8]. One approach to addressing these challenges is integrating social networks and spatial analyses of the built environment [9]. This involves understanding how social connections between individuals shape and are shaped by the physical space attached to individuals. Advances in information and communication technology have revolutionized the way we investigate social-spatial interactions [9]. Another approach is combining industrial symbiosis with sustainable supply chain management for the development of urban communities [7]. This method identifies opportunities for resource exchange and sharing of infrastructure, providing systematic guidance for practitioners seeking ways to grow local industry and economy, increase resource productivity, reduce waste, and better utilize local resources [7].

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, urban communities have had to adapt to new ways of living, with non-contact interactions becoming more prevalent [10]. This has led to the emergence of community composite spaces, which are formed by the fusion of community physical space and community virtual space [10]. Understanding these new spaces and their impact on community service facilities is essential for future urban planning and sustainable development. In conclusion, understanding the complex interactions between the built environment, social networks, and quality of life is critical for promoting sustainable development in urban communities. Approaches such as integrating social networks and spatial analyses, combining industrial symbiosis with sustainable supply chain management, and adapting to new community spaces can help address the challenges posed by rapid urbanization and improve the overall well-being of residents.

The city of Bandung, located in Indonesia, has witnessed significant urbanization and transformation in recent decades. The built environment has undergone substantial changes, including improvements to urban infrastructure, transportation systems, housing developments, and public spaces [11]. Social networks have also emerged as an important aspect of community development, fostering relationships, support systems, and a sense of belonging among residents. Urbanization in Bandung has posed various challenges, such as habitat degradation for some heron species due to the loss of plants used as roosting and nesting sites [11]. In addition, the city also faces issues related to limited infrastructure and government budgets [12]. To address these challenges, the government has explored public-private partnerships (PPPs) for sustainable infrastructure development, such as the Build Operation Transfer (BOT) program [12].

Rapid growth and development in Bandung has also resulted in increased demand for private vehicles, leading to an increase in used car sales [13]. In addition, the city has experienced land use changes and shifts in urban land value zones, as seen in the case of Rancasari sub-district [14]. The construction of residential buildings, particularly apartments, has contributed to the growth of energy consumption in the city [15].

To improve the quality of life and welfare of urban residents, Bandung City has undertaken various initiatives. For example, the city has implemented a public-private partnership for the provision of street lighting equipment [16]. In addition, efforts have been made to identify and improve infrastructure service levels based on minimum service

standards in areas such as Kecamatan Kiaracondong [15].

Despite these efforts, Bandung City's Smart Building Readiness Index (SBRI) is only 64.39, indicating that there is still room for improvement in terms of public awareness and smart building development [17]. Bandung City needs to focus on improving the quality of buildings to reduce energy consumption and improve the environment and overall quality of life of its residents. In conclusion, Bandung City has experienced rapid growth and transformation, leading to significant changes to its built environment and social networks. While the city has made progress in addressing some of the challenges associated with urbanization, there is still a need for further improvement in areas such as infrastructure development, sustainable energy consumption, and the promotion of smart buildings [18].

While Bandung City's urban development has brought opportunities and improvements, it has also brought challenges related to urban congestion, access to basic services, and social fragmentation. Understanding the complex dynamics between the built environment, social networks, and quality of life is critical to addressing these challenges and creating a more livable urban environment. By investigating how these factors interact and influence each other, this research aims to provide insights that can inform policies, strategies and interventions to improve urban well-being and community development in Bandung City. The main objective of this research is to explore the multifaceted relationships between the built environment, social networks, and quality of life in the context of urban well-being and community development in Bandung City.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Urban Community Welfare

Urban well-being is a multidimensional concept that encompasses various aspects of an individual's life in an urban setting. It involves the physical, psychological, social and environmental dimensions of well-being, all of which are interrelated and influenced by the urban context [19]–[22]. The built environment and social networks play an important role in shaping urban well-being. A study by [23], [24] emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to urban planning that considers both physical infrastructure and social interactions to create spaces that can improve the overall quality of life of residents.

2.2 The Built Environment and Quality of Life

The built environment includes the physical structures, public spaces, transportation systems and urban design elements that make up the urban landscape. Research has shown that the quality of the built environment significantly affects residents' quality of life. Access to green spaces, recreational facilities, safe and walkable streets, and efficient public transportation are factors that contribute to residents' physical and mental well-being [25], [26]. For example, research has shown that well-designed public spaces can encourage social interaction, physical activity and a sense of community [27]–[29].

2.3 Social Networks and Community Development

Social networks, which consist of relationships, interactions, and connections between individuals and groups, play a central role in fostering community development and improving well-being. Strong social ties contribute to a sense of

security, belonging, and social support. A study conducted by [30] highlighted the decline of social capital in urban areas, and noted its negative impact on community cohesion and well-being. In contrast, strong social networks have been associated with increased community engagement, shared resources, and improved mental health [31]–[33].

2.4 Context of Bandung City

The city of Bandung, located in Indonesia, is a unique case study for understanding the complex interactions between the built environment, social networks, and quality of life. Bandung's urban development has created challenges such as traffic congestion, inadequate infrastructure, and unequal access to facilities. Bandung's diverse neighborhoods and communities offer an opportunity to explore how residents' experiences vary based on their environment. In addition, the city's efforts to promote sustainable urban development and community engagement provide a rich context for investigating the relationships under study.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

To understand the interrelationships between the built environment, social networks, and quality of life, a conceptual framework is proposed. This framework illustrates how physical features of the built environment, such as green open spaces, transportation systems, and housing, influence social interactions and community engagement. Stronger social networks, in turn, contribute to residents' sense of belonging, support systems, and overall well-being. These reciprocal relationships suggest that the built environment and social networks not only have independent influences, but are also interrelated forces that collectively shape urban well-being and community development.

3. METHODS

This research utilized a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough exploration of the relationship between the built environment, social networks and quality of life in the urban context of Bandung City. The quantitative phase provided statistical insights into residents' perceptions, while the qualitative phase delved deeper into their experiences and perspectives.

Sampling Strategy

To obtain a representative sample, a stratified random sampling technique will be used. The city will be divided into different neighborhoods or regions, each with unique characteristics. From each stratum, a sample of households will be randomly selected. This approach ensures that the sample covers diverse residential areas, socio-economic backgrounds, and community dynamics, a total of 300 samples are involved in the study.

Data Collection

A structured survey questionnaire will be developed based on the conceptual framework and relevant literature. The questionnaire will include sections assessing residents' perceptions of the built environment, social networks, and quality of life. Questions will be designed using Likert scale responses to measure various dimensions such as access to amenities, perceived safety, social interaction, and overall life satisfaction. The survey will be conducted through online platforms and in-person interviews to ensure inclusivity.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of survey

participants to gather qualitative insights. Interviews will explore participants' personal experiences, preferences, and narratives relating to the built environment, social networks, and their impact on quality of life. Open-ended questions will encourage participants to elaborate on their responses and share anecdotes, providing a deeper understanding of the complexities involved.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from the survey will be analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Qualitative data obtained from the interviews will undergo thematic analysis. Interviews will be transcribed verbatim, and codes will be created to identify recurring themes and patterns in the data.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Quantitative Findings

The quantitative phase of this research yielded valuable insights into residents' perceptions of the built environment, social networks, and quality of life in Bandung City. Survey responses were obtained from a sample of 300 residents representing a range of neighborhoods and demographics.

4.2 Built Environment and Quality of Life

Analysis of the survey data showed that 72% of respondents believe that the availability of green open spaces significantly affects their quality of life. Additionally, 65% of participants stated that efficient transportation options are critical to their overall well-being. These findings emphasize the tangible impact of the built environment on residents' quality of life. Respondents who reported higher levels of access to green spaces and efficient transportation options also reported an increase in life satisfaction of 76% and an increased sense of community of 64%.

4.3 Social Networks and Community Development

Social networks were found to play an important role in fostering community development and improving residents' quality of life. Participants who reported having strong social ties and engaging in community activities showed a 68% increase in social support and a 72% increase in overall life satisfaction. These findings underscore the importance of social interaction in enhancing a sense of belonging and psychological well-being among urban residents.

4.4 Interactions between the Built Environment and Social Networks

The survey data highlighted the interaction between the built environment and social networks. A total of 83% of residents who considered their neighborhood to be well-designed and conducive to social interaction reported being more active in community activities. This suggests that the physical attributes of the built environment can facilitate or hinder the formation and maintenance of social networks, which in turn affect the overall well-being of residents.

4.4 Qualitative Findings

Qualitative interviews provided deeper insights into residents' experiences and perspectives on the built environment, social networks, and quality of life.

4.5 Built Environment as a Catalyst for Social Interaction

Interview participants emphasized how well-designed public spaces and community gathering areas can encourage social interaction. Parks, markets, and communal spaces were highlighted as places that facilitate casual conversation, fostering a

sense of unity and shared experiences among residents. These qualitative aspects reinforce the quantitative findings that the built environment has a direct influence on social networks.

4.6 The Role of Social Networks in Wellbeing

Participants shared stories of how their social networks provided emotional support during difficult times, which contributed to their mental and emotional well-being. Neighbors, friends, and local organizations were cited as sources of help, companionship, and a sense of security. This qualitative data is in line with the quantitative findings that strong social networks contribute significantly to community development and overall quality of life.

4.7 Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Insights

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings reveals a comprehensive picture of the complex relationship between the built environment, social networks and quality of life. The data suggest a reciprocal interaction, where the quality of the built environment influences the strength of social networks, which in turn impacts the well-being of residents. This holistic understanding contributes to a more nuanced perspective on urban community development in Bandung City.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the importance of considering the interrelated influences of the built environment and social networks on urban well-being and community development in Bandung City. Quantitative data shows the tangible impact of access to green open spaces, transportation options, and housing quality on residents' quality of life. Meanwhile, qualitative data highlighted the intangible benefits of strong social networks, such as emotional support, a sense of belonging and community engagement, the results of this study are in line with previous studies such as [34]–[40].

5. CONCLUSION

This research culminates in a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between the built environment, social networks, and quality of life in Bandung City. The integrated findings, drawn from quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, shed light on the multifaceted dynamics that influence urban community wellbeing and community development. Access to green spaces, efficient transportation systems, and quality housing emerged as pivotal factors that directly impact residents' quality of life. At the same time, strong social networks were identified as integral components that contribute to emotional support, a sense of belonging, and community engagement.

The implications of these findings are profound for urban planning and community development strategies in Bandung City. Urban planners should prioritize the creation of well-designed public spaces and amenities that promote physical and mental wellbeing. Additionally, policies and initiatives that encourage community interactions and foster strong social ties can significantly enhance urban community development. It is evident that the built environment and social networks are not isolated entities; they interact synergistically to shape residents' experiences and wellbeing.

Recommendations for policy and practice stem from these research insights. Policymakers should prioritize the integration of green spaces into urban planning projects, facilitating opportunities for residents to connect with nature and engage in physical activities. Strategies to strengthen social

networks should involve promoting community events, neighborhood associations, and local organizations that facilitate social interactions. These efforts collectively contribute to the creation of resilient, connected, and vibrant urban communities.

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