



The Role of Leadership Influencing the Health Equality Through Urban Design in the City of Surabaya, Indonesia

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Abstract

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has advocated a key role for local government in the struggle to improve health equality in developing countries. The Indonesian government has developed its own model of local government intervention for addressing health and wellbeing among citizens known as Kota Sehat program. Additionally the governments prioritise on urban health is very much a function of socio-cultural norms and leadership styles. The role of political leadership is therefore particularly important regarding local government interventions to promote health equality. Urban design is one of a number of factors in the built environment which have been shown to be important in promoting physical activity and social interaction which in turn are important mediators of physical and mental health. The challenges for policy makers in Indonesia regarding sustainability and health in cities has been stressed in particular the development of urban design principles especially in the City of Surabaya. The research established a theoretical framework for urban design protocols such as productivity, liveable, sustainability, design excellence and leadership. The aim of this study was to examine the extent to which the administration of the City of Surabaya is improving public health and creating a healthy and sustainable city. The findings indicate that the quality of mayoral leadership has played a vital role in enhancing the quality of urban life in Surabaya. The mechanisms underlying this role include that the mayor has a sound understanding of urban design and has been able to intervene to insist on good urban design as urban policy.

Keywords: Political Leadership, Mayor, Urban Design, Policy, Health, Surabaya

1. Introduction

A city which is well planned yields community benefits by reducing the negative impacts that can arise from swift and massive development. If a city is well designed and properly managed the quality of life of its inhabitants will be enhanced both in economic and social terms (Montgomery 1998). Sustainability in planning and urban development have become important guiding principles among professionals and academics globally, now commonly being applied to urban design elements (Childs 2010). As explained by the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council [ASBEC] (2014), the design of public spaces - such as green open spaces, streets, pathways, public plantings, shading, and landscaping - is now a key element in urban design implementation.

Urban design plays an important role in fostering community health and ensuring a balance in the composition of the urban environment. Several studies worldwide (Madanipour 2006; Carmona et al. 2002; Heath et al. 2006) have been conducted indicating that there are numerous health, welfare, and community benefits resulting from the implementation of good urban design (De Leeuw 2009). Such surveys have been supported by a recent study conducted by Harris et al., (2013) who showed that there is a close relationship between good urban design, health and unstructured built environments. Designs and plans indicate the need for city managers and planners to be responsible for matters regarding the environment and its inhabitants, the aim being to foster cities as friendly environments with healthy and active communities (French 2005). Although various studies have confirmed that urban design delivers many social, economic, and health benefits, a number of cities around the world have ignored the principles of urban design when considering city development.

Although governments and policy makers have generally understood key planning concepts, many fundamental principles of urban design for creating safe and healthy environments have not been applied in Indonesia's major cities (Firman, 2004). There needs to be a beneficial synergy between health and urban design so that plans can be effective tools for addressing issues of public health (Jackson 2003). Although municipal planning strategies have a fundamental role in improving community health (Stephens 1995), until now only a limited number of scholars have undertaken research relating to the link between design and health (Lowe et al. 2014). Hilman (2012) stated that the city administration of Surabaya has committed to sustaining its environment and the population through making it a healthy city.

The implementation of urban design policy can be gauged by examining the role of leaders, policy-makers, and stakeholders who have responsibilities for urban planning processes (Collinge & Gibney 2010). Cities that successfully address urban challenges usually have strong and visionary city leaders who are committed to urban design policies. Hence, the aim of this study was to examine the extent to which the administration of the City of Surabaya is improving public health and creating a healthy and sustainable city. The focus of the

study was on how leadership has been able to influence and shape urban design and planning policies, and how good governance has been used to improve population health.

2. Methods

This study applied the Urban Design Protocol (UDP) as a conceptual framework. Specifically, the aims of the framework are to generate productive, sustainable, and liveable places for people through leadership and the integration of design excellence (ASBEC 2014). See figure 1 below.



Fig. 1: The Urban Design Protocol Framework

(Source: Adapted from the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council (ASBEC) (2014). Available at <http://urbandesign.org.au/>)

The focus of the research question was on how leadership has been able to influence urban design to improve population health. The researcher visited Surabaya to conduct interviews with key policy makers (Head of the Regional Planning and Development Board [Bappeko], Head of the Environmental Board [BLH], Head of the Department of Spatial and Planning [DCKTR, and Head of the Department of Waste Management and Parks [DKP]) for this study. Particular attention was given to the ways in which the information was obtained and analyzed to remove any possible bias and to ensure reliability and validity.

Then, content analysis was employed to analyse the data. As commented by Hsieh and Shannon (2005) content analysis is a technique to review raw data, and in this instance it facilitated detailed examination of the extent of leadership in urban design in Surabaya (Lakshman 2012). This analysis assisted the researcher to expand the concept and model based on coding, categorising, and connecting the various strands of information. All the interview data were transcribed and categorized, then organised for coded analysis by QSR NVivo 10 software.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Quantitative content analysis

Word search and word frequency were applied in this study for content analysis purposes. The text search revealed key words (taken from the appropriate theory) relating to the main concepts of urban design and leadership, and this helps explain the elements of the urban design process. The NVivo's text search was employed to locate the key words so as to more efficiently collect all references to the framework of the urban design.

Table 1: Word search total counts UDP - all respondents

Principles		Bappeko	BLH	DCKTR	DKP	TOTAL
Productivity	Enhancing	10%	20%	7%	17%	12%
	Connected	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%
	Diverse	8%	14%	4%	5%	8%
	Enduring	5%	3%	6%	5%	5%
Liveability	Comfortable	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%
	Vibrant	10%	13%	12%	4%	10%
	Safe	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%
	Walkable	5%	10%	4%	5%	6%
Leadership and governance	Context	11%	6%	4%	4%	6%
	Engagement	23%	8%	10%	13%	14%
	Excellence	22%	18%	44%	42%	32%
	Custodianship	1%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 1 shows the twelve keywords used in the interviews and the frequency of support for those principles. Overall, it can be seen that all parties consider leadership and governance as a vital aspect in urban design, especially with regard to the feature of 'excellence' which recorded the highest level of support, 32 percent. The Head of Bappeko considered that engagement was the most important feature (23 percent), a level similar to that recorded for excellence (22 percent). Considering how a place can enhance the quality of the local environment and local economy, with communities as a primary focus, the Head of BLH recorded 20 percent, this being followed by excellence at 18 percent. Interestingly, DCKTR and DKP stated that creating conditions for innovation and building good teamwork are essential attributes for fostering excellence in their perspectives, recording levels of 44 percent and 42 percent respectively.

In summary, the word search of the data identified the overall priorities of the participants; they were excellence (32 percent), engagement (14 percent), enhancing (12 percent), vibrant (10 percent), diverse (eight percent), walkable (six percent), context (six percent), enduring (five percent), custodianship (two percent), comfortable (two percent), safe (two percent), and connected (one percent). The relative priorities of these UDP attributes are illustrated in Figure 2.

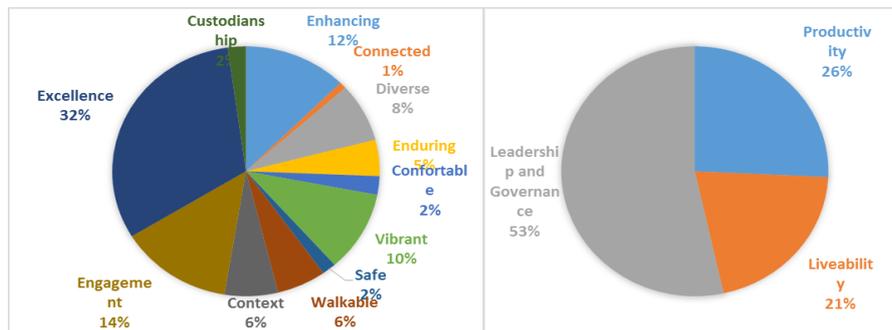


Fig. 2: Word Search of UDP Theory– All respondents, Source: Processed data analysis (Author 2015)

Of the twelve attributes of the UDP, five emerged as very significant for all the participants: excellence, engagement, enhancing, vibrant, and diverse. Excellence relates to such qualities as innovation and leadership and from the word search it scored 32%. Next in importance was the element of engagement which scored 14%. In this regard the participants described the city and its urban design and planning as benefiting from several key stakeholders and investors both nationally and internationally. Other keywords identified in the word search were related to leadership and governance, which scored 53%. Of lesser importance were productivity and liveability with scores of 26% and 21% respectively. To conclude, all respondents agreed that leadership and governance (53%) were of highest priority for implementing urban design in Surabaya, and of lesser significance were productivity (26%) and livability (21%).

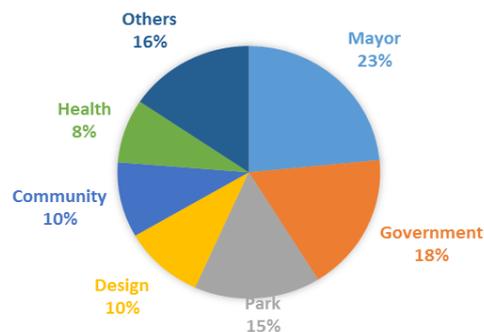


Fig. 3: Word Frequency – All respondents, Source: Processed data analysis (Author 2015)

The word search for frequency of use by all respondents found that the attributes considered of prime importance were leadership and governance. In conclusion, all respondents addressed the attributes associated with the research question, and especially those associated to the role of political leadership in influencing urban design in Surabaya. They agreed that the attributes of leadership and governance applied to the mayor of Surabaya.

4. A Qualitative Content Analysis

4.1. Mayor and local government

The mayor, as the city leader, is in a strong position to influence urban design and its implementation. It is the mayor who is in a position of leadership, and if he/she has a commitment to good urban design then it is more likely that design principles will be implemented despite any challenges or obstacles (Irvine 2008). Furthermore, Satterthwaite (2009) argued that municipal government requires a mayor who has a good understanding and knowledge of city planning. Therefore, the question arises, 'does mayoral quality and background matter in influencing urban design in Surabaya?'

Some respondents spoken this point directly. The Head of Bappeko stated that:

"...if we look at the background of the current mayor of Surabaya, she has strong competence in the field of architecture and planning". (Respondent #1 Bappeko, 2015)

Similarly, the Head of DCKTR expressed this view:

"Formerly, she was studying at the Institute of Technology Sepuluh Nopember (ITS), majoring in architecture. Then she continued to a Master of Management and Urban Development (2002) in ITS as well. Recently she received a Doctor HC from ITS Surabaya for her ability to lead Surabaya". (Respondent #3 DCKTR, 2015)

This statement was echoed by Professor Triyogi Yuwono (Rector of ITS Surabaya) who stated that the conferment of the Doctor of Honorary Clause was awarded to Risma (mayor) because she has strong leadership in leading Surabaya to make it a green and liveable city for the people (Dinkominfo 2015).

From these responses it was clear that all respondents were aware that the background the mayor was as an architect / planner. This is in line with the work of Avellaneda (2009) who acknowledged that the mayor's performance in the municipal is shaped by their credentials and knowledge. This factor has been reinforced by the work of Fiedler (1986, p533) who commented, "Cognitive resource theory assumes that more intelligent and knowledgeable leaders make better plans and decisions than do those with less ability and knowledge". It

can be concluded that the quality of mayoral leadership has played a vital role in enhancing the quality of development and urban life in Surabaya. That the mayor has credentials and a sound understanding of urban design has proved to be an advantage for local government.

4.2. Leadership, Urban Design and Health

The role of the leadership of the mayor has been recognized by all respondents as the main attribute in the successful application of urban design in Surabaya (see figure 3). Therefore, this section seeks to answer the research question, "How urban design elements employed by the mayor helped enhance public health?"

Based on data obtained from the DKP office, Surabaya has many urban open spaces; 54 active and 270 passive parks (Timoticin et.al, 2014). This is in line with Bappeko who stated that:

"In addressing urban issues, the Mayor of Surabaya has focused on delivering more open spaces and parks". (Respondent #1 Bappeko, 2015)

In terms of uses, the active parks are designed to the needs of the community by facilitating physical activity for people. This was confirmed by BLH:

"She (the mayor) strongly highlighted the need to modify the function of parks to active areas for the community for functions such as sports, jogging, walking and cycling ... so that they can obtain health benefits". (Respondent #2 BLH, 2015)

He added later:

"...we plan to develop Surabaya in ways that are beneficial for the environment, social benefits, economic opportunities, and public health. In what ways? One of them is by increasing green areas. This is good not only for the environment but for our health as well". (Respondent #2 BLH, 2015)

This approach was advocated by Burden (2008) who argued that if properly placed and spaced, urban street trees provide various economic, health and environmental benefits.

Furthermore, DKP added:

"We reproduce green areas not only in the town center but also in the suburbs. It is intended for a balance between them". (Respondent #4 DKP, 2015)

The observation is similar to the work of Timoticin et.al (2014) who said that 80 percent of Surabaya's residents visit parks at least twice each week. Then, DCKTR touched on the impact of urban open spaces for mental health in Surabaya:

"People come to the parks for a breath of fresh air and to relieve their stress. I think this is one of the effects of providing more urban open spaces mediated by excellent urban design". (Respondent #3 DCKTR, 2015)

From this discussion it can be concluded that there is a relationship between strong leadership by the mayor and public health. In order to improve the quality of public health we need the leadership of a mayor who can implement good urban design in the planning process. The mayor of Surabaya has succeeded in implementing urban design.

5. Conclusion

It was evident from this project that the mayor, as leader of the municipal government has had an impact on the urban development process - especially in influencing urban design. This type of situation was recognized by Irvine (2008) found that a mayor who has strong leadership is able to create a more attractive city environment and is capable of facing municipal challenges through various design strategies. Therefore, it is advantageous for a city to have a mayor who has excellent understanding and high commitment to the principles of the UDP and who also has a forward-thinking approach to the environment.

Drawing on the key findings of the interviews, and based on both the quantitative and qualitative data, this study has found that there is a close relationship between strong leadership and community health and wellbeing which is mediated by an urban design protocol. In order to apply the UDP as good policy, the municipality needs a leader who recognizes that applying the UDP can yield profound benefits for the community. Based on this study, the quality of leadership of the mayor, who has a professional background as a planner or architect, has proved to be beneficial for the people of Surabaya. The current mayor has been able to achieve improved urban plans and designs because she has understood how to shape the city and make it more attractive and comfortable for the community. Therefore, she has been able to shape and refine the city planning process in Surabaya. Furthermore, she is able to articulate her ideas when addressing social, economic, and health issues. Indeed some practitioners within the planning agencies in Surabaya have developed a sense of pride to be part of the current urban development process.

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