

Mitzi Collinsworth

ENG 574 Research and Report Writing

Secondary Research Project

*Neighborhood Built Environment Influences on Physical Activity among Adults: A Systematized Review of Qualitative Evidence*

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Humans are born to be physically active. Our bodies are designed for hard physically taxing movement. In the past, humans spent most of their day surviving. They had to hunt their own food and build their own shelter. There were no modern conveniences like we have today. Today, human life is easier thanks to modern inventions and the discovery of technology. However, these conveniences are proving to have a negative impact on our health.

We no longer have to hunt our own food or build shelter. In fact, we do not even have to open our garage or our own car door. Technology has made human life so easy that we can live by pushing buttons or speaking to Alexa. This means we can focus on creating new advances or improvements. However, we have to combat the negative effects to the human body due to a more sedentary life.

The literature review article “*Neighborhood Built Environment Influences on Physical Activity among Adults: A Systematized Review of Qualitative Evidence*,” investigates how our built environment effects our level of physical activity. Does our city have sidewalks, bike trails, parks, or recreation areas? Are these area’s safe for young children and women? Is the area aesthetically pleasing to encourage usage? This literature review views these questions as a public health issue. The reviewers want to know if a planned neighborhood environment influences physical activity.

The overall style of this literature review had a standard style with a generalized tone. The motive seemed geared towards government and public health organizations to influence builders to take their findings into consideration. There was a wide variety of concepts defined throughout the review. Sociodemographic defines public age, sex, and ethnicity to help identify if these factors effected the type of environment they lived in. Built environment is the master planned communities that were researched to identify different environmental factors that influence physical activity. Moderate to vigorous activity (MVPA) is used to differentiate between different types of intensity in physical activity.

The review uses a qualitative method but introduces a handful of research analysis and theory terms throughout. Thematic analysis is used to look for patterns in the data relating physical activity with the surrounding environment. As the reviewers researched and collected data from other reports, they use grounded theory to formulate their ideas. The review quotes many participant opinions about their physical activity relating to their environment. Content analysis was used to gather data using the participants communication. The participant communication also used a phenomenological approach considering that the participants comments are subjective. Conclusions were reached using methodological rigor to look for logic in the overall research.

The literature review uses MLA citation style. I know this is not the most common citation style, however, I feel that this might be because the review comes from Canada. All of the works cited appear throughout the review, but the majority were paraphrases with little quotation. I estimated about sixteen quoted items in the entire review. The majority of the quotations were subjective responses from participants and the conductors. The review was broken into the following headings: abstract, introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion, and conclusion. The materials and methods section had mini sub sections to discuss the different types of research used to reach a conclusion.

The literature used for the review is introduced in the introduction. They explain how the articles and research used has to fit a qualitative method to meet the criteria. The

research used is mentioned throughout the results section explaining in a general tone how they led to these conclusions. The relationship between the built environment and the physical activity level is one connection made with the literature used. They used thirty-six articles to conclude that safety was the biggest factor to regular physical activity. This considered the condition of the path, lighting, safety phones, police presence, and hazards. The second connection was the next important factor of destination. This included convenience to recreation. Most participants in the studies preferred to use recreation areas that were in their communities. In section 2.1, the authors state “Systematized literature reviews have been undertaken previously to explore the relations between built and social environments and health outcomes [15] including PA [16]” (Salvo, 2018). Based on this one sentence, the storyline of the literature review still fits the whole. The main objective is to see what the relationship is between the built environment and physical activity. The authors take a neutral stance in the review. They feel there is no evidence to show significance. They feel more mixed method research is needed to find a better conclusion (Salvo, 2018).

The authors begin to draw conclusions in the literature review at the end of the discussion section. They begin to analyze the participant comments and infer that their reasons are casual and not fact. The authors further their analysis in the conclusion. They feel more research needs to be done concerning change over time with urban planning interventions to improve public health. They also feel their needs to be more natural experiments using mixed method research to reach a more defined conclusion. I agree that the majority of the results and discussions were based mostly on subjective comments from the participants. I also feel that mixed methods of research including change over time with interventions will be more telling than subjective qualitative methods. The quantitative data does play a role, and it cannot be excluded. There are too many factors that effect this issue (Salvo, 2018).

## Summary

The purpose of this study is to investigate how our built environment affects our level of physical activity. The lack of physical activity and the increase in preventable diseases is a public health concern. This study uses thirty-six different peer-reviewed qualitative studies to find conclusive information. This includes input from the surrounding community to inform urban policy makers when designing the built environment to influence physical activity. The majority of the studies were based on surveys with participants from different socioeconomic, sociodemographic, and international communities. Safety and destination were the top two factors chosen by participants to increase their physical activity and use of urban recreation areas. Presence of both factors increased the likelihood of physical activity regardless of the social differences. Participants wanted effective lighting, police presence, limited hazards, and recreation areas in close proximity. The added benefit of aesthetics was also included. The qualitative evidence was considered subjective since the quantitative research was not considered. The majority of the participants survey responses were considered not plausible, but casual. The subjective nature makes it difficult to draw concise conclusions without including quantitative data. The authors feel more research needs to be done concerning change over time with urban planning interventions to improve public health. They also feel their needs to be more natural experiments using mixed method research to reach a more defined conclusion. Urban policy makers need to study the effects of recent interventions to increase physical activity over a longer period of time. This includes community outreach and education, community input, and community support.

## Works Cited

Salvo, G. L.-B. (2018). Neighborhood Built Environment Influences on Physical Activity among Adults: A Systematized Review of Qualitative Evidence. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15(5), 897. doi:[10.3390/ijerph15050897](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15050897)