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Examining the Quasi-Public Spaces in Commercial Complexes

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Abstract: Commercial complexes are steadily expanding in size and function and plying roles as quasi-public spaces. This study investigated quasi-public spaces in contemporary commercial complexes by posting two questions: the physical features of quasi-public spaces in commercial complexes and how these characteristics promote sociability in commercial complexes? To answers these questions, a questionnaire survey was administered, and various observations were made in Intime City, Wanda Plaza and Western City Square, three prominent commercial complexes in Hangzhou City (Zhejiang Province, China), to enrich the analysis. Confirmatory factor analyses were used to examine the collected data. The results show that commercial complexes are also used as quasi-public spaces: they provide a more secure and well-maintained environment, playful conversations take place freely and democratically, promote socialization, and also increase consumption. In the existing literature, there is a dearth of theoretical and empirical studies on the emergence of quasi-public spaces.

Keywords: commercial complexes; China; quasi-public space; sustainable development; socialization; social suitability

1. Introduction

In urban life, changing consumption and leisure patterns have emerged as an essential feature [1,2]. As cities have changed, so have their urban fabric identity, which is stated with public places like the streets, squares, and parks that have changed into enclosed public buildings such as shopping centers and commercial complexes [3]. In the contemporary world, rapid economic growth has created modern civic centers, shopping centers, and commercial complexes. These spaces are used as quasi-public spaces, entertainment venues, and sociable hubs [4–6].

The concept of sustainability, which relies on the efficient and productive use of natural resources, the preservation of social and cultural features of people, the protection of psychological and physiological health, and the promotion of quality of life, requires a harmonious relation of social, environmental and economic factors in any areas [7].

Sustainable development consists of three fundamental multidimensional aspects: social, economic, and environment [8,9]. Theoretical and empirical studies have proved that these features help to achieve livelihood, ecological viability, and other various sustainable development goals [10,11]. Social sustainability is one of the basic pillars of sustainable development. Worldwide, it is believed that compact built environments might help achieve desired sustainable goals. This also recommends that in the future, developments should take place near to existing urban structures [12]; this will minimize the transportation burden, reduce fossil fuel gas emissions, save the environment and promote social sustainability. Such kinds of infrastructure support to achieve continuity and connectivity in cities. The social sustainability, as an independent dimension of sustainable development, and has equally important as the economic and environmental dimensions [13].

In the literature, we did not find an accurate definition of social sustainability. However, social sustainability can be described as a "set of measures and policies which seek to improve quality of life and equal access to distribution and proper use and allocations of natural and artificial environments by all humans. Social sustainability also focuses on assets like consumption, education, skills, experience, income and employment, and gender equity in the society" [14,15]. The basic aim of social sustainability is to promote 'eco-friendly' behavior or stronger environmental ethics. Social sustainability also helps to build bridges and connections between people and the bio-physical environment [16,17]. Consequently, this will help to improve the quality of life and will help to achieve sustainable development.

Jabareen [17] suggested that the role of the built environment, urban design, and urban planning cannot be neglected in creating social sustainability. The compact development, mixed-use, sustainable transportation, greenery, and density help to achieve social sustainability. Furthermore, physical features also play a key role in sustaining sustainability, like accessibility, walkability, public realm, amenities, sustainable urban design principles, and pedestrian-friendly environments [18].

In modern urbanization, under neoliberalism and capitalism, the trend and concept of public space are changing. According to Dovey [19], quasi-public spaces are controlled by private authorities and are a kind of mixed form. Moreover, public spaces are always playing the role of creating social interaction. In the contemporary world, commercial complexes are used as quasi-public spaces and promote social sustainability.

In a contemporary word, public spaces have great social importance. They are used as a sphere of people's action essential to socialize inhabitants. In the modern era under the influence of capitalism and neoliberalism, the new trend has emerged and growing rapidly especially in developing countries "quasi-public spaces". Quasi-spaces are found in malls and complexes [20]. However, on the first look, the quasi-spaces looks like public spaces. These spaces are easily accessible to all people. However, these are organized and controlled by private authorities [21,22]. They are quasi-public spaces. These types of urban spaces, in other words, are a mixed form of public meaning and controlled privately [19,23].

After the Industrial Revelation, quasi-public spaces emerged in urban areas [24]. These spaces are developed, maintained, and managed by private organizations [25,26] and are provided for social, economic, psychological, and aesthetic purposes. In other words, the urban features are incorporated into commercial complexes and given the shape of a small city, so commercial complexes serve as alternative city centers [27]. Quasi-public spaces may have less convenience levels than other spaces developed and controlled by public organizations. However, quasi-spaces still provide "physical, psychological, social, economic, and aesthetic" in the cities. Spaces in commercial complexes are mostly designed and managed to provoke people for seeking profit and manipulated to serve to pay customers. These spaces are considered private urban spaces [25,26].

Various concepts have been coined in the academic literature to discuss this sort of urban space, "quasi-public spaces" [2,4,5]. These kinds of spaces are known as privately owned public space (POPS) [28,29]; pseudo-public space [30]; semi-public space [31]; ambiguous space [32]; pseudo-place [4]; and publicly accessible space [33]. The public-use and private ownership combined, as a result, lead

to those spaces becoming the key places where capitalists, the public, and the state meet in the urbanization process under neoliberalism. In this study, we examined quasi-public spaces in China.

The design of spaces in commercial complexes boost publicness. The "closing off" of the complex is not only achieved through technological surveillance but also ambient qualities also play their role to provoke public [34]. The description of the seductive qualities of quasi-public space contrasts with dystopian accounts of urban governance, which have previously over-emphasized the role of coercion, sur veillance, and private security [35,36].

China is in a key era of urbanization and industrialization and as a form of highly concentrated trading. China has the largest consumer market in the world. Therefore commercial complexes have high development potential in the country [37]. The past two decades have seen enormous growth in commercial complexes in China. The retail sector continues to grow, with projections of a 34% increase between 2008 and 2012 to reach RMB 7.54 trillion of total value [38,39]. This growth has changed the shapes of cities. Local and international investors are showing a keen interest in investing in commercial complexes [40].

In the research on the Chinese urbanism, quasi-public spaces have received little attention. Indeed, empirical attempts to assess the degree of publicness of quasi-public urban spaces in China can hardly be found in the existing literature. From the literature review, we found that many researchers have worked on various factors of commercial complexes in China, like consumer behavior, marketing strategies, online shopping, and the architecture of malls [39,41,42]. But no research has been carried on the role of quasi-public space in China. Therefore, the following two questions are designed in this study to investigate the quasi-public spaces in contemporary commercial complexes in China: What are the physical features of quasi-public spaces in commercial complexes and how these characteristics promote sociability in commercial complexes?

2. Literature Review

Before defining the terms public and quasi-public space, it is important to describe the term "public". According to Madanipour [43], the term public is taken from Latin which means the strong relationship among community and state. It belongs to a residence that is open and shared with the community as a whole. Space is a physical object and is related to people [43]. This gives strong arguments of public spaces, the spaces that belong to the public and may be described as the space open for the public as a whole without any discrimination [44]. These spaces are present at almost scale and levels. These spaces are present at a very small scale of the street to large shopping malls and commercial complexes. One cannot neglect the importance of public spaces [45].

In urban areas, public spaces have a vital role in creating the public realm [46]. However, it is a quality of good spaces to provide socio-economic and psychological health to communities [47]. Modern spaces are emerging in commercial complexes with more advanced technology to attract and engage people. The modern spaces in complexes are responsive and meaningful [48].

Carr, et al. [49] have described the various activities in public space. They describe five needs in public space: active engagement, passive engagement comfort, relaxation, and discovery:

- Active Engagement: Public will engage in the art, coffee stalls, sitting areas (benches) and fountains;
- Passive Engagement: Enjoying the interior environment without getting involved;
- Comfort: People feel safe and comfortable, by getting their needs like food, soft drinks, and the best place for rest when tired;
- Relaxation: Find a peaceful environment absent of vehicle noise and pollution and feel physiological comfort;
- Discovery: Shows wish for new spectacles and pleasurable experiences, "discovery" depends on variety and change.

The above five various activities are present in the commercial complex. Therefore, we can say spaces in commercial complexes are quasi-public spaces. The concept of trade, one of the most basic

actions of humankind, has always actualized at different places in every period and civilization. Social and shopping activities that are carried out in public areas and city squares in ancient and medieval cities have shifted out of the city centers via shopping malls and commercial complexes that emerged in the 20th century [50]. The history of shopping and retailing is starts from the Greek agora and continued with the Roman forum. These shopping places were located in the polis (city) center. This was easily accessible to all inhabitants. The main function of the agora was meeting and market place. They also called it an assembly to discuss political issues [51,52].

Moreover, the Greek agora was also used as a place for daily public communication. In medieval Europe, plazas and squares were the core areas for public life. This also continued in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, where these places contained special buildings and were used as gathering places, public celebrations, and play areas [49]. In the 11th century, shopping streets and market places were also located in city centers. These places were the crucial public spaces of the middle ages. In the medieval era, cities had a great role in business, and the streets were used as the market place. The main streets were used as workplaces, meeting places, for selling and purchasing civic ceremonies, and as a religious activity [7,52].

The modern technological revolution has marked the progress of modern economies, and society changes the shape of cities. In cities, new consumption spaces like shopping centers, commercial complexes, shopping streets, bazaars, and departmental stores were created with more entertainment and leisure facilities [53]. Rather than providing community's demands, shopping malls and commercial complexes have become the urban focal points that reflect the socio-cultural characteristics of the society with the sporting practices, cultural activities, entertainment and recreation areas, restaurants, and cafes within them [27]. Contemporary commercial complexes are also a place of recreation and a means of social interaction besides buying and selling activities. The presence of retailing within mixed-use areas are added to the public and communal life by making them safer and faster [42].

A commercial complex is considered a place. The social, physical and environment are essential attributes of any place [54]. Therefore, complex as a place contains mathematical dimensions that can be calculated and standardized. The commercial complexes are developed in such a way that has a special atmosphere generated from their interior design and physical environment. Which all altogether create a beautiful experience. Being in a complex provides experience to the senses and serves as a stimulus for an integrated experience [55]. The commercial complex atmosphere can offer a sensation to people. The interior environment of the complex creates and enables people communication, generates spatial identification in minds and increases the value of shopping [56–58].

The interior design and layout of the commercial complex attract more visitors [59]. Sitting areas, appropriate interior temperature, background music, good architecture and layout, lifts and food courts, elevators, and easy access to anywhere in the building. Entertainment facilities like play areas, cinemas and etc. play a major role in facilitating the public [26,60,61]. Therefore, they are emerging as quasi-public spaces, where people come to spend time to have fun and entertainment activities with family and friends besides shopping. This will have a positive impact on the consumption of complexes [62–64].

The life in public places (shopping malls) can be described in two ways: the physical characteristics of the mall, such as the accessibility (micro and macro-accessibility) to amenities, ease of navigation and comfortable environments [1,65,66], and the digital capabilities, such as social networking services, shopping applications, free wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi) services, and free parking, that have been entrenched in the shopping mall environment to support the increasing vitality of everyday routines and public demand [67,68]. Atmosphere (ambiance), amenities and facilities, accessible restrooms, aesthetics, background music, moderate temperature, design and layout, architecture, play areas, cinemas, safety, and security, etc. provoke people to visit the shopping malls [61,69].

From the literature review; we found that various scholars have worked on private, public spaces (quasi-public spaces), like Németh and Schmidt [33], who conducted a study on privately own public spaces. They are of the view that the private organizations used to develop and manage quasi-spaces

more accessible, well designed and attractive. This will leave a positive impact on the mind of people and more public will visit them. Pratt [70], carried out research on the consequences and emerging quasi-public space. He also checked its impact on the culture and urban areas a new phenomenon is emerging in London. He is of the view that these spaces are privately own and access to all. These spaces are mainly used for commercial purposes. Tyndall [71] also conducted research on the quasi-public spaces in suburban shopping malls in Sydney. According to his study, quasi-public spaces are having on the nature of publicness.

In India, mostly market activates were carried out in the streets. Since 1998 new commercial complexes have emerged in India. In big cities like Delhi and Bombay malls attract many customers [72]. A study that comes closer to exploring experiential aspects of shopping in Indian cities was one carried out by in which the authors study the impact of service environment, patronage intentions and entertainment service. These services have a significant positive impact on customers and attract more customers [72,73]. El-Adly and Eid [74] conducted research to evaluate the loyalty of customers in the UAE. He studied numerous factors affecting loyalty. According to their study the complex environment, entertainment, and recreational have a positive impact on the customers. These facilities and services loyal the customers towards complexes. Moreover, the same kind of study was conducted by Kusumowidagdo, Sachari and Widodo [57] on Indonesian atriums as quasi-internal public spaces in commercial complexes. In the case of Gandaria city mall, atrium sign legibility, atrium decoration, and event decoration are the physical factors, whereas social image and interaction, as well as event ambiance, are the social factors. This study also prove that, these factors provoke shoppers in the complexes and play their role as quasi-spaces. Moreover, these scholars have used various methods to conduct a study on quasi-public spaces. Like interviews from management, review of literature, and on secondary type of the data. But in this study, we have used different methods and collected data from visitors, personal observation, and there perception about spaces, how these spaces attract them and how much time they spent, and the purpose of visiting complexes.

Commercialized urban spaces in China mainly began to emerge after the 1990s when the state abolished its job and housing allocation systems. The shopping mall as a new building typology has expanded rapidly in Chinese cities. Once built in the suburbs, the shopping mall is a now dominant feature of contemporary Chinese city centers [37]. In the last twenty years, commercial complexes haves been the focus of commercial real estate development in the big cities of China. Although China has the largest consumer market in the world, the consumer behavior and consumption psychology of this enormous market. In China, consumers are more concerned with the quality and price of the merchandise, level of popularity and variety of sales incentives and physical aspects of commercial complexes, so the existing literature is caught in a never-ending dichotomous debate about public and private spaces with some notable contributions on the commons. When it comes to the quasi-public space, this particular kind of urban space still has not received much attention in the Chinese literature [20].

3. Study Area

In Zhejiang Province, Hangzhou is a prosperous and rapid-growing capital city. The recent development and evaluation of commercial complexes reflect the growth trends of China's commercial estate. Three commercial complexes (Wanda Plaza, Western City Square, and Intime City) in Hangzhou City were selected for the survey. The details of the complexes are given in Table 1. These are the famous commercial complexes in Hangzhou. Hangzhou city is situated on the south wing of the Yangtze Delta river, on the west side of Hangzhou Bay [75]. Hangzhou has ranked top in Forbes best commercial cities in 2013, in mainland China and topped China's happiest cities (by the Xinhua News Agency) for ten repeated years [75,76]. The population of Hangzhou city is 8.1 million [77]. The transformation of spatial structures and relocation of urban elements has greatly impacted the city's ecological environment. However, since 2008, contemporary commercial complexes are developed in Hangzhou. This tendency is increasing fast, and new complexes are developing in the province.

Table 1. Detail of Commercial complexes.

	Wanda Plaza	Western City Square	Intime City
Opening date	2014.12	2004.12	2013.10
Number of floors	6	7	8
Floor area(m^2)	360,200	55,000	290,000
Selling area(m^2)	70,744.3309	31,711.99152	81,284.4201
Total number of shops	202	153	290

4. Methods

The questionnaire survey was administered to collect data from visitors inside complexes, and mall intercept techniques were used. The questionnaire was designed in light of the study's aim and the literature review. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the 1st part on demographic characteristics and the 2nd part containing thirty items, which were scaled on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was first written in English and was then translated into Chinese [78,79]. However, the final questionnaire was in both English and Chinese. The sampling size was 500 with a mall intercept technique, was used to fill the questionnaire [80]. The questionnaires were distributed in three prominent complexes (Wanda Plaza, Intime City, and Western City Square) at different hours of the day. The data collection process was conducted for about one month in September 2018, from Monday to Sunday. Mostly the questionnaires were filled out on weekends (Friday-Sunday), especially in the evening, by considering the visiting habits of the respondents.

We selected 167 interviewees from Wanda Plaza and Itime City complexes, and 166 from the Western City commercial complex. The overall number of true responses from three commercial complexes was 440. In order to avoid missing data, we selected only the properly filled questionnaires. In questionnaire data collection, missing data are the common occurrence that can have a significant influence on the results and accuracy of the study. Missing data can create biased estimates and leads to wrong or weak conclusions [81]. Therefore to avoid this issue, during the filter process 60 improper filled questionnaires and half-filled questionnaires were dropped to get accurate results and conclusions. Later, 440 completed questionnaires were utilized for data analysis (SPSS), and analysis of a moment structures (AMOS) was used to measure and validate the collected data [82].

In this study, we have also used the personal observation method and captured the photos at various locations inside and outside of the complexes. According to Benjamin [83] the figure of the flaneur is that of the observer. The flaneur, in this sense, is a beneficial and innovative technique for a field study that creates the link among the real city and recorded city. Personal observation is a process to record one's observation, knowledge, and insight into urban life and space and then convert them into the narrative description. Considering the idea of Benjamin, the main data for this study were conducted through fieldwork in commercial complexes of Hangzhou City, China.

4.1. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the institute of urban and rural planning college of civil engineering and architecture (Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China), and commercial complexes management. Before data collection, all eligible respondents were informed about the aims of the study, voluntary participation, the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, and were assured of the confidentiality of the information to be collected.

4.2. Measures

The achieve study aim, five factors (social activities, accessibility, physical aspects, safety, and circulation) were used with multiple items adopted from various previous studies. All variables are evaluated on the five-point Likert scale. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) [84] and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) [85] of all variables were also analyzed. The factor "social activities" was measured

with twelve items (cinema, children play area, various entertainment facilities for youth, fashion shows, crowded complex, restaurants, coffee shops, enjoy while shopping, It's fun to be here, existence of people of different age group, presence of both females and males and Games). These items were adapted from [62,74,86,87]. To analyze the "accessibility" factor, six items (easily park vehicle, easily find the entrances and exits, easy to go anywhere in the complex, opening hours and closing hours are appropriate, complex is close to home and work, and complex is close to bus station and metro) were adopted from [41,62,88]. "Physical services" were measured by using five different items (sitting areas, escalators and lifts, signage, restrooms, and adequate parking area) adapted from [41,62]. Three items for safety (safety in car parking, personal security, and children are secure while playing and doing different activities) were chosen to get the views of visitors about safety in commercial complexes and how it affects them [74,86,87]. The circulation inside the commercial complexes is an essential factor in attracting visitors. Four items for "circulation" (ease of navigation, wide pedestrian paths, adequate clear space in circular elements, and Sample layout) were taken from [20,24].

4.3. Common Method Bias

In the data collection process, a common method bias (CMB) can be present because of the same method used for data gathering. Harman's one-factor test was applied to the analysis of CMB. The results revealed the highest variance explained by single factor was 23.74% (approx. 24%) which is less than 50%. This result shows that no CMB is present in our study [89,90].

5. Results and Analysis

The exploratory research was conducted on the various 30 items significant variances recognized in light of the aim of this research. We used SPSS 23 version to analyze the data. In our 30 selected variables, we found significant correlations among them. The correlation was high and data was accurate for further analysis. We also performed Barlett's test of sphericity. The basic idea to test EFA was to remove minimum attributes responsible for the max: variance in the data. Furthermore, the kaiser-Meyer-olkin (KMO) index for measurement of sampling adequacy and Barlett's test of sphericity were performed to see for redundancy among various attributes.

The demographic characteristics of data were obtained from visitors. Table 2 shows the gender and age of visitors. There was an inclination towards female shoppers with 55.28%, while male visitors were 44.72%. Table 3 shows the monthly income and education. The income level, as shown in Table 3. This kind of data was gathered to know the demographic characteristics of various visitors.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics.

Gender	Percentage	Age	Percentage
Male	44.72%	20–30	53.21%
Female	55.28%	31–40	32.23%
		41–50	10.24%
		51–60	3.12%
		≥61	1.20%

Table 3. Education and Monthly income.

Education	Percentage	Monthly Income	Percentage
Less than secondary school	1.02%	<2000 RMB	7.12%
Secondary school	5.51%	2001 to 3000 RMB	5.34%
Diploma holder	4.03%	3001 to 4000 RMB	6.41%
College graduate	72.02%	4001 to 5000 RMB	3.72%
Postgraduate degree	17.42%	5001 to 6000 RMB	5.71%
		6001 to 7000 RMB	5.82%
		7001 to 8000 RMB	7.63%
		8000 to 10,000 RMB	23.12%
		>10,000 RMB	35.13%

As can be seen from Tables 4–6, from the perspective of in-store consumer experiences, the overview survey shows that spending time for individual and social purposes is an important component of the commercial complex experience for many consumers. Particularly, the questionnaire respondents were asked to select from a list of how often they visit, how much time they spent in the complex, visiting time of complex, and intention of visiting complexes.

The survey show visiting days, time spent and visiting time and days. The shoppers were requested to respond to how often they visit commercial complexes; 33.62 percent responded that they visit commercial complexes once a week, 20.43 percent response that they visit within one to two weeks, and other responses are given in Table 3. The visiting days for commercial complexes are varied. The Table 5 indicates that, that the majority of people spent around 2–3 and more than 3 h, 32.63% and 30.21% respectively, followed by 2.12% around 10-30 min, 12.33% around 30 to 59 min and 22.61% around 1–2 h in a day in commercial complexes see Table 5. Most of the people visit malls in the evening, and on weekends while getting the response, 67.63% replied that they visit in the evening, and 32.37% person said they visit in the morning or at different hours of the day. Similarly, people said that they visit complex on weekends, as 64.24% replied they visit on weekends, and remaining said they visit on weekdays. However, in commercial complexes, customers can be visited at any time and can spend as much time they want.

Furthermore, it's believed that commercial complexes are easily accessible to all age groups and diverse backgrounds of people. All the social groups will sit and play together. All people sit and a beautiful conversation takes place among them in complexes Oldenburg [91]. Table 6 shows the reasons for visiting shopping malls. Therefore, complexes provide spaces for people to visit, hang out and talk with their companion in a beautiful environment.

Table 4. Visiting Days of the Public.

Visiting	Percentage
Everyday	0.86%
within two to three days	13.63%
Once a week	33.62%
Within one to two weeks	20.43%
Once a month	18.32%
Seldom visit complexes	13.14%

Table 5. Time spent and Visiting Time.

Time Spent in Shopping Malls Per Trip	Percentage	Time of Visiting Shopping Malls	Percentage
10 to 30 min	2.12%	Morning	32.37%
30 min to 59 min	12.33%	Evening	67.63%
1–2 h	22.61%		
2–3 h and more	32.63%	Weekdays	35.76%
>3 h	30.21%	Weekends	64.24%

Table 6. The intention to visit shopping malls.

Visiting Purpose	Percentage
Shopping	32.51%
Window Shopping and wandering	28.17%
Entertainment and Relaxation	39.32%

Cronbach's alpha consistency values were checked of all four factors with thirty variables in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, company, city, state abbrev if USA, country) [92]. Table 7 presents the values that were consecutively computed as social activities (0.920), accessibility

(0.904), safety (0.889), physical aspect (0.858), and circulation (0.913), which are within the acceptable range [93]. Exploratory factor analysis was used with principal components analysis (PCA), using varimax rotation to find and analyze the items [94].

Table 7. Cronbach's Alpha values for Factors.

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha
F1(Social activities)	0.920
F2 (Accessibility)	0.904
F3 (Safety)	0.889
F4(Physical aspect)	0.858
F5 (Circulation)	0.913

From the results of above factors analysis, we conclude that commercial complexes contain the basic attributes of any as a place for social interaction; however, sitting areas, food courts, spaces beside children play areas, safety for all, easily circulation in the complex, and catwalk shows mark a significant by enhancing the playful mood and insist public stay longer than they decided because the interior atmosphere will feel them better.

The significant value of KMO is shown in Table 8. The evaluation shows that there were correlations in the dataset and that it was suitable for factor analysis. Besides, the KMO value of entire factors was over 0.900, which is greater than a thumb rule value of 0.5 [95]. Bartlett's test of sphericity values was taken (approx. chi-square 7310.401, df = 276, $p = 0.000$) for different factors.

Table 8. KMO and Bartlett's Test.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		**0.900**
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7310.401
	Df	276
	Sig.	0.000

Table 9 shows the five factors with various items. Particularly, the questionnaire respondents were asked to select from a list and rank which commercial complex qualities were most crucial to them. The questionnaires were filled from a diverse age group. The above table shows that every factor has its own importance and affects customers. The social activities and accessibility factors play their role in many respects, the inclusiveness of the complex as a leveler puts down the imperceptible barrier of social class and provides a chance for people from different walks of life to mingle together. Furthermore, three other factors also play an important role to provoke and facilitate customers. Whereas being neutral ground is conducive to making a place easily accessible and acting as a leveler makes way for people from diverse backgrounds to gather, the lively and interesting conversation is the main activity.

Table 9. First Order Measurement Model.

Factors	Statement	EFA	CFA
Social activities	The complex has cinemas with appropriate seating arrangement	0.815	0.895
	The complex has children play areas with sufficient space	0.794	0.888
	The Complex has various activities for youth and these are excellent	0.765	0.831
	The Fashion shows and catwalk in the complex are organized and attract more	0.752	0.761
	Crowded complex attract and spend more time	0.767	0.856
	The complex has a restaurant and offered a variety of food	0.716	0.728
	The complex has brand coffee shops with good seating arrangement	0.750	0.862
	Enjoy while shopping in complex	0.712	0.780
	It's fun to be here in complex and spend more time	0.748	0.755
	The complex is crowded with people of different age	0.800	0.811
	The Complex is crowded with all gender	0.783	0.774
	The Complex has games for all age groups	0.793	0.771
Accessibility	Easily parking is available in the complex	0.849	0.882
	Easily find the entrance and exist in complex	0.844	0.803
	Opening and closing hours of the complex are appropriate	0.834	0.842
	The layout of the complex is good and easy to go anywhere in the complex	0.821	0.755
	The complex is close to the bus station and Metro	0.749	0.793
	The complex is close to home and work	0.714	0.723
Physical aspects	In the complex sufficient sitting, spaces are available	0.869	0.876
	The complex has sufficient escalators and lifts	0.866	0.842
	The complex has sufficient and clean restrooms	0.864	0.891
	Complex has sufficent parking lots	0.794	0.755
	The complex has signage, which helps me to go anywhere	0.795	0.710
Safety	The complex has safety in the car parking	0.861	0.831
	Complex has personal security (no snatching)	0.814	0.790
	The complex has the safety of children while they play games or performing various activities	0.758	0.734
Circulation	Complex has ease of navigation	0.881	0.790
	Complex has wide pedestrian paths	0.825	0.831
	Complex has adequate clear space in circular elements	0.760	0.751
	Complex has sample layout	0.799	0.816

Table 10 shows that the Composite Reliability (CR) of four factors is 0.913 to 0.764, which is above the standardize ratio CR ≥ 0.7 [96]. The values of average variance extracted (AVE) for all loaded variables are 0.679 to 0.523, which show "convergent validity" as it should be more than 0.50 that is often used as the threshold [97,98]. To analysis discriminant validity, all values of the square root of the average variance extracted are more than all inter-factors correlations [99,100]. All variables used in this article have a significance level of ($p < 0.001$).

Table 10. Composite Reliability, Discriminant Validity and Convergent Validity.

	CR	AVE	MSV	Social Facilities	Accessibility	Physical Aspects	Safety	Circulation
Social Facilities	0.913	0.533	0.301	(0.730)				
Accessibility	0.914	0.641	0.301	0.548 ***	(0.801)			
Physical aspects	0.913	0.679	0.150	0.264 ***	0.388 ***	(0.824)		
Safety	0.764	0.523	0.236	0.189 **	0.134 *	0.126 *	(0.723)	
Circulation	0.878	0.633	0.241	0.327 **	0.281 **	0.213 **	0.307 **	(0.796)

Significance at = * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; Diagonal values are squared root of AVE which demonstrates the discriminant validity.

The various variables associated with five factors (F1 social activities, F2 accessibility, F3 Design, and Physical aspects, F4 Safety, and F5 circulation) and the details of the variables are given in Table 7. This model was subjected to a confirmatory test in the form of CFA. The analysis was carried out to measure the adequacy of parameter estimates. However, complexes are open 24/7 to facilitate the needs of their customers. The above results show that customers are highly satisfied with the services provided by complexes. Thus, the complexes are able to provide a friendly space for people to come to when they want to escape from the pressures and stress of work or merely to spend their leisure time.

Because of the welcoming environment, many respondents like to sit for hours to relax, enjoy and simply spend time socializing.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

This study investigated how commercial complexes act as quasi-public spaces and create social sustainability in modern China. Commercial complexes are used as quasi-public spaces. With the rapid growth of economic development in China, commercial complexes are expanding in size and becoming important elements of urban life. In the contemporary world, the purpose of commercial complexes is not only limited to consumption, as they also form a new character by providing both social and economic development. People seem to be more attracted to quasi-public spaces as they provide a modern and clean environment as an indication of civilized society. These, in turn, foster the development of positive tolerance, social integration, sense of community and unity, and public trust among people throughout the city.

The complex complexes provide a high-quality atmosphere with various activities under one roof. In complexes, the development of vibrant but wild and extremely high organized programmed fiesta spaces. These festival spaces are equipped with modern techniques to manipulate and provoke more public. The complexes provide a place for consumers to enjoy a restorative experience while spending time in a pleasurable setting in conversation with others, very often without considering purchasing anything. Whereas being neutral ground is conducive to making a place easily accessible and acting as a leveler makes way for people from diverse backgrounds to gather together, a lively and interesting conversation can be in complexes.

The social activities, accessibility, physical service, safety, and circulation factors support our study findings. Table 7 describes five factors, the social activities, and physical features provoke more public. During the survey, we observed that people come to leave there children for games, for study, after that parents were busy in conversation. Many customers were busy in conversation on the dining table, in coffee shops, sitting on comfortable-appearing furniture decorated at various spots inside complexes. Moreover, entertainment (such as movie theatres, food courts, catwalk, and fashion shows) can provoke more visitors to commercial complexes. As a result, shown in Table 5, most of the visitors come for entertainment and relaxation purposes. Commercial complexes can help to promote social sustainability and use as quasi-public spaces. These physical facilities, social activities, and safety in complexes also have a positive impact on customers and provoke more public. Moreover, these variables have a positive impact on the physiological, cognitive and emotions of visitors in complexes, and people don't consider commercial complexes merely as shopping places, but also as providing psychological needs such as social interaction, enjoyment, relaxation, enhancing socialization, and meeting place. The quasi-public spaces can reduce the concept of strangeness in the urban areas and promote the social sustainability concept in real meaning.

We have found that quasi-public spaces have controlled use, access, and are open for public seven days a week from morning to evening. In quasi-public spaces, additional features are employed that govern various activities. Especially, the management of private own spaces is carried out with the use of surveillance and private guards. Therefore, visitors feel secure and are more inclined. The outcome of the study not only adds to the long discussion on the development, use, and organization of quasi-public spaces and commercial complexes but also has implications for planners and policymakers.

It seems that commercial complexes are prominent places for consumption, entertainment, and leisure activities in contemporary Chinese cities. The changing leisure and consumption patterns of Chinese people, under global influences, made this spatial transformation possible.

7. Limitations and Implications

The questionnaires were filled out in three prominent commercial complexes in Hangzhou City, China. The study findings may thus not be representative of China in general. Hence, research in other cities is needed to study the validity and reliability of the identified factors of quasi-public spaces.

People of all age groups visit shopping malls. Specific age groups and genders should be studied to determine which group wants more entertainment and leisure activities and on which hours of the day in malls. Future research should be conducted to study the causes of the decline of squares and public streets.

To fulfill the potential of commercial complexes to attract more public and its role as quasi-public space factors identified in this study, the architects, interior designers, urban planners, and managers of the commercial complex should design and provide more entertainment and social facilities and services. Comfortable seats, more social facilities, different activities for all age groups, accessibility (micro-accessibility and macro-accessibility), safety, ample parking space, food courts, play areas, pleasant atmosphere, and aesthetics should be given consideration. This will enhance the image of commercial complexes, people will socialize more, and social sustainability will be enhanced.

Furthermore, real estate developers and managers should know what the public likes and dislikes. New commercial complexes should be designed to save more energy, with more amenities, facilities, and activities to attract more people in one place to achieve the goal of sustainable development.

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