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WALKING LEVELS ARE GOING DOWN

- England average walking trips per person fell 24% since 1995
- 19.3% of Bristol residents walk to work

2015 Bristol Quality of Life (QoL) survey
HEALTH BENEFITS OF WALKING

- **20** minutes/day will burn 7 pounds of body fat/year
- **45** minutes/day halves odds of catching a cold
- **1** minute can extend life by 1.5-2 minutes
- **20** minutes/week can extend life by several years

**Dementia**
Seniors who walk 6-9 miles/week are less likely to suffer from mental decline as they age, including dementia.

**Diabetes**
Walking 30 minutes/day, 5 days/week, along with moderate diet changes, can halve risk of Type 2 Diabetes.

**Heart Disease**
Walking 30 minutes/day, 5 days/week can halve the risk of heart disease and reduce stress, cholesterol, and blood pressure.

**Arthritis**
Walking can reduce pain and improve function, mobility, mood, and quality of life, without worsening symptoms.

**Depression**
Walking triggers endorphins, promotes relaxation, and prevents anxiety and depression.

Walking 3-5 hours/week reduces mortality by 50% in women with breast cancer.

Women who walk for 1 hour/day, 5 days/week and consume 1,500 calories/day can lose and keep off 25 lbs.

Walking 30 min/day, 4 days/week can reduce the risk of diabetes by nearly 60%.

Prostate cancer patients who walk 90 min/week have nearly 50% lower mortality risk.

Women who walk regularly are 31% less likely to develop colon cancer than those who exercise less than one hour/week.

EveryBody Walk! The Campaign to Get America Walking

WWW.EVERYBODYWALK.ORG
ROLE OF SETTING IN WALKING EXPERIENCE

Restorative environments (Kaplan, Ulrich):
- Physical setting has impact on cognitive and affective state
- Walking in nature: affective and cognitive recovery
  → Growing urbanisation trends

This research:
- Assessed moderating role of different built settings in Bristol during walking
- Tested if walking experience impacts walking intentions
  → Affect & cognition as measuring tools (Kaplan, Ulrich)
Methodology: quantitative phase

Online survey (n = 385, mean age = 35)

- Employees and students
- 68% females
- 31% UWE Psychology students

Measurements:

- Affect and cognitive recovery (Stress, Hedonic tone, Energy)
- Place perceptions
- Walking intentions
- Socio-demographics

Simulation: virtual walk
PHYSICAL SETTING HAS A MODERATING ROLE ON WALKING EXPERIENCE

Stress (pre and post)

Repeated measures
n = 55

** p = .000
* P < .05

- Horsefair: Commercial with traffic**
- Millennium Promenade: Modern pedestrianised
- Corn Street: Historic pedestrianised
- Castle Park: Park*
- College Green: Mixed pedestrianised **
Methodology: qualitative phase

Photo-elicited interviews

- 14 participants
- Asked to take photos before interview
- Photograph things that made them feel good or bad during walk

Discussion on case study areas with videos
THREE ELEMENTS MAKE A POSITIVE WALKING EXPERIENCE

- No barriers
- Connection with place
- Nature
Attentional efforts and cognitive fatigue

• “When you are walking it is nice to keep the rhythm and not stop, keep the momentum” (Michael, 43)
• Need to “be constantly aware of the surroundings”

Noise and fumes

Crossing the road and interruptions

• “I have to negotiate, so I was thinking how to cross, watching out for cars…”
“That was kinda the theme of my walk, really... stop here, stop there... when you walk you have to stop” (James, 37)
Safety

Lack of space (narrow pavements)

Powerlessness

• “I feel like a lot of people watching me. And because they have got a car, and I’m just walking, it is kind of like they win” (Julia, 20)
THREE ELEMENTS MAKE A POSITIVE WALKING EXPERIENCE

- Motor-traffic
- City busyness
- No barriers
- Connection with place
- Nature
CITY BUSYNESS

“The city never seems to rest”

Crowds of people

• Slow you down
• Lack of space
• Intimidating: “you against them”

Interruptions, deviations, constructions

• “Weary of all the road works”
“The city never seems to rest”

Trash and carelessness

- “Not nice”
- Wrong type of people hanging out
THREE ELEMENTS MAKE A POSITIVE WALKING EXPERIENCE

- Connection with place
- Nature
- No barriers
- Motor-traffic
- Personal
- City busyness
PERSONAL CONNECTION

Memories and habits

• Familiarity
• Distraction and positive feelings

What reminds of “home”

• Happiness and nostalgia
“This falafel shops reminds me of home... it makes me happy!” (Layla, 18)
THREE ELEMENTS MAKE A POSITIVE WALKING EXPERIENCE

- No barriers
- Connection with place
- Nature

Motor-traffic
City busyness
Personal
With Bristol's identity
Sense of history

“When you’re in the ground, I always feel in this land there are other people who walked before me, it gives you more than just reading history books. You can really feel the past” (Erin, 41).

- Distraction & imagination
- “Something to think about”
- Interesting, intriguing
- “Escapism” to another dimension
“I think where it comes from, and the history behind it, I find it interesting. It’s good, sort of intriguing” (James, 37).
CONNECTION WITH BRISTOL’S IDENTITY

Sense of history

• Safety and comfort

“(Cobbled floors) make me feel relaxed and safe. Which is silly because it is just the pavement!” (Julia, 20)

• Pride and sense of belonging
When I'm walking around the Harbourside I feel proud actually. You know I'm a Bristol person (...) and to me the Harbourside to me represents part of the pride of being Bristolian, it is a symbol of Bristol, so I feel proud, when I walk around here” (Rachel, 34)
CONNECTION WITH BRISTOL’S IDENTITY

Street art

• Distraction

• Pride and sense of belonging
  • Taking visitors to see graffiti
  • Effort and creativity
THREE ELEMENTS MAKE A POSITIVE WALKING EXPERIENCE

- Connection with place
- Nature
- No barriers

- Motor-traffic
- City busyness
- Personal
- With Bristol identity
- With community
CONNECTION WITH COMMUNITY

Sense of community and care

• Sense of care in windows, shops
• Cleanliness
“This is what makes me **smile** every time I walk past it, because they grow sunflowers, and it makes me think that someone takes a little bit of **pride** in their house... ok it’s **not to my taste** sometimes, but they have **made an effort**, so that’s what matters” (Rachel, 34)
People are contagious

- “Looking at people enjoying themselves, it is like… wow!”
- Mix of people socialising, drinking coffee
- Safety and ease

Place-making and community events

- Busking, neighbourhood events:
  “The place itself is just a place to shop, it’s got no.. colour, it’s just shops, it’s like Milton Keynes... But people have started to do busking, or when the Grommits or Shaun the Sheep were there… god it keeps the spirit!” (Sarah, 34)
THREE ELEMENTS MAKE A POSITIVE WALKING EXPERIENCE

- No barriers
- Connection with place
- Nature

- Motor-traffic
- City busyness
- Personal
- With Bristol’s identity
- With community
WALKING EXPERIENCE PREDICTS WALKING INTENTIONS

No barriers
Functionality ($\beta = .334$)
Pedestrianised ($\beta = .117$)

Nature
Park ($\beta = .174$)

Connection
Cultural significance ($\beta = .189$)

Walking intentions

$N = 385, R^2 = .389$
POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Walking intentions

No barriers
Walking is undisturbed
- Reduce traffic and pedestrianize?
- Reduce noise & fumes (electric cars/buses)
- Reduce interruptions and waiting times
- Improve sidewalks (larger; safer)
- Improve street cleaning

Connection
Walking is engaging
- Memories and habits?
- Promote history (preserve + interpret)
- Promote street art
- Variety (old, new, green...) vs «grey buildings»

Nature
- Place-making and community events
- Active frontages and spaces to socialise
Thank you

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