

**AN EVALUATION OF THE VISUAL QUALITY OF A
STREETSCAPE FOR ITS CAPACITY TO FOSTER
PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITIES: WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO S.D.S. JAYASINGHE ROAD AND
STANLEY TILLAKARATNE MAWATHA, NUGEGODA.**

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Declaration

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between the visual quality of streetscapes and pedestrian comfort within a mixed-use streetscape in Nugegoda, Sri Lanka, focusing on Stanley Thilakaratne Mawatha and S.D.S. Jayasinghe Road. As urban streets in Sri Lanka evolve with increasing commercial intensity, congestion, and informal activities, understanding how visual and spatial attributes affect pedestrian experience is essential for creating livable urban environments.

Adopting a qualitative, place-based research design, the study was conducted in three phases. The first phase involved a visual assessment of ten key physical streetscape attributes such as building heights, façade design, sidewalk width, greenery, setbacks, informal activity spaces, and traffic conditions through field observation and spatial documentation. The second phase assessed pedestrian comfort through casual interviews, focusing on three perceptual indicators: sense of safety, comfort, and interest. The third phase mapped pedestrian activity distribution to understand behavioral intensity patterns along different street segments.

The findings revealed that wide sidewalks, greenery, building setbacks, and active edges significantly enhanced pedestrian comfort and interest, while narrow paths, high vehicular presence, and visually inactive zones contributed to discomfort. Activity-rich segments were viewed as safe and engaging, whereas areas with neglected edges or vacant plots often evoked avoidance.

A synthesis of findings demonstrated that while visual quality has a clear and consistent relationship with pedestrian comfort enhancing perceptions of safety, interest, and ease, it alone does not determine pedestrian activity levels along the street. Activity patterns are shaped by a combination of spatial, temporal, and contextual factors, underscoring the importance of designing streetscapes that balance visual appeal with broader functional and behavioral needs.

Key Words: Visual quality, pedestrian comfort, mixed-use streetscapes, urban design, Sri Lanka

Dedication

To my parents, mentors, and friends, for their unwavering support, guidance, and belief in me.

And to the everyday pedestrians of Nugegoda, whose experiences inspired and grounded this research.

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