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Urban Parks and Office Workers' Health: Considering the Influence of Marital Status and Different Qualities of Urban Parks

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Abstract: This study addresses the impact of urban parks on the self-rated health of office workers under 40, a demographic experiencing significant increases in depressive symptoms during the pandemic. This study in Baise City, China, aims to fill this gap by exploring the relationships between landscape quality, leisure time spent in parks, place attachment, and self-rated health among 411 office workers aged 18 to 40. Structural equation modeling was used to assess these relationships, and multigroup analysis (MGA) in SmartPLS evaluated differences between subgroups. The findings reveal a strong link between urban park landscape quality and leisure time spent in parks, place attachment, and self-rated health. Although the old-fashioned park showed lower overall performance in the study variables compared to the modern park, it had a stronger relationship between landscape quality and place attachment. Leisure time spent in parks did not directly impact self-rated health but was mediated by place attachment. MGA results indicated that while leisure time in parks positively affected self-rated health for single participants, it had a negative effect for married participants. These results underscore the importance of tailoring urban park design and management to accommodate the varying needs of different demographics. This research provides new insights into enhancing office workers' self-rated health through environmental design and supports the objectives of the Healthy China strategy and Sustainable Development Goal 11.

Keywords: marital status; office workers; self-rated health; place attachment; old-fashioned or modern urban parks

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak caused high-risk perceptions worldwide beyond the scope of individual control [1] and brought a new challenge to environmental psychology studies [2]. Urban parks serve as a green haven to address the public health issues and negative impacts caused by COVID-19 by using targeted environmental designs [3]. However, despite the widespread belief in urban parks as critical infrastructure for improving public health, there is a need for a more rigorous examination of their actual impact. This is warranted due to findings in previous literature reviews indicating that not everyone benefits from urban park equality [4,5].

Office workers, who work in a professional realm and rely on the financial environment to live or raise a family, were the most prominently affected group by the pandemic [6]. The working conditions of this group are characterized by prolonged sitting and indoor work, which have been closely linked to adverse health effects. For instance, long-time sedentary behavior indoors was associated with a 15.5% increased risk of breast cancer [7]. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a shift to telecommuting, resulting in reduced physical activity levels and increased sedentary behavior [8]. These factors further exacerbate unhealthy behaviors in this group, leading to more negative health outcomes [9]. Additionally, unemployment resulting from the pandemic was associated with increased psychological distress and decreased trust and optimism due to financial

strain and loneliness among young people aged 20–35 [10]. Employees who are under 40 showed a more significant increase in depressive symptoms during the pandemic [11]. These situations call for paying careful attention to employees' well-being.

Despite advancements in public health in China from 2015 to 2020, challenges persist due to urbanization, ecological changes, and lifestyle shifts. These challenges include increasing rates of chronic disease, a trend toward younger onset of health issues, and ongoing occupational health problems [12]. Such issues complicate efforts to meet the Healthy China 2030 goals, which focus on improving overall health, promoting healthy lifestyles, and ensuring balanced economic and social development [13]. Additionally, urban parks, essential for supporting resident health, are plagued by inequity issues due to China's large and diverse population [14]. This inequity presents a challenge to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 11.7, which aims to provide universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible green spaces by 2030 [15]. To address these challenges, it is crucial to further investigate the dynamic interactions between urban parks and young office workers. Such research will provide valuable evidence for developing and implementing physical health intervention programs tailored to occupational groups in line with the Healthy China 2030 strategy [13] and to support the realization of SDG 11.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1. Urban Parks and Young Office Workers

Previous research aimed at enhancing office workers' self-rated health has primarily focused on the work environment itself [16] and explored how to create decent work for all through environmental design and management [17,18]. However, there is limited evidence on the impact of outdoor spaces, such as urban parks, on self-rated health. Place Attachment Theory, which emphasizes the emotional connections individuals develop with their environments, offers valuable insights into this area [19]. Although existing research indicates that urban parks enhance residents' mental well-being by fostering place attachment (PA) [20,21], many young workers in this age group tend to develop phone hedonistic habits [22] and are less likely to engage in regular exercise in urban parks compared to older adults [22,23]. Instead, they often rely on other coping mechanisms, such as alcohol and smoking, to manage stress [7]. This makes it unclear how urban parks connect to the self-rated health of young office workers. Additionally, the components of urban parks have a lesser influence on the actual behaviors (frequency and duration) related to health among young people aged 18–35 [24]. These situations create more uncertainty in the relationship between urban park landscape quality and self-rated health or the mediate role of PA in this relationship [25,26], which prevents us from simply applying findings from other groups (such as older adults) to understand the influence of urban parks on office workers [27].

2.2. Leisure Time Spent in Parks and Self-Rated Health

The quality of urban park landscapes not only affects the time users spend there but also is associated with PA and self-rated health [28]. Nevertheless, the consistency of these relationship outcomes varies across studies [29]. A study in China found that the frequency and duration of green space visits were associated with a reduced risk of mental ill-being but not with any well-being indicators [30]. In contrast, a study in Singapore's urban parks found that park usage time was significantly correlated with self-reported well-being, and well-being scores exhibited a progressive increase from non-users to infrequent users and reached their peak among frequent users [31]. The juxtaposition of compelling research findings from both China and Singapore vividly underscores the dynamic relationship marked by substantial variability across diverse demographic groups and districts [32].

2.3. Marital Status

Research highlights that marriage is associated with notable health benefits, including lower levels of psychological distress [33]. During the pandemic, married individuals re-

ported less COVID-19-related psychological distress compared to their single counterparts, likely due to the supportive role of intimate partners; the presence of a partner can mitigate some of the pandemic's adverse effects [34]. Despite the generally pronounced therapeutic effects of green spaces for those experiencing high mental and physical stress (e.g., single individuals) [35], studies suggest that married individuals are more likely to engage in family-oriented activities in urban parks and develop stronger place attachment (PA) to these spaces [36]. In East Asia, marriage forms the cornerstone of the family structure, involving a committed relationship and the establishment of a family unit dedicated to childrearing [37]. Consequently, married individuals often prefer to spend leisure time in green spaces, particularly on weekends, due to family-oriented activities [38]. Given that marital status is a significant factor among young office workers [39], an important research question arises: How does marital status influence the relationships between urban park landscape quality, leisure time spent in parks, PA, and self-rated health among young office workers? Addressing this question could provide valuable insights into park service disparities and offer evidence for designing targeted urban park interventions to enhance the mental health of young office workers based on their demographic characteristics.

2.4. Different Qualities of Urban Parks

In China's leisure activities, mobile phone usage ranks second only to tourism, highlighting deficiencies in meeting people's psychological needs through green outdoor spaces to some extent [40]. Although urban parks boost self-rated health for older adults and children in many studies [41,42], limited studies explore whether urban parks offer office workers the same benefits. This research gap is particularly pronounced in smaller Chinese cities. Despite closer offline interactions and shorter work hours in these locales compared to larger cities, residents still feel lonely and lack spaces or environments conducive to forging new connections with like-minded individuals and are more immersed in phone-based entertainment [43]. Baise is a representative small city in southwest China, characterized by remarkable economic growth and a gradual increase in office workers [44]. Despite its high greening rate, which theoretically should promote social welfare and enhance public health [45], continuous industrialization and urbanization have led to increased incidences of hypertension and fatty liver among employees as early as in the year 2010 [46]. By 2021, Baise's residents still had lower health literacy levels compared to other cities in Guangxi [47]. Given this context, exploring the role of Baise City's urban parks in addressing health crises is crucial.

As outcomes of the ongoing wave of urban park development in China, nearly every small city has an old People's Park and one or more newly built modern urban parks [48]. Baise City has two comprehensive urban parks serving all residents: the old-fashioned People's Park and the modern Peninsula Park. Figure 1 shows People's Park (A), established in 1975, which is relatively small, covering only 15.4 hectares. Its central location in Baise's old district makes it easily accessible, particularly for older adults who gather daily for dancing. Young parents often bring their children to the playgrounds on weekends. While historical features like the clock tower and corridors add character, the park's dense vegetation and murky artificial lake give it an aged and poorly managed appearance, resulting in fewer visits from young singles compared to Peninsula Park [49]. Peninsula Park (B), established in 2007, covers 23.47 hectares in a new urban area of Baise. It offers modern amenities and scenic features, including varied topography, an artificial lotus lake, a spacious lawn for picnics and kite-flying, fitness equipment, and looped trails for walking and jogging. These attractions draw both families and young people for outdoor activities.

Theoretically, People's Park, steeped in local nostalgia, should evoke emotional resonance and well-being, as suggested by a study on Chengdu's Huanhuaxi Park [50]. However, actual usage patterns do not align with these expectations. This discrepancy reveals a research gap in understanding how the quality differences between old-fashioned and modern urban parks affect user visits, PA, self-rated health, and perceptions of park

equity. Although evidence suggests a preference for modern parks over older ones [51,52], further investigation is needed to clarify these dynamics.

Figure 1. Map of the study area (Google Earth, 2022) and its landscape photos. Note: (**A**). People's Park. (**a1**), Fountain Square; (**a2**), people sitting by the square; (**a3**), elderly people doing square dancing in the morning at the small square; (**a4**), elderly people gathered around tables and chairs under the tree, playing cards. (**B**). Peninsula Park. (**b1**), people picnicking beside the large lawn; (**b2**), young people exercising; (**b3**), people having a picnic under the tree; (**b4**), young people resting on the grass beside the main entrance square.

2.5. Hypotheses and Theoretical Model

This study aims to explore how urban park landscape quality influences young office workers' self-rated health, with a focus on the mediating role of place attachment (PA). Based on this objective, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: *Landscape quality significantly impacts office workers' self-rated health.*

H2: *PA mediates the relationship between landscape quality in urban parks and office workers' self-rated health.*

Further, to elucidate the dynamic mechanisms linking urban park landscape quality, leisure time spent in parks, PA, and self-rated health among office workers, we propose:

H3: *Leisure time spent in parks mediated the relationship between landscape quality and PA.*

H4: *Leisure time spent in parks mediated the relationship between landscape quality and self-rated health.*

H5: *PA mediated the relationship between leisure time spent in parks and self-rated health.*

Given the typical marital statuses of young office workers—single and married—and the observed differences in visits to two urban parks between these groups, we introduce

four hypotheses to explore whether the study variables and their interrelationships differ between single and married participants as well as between Peninsula Park and People's Park. This approach aims to enhance understanding of how urban park services vary across demographics and park qualities.

H6: *Study variables exhibit variations based on marital status.*

H7: *Associations between study variables differ by single and married office workers.*

H8: *Study variables exhibit variability across Peninsula Park and People's Park.*

H9: *Associations between study variables differ by Peninsula Park and People's Park.*

Based on the hypotheses, Figure 2 illustrates our theoretical model. The aim of the study is to provide evidence of urban parks' influence on office workers in small Chinese cities and support the Healthy China 2030 goals of reducing disparities in public services and health across regions and populations, thereby promoting social equity [13].

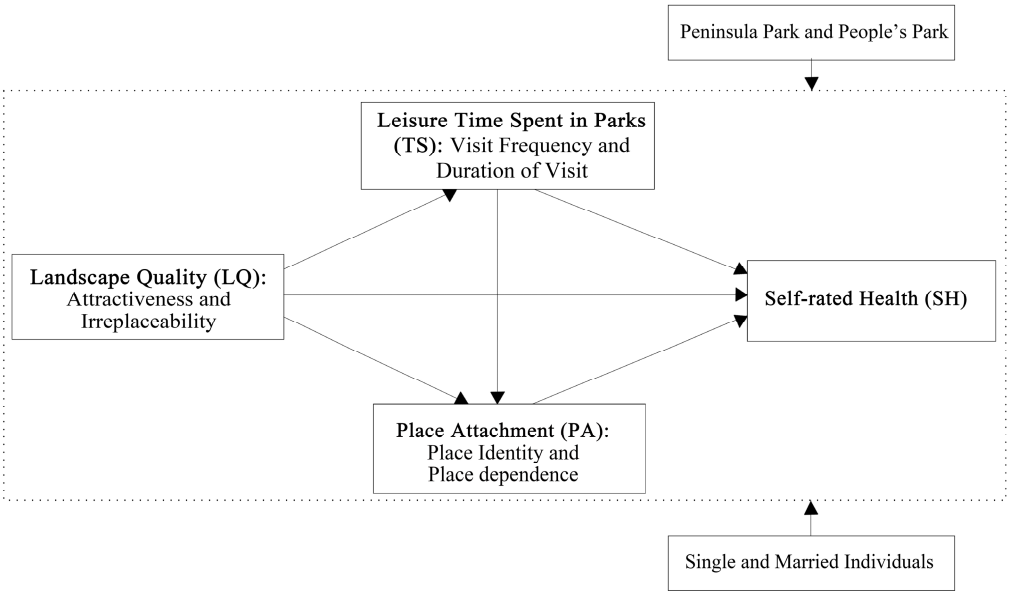

Figure 2. The theoretical model.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Study Context

The questionnaire was used to collect data from office workers between the ages of 18 and 40 who had frequented People's Park or Peninsula Park on multiple occasions and were working in Baise City [53]. We conducted an a priori analysis using the G*Power T-Test to determine the minimum number of participants for valid results. With an effect size of 0.3, a test power (1-β) of 0.80, and a significance level (α) of 0.05, 352 participants (176 per park) were deemed sufficient for statistical significance [54]. The questionnaire was administered online and face-to-face (in urban parks) from May to June 2023. A total of 421 responses were gathered, considering time, financial resources, and investigator involvement. After data cleaning, 411 valid questionnaires: 212 for Peninsula Park and 199 for People's Park. The study comprised predominantly female participants (68.37%), with slightly over half being married (57.18%).

A significant proportion held a university/college education (83.45%). In terms of occupation, 48.9% worked in public institution personnel, while 45.5% were in enterprise personnel, and 5.6% were others. Regarding leisure time spent in parks, around 30% visited weekly, spending 30 min to two hours per visit. On average, participants were around 30 years old. A comparison between Peninsula Park and People's Park revealed that

individuals aged 18–30 were more inclined to visit Peninsula Park (57.08%) than People's Park (48.7%).

3.2. Measures

The questionnaire survey consisted of two sections: one collecting basic demographic information and another measuring the research variables (Table 1). All items in the questionnaire were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree".

Table 1. Construct and measure items.

Construct	Item Code	Item	Source
Landscape Quality			
Attractiveness (LQA)	LQA1	The park landscape is beautiful.	[55–59]
	LQA2	Reasonable and easily accessible park landscape layout.	
	LQA3	The park has various types of landscapes, each with its own characteristics.	
	LQA4	The water, terrain, plants, pavement, roads, structures, and landscape features are well combined and aesthetically pleasing in the park.	
	LQA5	The park landscape is playful and has a sense of landscape sequence.	
Irreplaceability (LQIP)	LQIP6	The park landscape facilities can meet our diverse leisure needs.	
	LQIP7	I can clearly distinguish between the various landscapes in the park.	
	LQIP8	I can clearly distinguish the park landscapes from other landscapes.	
	LQIP9	The park has a view that is not found anywhere else.	
	LQIP10	The park landscapes highlight the regional culture of Baise.	
Place Identity (PAI)	PAI1	I have a lot of fond memories of the park.	[38,58–62]
	PAI2	I miss the park when I am away for a long time.	
	PAI3	The park reminds me of some of my loved ones (parents, children, friends, etc.).	
	PAI4	This park has a special meaning to me.	
	PAI5	I rely on this place to alleviate my fear perception of COVID-19.	
Place Dependence (PAD)	PAD6	I prefer to visit the park because I believe it offers a good, clean, safe, and relaxing environment.	
	PAD7	I am more satisfied with the activities in this park than in other parks.	
	PAD8	This park is the most suitable place for me to relax and unwind.	
Self-Rated Health (SH)	SH1	I am satisfied with life in general.	[63–65]
	SH2	Overall, I felt happy upon my return from this park.	
	SH3	I feel better physically and mentally after an activity in this park.	
	SH4	Although I have my ups and downs, I generally feel good about my life.	

3.3. Analytic Techniques

The partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique in PLS is highly suitable for our study, as it allows for the consideration of complex relationships among multiple variables and facilitates the estimation of both direct and indirect effects within the model [66]. Therefore, we used the PLS algorithm in SmartPLS 3.0 to calculate the results for hypotheses H1 to H5. The Multigroup Analysis (MGA) package in PLS 3.0 was employed to assess the disparities in these relationships across the two groups for hypotheses H7 and H9. Additionally, the use of the Chi-square test and independent sample *t*-test in SPSS 26.0 was effective for our study, allowing us to explore associations among categorical variables and examine differences in study variables between the two groups for hypotheses H6 and H8.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement Model

Figure 3 illustrates the model utilized for investigating the relationships among the variables. We conducted data analysis using SmartPLS 3.0. Table 2 shows that all the item factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7, indicating the observed variable effectively reflects the latent variable's characteristics, showing high validity and reliability in the measurement model. Both CR and α values should exceed 0.7, indicating strong reliability. Additionally, all AVE values above 0.5 demonstrate good convergent validity, meaning the latent variables effectively capture the concept represented by the observed variables [66].

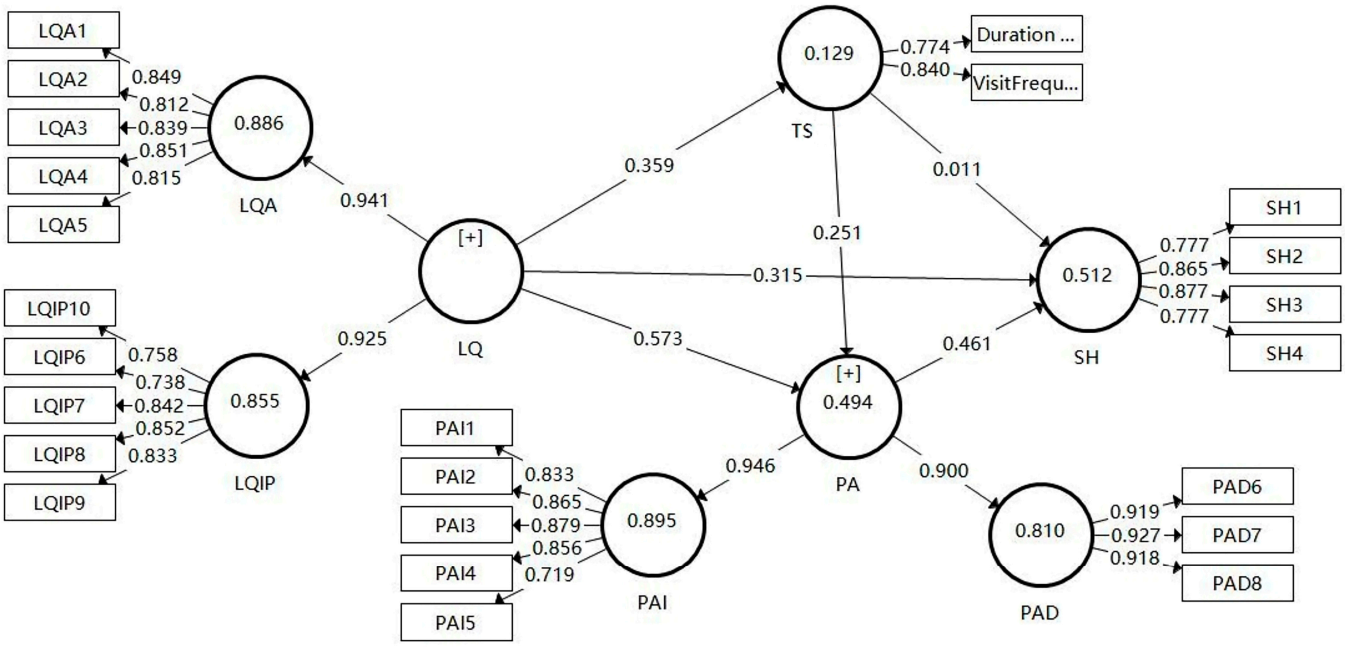

Figure 3. Parameter estimates of the partial least squares analysis.

Table 2. Reliability and convergent validity results.

Constructs	Items	Convergent Validity		Internal Consistency Reliability	
		FL (≥0.708)	AVE (≥0.5)	α (≥0.7)	CR (≥0.7)
LQA	LQA1	0.849	0.694	0.89	0.919
	LQA2	0.812			
	LQA3	0.839			
	LQA4	0.851			
	LQA5	0.815			
LQIP	LQIP10	0.758	0.65	0.864	0.902
	LQIP6	0.738			
	LQIP7	0.842			
	LQIP8	0.852			
	LQIP9	0.833			
PAI	PAI1	0.833	0.693	0.888	0.918
	PAI2	0.865			
	PAI3	0.879			
	PAI4	0.856			
	PAI5	0.719			
PAD	PAD6	0.919	0.849	0.911	0.944
	PAD7	0.927			
	PAD8	0.918			

Table 2. *Cont.*

Constructs	Items	Convergent Validity		Internal Consistency Reliability	
		FL (≥0.708)	AVE (≥0.5)	α (≥0.7)	CR (≥0.7)
SH	SH1 SH2 SH3 SH4	0.777 0.865 0.877 0.777	0.681	0.848	0.895
TS	Visit Frequency Duration of Visit	0.84 0.774	0.652	–	0.789
LQ	–	–	0.585	0.921	0.934
PA	–	–	0.645	0.921	0.935

As shown in Tables 3 and 4, the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations affirm the discriminant validity of the constructs (e.g., HTMT < 0.85) [67,68]. The effect size (f^2) of landscape quality, time spent in the park, and PA on self-rated health are 0.114 (small, in the range of 0.02 to 0.15), 0 (none), and 0.221 (medium, in the range of 0.15 to 0.35), respectively [66]. Table 5 shows that the coefficient of determination (R^2) for self-rated health was 0.512, indicating the model had moderate explanatory power for this variable. All the predictive relevance (Q^2) values were positive and statistically significant [68]. Furthermore, the goodness-of-fit calculation significantly exceeded the threshold of 0.36 [69].

Table 3. Fornell–Larcker criterion.

Constructs	TS	LAIP	LQA	PAD	PAI	SH
TS	0.807					
LAIP	0.308	0.806				
LQA	0.358	0.742	0.833			
PAD	0.452	0.549	0.632	0.921		
PAI	0.401	0.539	0.572	0.71	0.832	
SH	0.335	0.524	0.636	0.623	0.626	0.825

Note: Correlations < diagonal AVE root, ensuring discriminant validity.

Table 4. Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio.

Constructs	TS	LAIP	LQA	PAD	PAI	SH
TS						
LAIP	0.477					
LQA	0.549	0.847				
PAD	0.69	0.62	0.701			
PAI	0.621	0.616	0.643	0.789		
SH	0.529	0.586	0.704	0.683	0.694	

Table 5. Coefficient of determination and predictive relevance and GoF.

Constructs	Q^2	R^2	AVE (≥0.5)	GoF
Landscape Quality	--	--	0.585	$= \sqrt{\left(\overline{R^2} * \overline{AVE}\right)} = \sqrt{(0.64 * 0.378)} = 0.499$
Leisure Time Spent in Parks	0.081	0.129	0.652	
Place Attachment	0.312	0.494	0.645	
Self-Rated Health	0.328	0.512	0.681	

4.2. Structural Model Evaluation

Table 6 presents the results of the hypotheses and mediating relationships, based on the criteria outlined by Hair et al. [66]. Landscape quality significantly influences self-rated health (β = 0.315, $p < 0.001$), and PA further strengthens this relationship (β = 0.264, $p < 0.001$). However, the leisure time spent in parks does not have a significant mediating effect between landscape quality and self-rated health, as it does not significantly impact self-rated health (β = 0.011, $p > 0.1$). While leisure time in parks does not directly impact self-rated health, PA significantly mediates this relationship (β = 0.116, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, although leisure time alone does not mediate the link between landscape quality and self-rated health, its combined mediation with PA reveals a significant effect (β = 0.042, $p < 0.001$). Notably, PA emerges as the most critical factor influencing self-rated health (β = 0.461, $p < 0.001$), surpassing both landscape quality (β = 0.315, $p < 0.001$) and leisure time spent in parks (β = 0.011, $p > 0.1$).

Table 6. Results of Hypothesis Testing.

Hs	Relationships	β	*p*-Value	Direct Relationships *p*-Value	Total Effects *p*-Value	Type of Mediation
H1	LQ → SH	0.315	0 ***	--	--	--
H2	LQ → PA → SH	0.264	0 ***	0 ***	0 ***	Complementary mediation
H3	LQ→ TS → PA	0.09	0 ***	0 ***	0 ***	Complementary mediation
H4	LQ → TS→ SH	0.004	0.804	0 ***	0 ***	Direct-only
H5	TS →PA→ SH	0.116	0 ***	0.801	0.004 ***	Indirect-only

Note: *** $p < 0.01$.

The positive influence of landscape quality on PA becomes more pronounced with increased leisure time spent in parks (β = 0.09, $p < 0.001$). In examining the mediating relationships, we also observed significant direct relationships: landscape quality significantly affects leisure time spent in parks (β = 0.359, $p < 0.001$), PA (β = 0.573, $p < 0.001$), and self-rated health (β = 0.315, $p < 0.001$). This highlights landscape quality as a key physical determinant within urban parks, particularly in its substantial impact on PA (β = 0.573, the highest in this study, $p < 0.001$).

4.3. Multi-Group Analysis

Our study confirmed that the measurement invariance evaluated using Measurement Invariance Assessment (MICOM) in PLS 3.0 satisfied the requirement in the multi-group analysis (MGA) [70,71]. The MGA *p*-value and the *p*-value for the permutation differences between path coefficients were lower than 0.1 (two-tailed), demonstrating a 1% level of significant difference between the two groups.

Table 7 reveals that the mediation effect of leisure time spent in parks on the relationship between landscape quality and self-rated health is stronger among single office workers (β = 0.125) compared to married workers (β = 0.067). This pattern is also observed in two other relationships: leisure time spent in parks → self-rated health, landscape quality → leisure time spent in parks → PA. Interestingly, the relationship between leisure time spent in parks and self-rated health, as well as the effect of landscape quality on self-rated health mediated by leisure time, shows positive results for single office workers but negative results for married ones. Additionally, significant differences were found between Peninsula Park and People's Park in how landscape quality affects PA.

Table 7. Comparison of the model relationships by two groups using Henseler's MGA Test.

Hs	Relationships	Group 1			Group 2			Path Coefficient Difference	*p*-Value Permutation	*p*-Value MGA
		Name	β	95% CI	Name	β	95% CI			
--	TS → SH	Single	0.098	[−0.015, 0.206]	Married	−0.07	[−0.189, 0.034]	0.169	0.055 *	0.037 **
H3	LQ → TS → PA		0.125	[0.081, 0.177]		0.067	[0.03, 0.116]	0.058	0.096 *	0.074 *
H4	LQ → TS → SH		0.038	[−0.006, 0.086]		−0.021	[−0.063, 0.009]	0.06	0.063 *	0.039 **
--	LQ → PA	Peninsula Park	0.471	[0.365, 0.562]	People's Park	0.631	[0.536, 0.719]	−0.16	0.012 **	0.02 **

Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$. Single office workers ($n = 176$) and married ones ($n = 235$). Peninsula Park ($n = 212$) and People's Park ($n = 199$). CI, confidence interval.

4.4. Differences and Relationships in Study Variables between Two Groups

Independent-sample *t*-test results indicated a significant difference between single and married individuals in their perceived landscape quality (M = −0.159, t (409) = −2.764, $p = 0.006$), PA (M = −0.178, t (409) = −2.577, $p = 0.010$), and self-rated health (M = −0.161, t (409) = −2.992, $p = 0.003$). Specifically, married participants perceived higher landscape quality than single individuals. As well as married individuals exhibit higher PA and self-rated health than single ones. Moreover, Chi-square results indicate a significant association between marital status and visit frequency ($\chi^2(6) = 48.826$, $p = 0.000$), visit duration ($\chi^2(4) = 30.304$, $p = 0.000$), companionship in the park ($\chi^2(3) = 187.198$, $p = 0.000$), and visiting for physical activity ($\chi^2(1) = 12.574$, $p = 0.000$). Married workers frequently visit with family (87.3%) and stay longer (1–3 h) with family (88.9%). Single individuals spend less time (30–60 min), occasionally visit alone (76.5%) or with friends (78.1%), mainly for socializing (59.6%) and physical exercise (57.7%).

Independent-sample *t*-test results indicated a significant difference between Peninsula Park and People's Park in landscape quality (M = 0.347, t (409) = 6.346, $p = 0.000$), PA (M = 0.465, t (409) = 7.150, $p = 0.000$), and self-rated health (M = 0.236, t (409) = 4.476, $p = 0.000$). Participants in Peninsula Park perceived higher landscape quality, PA, and self-rated health than those participants in People's Park. Moreover, chi-square results indicate a significant association between urban parks and visit frequency ($\chi^2(6) = 23.871$, $p = 0.000$), visit duration ($\chi^2(4) = 33.270$, $p = 0.000$), physical activity purpose ($\chi^2(1) = 19.309$, $p = 0.000$), socializing with friends (e.g., picnic, chat; $\chi^2(1) = 7.425$, $p = 0.006$), and no specific purpose ($\chi^2(1) = 19.855$, $p = 0.000$). Overall, most office workers weekly visited Peninsula Park (34.3%), while People's Park drew a significant portion for 2–5 yearly visits (27.1%). Peninsula Park had more visitors engaging in physical exercise (34.4%) and socializing with friends (17%) compared to People's Park (15.6% and 8%, respectively). Conversely, more People's Park visitors had no specific purpose (21.1%) compared to Peninsula Park (6.1%).

5. Discussions

5.1. Key Findings

The findings of this study align with research on urban park usage across other demographic groups, such as the elderly [38], highlighting the pivotal role of landscape quality in promoting young office workers' self-rated health, and PA significantly strengthens this relationship. Notably, landscape quality has a greater impact on PA than mere leisure time spent in parks. This suggests that improvements in the attractiveness and unique value of urban parks are more likely to lead to enhanced PA and better health outcomes than simply increasing the time spent in these spaces. Consequently, urban planners and policymakers should prioritize enhancing park quality to effectively promote better health among users. Additionally, while leisure time spent in parks significantly strengthened the relationship between landscape quality and PA, it did not directly impact self-rated health. Consequently, the mediated effect of leisure time spent in parks on the relationship between landscape quality and self-rated health was not significant. This finding aligns with Liu, Nong, Ren and Liu [30] but contrasts with the findings of Lak, et al. [72] and de Bell, et al. [73]. Interestingly, our study revealed an indirect effect: leisure time in parks positively influenced self-rated health when mediated by PA, a relationship not observed

by Liu, Nong, Ren and Liu [30]. This suggests that merely increasing the time spent in parks is insufficient for improving self-rated health; instead, targeted efforts to cultivate emotional connections to these spaces are crucial for achieving meaningful health benefits.

Our research reveals that the impact of time spent in parks on self-rated health, as well as the mediation paths of landscape quality through time spent in parks to PA and self-rated health, are notably stronger among singles—who have been more adversely affected by the pandemic than their married counterparts [33]. These findings from MGA offer new insights into the therapeutic benefits of green spaces for those under elevated mental and physical stress [35]. However, it is concerning that single office workers, despite potentially benefiting more from green space exposure, actually spend less time in parks and, as a result, report lower landscape quality, PA, and self-rated health compared to married individuals. This paradox highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions to increase park engagement among groups currently underutilizing these spaces. To fully realize the well-being potential of urban parks and align with SDG 11.7's goal of universal access to safe and inclusive green spaces [15], strategies must be developed to encourage more frequent and prolonged park visits among these populations.

Consistent with the findings of Dasgupta et al. [38] and Lomas, et al. [74], the study offers a fresh perspective on the health benefits associated with different family forms [33,34]. Specifically, the need for family-oriented outdoor activities drives longer park visits among married individuals, leading to higher perceived landscape quality, increased PA, and improved self-rated health compared to their single counterparts. However, our study uncovers an interesting aspect of this dynamic: the very benefits linked to marriage can also introduce certain drawbacks. Notably, increased park visitation among married individuals—primarily driven by the desire to engage in family activities—has led to two negative relationships: between leisure time spent in parks and self-rated health, and the mediation of this leisure time on the link between landscape quality and self-rated health. This paradox arises because some married individuals visit parks more for family obligations than for personal fulfillment, resulting in frequent but less health-enhancing visits. In contrast, single individuals who engage with parks primarily for personal reasons such as exercise and socializing report higher self-rated health benefits from these activities [75]. This finding aligns with Angelia et al. [31], suggesting that those with a stronger personal connection to nature derive more health benefits from park visits. Conversely, individuals driven by social norms, like the married participants in our study, may experience weaker or even negative effects [76].

While the modern urban park (Peninsula Park) attracts users who spend more time there and report higher landscape quality, PA, and self-rated health compared to the old-fashioned People's Park, our study reveals an intriguing contrast: the relationship between landscape quality and PA is more pronounced in the People's Park. Sugiyama, et al. [77] suggest that early childhood exposure to nature can mitigate negative perceptions of natural environments later in life. Interestingly, People's Park, established in 1974, holds a wealth of childhood memories for local office workers, despite its aging appearance. This connection likely enhances the influence of landscape quality on PA in older parks, as familiarity and nostalgia play a significant role. Conversely, modern parks, while visually appealing, may lack the cultural and emotional ties that deepen engagement with the environment, potentially weakening their impact on PA [62]. These findings highlight the need to integrate local cultural landscapes into urban planning to strengthen residents' sense of attachment, particularly in light of the goals outlined in China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025) for creating "livable, green, and humanistic cities" [78].

5.2. Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

This study represents a significant shift from traditional office worker health interventions, which often focus solely on work environments [17], by exploring the benefits of public green spaces. By integrating detailed empirical evidence, the study enhances the understanding of how young office workers' self-rated health relates to urban parks'

landscape, park visits, and perceived safety. This contribution not only broadens the theoretical framework of environmental psychology but also provides nuanced insights into the varying impacts of urban green spaces on different demographic groups. Additionally, this study uncovers distinct differences in how single and married office workers perceive these green spaces, particularly across different qualities of two urban parks, contributing to the broader discourse on urban park equity and its role in serving diverse populations within environmental psychology.

While this study effectively confirmed the relationships among the variables using SmartPLS 3.0 and SPSS 26.0, understanding the underlying mechanisms behind these findings warrants further exploration. Future research could benefit from incorporating in-depth interviews to gain a more nuanced perspective on these results. Additionally, it is uncertain whether the findings from office workers in Baise City are generalizable to larger urban areas, highlighting the need for studies in different settings to validate these insights across diverse contexts. Moreover, while this study validated the relationships among the variables, the specific physical elements of urban parks and their influence on office workers' job satisfaction and overall well-being remain underexplored. Future research should investigate whether urban park environments effectively enhance office workers' satisfaction with their working city and support improvements in outdoor working conditions. Additionally, exploring how various aspects of urban parks, such as landscape features, air quality, and noise levels, interact with mental health indicators—such as attention recovery, self-efficacy, weight and body image management, and sleep quality—would provide valuable insights. Such research could offer concrete evidence on how urban parks can address sedentary behavior, late-night habits, and lack of exercise among young Chinese office workers.

6. Conclusions

This study, conducted in two urban parks in Baise City, examines the intricate relationships between park landscape quality, leisure time in parks, PA, and self-rated health among office workers, with a focus on the impact of park quality and marital status. The findings reveal that while park landscape quality positively influences self-rated health, PA plays a critical mediating role in this relationship. Interestingly, leisure time in parks does not directly enhance self-rated health, but PA significantly mediates this effect. Married participants, who spent more time in parks and reported higher landscape quality, PA, and self-rated health, paradoxically experienced a negative impact on self-rated health from their park leisure time, unlike single workers, who saw a positive effect. Furthermore, the influence of leisure time in parks on self-rated health and its mediation of the relationship between landscape quality and PA (or self-rated health) was more pronounced among single individuals. Notably, despite frequent visits and high landscape quality at Peninsula Park, the older People's Park landscape quality had a stronger impact on participants' PA, likely due to its nostalgic connection to local participants' childhoods.

The evidence linking urban parks to office workers' self-rated health provides new insights into environmental psychology across different demographics. It suggests that effective occupational health interventions should not only focus on traditional work environments [79] and the creation of decent workspaces [17] but also incorporate the positive impact of urban parks on office workers. This introduces a fresh perspective for developing physical health interventions for occupational groups, as outlined in the Healthy China 2030 strategy [13]. Additionally, the MGA findings on marital status offer critical insights for improving the mental health of young office workers through tailored park designs. For married workers, the negative relationship between leisure time in parks and self-rated health suggests a need for spaces that promote personal engagement beyond family-oriented areas. Conversely, parks designed to support individual activities, such as exercise and socializing, are likely to better serve single workers. Addressing these diverse needs can help urban parks better contribute to public health goals, support nature orientation, and enhance community well-being in line with SDG 11. The study also

emphasizes the importance of addressing disparities in green space provision, ensuring that parks of varying qualities serve all demographics equitably, thereby advancing the realization of SDG 11.7 [15].

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