

Students' Perceptions of Difficulties in Cycling to School in Urban and
Suburban Taiwan

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Abstract

Previous research has identified the importance of cycling training programs and examined the relationship between cycling attitudes and the behavior of cyclists; however, another important factor that needs further research is obstacles to cycling in cities. This study attempts to investigate cycling difficulties confronted by Taiwanese students' in the Hsin-Chu Technopolis while riding their bikes back and forth from home to school.

In order to provide an empirical perspective on this topic, a questionnaire was designed to collect data related to perceptions of cycling difficulties, as well as provide and a descriptive analysis of students and their parents. Data was collected from samples in both urban and suburban environments.

The Rasch model was applied to analyze the cycling abilities of the students as well as their perceptions of cycling difficulty. Findings indicate that boys' have better cycling abilities than girls, urban students have better abilities than suburban students, ability parallels age (i.e., the older the students the better their cycling ability), and parents' attitudes towards cycling to school parallel the students' cycling abilities (i.e., the better the cycling ability of the students the less concern on the part of the parents). In addition, various impediments to cycling are identified and, based on students' perceptions, levels of difficulty assigned.

Implications of the results are discussed. A battery of recommendations is offered for consideration by decision-makers, so as to facilitate matching bicycle usage with Taiwan' s status as a worldwide leader in bicycle manufacturing. (241 words)

Keyword : cycling difficulty, cycling ability, Rasch Model