

Urban walkability perceived by children and youth: Participatory methods and scale development in the WALKI-MUC project



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BACKGROUND AND AIM

- Youth's perceptions of their neighbourhood's or city's walkability influence their physical activity (PA)
- Objective measures of walkability, e.g. the walkability index, do not capture children and youth's (CY) subjective views
- The Neighborhood Environment Walkability Scale for Youth (NEWS-Y) is an internationally recognised subjective measure of walkability
- The WALKI-MUC project uses novel and comprehensive participatory research methods to develop a German version of the NEWS-Y to measure subjective walkability for German-speaking adolescents

METHODS

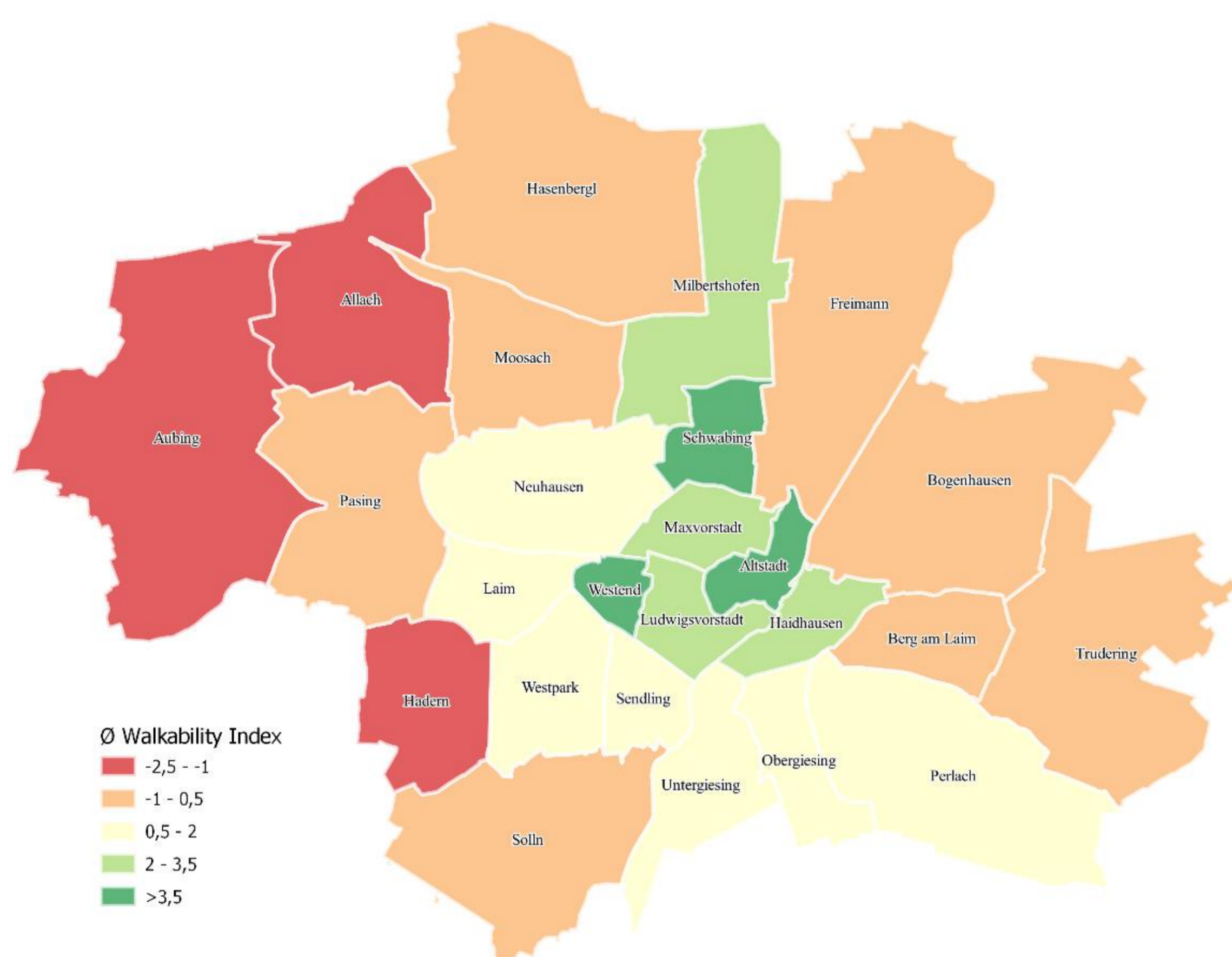


Figure 1: Objective walkability categories for Munich districts

- The subjective perceptions of self-chosen PA-friendly places were assessed in 93 children and adolescents aged six to 17 years from six Munich neighbourhoods with different objective walkability
- The participatory procedure combined photovoice, walking interviews and mapping exercises
- Interviews were coded using the Tripartite Framework for Place Attachment including its dimensions of Place, Person, and Process

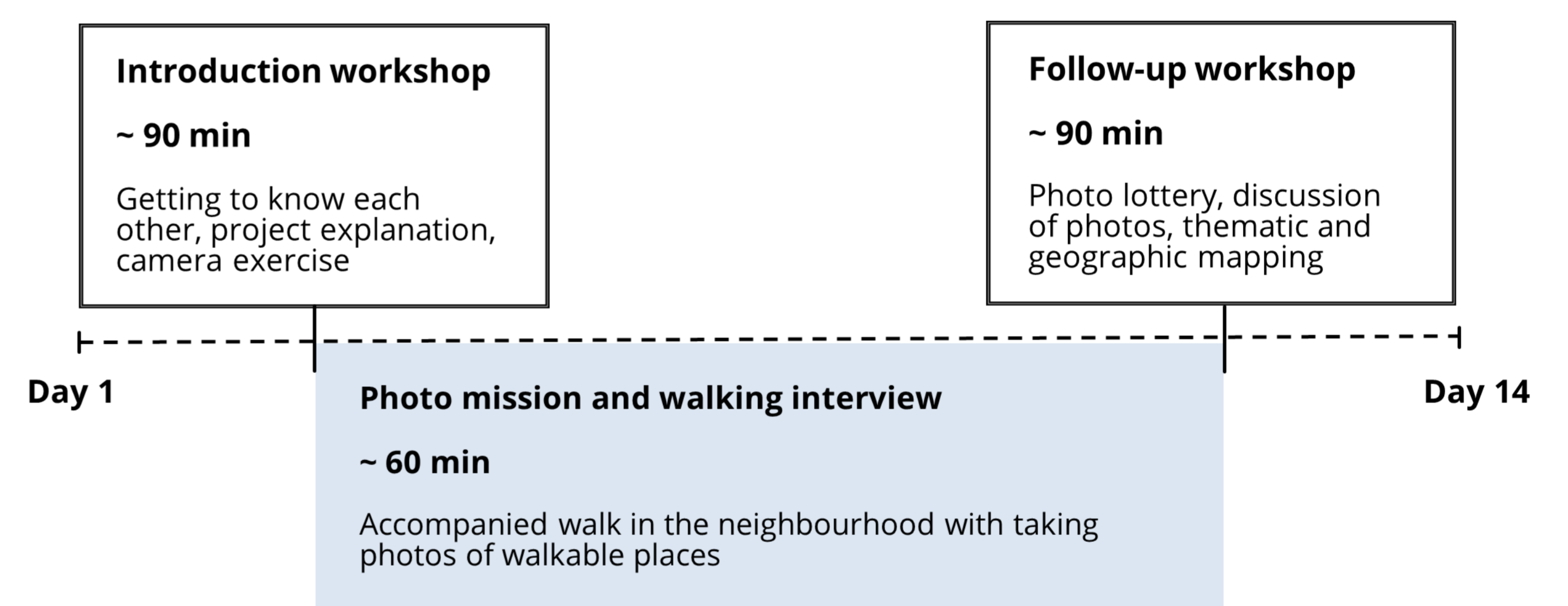


Figure 2: Procedure in the participatory study

RESULTS

- Affects, emotions, and memories associated with PA-friendly places influenced the perceptions and frequency of visits, with variations observed based on age and gender
- Nature was crucial for visiting PA-friendly places, while group motives outweighed individual motives for PA
- The identified built and natural characteristics of PA-friendly places were used to modify the original NEWS-Y after translating the scale into German using a back-translation technique
- Four items were removed and 11 items were added to the existing subscales of the questionnaire, resulting in a total of 74 items in the NEWS-Y-German (NEWS-Y-G)

CONCLUSION

- The WALKI-MUC project combines qualitative and quantitative methods for subjective walkability measurement and scale development
- NEWS-Y-G: German instrument for subjective walkability measurement in adolescents
- Piloting in Munich: Testing the applicability and validity of the NEWS-Y-G in a representative sample of 6000 adolescents living in the six selected Munich neighbourhoods

LITERATURE

1. Rosenberg, D., Ding, D., Sallis, J. F., Kerr, J., Norman, G. J., Durant, N., ... & Saelens, B. E. (2009). Neighborhood Environment Walkability Scale for Youth (NEWS-Y): reliability and relationship with physical activity. *Preventive medicine*, 49(2-3), 213-218.
2. Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework. *Journal of environmental psychology*, 30(1), 1-10.

Project link:

