

Feng shui and spatial comfort influences on F&B establishments in Tasikmalaya main-street-hospitals

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Article history:</i> Received March 08, 2025 Received in revised form May 13, 2025 Accepted July 03, 2025 Available online August 01, 2025</p> <p><i>Keywords:</i> F&B Feng shui Geomantic factor Spatial comfort Tasikmalaya</p> <p>*Corresponding author: Dewi Mariana Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Katolik Parahyangan, Indonesia Email: dewi.mariana@unpar.ac.id ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6756-5777</p>	<p><i>Feng Shui posits that proximity to hospitals may introduce unfavorable energy into residential and commercial environments. Nevertheless, in practice, several food and beverage (F&B) establishments located near hospitals continue to thrive, suggesting that certain spatial factors may contribute to their sustained success. This study aims to evaluate the environmental quality and spatial comfort of F&B outlets situated near three major hospitals in Tasikmalaya. Employing a qualitative case study methodology, the research integrates on-site observations with photographic documentation. Each establishment was analyzed through the lens of five geomantic principles Long, Sha, Xue, Shui, and Xiang as well as three spatial comfort dimensions: physical, visual, and haptic. The findings reveal that three long-standing establishments along Rumah Sakit Street demonstrate strong alignment with the Long, Xue, Shui, and Xiang factors, in addition to exhibiting a high degree of spatial comfort. Conversely, establishments on Otto Iskandardinata Street perform poorly across most geomantic and spatial parameters, except for haptic qualities, primarily due to suboptimal environmental configurations. On HZ Mustofa Street, two well-established outlets benefit from favorable Long, Xue, Shui elements and overall spatial comfort. These results underscore that the viability of sites near hospitals is contingent upon the nuanced interplay between Feng Shui principles and spatial comfort conditions, necessitating a context-specific approach to spatial assessment.</i></p>

Introduction

Science must account for all phenomena that exert notable social, economic, and personal influence feng shui being no exception. As with other social phenomena, feng shui warrants systematic analysis and critical evaluation (Kryżanowski 2021). Many architects integrate feng shui into their design processes to better address environmental and contextual considerations (Yulianto, Simon, and Cahyadi 2022). Although frequently dismissed as mere superstition, recent studies have shown that designs informed by feng

shui can yield positive psychological and physiological effects on space users (Jin and Juan 2021; Madeddu and Zhang 2017). While its scientific status remains contested, feng shui has demonstrated considerable reliability in evaluating the ways environmental conditions influence human behavior (Han and Lin 2023). This reliability even extends into real estate decision-making within Chinese communities (Hassan, Tedong, and Haris Fadzilah 2023).

Certain spatial arrangements may be deemed unsuitable for particular functions and are commonly referred to as manifestations of “bad

feng shui” (Madeddu and Zhang 2021). Existing literature has predominantly examined these negative implications within residential environments (Han 2023; Kuo et al. 2023), while their relevance to food and beverage (F&B) businesses remains insufficiently explored. Anecdotal evidence suggests that proximity to hospitals may adversely affect F&B businesses due to associations with death and illness. However, these claims have yet to be rigorously substantiated. Interestingly, in the city of Tasikmalaya, several F&B establishments located near hospitals have continued to perform successfully, thereby challenging the practical validity of such feng shui concerns.

This study aims to assess the environmental quality and spatial comfort of F&B establishments situated near three major hospitals in Tasikmalaya: Dr. Soekarjo Regional Public Hospital, Jasa Kartini Hospital, and Tasik Medika Citratama (TMC) Hospital. The central research question addressed is: How do five geomantic principles in feng shui, alongside spatial comfort parameters, explain the spatial viability and perceived favorability of F&B establishments located near major hospitals along the main commercial corridors of Tasikmalaya?

By exploring this question, the study seeks to fill a gap in the academic literature on the application of feng shui within the F&B sector. It also provides practical insights for designers and business owners by examining whether the presence of hospitals genuinely impacts surrounding commercial spatial configurations. Ultimately, the research aims to move the discourse from unsubstantiated belief to empirically grounded spatial evaluation.

Methods

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach to investigate how Feng Shui principles and spatial comfort parameters affect the viability and perceived favorability of food and beverage (F&B) establishments situated near three major

hospitals in Tasikmalaya: Dr. Soekardjo Regional Public Hospital, Jasa Kartini Hospital, and Tasik Medika Citratama (TMC) Hospital. The research methodology integrated direct site observations, spatial mapping, and an interpretive, comprehensive analysis grounded in Feng Shui principles.

Site selection

This study centers on three urban streets in Tasikmalaya that are adjacent to major hospitals: Rumah Sakit Street, Otto Iskandardinata Street, and HZ. Mustofa Street (figure 1). Dr. Soekarjo Regional Public Hospital is situated on Rumah Sakit Street, Jasa Kartini Hospital on Otto Iskandardinata Street, and Tasik Medika Citratama (TMC) Hospital on HZ. Mustofa Street. Although proximity to a hospital may enhance business viability, this effect is not uniformly observed across all locations. While certain food and beverage (F&B) establishments demonstrate resilience and long-term success, others fail to sustain operations and disappear shortly after opening.

Rumah Sakit Street, where Dr. Soekarjo Regional Public Hospital is located, experiences frequent congestion, particularly during hospital visiting hours and school commuting periods (figure 2). The street is lined with numerous informal street vendors as well as several formal food and beverage (F&B) establishments. In contrast, Jasa Kartini Hospital, situated near Tasikmalaya City Square, is surrounded by relatively few vendors, none of which exhibit significant levels of activity (figure 3). TMC Hospital is located on HZ. Mustofa Street, a major arterial road featuring a central median (figure 4). Despite its proximity to Asia Plaza Mall, this area shows limited F&B activity and is instead dominated by banks and small-scale commercial enterprises. These contrasting spatial patterns indicate that proximity to hospitals alone does not account for the success of F&B establishments, underscoring the need for a more nuanced spatial analysis.

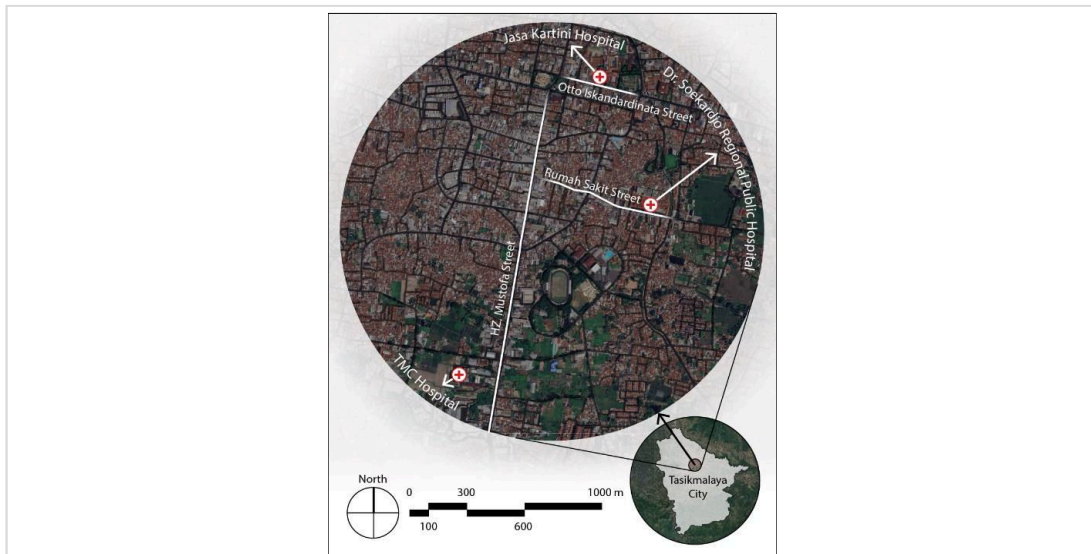


Figure 1. Map of the study area



Figure 2. Dr. Soekarjono regional public hospital's entry gate, which is flanked by informal food stalls



Figure 3. Jasa Kartini hospital is located on the wide Otto Iskandardinata Street



Figure 4. TMC hospital faces the street median

Data collection

Data collection was conducted through direct field observations, photographic documentation, and sketch-based spatial mapping. The observations focused on the environmental composition and spatial characteristics of food and beverage (F&B) establishments situated near major hospitals. Key data included the shapes and colors of building façades, their orientation, and the positioning of entrances. Additional contextual elements such as land contours, street conditions, traffic patterns, and overall accessibility were also documented. To better understand the spatial setting, surrounding features including trees, fences, vacant lots, and adjacent buildings were recorded for their potential influence.

Human activity around each establishment was observed to evaluate vibrancy and spatial usability. This included tracking the presence of customers, informal street vendors, and patterns of public space usage. The overall atmosphere of each site was assessed based on environmental factors such as sunlight exposure, air circulation, and the perceived sense of comfort or security. Photographs were used extensively to support the documentation and enable more detailed analysis in subsequent stages of the research.

Data analysis

The analysis in this study employed a descriptive and comparative approach. Each food and beverage (F&B) outlet were examined individually within its specific spatial context and assessed according to its alignment with key Feng Shui principles. Indicators such as business

endurance, customer popularity, and degree of spatial integration were interpreted to evaluate the overall viability of each site. The Feng Shui assessment was grounded in five core geomantic factors: Dragon or Long (龍), Sand or Sha (砂), Cave or Xue (穴), Water or Shui (水), and Orientation or Xiang (向) (Cui et al. 2021). These five elements are widely used in site evaluation practices, encompassing assessments of topography, water quality, microclimate, soil conditions, existing vegetation, and ambient spatial qualities (Choe and Han 2020). As a foundational model in traditional Feng Shui, this framework continues to be adopted in contemporary qualitative empirical research (Han and Lin 2023).

Long denotes the presence of supportive structures located behind the site, traditionally natural landforms such as mountains, but in urban settings, this role is often fulfilled by adjacent buildings or built forms that offer protective spatial backing (Choe and Han 2020). *Sha*, sometimes referred to as hills in the literature Xu (2016), encompasses both natural and built environmental features surrounding a site. It influences the site's energetic stability and environmental coherence. *Sha* also plays a buffering role by stabilizing and diffusing dispersed energy, often conceptualized as a protective "sand ring" (Choe and Han 2020). *Xue* represents the central node or focal point of a site where energy accumulates. It is regarded as the most auspicious location due to the convergence of *Long*, *Sha*, and *Shui*, creating a harmonious and vibrant spatial atmosphere (Choe and Han 2020).

Shui refers to the presence and direction of water, or symbolic analogs such as roads and pedestrian pathways, which are essential for the movement, containment, and retention of energy flows (Koh 2003). Lastly, *Xiang* pertains to the building's orientation, determining its exposure to beneficial climatic factors such as sunlight, prevailing winds, and thermal conditions. In practical terms, cardinal directions North, South, East, and West

are interpreted as the site's back, front, left, and right, guiding optimal spatial configuration (Mak and Thomas Ng 2005).

Each of these five geomantic factors in Feng Shui is supported by specific theoretical foundations, which collectively inform a holistic spatial evaluation model. Their interrelationships and theoretical underpinnings are illustrated in figure 5.

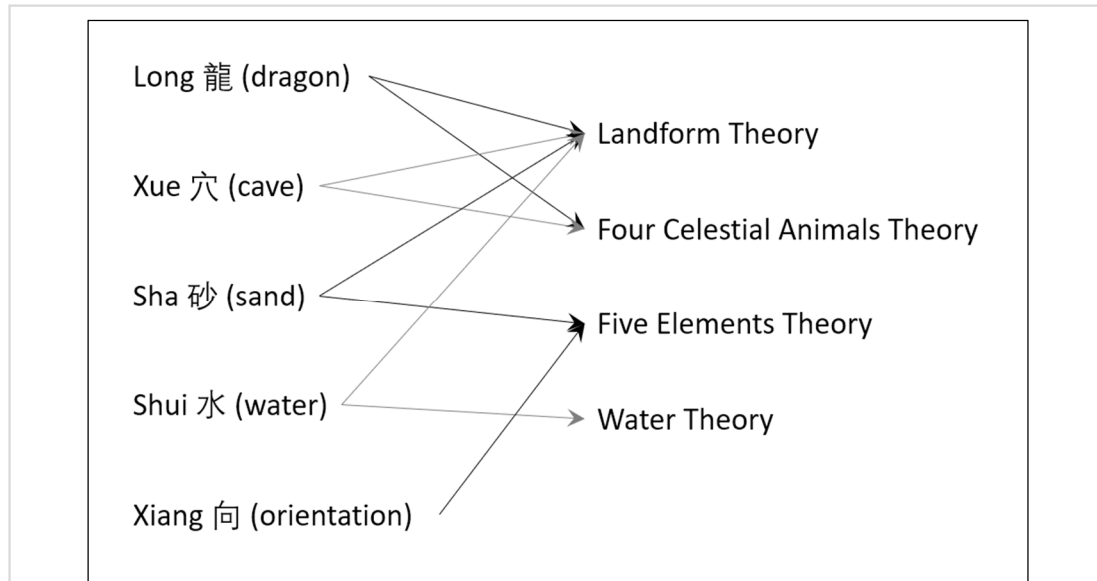


Figure 5. The relation of the five geomantic factors with feng shui theories

The Five Elements Theory elaborates upon the fundamental Yin and Yang principle by introducing five interrelated elements: Earth, Metal, Water, Wood, and Fire. These elements interact through cyclical processes of generation and destruction (figure 6), forming the basis for understanding spatial harmony and balance (Tan 2022). Landform Theory, on the other hand, focuses on identifying optimal site forms, orientations, and environmental features that influence the flow of qi. It evaluates spatial quality based on elements such as the presence of backing structures or the impact of T-junctions (Mak and Thomas Ng 2005). The Four Celestial Animals Theory interprets spatial configurations through the symbolism of four protective entities Green Dragon, White Tiger, Black Tortoise, and Red Phoenix each representing an ideal spatial role and contributing to environmental balance (Montenegro 2003). Water Theory analyzes the influence of actual, artificial, or symbolic water elements, classifying them as sources of incoming (beneficial) or outgoing (detrimental) energy

depending on their flow and orientation (Koh 2003).

In addition to the Feng Shui evaluation, this study integrates a spatial comfort assessment based on three principal parameters: physical, visual, and haptic. Although spatial comfort lacks a universally agreed-upon definition, it broadly refers to the sense of ease and satisfaction experienced by users within a space, shaped by its physical, visual, and tactile characteristics (Alfirević and Simonović-Alfirević 2020). The physical parameter encompasses accessibility, spatial openness, and exposure to environmental factors such as natural ventilation and sunlight. The visual parameter involves aspects of visibility, aesthetic integration, and the effects of light and color. The haptic parameter pertains to emotional and sensory responses related to safety, ambiance, and overall spatial perception. These categories are informed by contemporary architectural research that emphasizes the multisensory dimensions of user experience (Jakubiec 2022; Lee et al. 2021).

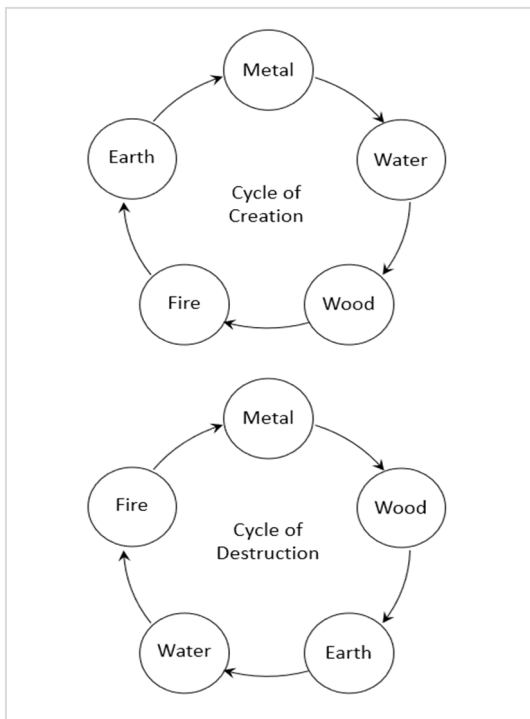


Figure 6. Cycle of creation and destruction

Results and discussion

1. F&B outlets adjacent to RSUD (Rumah Sakit Street)



Figure 7. Three segments in rumah sakit street according to the area's vibrance
Source: (Abner Farrell Dauna and Mariana 2024)

The second segment features two formal food and beverage (F&B) outlets Kedai Baso Solo Mas Wiji and RM Ny. King alongside a 24-hour informal fried snack stall (figure 8), all of which demonstrate alignment with the five key Feng

Rumah Sakit Street is a two-way thoroughfare that hosts three hospitals, two high schools, and a military base. The street contains a limited number of abandoned lots and is lined with both formal and informal food vendors.

In total, twenty-two formal food and beverage (F&B) establishments operate along the street, alongside numerous informal vendors who occupy pedestrian walkways. This informal occupation contributes to increased traffic congestion and creates adverse Sha conditions by disrupting spatial flow and reducing pedestrian accessibility. The lack of adequate sunlight exposure and poor air circulation further exacerbate user discomfort, particularly in Tasikmalaya's hot and humid climate. Additionally, concerns about pickpocketing in the area contribute to a general sense of insecurity. As a result, the physical, visual, and haptic dimensions necessary to support spatial comfort remain largely unmet.

A previous study divided Rumah Sakit Street into three distinct segments (figure 7). Notably, the second segment emerges as the most active area, characterized by the highest concentration of informal street food vendors and frequent occurrences of traffic congestion (Abner Farrell Dauna and Mariana 2024).

Shui factors. These three establishments have proven to be the most enduring in the area, maintaining continuous operation for over three decades.



Figure 8. Kedai Baso Solo Mas Wiji with its surroundings

Kedai Baso Solo Mas Wiji is distinguished by its favorable *Long* and *Xue* attributes. Strategically positioned at a T-junction and close to the emergency entrance of Dr. Soekarjo Regional Public Hospital (RSUD), the outlet benefits from advantageous *Shui* (incoming water) conditions (figure 9). According to Landform Theory, this configuration does not constitute *Sha Qi*; rather, its prominent location increases its visibility and accessibility to passersby.

The building's façade is adorned with a red banner, symbolizing the fire element, while the structure itself faces north, associated with the water element. Its rectangular form corresponds to the wood element. This combination

exemplifies a harmonious application of the Five Elements Theory, indicating elemental balance in design.

The presence of numerous informal food stalls across from Kedai Baso Solo Mas Wiji, near the hospital's emergency entrance, contributes to a vibrant street atmosphere that dispels fear or unease typically associated with hospital environments. This clustering effect fosters a heightened sense of safety and community. As a result, all three spatial comfort parameters physical, visual, and haptic are effectively fulfilled. These factors collectively explain the outlet's remarkable longevity, having operated successfully in the same location for over three decades.

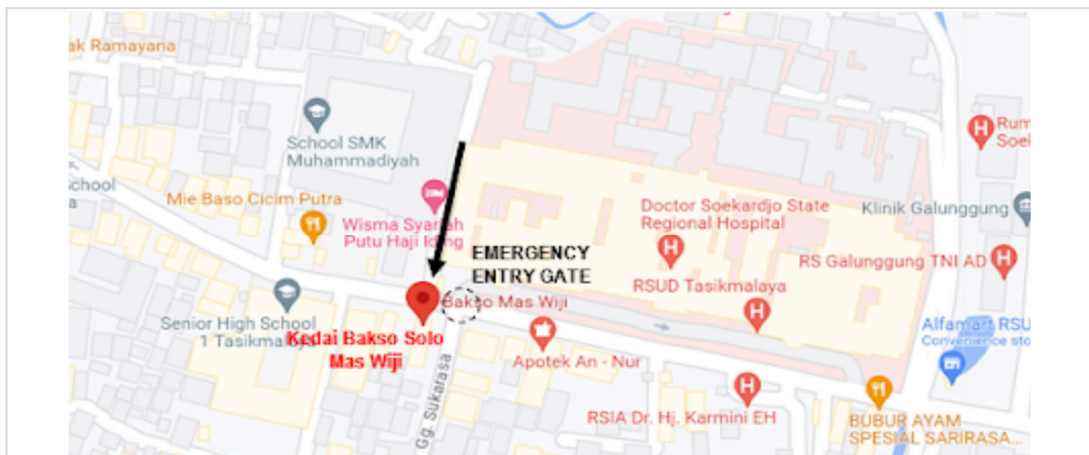


Figure 9. Kedai Baso Solo Mas Wiji is positioned on T-junction (arrow) and in proximity to the emergency entrance of RSUD (circle)

RM Ny. King, another formal food and beverage (F&B) establishment, similarly benefits from auspicious *Long* and *Xue* conditions, along with favorable *Shui* (incoming water) supported by the presence of a widened road on its right side, which functions as a parking area and serves as an energy pool (figure 10). The main entrance faces a large tree, a feature traditionally considered inauspicious in Feng Shui due to its potential to obstruct energy flow. However, because the tree is located across the street within the RSUD

premises, it plays a mitigating role by absorbing and neutralizing any negative energy or *Sha* emanating from the hospital environment. According to the Five Elements Theory, the building's north-facing orientation corresponds to the water element, its green-colored façade aligns with the wood element, and its business function is associated with the fire element. This elemental configuration results in a balanced and harmonious spatial composition, contributing to the outlet's sustained viability.



Figure 10. Prominent three-storey RM Ny. King building with its parking area as an energy pool

RM Ny. King is also located near one of the street's favorable contours, which enhances the effect of incoming *Shui* (water) according to Feng Shui principles (figure 11). The presence of an energy pool, the supportive arrangement of surrounding structures, and the establishment's esteemed reputation having operated successfully for over four decades collectively contribute to its superior performance across all three spatial comfort parameters when compared to Kedai Baso Solo Mas Wiji.

Adjacent to RM Ny. King, just a few steps to the left, is an informal 24-hour fried snack stall (figure 12). Its slightly protruding position toward the street ensures high visibility for both

pedestrians and motorists approaching from either direction. This prominent location is considered favorable according to Water Theory, as it allows for effective energy reception. The stall is backed by tall buildings, which strengthen its *Long* and *Xue* characteristics, thereby fulfilling the physical spatial comfort requirements. In terms of the Five Elements Theory, the stall faces North corresponding to the water element its structural form aligns with the wood element, and its commercial function is associated with the fire element. This elemental alignment creates a harmonious spatial balance, which likely contributes to the stall's continued success despite its informal nature.

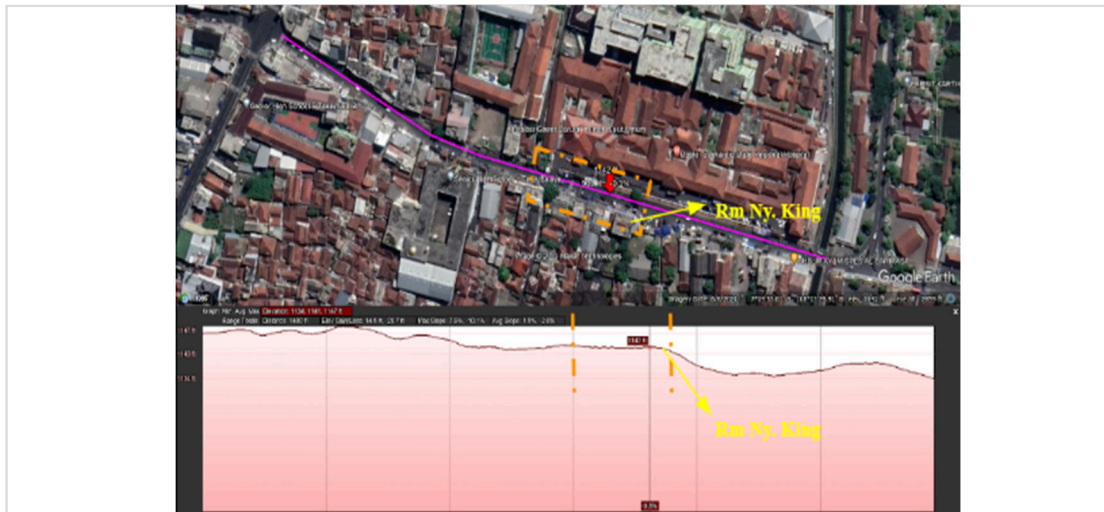


Figure 11. Contour section of Rumah Sakit Street

Its physical isolation from other stalls and its semi-permanent structural design contribute to a heightened sense of security, as the openness of the space reduces the likelihood of criminal activity. As a result, all three parameters of spatial comfort physical, visual, and haptic are

adequately fulfilled. Notably, this informal stall has maintained its presence in the same location even before the establishment of Kedai Baso Solo Mas Wiji, underscoring its enduring spatial viability.



Figure 12. The 24-hour fried snack stall near RM Ny. King protrudes towards the street

2. F&B outlets adjacent to Jasa Kartini Hospital (Otto Iskandardinata Street)

Otto Iskandardinata Street is a broader two-way road compared to Rumah Sakit Street and is characterized by relatively light traffic (figure 13). Its spatial atmosphere is comparable to that of Rumah Sakit Street, with a variety of adjacent structures including a hospital, military base,

prison, abandoned buildings, library, pawnshop, school, post office, and fire station.

Despite the presence of three formal food and beverage (F&B) outlets along the street, none have succeeded in attracting a stable customer base. This is primarily attributed to the poor quality of outgoing *Shui* (water), which is considered detrimental according to Water Theory. Furthermore, the street's energy retention

is compromised by the high frequency of closely spaced intersecting side streets. These interruptions in spatial continuity prevent the sites

from accumulating and sustaining sufficient qi (energy) (figure 14), thereby undermining their spatial viability.



Figure 13. Otto Iskandardinata Street, adjacent to Jasa Kartini Hospital, with the usual light traffic

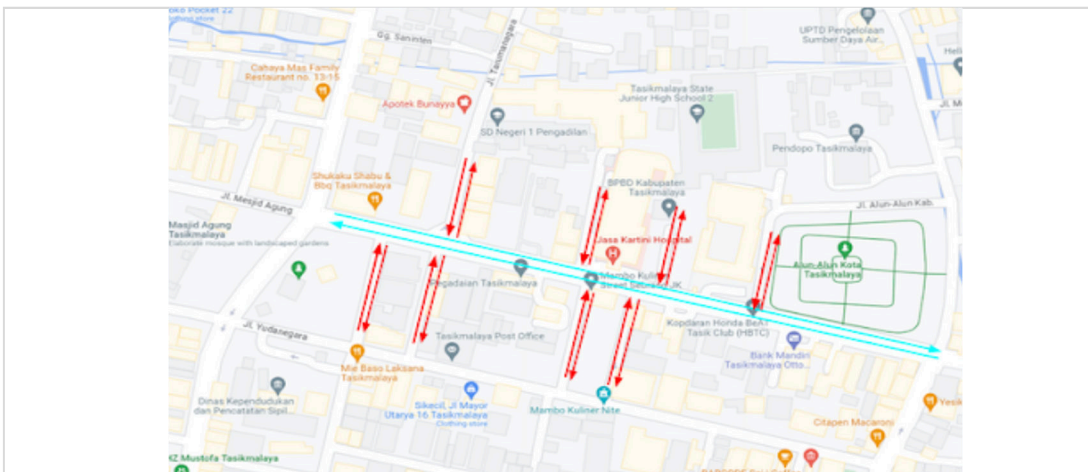


Figure 14. Otto Iskandardinata Street traffic (blue) is truncated by lots of small street traffic (red)

According to the Five Elements Theory, none of the three formal food and beverage (F&B) outlets along Otto Iskandardinata Street demonstrate elemental harmony. Gade Coffee and Gold, located within the Pegadaian complex, is the largest and most architecturally modern among them; however, it attracts only a limited number of customers. Despite the presence of adequate physical and visual comfort parameters, the establishment fails to fulfill the necessary haptic qualities such as emotional appeal and perceived safety resulting in a lack of overall

spatial comfort. The other two formal F&B outlets in the area suffer from uninviting façades and the absence of attractive entry or seating areas, making them ineffective in drawing customers. Consequently, they do not meet any of the essential spatial comfort parameters.

Nonetheless, during public events, three key open spaces along the street tend to draw significant crowds: Tasikmalaya City Park (A), a vacant lot in front of Jasa Kartini Hospital (B), and Tasikmalaya Town Square (C) (figure 15). These areas often accommodate temporary food

stalls that succeed in attracting visitors due to their open, communal, and event-driven settings.

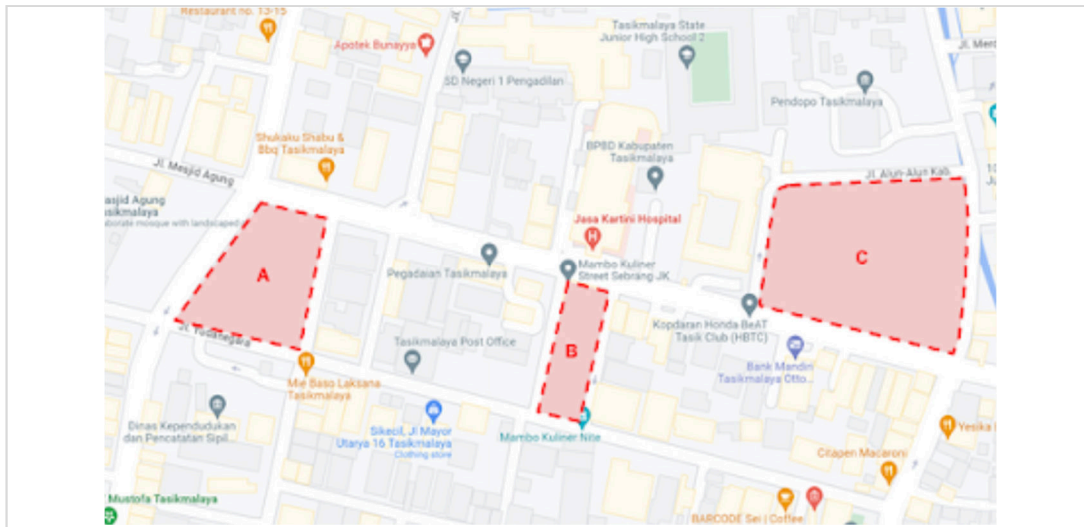


Figure 15. Three open spaces for people gatherings. (A: Tasikmalaya City Park, B: abandoned lot, C: Tasikmalaya Town Square)

Among the three locations, Tasikmalaya Town Square experiences the least amount of foot traffic. According to Water Theory, this phenomenon can be attributed to the site's

declining topography, which is indicative of outgoing water flow. Such a configuration allows energy to dissipate rather than be effectively retained within the space (figure 16).



Figure 16. Contour section of Otto Iskandardinata Street

Furthermore, the Five Elements Theory suggests that the orientation, colors, shapes, and material elements of the food stalls in this area are generally well-aligned. The *Xiang* (orientation) of Tasikmalaya Town Square facing Otto Iskandardinata Street is considered more favorable when compared to the other two open

spaces. In the evenings, however, Tasikmalaya City Park becomes the preferred location for outdoor dining, largely due to its proximity to a mosque, which offers a convenient place for rest and prayer. This spatial relationship fosters a distinct atmosphere characterized by comfort and emotional ease. As such, among the three spatial

comfort parameters, haptic qualities including the sense of security, emotional resonance, and ambient experience exert the most significant influence in this context.

3. F&B outlets adjacent to TMC Hospital (HZ. Mustofa Street)

HZ Mustofa Street is a two-way primary arterial road featuring central medians and limited U-turn zones. This street design restricts direct access to locations on either side, a spatial configuration which, according to Water Theory, may influence the flow and retention of environmental energy. Along this corridor, there are 20 officially recognized food and beverage (F&B) outlets extending toward Asia Plaza Tasikmalaya, located one block from TMC Hospital. In addition, several informal street food vendors are active within the area.

Within this context, two formal outlets Huko Bowl and Gyumbox exhibit spatial configurations that align well with all five key geomantic factors in Feng Shui. Despite the fast-moving traffic along HZ Mustofa Street, the presence of medians and strategically placed U-turn areas facilitates the effective collection of beneficial incoming *Shui* (energy) for both establishments.

Huko Bowl benefits from a large vehicle entrance situated immediately after a U-turn point, allowing it to capture favorable incoming energy more efficiently than neighboring outlets (figure 17). Gyumbox, in contrast, features an even more prominent and expansive vehicle entrance, further enhanced by the presence of decorative water fountains lining the boulevard. These fountains serve to positively influence the energy dynamics of the building, contributing to its favorable Feng Shui alignment (figure 18).

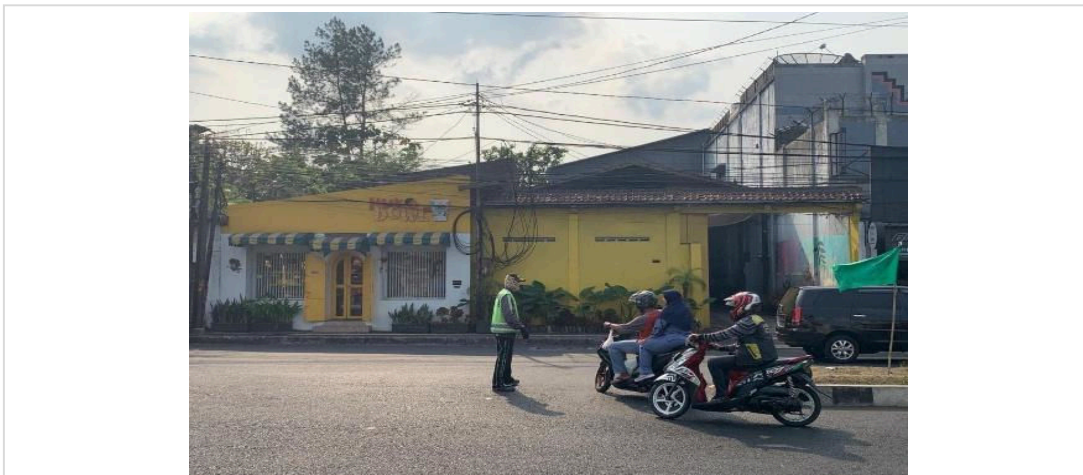


Figure 17. Huko Bowl and the traffic flow to it



Figure 18. Gyumbox with its wide entrance

Both Huko Bowl and Gyumbox exhibit *Xiang* (orientation) conditions that are in harmonious alignment with the Five Elements Theory. The fountains located along the street median introduce a distinct *Sha* quality that sets this area apart from the other two streets analyzed. While both outlets successfully meet all three spatial comfort parameters physical, visual, and haptic their exact spatial positions and surrounding configurations differ slightly.

TMC Hospital itself stands out as a welcoming and approachable facility, a notable contrast to the typically, intimidating image associated with

hospital environments. This positive impression is further enhanced by the presence of water fountains near its entrance, which contribute to the cultivation of favorable energy flow (*Shui*) following Feng Shui principles (figure 19). Additionally, the building's generous front setback creates an energy pool that strengthens its overall spatial vitality. The hospital's location adjacent to Asia Plaza Tasikmalaya also contributes to the area's energetic dynamism, infusing the surroundings with a vibrant and cheerful atmosphere.



Figure 19. The water feature in front of TMC Hospital with its setbacks

Three abandoned lots in the area are unexpectedly well-preserved, with tall and vigorous trees flourishing despite the absence of active human care. This condition suggests the presence of positive environmental energy, although it appears to be spatially confined within the boundaries of each site. The enclosure of these lots by perimeter walls, combined with the

specific topographical contours of the street, likely contributes to this localized energy containment (figure 20). As a result, the surrounding commercial establishments particularly food and beverage (F&B) outlets do not reflect the same level of vitality or spatial vibrancy as the two prominently successful outlets, Huko Bowl and Gyumbox.

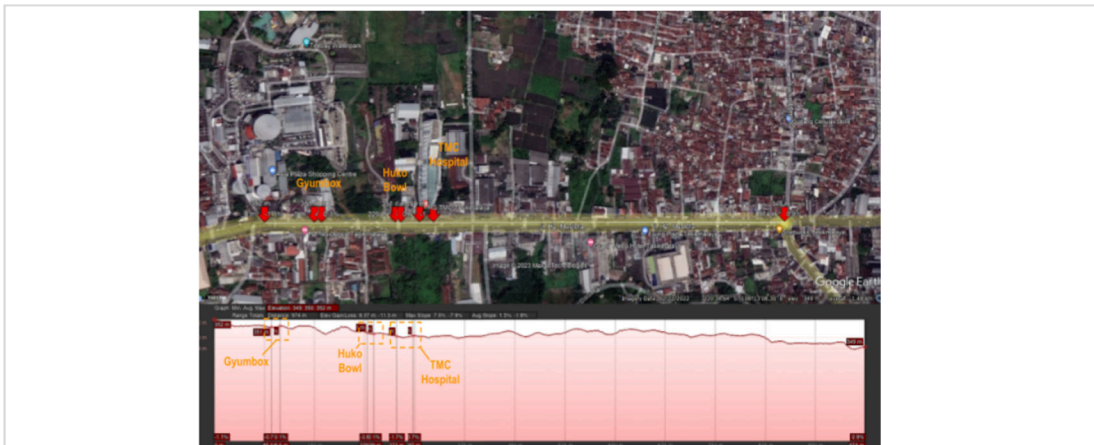


Figure 20. Contour section of HZ Mustofa Street

Conclusions

This study evaluated the environmental quality and spatial comfort of food and beverage (F&B) establishments located near three major hospitals in Tasikmalaya, using five Feng Shui geomantic principles and three spatial comfort parameters. Analysis of the three most enduring F&B outlets on Rumah Sakit Street, which have thrived for over four decades, reveals that their sustained success can be attributed to the favorable arrangement of surrounding structures, street contours, traffic flow, building orientations, and the presence of energy pools. These conditions align with four of the five key Feng Shui factors: *Long*, *Xue*, *Shui*, and *Xiang*.

In contrast, F&B establishments along Otto Iskandardinata Street consistently struggle, largely due to the unfavorable configuration of surrounding structures, topographical contours, disrupted traffic patterns, and an overall uninviting atmosphere. These deficiencies contradict the principles of *Long*, *Xue*, *Sha*, and *Shui*. Notably, only during special public events does Tasikmalaya City Park demonstrate spatial vibrancy through the emergence of informal food stalls, highlighting the dominant influence of haptic parameters in this particular context.

On HZ Mustofa Street, the success of two formal F&B outlets Huko Bowl and Gyumbox is strongly linked to the advantageous arrangement of built forms, street contours, and vehicular circulation. These elements align closely with *Long*, *Xue*, and *Shui*, particularly enhanced by the water features integrated into the street median and the overall positive ambiance. All three spatial comfort parameters physical, visual, and haptic are satisfied in these specific sites. However, this success remains spatially isolated, likely due to the presence of perimeter walls enclosing adjacent buildings, which restrict the broader diffusion of positive energy.

In conclusion, the varying degrees to which the five Feng Shui geomantic factors and the three spatial comfort parameters are fulfilled significantly influence each site's potential for long-term commercial viability. Each factor is measurable and should be evaluated individually and contextually to provide an evidence-based understanding of spatial performance and sustainability.

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Author(s) contribution

Dewi Mariana contributed to the research concepts preparation, methodologies, investigations, data analysis, visualization, articles drafting and revisions.

Ethan Abner Farrell Dauna contribute to the research concepts preparation and literature reviews, data analysis, of article drafts preparation and validation.

Andi contribute to methodology, supervision, and validation.

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