Cycling in the Green Wind

作者：
郭寶純。士林高商。應外三 6 班
黃雯華。士林高商。應外三 6 班

指導老師：
張玉英老師
I. Introduction

Have you ever had experience riding bicycles? If yes, did you have a wonderful feeling when you rode your bike? Or if not, can you imagine how it is when you ride it? Riding a bike can be one of the public transportation options, but it also can be part of a healthy lifestyle, a fad, affection, and subculture. The pleasant feeling can be depicted by the following true story.

Jack, a twenty-five year old young man, was sharing his experience of a cycling journey with his co-worker Leo. After hearing Jack, Leo was attracted by the amazing experience. Leo joined in Jack and started cycling. When Jack and Leo married, interestingly, their wives also participated in cycling. Few years later, they had their own babies. With their babies, they still made plans for cycling around Taiwan. On the journeys, they enjoyed the happiness of the family relationship; they met friends with the same interest and maintain their friendship easily. So far, their children grew up, and they are still riding bicycles together. They have impressive experience riding bicycles. They now bring their family to travel some beautiful places, encounter different cultural people, and touch nature closely.

Riding bicycles seems to fulfill Jack’s and Leo’s lives. It is even intensely closed to human history because bicycles were one of the necessary transportation systems in early times. With advanced technology, bicycles are increasingly replaced by motorcycles and cars. However, when people are calling on green energy sources to solve environmental problems, then again, bicycles have become fashionable aids because riding bicycles neither costs any gasoline nor brings no pollution.

Cycling seems to bring people satisfaction and it is also closely related to humans. However, people may not have such sense. For example, what is the history of cycling? What benefits does cycling really bring? Is cycling a craze or a great contribution to the environment? Is Taiwan suitable for cycling? If yes, where do people usually go and why do they go? Apart from reviewing the related literature, we will administer a questionnaire to ask 100 teenagers’ opinions on cycling. We hope to search the answers to these questions and help people get the implicative knowledge of cycling as well as promoting cycling which is also the government’s attempt. Hopefully, cycling is not a craze, a fad which appears suddenly and disappears quickly. It should be more meaningful than a recreational sport and transportation. Cycling should be a lifelong activity that helps build a great city with the green wind.
II. Thesis

2.1 Methods

The study is to dig profound meaning of cycling. We first studied related materials of cycling on the net and from libraries. Then, we delivered 100 copies of the questionnaire to high school students to realize what opinions the youth have about cycling.

2.1.1 Participants

One hundred high school students in Taipei participated in our study. Their age range is from sixteen to eighteen. We used high school students as subjects because we believed they have a great influence on people around them.

2.1.2 Instruments

• Reviewing the literature
  Doing the study, we studied as many as cycling articles on the Internet and from libraries. Then, we took notes about what we discovered and interpreted the viewpoints.

• Questionnaires
  The questionnaire included twelve questions. They were mainly divided into two parts: the recreation of cycling and the government’s contribution to cycling.

2.2 The History of Cycling

2.2.1 The Development of Bicycles

Hundreds of years ago, bicycles were invented and they became a useful transportation vehicle soon. However, no one knows for sure who initially invited bicycles, but it is acknowledged that bicycles are created by people from different countries one day after another. One of the theories was addressed as follows.

In 1966, a group of monks in Italy who took charge of repairing Da Vanci’s works found a bicycle sketch painted in 1490s. However, it was just a rough sketch and was not produced. Three hundred years later, Comte de Sicrac in French invented
the earliest bicycle, called “Celerifere,” which needed feet to balance but still was unstable. In 1817, Karl Drais in Germany improved “Celerifere” as “Hobby-horses,” which the front wheel was added the steering advice.

It was the breakthrough that Hobby-horses could keep upright by itself. This kind of bicycle had been caused a short craze in high society in France, Germany, British, and America. “Hobby-horses” unfortunately still didn’t become the daily transportation vehicle because of the instability on the rutted and winding road. In 1839, Macmillan, a blacksmith in Scotland, improved it and invented the first bicycle with two pedals. Michaux, a French carriage manufacturer, assembled two peddles and cranks to the front wheel and named it “Velocipede.” Later, the front wheel of the velocipede was enlarged, named “high wheels” and became more popular at that time. Bicycles were not manufactured until 1861 though it would cost a worker three-month wages. Because of the world-wide advanced economy, the bicycle industry in 1960 was flourishing and spread widely over the globe (Richard & Richard, 2004). Therefore, we can say that bicycles are humans’ product of effort.

2.2.2 Bicycles in Taiwan

The history of bicycles in the West is age-old; likewise, in Taiwan, bicycles also last in a long section of history. Its popularity rises and declines over time. In 1903, colonized by Japan, businessmen started importing bicycles from Japan to Taiwan. At that time, bicycles cost around 30 dollars whose value corresponded to that of the noble Benz nowadays. Therefore, only Japanese people and the rich could afford to buy bicycles. In 1940s, more and more bicycles produced in Japan were imported and the price was down, so people such as farmers and businessmen began to use bicycles to carry goods or as a means of transportation. After the restoration of Taiwan in 1945, Taiwanese people began to produce bicycles. Though the technique was not better than that in Japan, the prices were cheaper. In addition, the government fostered the domestic industry of bicycles so that businessmen were prohibited from importing bicycles. With the government’s protection in 1950s, the cheap bicycles became civilian, general and daily transportation. Unfortunately, right after the import of the 50 c.c. motorcycles in 1968, the business of bicycles depressed. Dramatically, due to the limitation of gasoline and the awareness of the environmental protection, many people in Taiwan again started turning to bicycles in the past decades. They slowly started to replace motorcycles with bicycles. The industry of bicycles in Taiwan is flourished and even popularized overseas, such as Giant, Merida and Maxxis (Zheng, 2010).
2.3 The Value of Cycling

2.3.1 Physical and Mental Benefits

After knowing the history of bicycles, it is time to discuss why cycling is now a very popular trend in the world. In general, people going cycling mainly depend on mental and physical reasons. In physical perspective, cycling can strengthen people’s muscle, weaken the opportunity of getting disease, balance blood pressure, and have the well-being (Caribbeantravel, 2010). For example, Lance Armstrong (2001), a racing cyclist, often joins cycling race activities in Europe and American. When he was young, he participates in races for the prize and money, but when he suffered testicular cancer, he rode the bicycle for health. He said he could sweat and exclude toxic components from his body by cycling. Meanwhile, he could throw away his pressure without thinking about the disease of cancer. He felt peace in mind and loved bicycle more than before. He recovered his health by constant cycling. People usually say “An apple a day keeps the doctor away,” but now we would like to say “Cycling a day keeps all the disease away.”

On the other hand, cycling offers mental satisfaction such as admiration of fitness and feelings of amusement. According to Bikeradar (2009), cycling per hour probably consumes around 400-800 calories, so cycling can control people’s weight and keep them in shape. Moreover, cyclists consider riding bicycles much amusement in life. Some people living in a hustle and bustle city need to release their pressure. Going cycling is a best and economical way to approach the nature. Cyclists can immerse themselves in a variety of scenery during the journey of cycling. When the breeze flows over cyclists, they have the tranquil and clear feeling in mind. Cyclists can smell the fragrance of flowers and listen to the stream ripple, bird chirps, and even wave sounds. No wonder natural beauty is influential in humans.

2.3.2 Environmental Protection

According to ChinaECNet (2008), since 2008, people all over the world have had the threat of energy resources. In order to survive in such an awful situation, people started using alternative energy sources such as riding bicycles instead of using cars and motorcycles even though it is a tiny effort they can do. In addition to save the gasoline consumption, riding a bicycle can also protect our environment because automobiles had resulted in severe environmental pollution and led to the effect of global warming. For instance, the air pollution caused by cars and motorcycles
contained some carbon dioxide. Once people contact it for a long time, they may hurt their lungs and have weak ability to resisting disease (The World Health Organization, 2009). Before long, governments in many countries are aware of the environment threatened by these situations. Especially when Kyoto Protocol was established on December 16, 2005, the industrial society begins to search for the substitute sources. Replacing automobiles with bicycles is one of the substitutes. “The bicycle is a curious vehicle. Its passenger is its engine” (Howard, 2010). Bicycles are regarded as the important vehicle for the quality of the life. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the government attempts to promote cycling.

2.4 The Promotion of Cycling

2.4.1 Cycling Policies

Cycling has been recognized beneficial to humans so the population of cyclists rapidly increases. However, whether people have enough road rights is still doubted. According to Huang (2009), the government in fact hopes to make cycling for daily transport. The government had some cycling policies such as building recreational bike paths and routes and bicycle parking lots. Since 2002, the Sports Affairs Council (SAC) in fact has been working with the central and local governments to construct bike paths and the bicycle network across the island of Taiwan. By the end of 2007, new bike paths had been finished for 589 kilometers (Government Information Office, EY, 2009). Besides, the SAC has published the guidebook called “Let’s bike!” in Chinese and English. The book introduces 50 bike paths, including maps and detail of scenic spots.

The MRT on the other hand offers the first and the latest box car to carry cyclists and their bicycles. Although a train only allows to park 16 bicycles, passengers are allowed to transfer 33 stations in the limit. Cyclists can even be allowed to transfer their bicycles from 6 AM to 12 PM on weekends and holidays (Metro Taipei, 2010).

2.4.2 Cycling Routes

As we mentioned, by the end of 2007, the government had built 589 kilometers cycling routes (Government Information Office, EY, 2009). Among them, four are especially well-known and introduced in the following.

First, it is the route from Jiantan, Guandu, the Left Bank of Bali and then Shisanhaung Museum of Archeology. This route extends 27 kilometers only one-way
The route is built along the Danshuei River which has beautiful scenery—serene
and calm. Aside from the route, there are some parks for pedestrian. Once cyclists are
tired of cycling, they can stop and go for a stroll in there. The Wazihwei Nature
Reserve and Shihsanhang Museum of Archaeology are good places to linger.

Second, Dongfong Green Passage is the Taiwanese first bikeway created along
the abandoned railway track. The bikeway starts from the outskirt of Fongyuan City,
Shihgang, and Dongshih. The huge Shihgang Dam is the best tourist destination.
Though the dam was great damaged by the 921 Earthquake in 1999, it was mended
and now has different fascination. Lover’s Bridge, the longest wood bridge in the Far
East, Meizih Railway Park, an old, narrow-gauge railway locomotive. And Dongshih
Hakka Culture Museum, are the best places to visit along the route.

Third, the Sun Moon Lake route located on the middle of Taiwan is built around
the lake. Once people go cycling there, they can access to all the scenic attractions
such as Lalu Island, Wunwu temple, Dehua village, the aboriginal culture center and
so on. The fresh air, bird chirping, gentle breeze, green mountain peaks and the
natural charm between the lake and surrounding mountain peaks are appealing to
people.

Bikeways also spread to the east of the Taiwan. The Guanshan encircling
bikeway has countrified aroma and it is the first bikeway in Taiwan. When people ride
along the Beinan River and Hongshih River, they can admire for a sheet of rice field.
The route is 12 kilometer or so, which is easy to accomplish in half an hour. People
can learn and at off. Guanshan Water Park can offers cyclists for recreation and the
Guanshan Township Farmer’s Association Recreation Center can tell the history of
rice (Tourism Burea, Rep, 2008).

2.5 The Results of the Questionnaire

When we saw the blooming cycling industry, we were puzzled about the
development of cycling and how good it is. We turned to our classmates whether they
know it. To our surprise, they didn’t know the evolution of bicycles. Therefore, we
decide to do a survey of cycling because we hope to help promote cycling in Taiwan
and aim to build a country of cycling in the green wind. We delivered one hundred
copies of the questionnaire to the high school students. There are twelve questions in
the questionnaire, including the experience, reasons, time, places, advantage, and
companies of cycling. Also, we asked them about whether they are satisfied with the
cycling routes and places that the government built. After calculating the data of the questionnaire, we found there were two main points worth discussing—one is the recipient considered cycling as recreation only, not transportation; the other is they were not either clear or satisfied with the government’s cycling routes and tourist places. The detail was addressed as follows.

2.5.1 Cycling as Recreation Only

![Figure 1 The Reasons Why Students Go Cycling](image)

Cycling is beneficial to humans because it contains advantages of mental and physical benefits as well as the environment protection. However, not many of the students do go cycling (the 36% every month and 33% not regularly). Then, many of them (44%) regard cycling as a kind of recreation. The most reason (44%) is they want to get close to nature and appreciate scenery. They (69%) love to go cycling with friends in groups (62%). They (43%) especially have the sense of achievement by finding a new route. Only 24% of them consider cycling a kind of exercise, much less other reasons (See Figure 1). Ironically, students do not really think about the fact that cycling can save natural sources or the environment, so the government that hopes to make cycling a short-term transportation vehicle to save the earth should spend more effort. Likewise, students seem not to really care about the physical advantage that cycling brings. Perhaps it is because students have too much pressure in life, so they want to pursue recreation to release themselves. Obviously, the result may disappoint the government that hopes to make cycling for daily transport.
2.5.2 Advice for the Government

The government indeed did something to promote cycling such as building cycling routes and paths. In figure 2, we found that the 60% of the high school students think the security of cycle paths needs to improve. In contrast, the majority of the students (84%) are satisfied with the cycle routes in suburb. The two results show that the government is successful in promoting cycling for recreation, but if the government wants to promote cycling as a short-term transportation option, the most important thing they need to do is to win people’s confidence of security in cycling in the city. In a sense, the government still has a long way to go.

Although the students are satisfied with recreational cycling routes in suburb, we found many of them mostly prefer going the cycling routes of Guandu (55%) and Sun Moon Lake (30%). The reason is they do not know where Dongfong (2%) and Guanshan (8%) are. Since the government built so many cycling routes, it seems a little pity that not many of the students know that. Perhaps the government can hold group cycling activities in different cycling routes since students like to go cycling in groups (62%).

III. Conclusion

The value of cycling changed with time. In the past, bicycles were basically regarded as a transportation vehicle, while cycling is viewed as a new activity as entertainment. Now we strongly believe that cycling should be a contribution to
Cycling in the Green Wind

environmental protection. To support our theory, we collected the related information such as the history of cycling on the Internet and from libraries. Then, we analyzed the benefits of cycling according to the references we found. Moreover, we administered a questionnaire to understand what cycling is in the mind of the young generation.

According to the result of our study, teenagers believe that they can get the benefit of cycling to get close to the nature. Although we found references saying that cycling can make our bodies health and reduce air pollution that will destroy the environment, we found that teenagers do not really care about these reasons. What they care is to enjoy cycling in the suburbs. Meanwhile, the government built cycling paths and routes to promote cycling, but some of them seem to be “invisible” because teenagers do not really know where they are. What’s more, the government hopes to promote cycling to make people use bicycles as a common transportation vehicle. Unfortunately, after surveying, we realized the result is totally different from what the government expects. People regard bicycles as recreation, not as a vehicle; such a result echoes what Life’s Taiwanderful mentions (2010)—the urban environment is too dangerous for cycling.

Here are some suggestions for the government, non-beneficial organizations, or people who really care about the issue of cycling in the green wind. First, we suggest that the government may construct cycle paths by observing other countries, setting up clear marks on roads and dividing clearly the ride paths from freeway and expressway. Give us a safer road right of cycling even in cities. Second, the government or non-beneficial organizations may hold more cycling activities because people can make friends and know the routes by joining activities. When they make cycling a habit, they may replace their motors with bikes. Third, the government policy should be clear and complete.

After doing the research, we realize that cycling is beneficial to people and to the environment. Once each of us can do a little, we believe that people can have a perfect environment. As the name of our topic, people can enjoy cycling in the green wind: fresh, natural, and healthy.
Cycling in the Green Wind

IV. References