

Example of research paper on skyscrapers



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Introduction

Tall buildings have captured the imagination of people throughout history. In the Old Testament, the Tower of Babel builders admonished the people to build a city and a tower “ with its top in the heavens And let us make a name for ourselves” (Glaeser, 2011). The height of the tower signified success and power. It showed recognition. Tall structures also date back to the obelisks of ancient Egypt. Western city builders got this nispiration in building church spires. Then, after four centuries, secular structures surpassed the representation of height. The 281-foot spire, Trinity Church was New York’s tallest building until 1890 (Glaeser, 2011). Twentieth century’s tall edifices also showcase the 1, 000-foot Eiffel Tower which was 700 feet taller than the Cathedral of Notre-Dame.

This research paper shall explore height as the symbol of power. It shall discuss various tall buildings and structures and how it relates well with the city’s prominence in various aspects of its architecture and design, culture, economy, political power, among others. This author chose to define height as a symbol of power in relation to the edifice’s physical and aesthetic representation. The paper intends to show how the physical world relates with the material and the spiritual worlds. It also aims to reflects the

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affluence of the edifice with the internal bounty of the city where the structure is built.

The terms “ edifice,” “ buildings” and “ structure” are going to be alternately used to define tall buildings or skyscrapers, in general. Success and power and triumph of the city where the building is situated will also refer to the material affluence and stability of the country or city in aspects such as political, economic, social/cultural, military security, etc.

The main thesis of this paper is that skyscrapers manifest the triumph of a city. It reflects the environment’s richness in terms of financial, human and material resources. A tall building is often an indication of a city’s success. Often, tall buildings are planned and built in order to showcase the success and power of the place where it is built. This thesis statement is the author’s own point of view based on the study of different tall edifices around the world.

In the following sections, this paper shall discuss various tall buildings and how they came to be. It will highlight the structure, the materials and the political and soci-economic contexts by which the structure was built. Along the way, the paper will also touch on the history of skyscrapers, their main features, the way these structures were built, among others. Indeed, many famous skyscrapers will be discussed in this paper.

Skyscrapers in the City

Skyscraper was the term used during the 1880s to depict the tall buildings which were constructed in the major cities of the United States (Skyscraper Website. (2001). However, tall buildings have been built since the Middle Ages and they were called towers. Towers were usually made of heavy stone and have thick, sturdy walls and lesser windows. This was why towers were

often dark and cramped. Then, Gothic cathedrals showed long, stone arms or buttresses which carry the cathedrals' weight. This enabled the walls to be filled with stained glasses (Skyscraper Website. (2001). The first modern skyscrapers were actually built with the emergence of steel. This was during the Industrial Revolution when engineers began to make structures using iron and steel (Reynolds, 1984).

The city of Chicago showcased the first remarkable skyscraper. It was a ten story Home Insurance Building which was supported by a steel skeleton of vertical columns and horizontal beams (Reynolds, 1984). Two years later, another tall building was built in Chicago. This was the Montauk Building. It was built with steel reinforcement. Iron frames also supported earlier edifices like the McCullough Shot and Lead Tower in New York and the St. Ouen dock warehouse near Paris (Reynolds, 1984). Modern structural designs made skyscrapers lighter and taller. They were also made to withstand the strong winds. Today's skyscrapers are taller as new, innovative designs and structures and building methods were discovered.

The tallest skyscraper in the world, Burj Khalifa, also known as Burj Dubai, is the most prominent skyscrapers in the world (Maly, 2013). It stands at 828 m. (2, 717 ft). This was initially constructed in September 2004 and was completed in October 2009. It is located near Dubai's main business district. This skyscraper costs about US\$1. 5 billion. It houses the prestigious Armani Residences which was sold for US\$3, 500 per sq ft (over US\$37, 500 per m²) (Maly, 2013).

Fig. 1. Burj Khalifa

The second tallest skyscraper is Taipei 101, also known as the Taipei World Financial Center. It is a landmark skyscraper situated in Xinyi District, Taipei,

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Taiwan (Maly, 2013). It actually held the record for being the tallest building from 2004 until 201, when Burj Khalifa opened. It was also the tallest LEED building in the world. Taipei 101 serves as an icon of modern Taiwan. The building was architecturally created as a symbol of the evolution of technology and Asian tradition. Its postmodernist design integrates traditional and modern design elements. Taipei 101 is also built to withstand typhoons and earthquakes. A multi-level shopping mall links the tower houses to so many fashion retail stores, clubs and restaurants.

The third tallest skyscraper is Shanghai World Financial Center, a super tall skyscraper in Pudong, Shanghai, China. It is a mixed use building consisting of conference rooms, hotels, observation decks, and offices. There are also shopping malls on the first floors. Park Hyatt Shanghai is located on the 79th to the 93rd floors and serves as the second highest hotel in the world (Maly, 2013). Another tall building, the Petronas Towers in Malaysia is connected by an adoptive sky bridge on its 42nd floor. This design improves the circulation of people between the towers. It also serves as an escape route from one tower to another, in case of emergency (Skyscraper Website, 2001).

Fig. 2. Table of Skyscrapers in the World

As Maly (2013) puts it, “ architecture is crystallized power.” A spectacular construction reflects the wealth and influence used in fulfilling it. There is a strong link between a robust economy and skyscrapers. Hence, most skyscrapers are located in the big cities of the world, where architectural power manifest the city’s overall powers. Today’s skyscrapers lie in the heart of China and the Middle East, where affluence abound.

As shown by the illustrated three major skyscrapers, the rapidly growing world economy has been witnessed by the major financial centers to

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enduring heights. The skylines of Dubai, Shanghai, Taipei and the old fame of New York, London, among others, pay tribute to the market affluence of these cities. The world's tallest buildings in major cities reflect this growth. The most remarkable city which has housed various prominent skyscrapers is no less than Dubai, in UAE. It has grown explosively. Being an oil rich country, the emirate of Dubai on the Persian Gulf invested heavily into construction, which major economies did decades ago. At present, Dubai is the place where the tallest building in the world is located. The 2, 684-foot Burj Khalifa pay homage to the wealth and grandeur of the prominent city in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, New York City remains the major city with various ksycrapers. It has 35 towers over 700 feet and no other city in the world holds such tall buildings. However, China is quickly catching up as Hong Kong is the second major city with the most skyscrapers. It has 30 tall towers while Shanghai also has 21 towers (Zumbrum, 2009). Shanghai is the fourth major city with the most skyscrapers.

According to reports, the foundations for the future skyscrapers are now being laid around the globe. In Shanghai, the 1, 614-foot Shanghai World Financial Center will further be expanded into a 2, 073-foot Shanghai Tower. This will become a trio of towers in Shanghai's financial district (Zumbrum, 2009). In the United States, the cities of New York and Chicago are racing to build their brand new skyscrapers. The Freedom Tower or the World Trade Center One in New York will reach 1, 776 feet. Chicago is also gearing up for its Chicago Spire, a planned 2, 000 feet building which will make Chicago City the home of the Tallest tower in the U. S. (Zumbrum, 2009).

All these skycraper plans are dependent on the state of the economy in each

country. Across the world, building projects are postponed by various economic developments. For instance, financial collapses would often lead to the fall of the demand for more office spaces. The lack of financial activities will certainly lead to ceasing building projects.

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