



Evaluation of Popular Recreation Places in Konya in Terms of Safety and Maintenance Criteria: In The Case of Kalehan Ecdat and Japon Parks

Sertaç GÜNGÖR^{1,*}

¹Selcuk University, Faculty of Architecture and Design, Department of Landscape Architecture, Konya, Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Both the negative impact of the covid pandemic that we have experienced in the last 2 years, and the understanding of having green areas with higher standards have come to the fore more today. While the longing for green spaces has increased in individuals who are closed in their homes in the pandemic environment, the necessity of these green spaces to be more well-maintained and safer has emerged, considering the pandemic conditions. The aim of this research is to determine the status of the facilities and the park in general in Kalehan-Ecdat and Japon Parks, two of the most popular urban parks in Konya, and to compare them with each other in terms of maintenance and security. These two popular parks constitute the main material of the research. A total of 256 visitors using the parks were surveyed on a voluntary basis, paying attention to the pandemic hygiene conditions, face-to-face and online using Google surveys. Kalehan-Ecdat and Japon parks were evaluated by the park users in terms of the well-maintained and safety of the facilities they contain and the park in general, in order to determine their current status and to compare them with each other. While 60% of the users found both parks well-maintained, 4% found them unmaintained. When the security conditions of the parks were evaluated, Kalehan-Ecdat park, which has straight access roads and patrols in the park, was found to be 70% safe in terms of circulation, while the Japon park, which had deserted areas in places due to its lively design, was found to be 50% safe.

1. Introduction

A landscape design understanding that is physically, socially, and visually adequate and has a high standard has started to gain importance today. Urban spaces are of great importance in meeting the needs in this direction in the daily life cycle between work and home. The most important of such places are the city parks, which contain many recreational opportunities and facilities. Urban Park areas can be defined as common use areas organized by city administrations for the purpose of people resting, walking, performing various recreational activities and approaching nature. (Güngör and Polat 2017). Urban green spaces are vital for cities to achieve sustainability. Optimum design and management of green space is necessary to counter the pressure from increased use due to urban concentration. Green spaces within the city are important not only for the bio-physical functioning of cities, but also for social functionality, such as reducing the urban heat island effect or

preserving biodiversity. The primary social function of green spaces is recreation, but green spaces also have other socio-cultural benefits. For example, they provide opportunities for social interaction or mental regeneration and are important for human health. However, as the urban population grows, cities face the challenge of ensuring that growing numbers of populations continue to have equal access to the benefits of green spaces. (Schrammeijer et al. 2022).

It is important for the developing urban ecosystem to adequately assess the role and benefits of green spaces for people living in the city. In the last decade, the concept of ecosystem services has gained importance in sustainability and quality of life discussions. Also, at the policy level, more emphasis is placed on human dependence on nature. In urban areas, the direction of intangible benefits or cultural ecosystem services is very important, and the quality of green space is an important factor in how people receive cultural ecosystem services. In order to strengthen this link in urban areas, it is

* Corresponding author email: sertac@selcuk.edu.tr

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necessary to have an understanding of the quality and management of urban ecosystem services to ensure sustainable urban planning and general well-being. Urban green spaces have been the subject of studies in different areas, but correlations with assumed benefits are generally based on their presence/amount. Therefore, green spaces are a complement to the urban physical structure. These spaces are a kind of urban land use with ecological, social and economic characteristics (Sarcheshmeh et al, 2020).

Urban parks are areas that provide opportunities for exercise, recreation and social interactions for disabled and elderly people. Especially city parks, which are easily accessible by users, play an important role in maintaining and regaining a healthy lifestyle (Sung et al. 2022).

It is the primary duty of city administrators to keep the facilities operational in order to provide suitable physical and social environments to park users and to provide them with interesting experiences. Especially in urban areas, limited parking space, high usage density and high diversity of activities make it difficult to fulfill these goals (Gobster, 2002).

One of the biggest problems in the management of parks today is being able to reconcile the conflicting interests of the different groups that use them. Those who seek a quiet environment, those who play lively and noisy games, dog walkers, picnickers, young people, the elderly, athletes and children all want to do whatever activity they want at that moment without being disturbed. In addition, different researchers argue that park conditions, maintenance, policies and programs affect park use and physical activity levels (San Jose, 2014).

Urban open spaces such as public parks and green spaces are important health-promoting facilities that play an increasingly critical role in contributing to the sustainable future of cities. At this stage, it is necessary to make the right planning, design and maintenance programs for the parks. The design and management of the park should take into account the recreational needs of all target groups it is intended to serve (Yücel 2020).

Although the wishes and expectations of the people who will use the park are determined by various methods at the planning stage, there are very few studies that measure the impressions and reactions of the users about the park after the realization of the park (Altınçekiç and Erdönmez, 2001).

Today, the understanding of physical, social and visual adequate and superior standards of outdoor arrangement has begun to find its place. Urban spaces are of great importance in meeting the needs in this direction in the daily life environment. The most important of these types of spaces are urban parks, which contain many recreational opportunities and facilities (Polat and Önder, 2004).

Preferences in the visual evaluation of the environment and the determination of environmental protection. The human-environment relationship and the

interactions used are important in terms of preserving the character of the external environment (Bozhüyük, 2007).

Green areas are areas that allow individuals who work indoors all day to relax in nature. Urban green spaces in cities are often defined as the lungs that allow the people of the city to breathe. Today, the idea that urban green spaces are an integral and very important part of a city is accepted. (Belmeziti, Cherqui and Kaufmann, 2018).

It is possible for a healthy and living city to exist to the extent that all individuals can live peacefully, comfortably and move freely (Baş 2016).

The purpose of this research; It is to determine the current status of the two most important urban parks in the Selçuklu district of Konya and the facilities in them in terms of security and maintenance criteria. In addition, it is to obtain information about user experiences within the scope of park visits of park users. The general conditions of the facilities in the parks will be revealed and suggestions will be made to use the park areas more effectively with the findings obtained.

2. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted in Konya. These two popular parks constitute the main material of the research. A total of 256 visitors using the parks were surveyed on a voluntary basis, paying attention to the pandemic hygiene conditions, face-to-face and online using Google surveys. Kalehan-Ecdat and Japon parks were evaluated by the park users in terms of the well-maintained and safety of the facilities they contain and the park in general, to determine their status and to compare them with each other.

3. Results and Discussion

While 60% of the users found both parks well-maintained, 4% found them unmaintained.

When the security conditions of the parks are evaluated, Kalehan-Ecdat park, which has straight access roads and patrols in the park, was found to be 70% safe in terms of circulation, while the Japon park, which had deserted areas in places due to its lively design, was found to be 50% safe.

In the last ten years, intensive afforestation studies have been carried out in Konya city parks. However, exotic species are generally preferred in these studies. As a result, adaptation and maintenance problems arise, and even plants dry up. While great efforts are made to increase the vegetation cover of the city parks to a sufficient level and to increase the growth rate, the principle of sustainability is not observed.

It is necessary to create opportunities for park users who are in demand for other recreational activities. Physical activities reduce the risk of some chronic diseases. The construction of facilities, especially for those who

want to do sports and physical activity, is considered important in terms of human health and life comfort.

A total of 256 visitors using the parks were surveyed on a voluntary basis, paying attention to the pandemic hygiene conditions, face-to-face and online using Google surveys. Within the scope of the research, 256 park users were interviewed. Their demographic characteristics are given in Table 1. The rates of the demographic characteristics of the users have emerged at a level to represent the whole city of Konya. Kalehan-Ecdat and Japon parks were evaluated by the park users in terms of the well-maintained and safety of the facilities they contain and the park in general, in order to determine their current status and to compare them with each other. While 60% of the users found both parks well-maintained, 4% found them neglected. When the security conditions of the parks are evaluated, the Kalehan-Ecdat park, which has smooth access roads in terms of circulation and patrols in the park, was found to be 70% safe. The Japon park, which has uninhabited areas due to its dynamic design, was found to be 50% safe.

As can be seen in Table 2,

Safety: good+very good= %49,99

Safety: bad+very bad= %1,95

Table 1

The Demographic Characteristics of the Users

Gender	Woman (%)		Man (%)									
		123	48,05	133	55,95							
Age	18-34		35-49		50-64		65 >					
	153	59,77	56	21,87	44	17,18	3	1,18				
Residence	Karatay		Meram		Selçuklu		Other					
	32	12,5	20	7,81	201	78,51	3	1,18				
Education	Primary School		High School		College		University		MSc-PhD			
	20	7,8	46	17,96	55	21,48	127	49,6	8	3,16		
Income (₺)	Min.wage		6000-9000		9001-12000		12001-15000		15000 >			
	26	10,15	79	30,85	104	40,62	42	16,4	5	1,98		
Profession	Worker		Civil Servant		Tradesman		Student		Housewife		Retired	
	16	6,25	196	76,56	21	8,2	18	7	4	1,56	1	0,43

Table 2

Current situation of the Kalehan-Ecdat park in Konya

Evaluate the Kalehan-Ecdat park in Konya in terms of safety.

Very bad (%)		Bad(%)		Normal (%)		Good (%)		Very good (%)		Undecided (%)	
1	0,39	4	1,56	70	27,35	77	30,08	103	40,23	1	0,39

Evaluate the Kalehan-Ecdat park in Konya in terms of maintenance.

Very badly-maintained		Badly-maintained		Normal		Well-maintained		Very well-maintained		Undecided	
1	0,39	10	3,90	94	36,66	65	25,39	85	33,27	1	0,39

Table 3

Current situation of the Japon park in Konya

Evaluate the Japon park in Konya in terms of safety.

Very bad (%)		Bad(%)		Normal (%)		Good (%)		Very good (%)		Undecided (%)	
1	0,39	4	1,56	122	47,67	71	27,73	57	22,26	1	0,39

Evaluate the Japon park in Konya in terms of maintenance.

Very badly-maintained		Badly-maintained		Normal		Well-maintained		Very well-maintained		Undecided	
1	0,39	9	3,51	92	35,94	67	26,17	86	33,6	1	0,39

The parks are expected to provide service for the demands and needs of people in different age groups, gender, and occupational groups separately. Therefore, it is

Maintenance: good+very good= %58,66

Maintenance: bad+very bad= %4,29

As can be seen in Table 3,

Safety: good+very good= %49,99

Safety: bad+very bad= %1,95

Maintenance: good+very good= %59,77

Maintenance: bad+very bad= %3,9

In the last decade, intensive plantation works were carried out in Konya urban parks. However, in general, exotic species are preferred in these studies. As a result of this, adaptation and maintenance problems arise and even the plants dry out. While a great effort is made to raise the vegetation of the urban parks to a sufficient level and to increase the growth rate, the principle of sustainability is not considered. It is necessary to create opportunities for the park users who are in demand for other recreational activities. Physical activities decrease the risk of certain chronic diseases. The construction of the facilities especially for people who want to do sport and physical activity is considered important in terms of human health and life comfort.

necessary to consider designs, with priority, that give users peace and confidence, and that will enable them to

relax, rest and most importantly be satisfied with that place in the planning.

- Park administrations should increase their maintenance works,
- The toilet facilities in the parks must be sufficient and quality,
- It is necessary to increase the usage related to the water element and to use materials with higher quality,
- The sufficiency and quality of the parking areas should be increased,
- The quality of the playgrounds and the park officers should be increased,
- The facilities that will provide opportunities for recreational activities should be established in the park,
- The park officers should be educated, and they should be carefully selected from among those who will adapt to the job.

4. Conclusion

The duplication of such studies will be the basis for the renewal of the parks in use, will increase user satisfaction for these parks, and will shed light on other related professional disciplines, especially landscape architecture, in future planning, design, implementation and management studies.

It is expected that the parks will serve the wishes and needs of people of different ages, genders and occupations separately. For this reason, designs that give the user peace and security, relax, rest and, most importantly, ensure that he is satisfied with where he is, should be considered as a priority.

In this study, by focusing on the Japon and Kalehan Parks located in the city center, the demands of the users for urban parks and green spaces and their general evaluations of these parks and green spaces were determined to improve the quality of life. These data will be guiding for creating urban park strategies in the coming years. In the results of working, Park managements should increase their maintenance work, the toilets in the parks should be in sufficient number and quality, the use of water elements should be increased, and higher quality materials should be used, the adequacy and quality of the parking areas should be increased, the arrangements made for the disabled should be made according to the standards, the equipment and the playgrounds should be used. It was observed that the quality of the park staff should be increased, there should be interesting facilities that will allow recreational activities in the park, the park staff should be trained to establish healthy social relations with the public, and they should be carefully selected from people who will adapt to the job.

Due to its increasing population, the city of Konya needs more and more recreational areas as well as more green areas every year. It should not be forgotten by those who run cities that people will always need accessible, safe and well-maintained park areas. However,

due to the limited number of surveys used in the study area and the low sample size due to covid conditions, the current research results should only be generalized after a study with wider participation to understand the general approach of the local people to the city. Improving the park areas by considering the needs and demands of the users and finding solutions to the problems will increase the level of satisfaction with the city parks and the number of visitors visiting these parks.

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