



WHY PEOPLE VISIT PARKS? THE ROLE OF GENDER, AGE AND EDUCATION AMONG URBAN PARK VISITORS IN FAISALABAD

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ABSTRACT

Parks are the response to unhealthy densely populated urban ecology. Parks are the recreational and open spaces providing the people a source of enjoyment and refreshment. The present study examines the trend of urban residents of Faisalabad visiting urban parks. For this purpose qualitative as well as quantitative data was collected through questionnaire. It was observed that 60% of the people are spending 1-2 hours at afternoon time and other in the evening or morning time and various reasons are morning people are visiting parks for jogging, walk and self-satisfaction, in afternoon for self-satisfaction and in the evening for the purpose of recreation. The largest proportion of urban park visitor was Teen age group consisting majorly on male respondents and they were mostly engaged in exercise and walk. It was also observed that most of the respondents feel pleasure while visiting park.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Parks are the urban landscapes which are serving many functions as the providers of many facilities like, environmental benefits, active and passive recreations, and wildlife habitats (Solecki, 1995). These are the community assets which are providing the leisure and enhancing the perceived value and image of any community. The urban parks can serve the need and interest of all groups of people of a community: young or old, groups or individuals, male or female etc. (Hayward, 1989). The urban parks are an important and crucial part of any urban environment. The concept of urban parks can be traced back in the era of ancient Greece, where the Athens created the public

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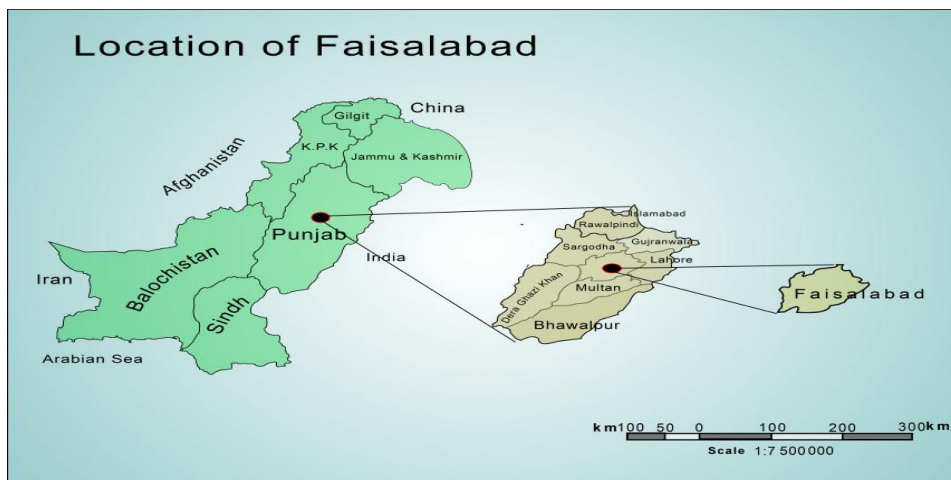
parques for the citizens (Reeves, 2000). Parks are considered important for public mental health and provide the opportunities to enhance the value of life for people of all age groups and abilities (Cohen *et al.*, 2006). Many researches exist which reveals that various age groups and gender have different interests of visiting parks such as research has explored the impact of gender and age on visiting parks. The geographical inequalities of urban parks are increasing social and environmental discrimination and also less access to urban parks (Walker, 2004). Accessibility is one of the most important concerns in observing the trend of population visiting urban parks because it highly depends on spatial distribution of urban parks in any region (Zhang, 2011). If the parks are located at a place where most of the people cannot access them they are usually devoid of many physical and social activities (Ottensmann, 2008). It is reviewed that various researchers e.g. Smale (1998) and Crespo *et al.* (2000) worked on the recreational facilities and behavior of people visiting park while Paul (2003), Powell (2003) worked on the importance of parks for physical activity and role of parks in socio-economic development of society. Therefore the aim of this research is to explain the role of gender, age and education of people toward parks in Faisalabad in a better way. As many researchers have worked on various aspects of parks therefore the present study has examined the reasons behind visiting park, feelings while visiting park and time spent in the park. Faisalabad is an industrial city also known as Manchester of Pakistan. It has many parks of various purposes e.g. ladies recreation, child recreation and for exercise. But two of them (Jinnah & Canal) are more important in terms of total population visiting and area.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Description of the Study Area and Sample

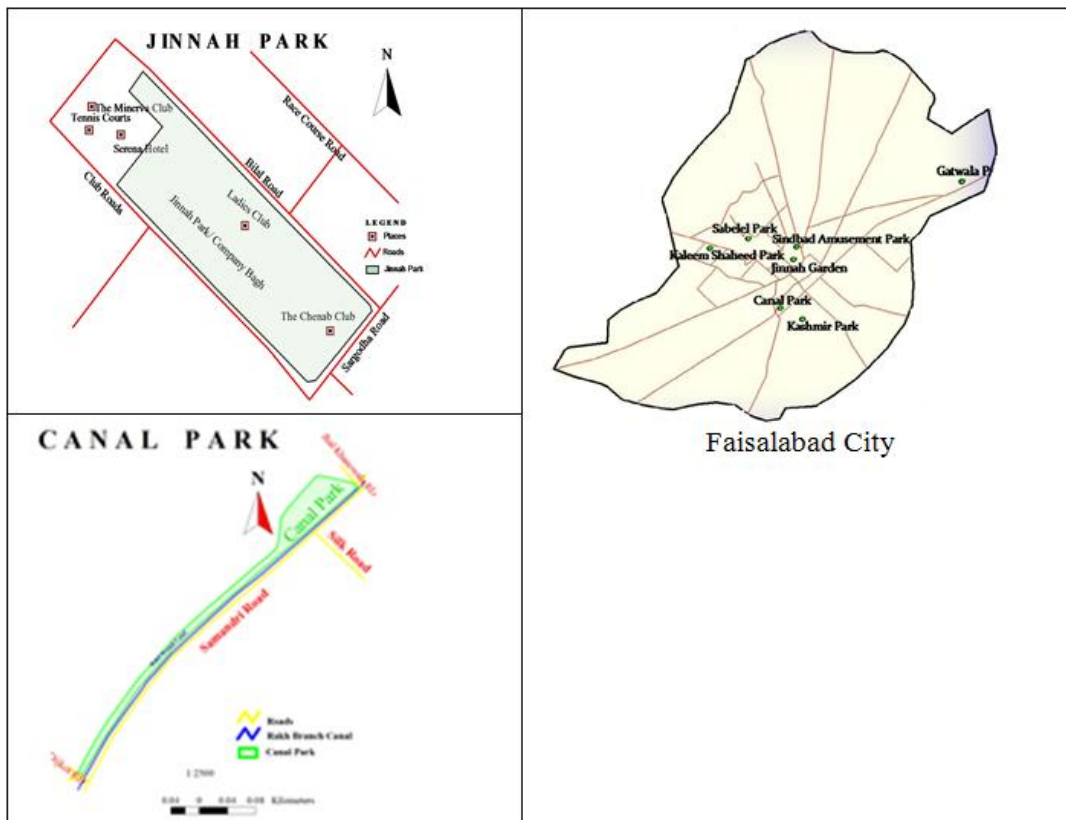
The sample was taken from the common park visitors. The data was collected through both primary as well as secondary techniques. Two major parks Jinnah Garden and Canal Park of Faisalabad were selected for the purpose. Jinnah Garden has more recreational and picnic facilities as compare to Canal Garden. In terms of acreage Jinnah Garden covers more areas than Canal Garden. For this research the data was collected from general park visitors at different time of the day. The data was collected through both primary as well as secondary techniques.

Figure- 1. Location of Study Area



The research purports to check the trend, behavior and reason of visiting urban parks among urban people of Faisalabad city. The descriptive statistical approach was used to study the trend. A structured questionnaire was used as primary data instrument. The questionnaires were distributed among the park visitors at different times of the day and respondents were selected randomly regardless of their class or social background. Reason of Visiting Park, Time of visit and Feeling associated while visiting are set as the objectives of the questionnaire. Data were coded into SPSS in order give them graphical presentation.

Figure- 2.Locations of Urban Parks



The questionnaire was focused on the following points:

- **Reason of visiting Park:** What reason motivate people to visit parks? And what activities they engage themselves while Visiting Park?
- **Perceptual Dimensions:** What kind of feelings people experience during visit and what time of the day attract them more to visit park?
- **Importance of parks:** to check the level of satisfaction about availability of parks among the communities of the respondents by qualitative field observations and open ended questioning.

A sample size of one hundred was defined to collect the data. After the collection of data, SPSS was used for analysis. Descriptive statistics was applied to find out the relationships between different variables.

2.2. Measurements

Independent variables were Age, Gender, and Education in present study whereas dependent variables were reason of Visiting Park, feeling while park visit, time spent in the park and time of Visiting Park as also investigated by Roovers (2002). Respondents were also classified into different age groups while education, reason of visiting park and feeling was assessed by asking structured questions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study was exploratory in nature which focused on the importance and trend of people visiting urban parks. The study indicates that Parks are essential for human health, physical activity and refreshment as the results of (Gavin *et al.*, 2010) also reveals. The following key results were concluded from the analysis:

Figure- 3. Time spent and Reason of Visiting Park

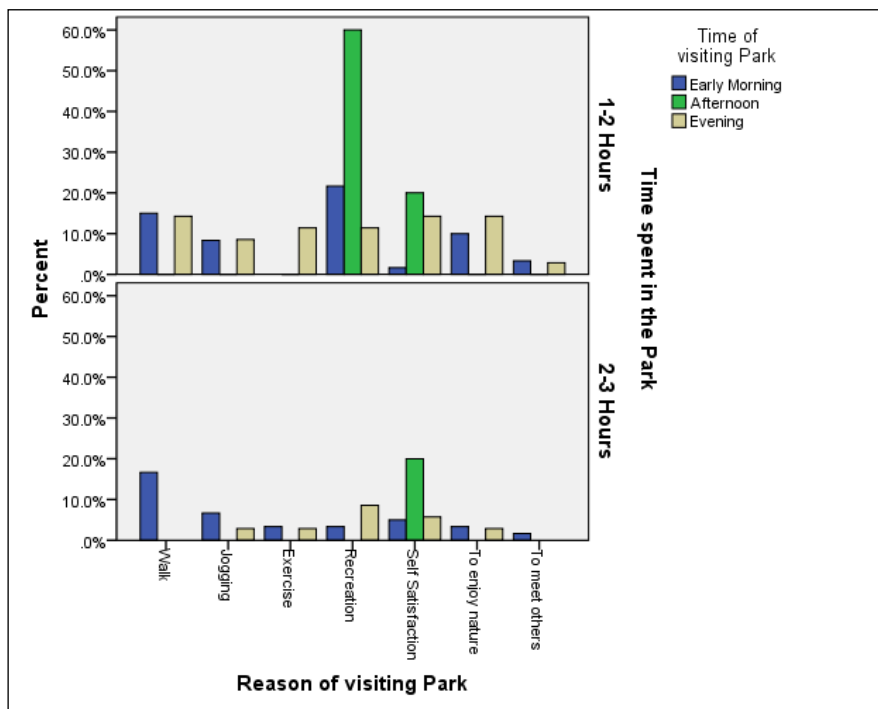


Figure 3 shows the relation between time of Visiting Park and time spent in the park. Results show that about 15% people spent 1-2 hours for walking in early morning and 18% people spent 2-3 hours for walking in early morning and 14% people spent 1-2 hours for walking in the park in the evening, for jogging about 8% people spent 1-2 hours and about 6% people spent 2-3 hours in the park in early morning for jogging and 9% people spent 1-2 hours, 3% people spent 2-3 hours in the park at evening time. For exercise 4% people spent 2-3 hours in early morning and about 11% people 1-2 hours do exercise in the park in evening while only 3% people spent 2-3 hours for exercise in evening. For recreation 22% people spent 1-2 hours in early morning and 4% people spent 2-3 hours for recreation in the morning and 60% people spent 1-2 hours in the park for

recreation in the afternoon. About 12% people spent 1-2 hours in the evening for recreation while about 9% people spent 2-3 hours for recreation in the park in evening. 1% people spent 1-2 hour for self-satisfaction while 5% people spent 2-3 hours in the morning in the park. 20% people spent 1-2 hours for self-satisfaction in the afternoon and 20% people spent 2-3 hours in the park in afternoon. 13% people spent 1-2 hours for self-satisfaction in the evening while 6% spent 2-3 hours in the park. 11% people spent 1-2 hours in park for enjoy the nature in the morning time while 3% spent 2-3 hours. 13% people spent 1-2 hours in the park for enjoy the nature in the evening while 2% spent 2-3 hours in evening. 4% spent 1-2 hours in the morning for meet others in the park while 1% spent 2-3 hours in the morning and 3% people spent 1-2 hours in the evening in the park to meet others.

Figure- 4. Gender based study in visiting Park

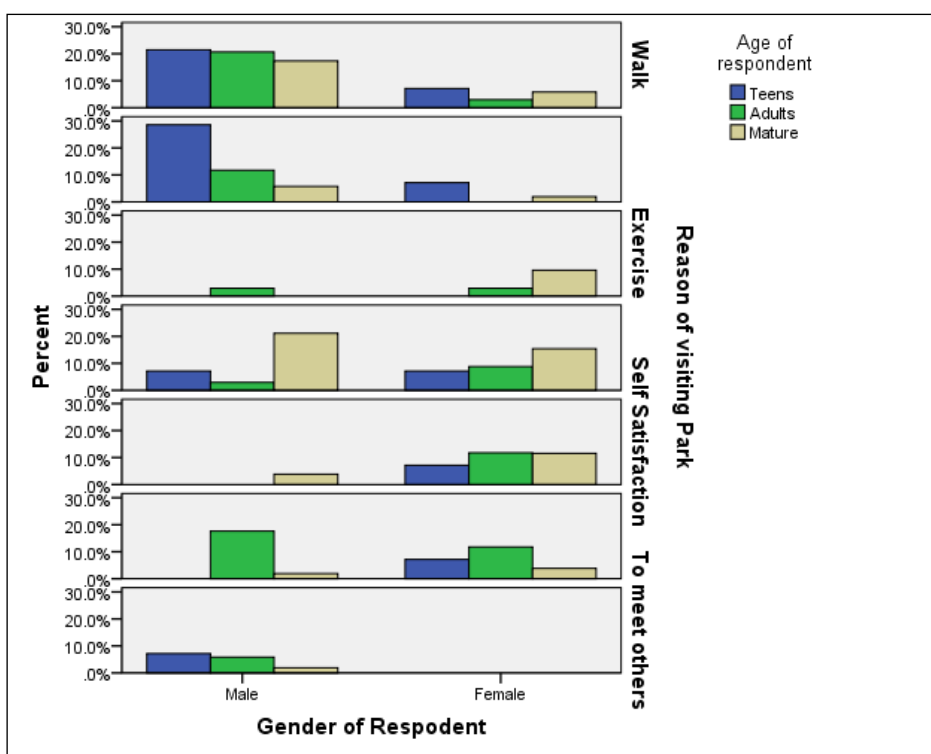


Figure 4 shows the relation between reason of Visiting Park and age of respondent. 21% teen’s male visit park for walk and 20% adults and 18% mature male visit park for walk for 1-2 hours. While 6% teens female and 2% adult’s female and 5% mature female visit park for walk for 1-2 hours, 28% teen’s male visit park for walk for 2-3 hours, 10% adult’s male and 5% mature male spent 2-3 hours for walk whereas 7% teens female and 2% mature female spent 2-3 hours for walk. As for adult male are concerned 3% spent 1-2 hours in park for exercise whereas 3% adult’s female spent 1-2 hours in the park for exercise and 9% mature female spent 1-2 hours for exercise, 7% teen male spent 2-3 hours in the park for exercise and 3% adult male and 20% mature male spent 2-3 hours for exercise in the park, 6% teen female spent 2-3 hours in the park for exercise, 7% adult female and 18% mature female spent 2-3 hours in park for exercise. As for self-

satisfaction is considered 4% mature male spent 1-2 hours in park for self-satisfaction, 9% teen female spent 1-2 hours for self-satisfaction 12% adult female and 12% mature female spent 1-2 hours for self-satisfaction, 18% adult male and 1% mature male spent 2-3 hours for self-satisfaction, 8% teen female and 12% adult female and 3% mature female spent 2-3 hours for self-satisfaction whereas 7% teen male 5% adult male and 1% mature male visit the park to meet others.

Figure- 5.Time spent and Feeling experienced

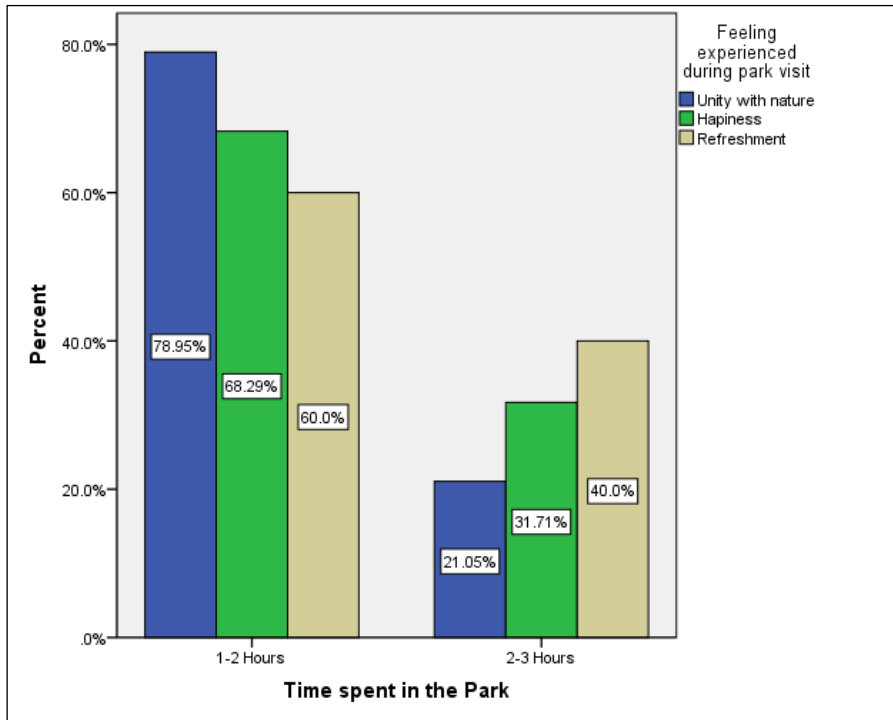


Figure 5 shows the relation between feelings experienced during park visit and time spent in the park. 78.95% people spent 1-2 hours and feel unity with nature 68.29% people spent 1-2 hours and feel happiness and 60% people spent 1-2 hours in park and feel refreshment. 21.05% people spend 2-3 hours in the park and feel unity with nature and 31.71% people feel happiness and 40% people feel refreshment after spent 2-3 hours in the park.

Table- 1.Trend of people towards park according to their level of Education

Reason of visiting Park	Walk	Education of Respondent			Total
		Metric	Intermediate	Becholer	
	Walk	6	8	10	24
	Jogging	3	6	4	13
	Exercise	1	4	2	7
	Recreation	10	6	9	25
	Self-Satisfaction	2	10	1	13
	To enjoy nature	6	5	3	14
	To meet others	2	1	1	4
Total		30	40	30	100

The findings of the table 1 explain the relationship between reasons of visiting park according to level of education. It shows that the main trend of Metric level education of respondents belong to recreation and high trend of respondents from Intermediate level of education visit parks for the sake of self-satisfaction. Similarly more educated people are visiting park for the purpose of walk. It shows that as age has great role in visiting parks similarly the low education and high education also has effect on various reasons of visiting parks.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the research shows that people have positive feelings while visiting park. The role of gender, age and education in describing the reason and purpose of visiting parks among the urban population of Faisalabad was the focus of this study. Age and gender has a great significance on the reason of Visiting Park as evident from the result that most of the park visitors were males as also described by many authors in their research. While in terms of spending maximum time in the park were male respondents for walk, jogging and self-satisfaction. On the other hand female respondents replied that their main focus is to enjoy nature behind park visit. Mostly male respondents had real concern in spending 2-3 hours in the park in morning and evening time to meet their friends and to enjoy nature. In this regard the gender was the best factor in defining the reason why people visit parks at various time of the day. Whereas the role of education is concerned most of the people from Becholer s' group of education were visiting park for the purpose of walk, jogging and to meet others.

The reason of visiting the park is very important thing to keep under consideration. The study revealed that most of the visitor in Faisalabad visit the parks for a morning or evening walk for men and the reason for women is often recreation. Walk and recreation are two major reasons behind visiting the park as these two categories cover almost 50% of the respondents. The study indicates the different point of view of male and female for visiting the parks, as the majority of man visit the park for walk, jogging and recreation, whereas in case of women the reasons are recreation and self-satisfaction. In case of enjoying the nature, both the male and females are equal. Through field observation and open ended answers it was evident that most of the people were not satisfied with the availability of the parks at community level. Because park are located at a distance from main residential areas and it becomes difficult to access them easily. So, people suggested that either parks are small or large they should be located near to residential areas so that they can access them easily.

Future research about park visits among urban population of Faisalabad can be extending with reference to other factors like social status, ethnicity and equity.

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