



ANALYSING OF RESIDENTS' UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE INHIBITING FACTORS OF USING URBAN PARKS

Mahdieh Pazhouhanfar¹

¹Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Golestan University, Gorgan, Iran

ABSTRACT

Studying on people usage of urban parks indicates that although people pay a lot of attention to the urban parks and talk about different advantages of it, some of the barriers with a different view among people cause negative attitudes which lead people not to use parks. The purpose of this study first is to recognize and classify the residents' points of view and their images about inhibiting factors of visiting to the parks and then surveying the difference of these factors in various groups of users. In this study a survey was conducted among 300 visitors randomly selected from visitors of two urban parks in the city of Gorgan in Iran, regardless of their social extraction or professional background. Visitors respond to a questionnaire about use rating and inhibiting factors on the use of urban parks. Factor analyses revealed four clearly distinguishable factors (quality, safety, accessibility and personal problems). Three first factors (quality, safety and access) had more than 55 percent of all of the answers which show the highest and most important inhibiting factors. Quality, safety and accessibility were known as the most important factors. The results showed that there is no significant difference between the four factors in the user groups. Understanding and finding these inhibiting factors will help the urban managers, policy makers through recognizing and classifying these factors step by step start to solve them.

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Keywords: Accessibility, Crowd, Gorgan, Quality of environment, Safety.

Contribution/ Originality

This study is exploring the residents' points of view and their images about inhibiting factors of visiting to the parks and then analyzing the link between these factors and the use of urban parks.

1. INTRODUCTION

While ecology is natural for the parks, social, economical, and designing functions were developed along with cities' developments (Hami, 2009). Urban development caused a repeated

gratitude from nature in lots of different parts of the world. The nature is placed near the crowded and populated cities and seems it found a nostalgic situation in times that people like to link to it and feel it.

Inside the cities' parks are used mostly for entertainment and relaxing and it was completely clear that the existence of parks in an urban ecosystem and profiting from it, will promote the quality of life (Daneshpour and Mahmoodpour, 2009). It's no doubt that parks and urban parks should be one of the most important factors for stable natural and humanistic living in today's urbanism. If it is programmed well that people use it frequently, it will have a desirable effect on clearing body and soul of human (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989; Stigsdotter, 2010; Stigsdotter and Grahn, 2011). Urban parks as the most important public places of the city play a great role in the promotion of public health of the society. The scientists found that using the parks and green spaces can help people to be relaxed and reduce anxiety and make them younger and they can have an important role in increasing the health (Reklaitiene, 2014; Wolf and Wohlfart, 2014). However, why the people don't go to the parks?

People of different places and cultures normally appreciate the parks and have a positive attitude toward it. Despite of these attitudes a lot of the problems will cause them not to go to the parks.

In a study for studying the people's image of the three parks in Tehran, lack of protection and crowded were the largest problems of the parks that were mentioned (Daneshpour and Mahmoodpour, 2009). Crowd in parks is known as a negative factor for estimating the quality of entertainment places (Arnberger, 2012). Some people think that urban parks are crowded, dirty and even horrible and unpleasant place (Ozguner and Kendle, 2006). Problems like trashes and garbage, drawings and wall writings and deliberate destruction will have the same effect (Özgüner, 2011). These problems especially about natural urban parks are true because it is inconsistent with the general requirements of aesthetic [9].

In addition to aesthetic reasons and environmental factors, the most important inhibiting factors in parks are safety which leads to not visiting to the parks (Refsauge *et al.*, 2012; Farbod *et al.*, 2014; Hami *et al.*, 2014). Some of the people in different age groups who were in the parks note that they feel unsecured and horror in these parks. Lack of beauty, low light and tall fencing, all of these reduces the secure feeling (Jorgensen *et al.*, 2002).

Concern about the safety of the urban landscape is not only focused on the effects of culture and appearance, but also the social factors play more important role. In a city in Italy, syringe and harassment of different groups is expressed as the main reasons for anxiety and fears that half of the people, express their main reason for not visiting to the parks is lack of safety (Sanesi and Chiarello, 2006).

Normally women feel more unsecured than men in parks (Jim and Shan, 2013). They along with children and old people would have more risk of vulnerability, for example, women would consider a forest environment a threat and concern more than men. Generally low safety in parks is one of the greatest inhibiting factors which lead people not to go to parks.

Close distance and absence of parks near to the living location have an important role in visiting to the parks and is reported as one of the inhibiting factors (Abkar *et al.*, 2010;

Schipperijn, 2010). The less the distance to the park, the more times people go to park (Grahn and Stigsdotter, 2003; Nielsen and Hansen, 2007). Earlier studies indicated that nature has an important role in people's health hence; parks with natural elements and natural features have an important role in public health (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989). Studies indicated that frequent use of parks leads to stress reduction, increase in physical activity, which ultimately results in promotion of health (Nielsen and Hansen, 2007; Stigsdotter, 2010).

Daily problems and being busy is one of the greatest reasons of people not to go to the parks (Grahn and Stigsdotter, 2003; Abkar *et al.*, 2010). In today's world that most of the people are involved in their daily activities, they don't have a free time to go to park.

Generally in concluding the researches and comments, the results showed that although people pay a lot of attention to urban parks and talk about its different advantages and enjoy their experience of nature, some of the barriers with a different view among people cause negative attitudes which lead people not to use parks. Understanding and finding these inhibiting factors will help the urban managers, policy makers through recognizing and classifying these factors step by step start to solve them.

The purpose of this study first is to recognize and classify the residents' points of view and their images about inhibiting factors of visiting to the parks and then analyzing the link between these factors and the use of urban parks. According to the introduction and in order to achieve the mentioned purposes, the following questions were asked:

- What inhibiting factors cause people not to go to the parks and what is the priority?
- Is there any meaningful difference among the different groups (according to their sex, marital status, age and education)?

2. METHODOLOGY

The nature of subject is to recognize the inhibiting factors of not visiting to the parks that the importance of using the survey method would be inevitable. In order to study the measurement of inhibiting factors from residents' points of view a combination of analytical and survey methods have been used. Descriptive research with studying the documents and survey method uses questioners. The statistical population of the research is all of the people who go to the parks of Chaleh Bagh and the city park in Gorgan. The sample is containing 300 people who went to these parks (150 questioners in Chaleh Bagh Park and 150 questioners in City Park). The visitors answered a questioner about variables of inhibiting factors on using the parks on a seven point Likert scale of agreement ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7(a great deal) and frequency of use of green space (1= daily, 2= several times per week, 3= weekly, 4= monthly, 5= several times per week, 6= seldom and 7= never). In order to assure of achieving sample, because of predicting different texture of population and age of the users of the parks, the questioners were collected every day and in different times from the people visiting to the parks.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Descriptive Analysis

In this section, the findings and achieved results from the two descriptive and analytical sections are demonstrated. In descriptive section, first the whole view of the statistical sample then the concepts and main variables of the research is studied. The distribution of general properties of statistical samples (visitors) shows that 66 percent of the respondents were men and 34 percent were women that the most frequency belonged to the men; also the age variable for the young 60 percent (18-25) was the highest, and 2 percent (more than 50) was the lowest frequency. According to the level of education the lowest frequency belonged to doctorate with the frequency of 6 percent and the highest was for diploma and bachelor with the frequency of 58 percent. Also 68 percent of the respondents were single and 32 percent were married.

3.2. Inferential Analyses

3.2.1. Factor Analysis

To measure each of the 11 type we used the Likert scale about inhibiting factors of using parks and the results are provided in table 1. As the results show, the respondents' answers to most of the questions were positive. The average and standard deviation in Table 1 indicates the relative and level of agreement of the participants.

Table-1. Mean and standard division of inhibiting factors

Variables	Mean	S.D
Busy	4.70	1.70
Lack of sport place	4.52	1.81
Lack of beautiful park	4.47	1.69
Crowd	4.47	1.84
Unsafe	4.38	1.80
Untroubled	4.32	1.80
Lack of maintains	4.28	1.69
Lack of place foe child	3.91	1.71
Distance	3.77	1.60
Access	3.71	1.60
Sick	3.20	1.57

A number of analyses and interpretations will be presented in order to test the hypothesis and answer the research questions. The list consisted of 11 inhibiting factors collected from previous studies. Since, informants were considered on 11 different inhibiting factors, a factor analysis oblique rotation was performed to identify which of the different inhibiting factors formed groups together. Kaiser's Measure of Sampling Adequacy yielded 0.74, indicating that the applicability of the factor analysis in our sample is high. Factor analyses revealed 4 clearly distinguishable factors with eigenvalues >1. Each factor was called a name that was interpreted as being significant for all of the variables that form the single factor. They were named to quality of environment, safety, access and personality (Table 2). Three first factors (quality, safety and access) had more than 55 percent of all of the answers which show the highest and most important inhibiting factors.

Table-2. Orthotran/varimax rotated loadings from factor analysis of inhibiting factors.

Variables	1	2	3	4
Quality of environment				
Lack of maintenance	0.78			
Lack of playground	0.77			
Lack of sport place	0.76			
Crowd	0.63			
Lack of beautiful park	0.55			
Safety				
Untroubled		0.92		
Unsafe		0.90		
Access				
Lack of easy access to park			0.88	
Lack of near access to park			0.87	
Personality				
Busy				0.76
Sick				0.68

3.2.2. T-Test and ANOVA Analysis

Performance of T-Test and ANOVA showed no significant differences among different group (age, gender, education and marital) with regard to four inhibiting factors.

3.2.3. Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was also run to investigate relationship between inhibiting factors and use of urban parks. The result showed the significant relationship between two variables safety, access and use of urban park.

Table-3. Correlation between inhibiting factors and use of urban park

variables	R	p
Personality	0.11	0.053
Safety	0.14	0.03**
Quality of environment	0.05	0.38
Access	0.13	0.03**

Note. All values were significant ($p < 0.05$)

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Nowadays parks play an important role in people's health. Despite this, inhibiting factors will cause people not to go to the parks. So the present research with the purpose to analyze and recognize these barriers from the residents' points of view and the link between these factors and the usage of parks fulfilled. By Factor analysis of the data, four factors were found that has the highest variance of the items. Three first factors had more than 55 percent of all of the answers which show the highest and most important inhibiting factors. Review on loading concepts on first factor with high factor loading shows the people's care to the environmental factors. According to available variables, environmental factors can be divided into two factors: 1) the quality of the place including: lack of maintenance and poor cleaning of parks, crowded park and untidy and undesirable park. 2) Facilities of the place including: lack of playground and facilities for children,

and lack of beautiful park. In studying and comparing to earlier studies (Grahm and Stigsdotter, 2003; Wong, 2009; Abkar *et al.*, 2010), the results from this study shows that environmental factors are the most important inhibiting factors (Refshauge *et al.*, 2012). In general environmental factors of quality and facility play an important role in the use of parks. The more the park is cleaner and the maintenance is better, the more people go to the parks. In addition to this, the more the facilities for different groups is, the more they come to the parks.

The second inhibiting factor in parks is safety. According to the previous studies (Grahm and Stigsdotter, 2003; Sanesi and Chiarello, 2006; Abkar *et al.*, 2010), one of the mentioned reason is the safety to some the bothering behaviors of some people, that most of them prefer to use them will affect it and even people may decide not to go to these places, because they fear to be bothered. The next thing about safety is insecurity in parks that can be affected through a lot of factors like facilities for play, incorrect locating and other factors. Further studies can work on affecting factors on parks securities.

Accessibility and long distance to the park is the third inhibiting factor named accessibility. The results match to the previous studies that show accessibility to the parks lead to more use of the parks and will increase people's health (Grahm and Stigsdotter, 2003; Nielsen and Hansen, 2007; Stigsdotter, 2010). The last factor which has lower variance is personal factor like sickness and being busy.

In general the results show that the four inhibiting factors in parks respectively are: quality, safety, accessibility and personal factors and in the next step we review the relation between inhibiting factors and use of urban park. According to the results of the previous studies we found a meaningful relation between the two factors; safety and accessibility (Grahm and Stigsdotter, 2003; Abkar *et al.*, 2010; Schipperijn, 2010; Stigsdotter, 2010). This study showed that the less the distance to the park, the more people go to the park and frequent use of the parks cause to the health of the people. In addition less safety leads to the less use of the parks. If people feel secure when they are at parks they will recognize parks as a secure place to rest and relax. Understanding and finding these inhibiting factors will help the urban managers, policy makers through recognizing and classifying these factors step by step start to solve them. Although we can have different suggestions according to the findings of this study, briefly mention some points for the managers and policy makers:

- Developing parks along with developing the city to promote residents' health.
- Building and developing parks in quarters, with an accessibility for public
- Using standard kid toys to provide safety of the toys
- Presence of the police in parks and using mobile petrol and placing safety cameras to give a feeling of safety in parks.
- Increasing the park applications to make parks secure
- Review the affecting factors; environmental or social, to increase the safety in parks especially for women in next studies.
- Increasing the quality of parks in design, cleaning and maintenance
- Review the related studies in different cities with more samples is suggested

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was supported by Municipality of Gorgan, Organization of Parks and Green Space, Department of Education and Research.

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