

## **FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE USERS' SATISFACTION ON URBAN PARK**

**Salina Mohamed Ali and Abdul Hadi Nawawi**

*Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying , Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, MALAYSIA*

### **ABSTRACT**

Unlike the West, where many studies have explored how people's needs are fulfilled by urban parks, Malaysia has received very little attention from researchers. One reason for this is the fact that Malaysia has only a short public park tradition. Although folk art and stories have chronicled a long history of gardens and other parks, these spaces were only accessible to royal family members and autocrats. In Malaysia, the concept of free public parks is relatively recent, having been introduced by the British colonial government.

This research aims to analyze the current demands on urban parks in Malaysia. It specifically studies two urban parks namely the Kuala Lumpur City Center (KLCC) Park and Subang Urban Park. This research is based on data obtained from a survey questionnaire that polled public attitudes regarding the KLCC and Subang Urban Parks. The data was analyzed to determine the factors that influence potential park patrons, as well as the preferred activities of those who visit the park.

The research suggests that accessibility, sense of territoriality, activities in the park, the natural environment, and park maintenance influence participants' decisions to visit the park. In addition, it points out that participants' preferred park activities include family gatherings and passive socializing activities. The primary implications of this research are that urban parks are emerging as important public spaces in Malaysian cities, and that their continuing effectiveness is largely dependent upon a prioritizing of activities and a commitment to maintenance. This research should help landscape architects and planners expand the relationship between urban parks and public life in Malaysian cities.

*Keywords: Park, Urban Park, Public Space, Youth development.*

### **Introduction**

Parks have long been recognised as major contributors to the physical and aesthetic quality of urban neighborhoods. But a new, broader view of parks has recently been emerging. This new view goes well beyond the traditional value of parks as places of recreation and visual assets to communities, and focuses on how policymakers, practitioners, and the public can begin to think about parks as valuable contributors to larger urban policy objectives, such as job opportunities, youth development, public health, and community building.

Today, urban parks are emerging as one of the most important spaces in the urban fabric. They are multi-purpose public spaces in the city that offer social, economic, and environmental benefits. They help to enhance the image of a city, and improve the quality of urban life. Most cities have urban parks, and these have become important and valuable urban spaces. People come to them for recreation, social gathering, and passive enjoyment. Additionally, urban parks provide habitats for urban wildlife (Jamil, 2002).

Urban parks are probably among the oldest features in cities. According to Yuen (1995), parks are peaceful, tranquil, beautiful spaces to which people are intrinsically attracted. Historically, urban parks emerged from public spaces that were used as grazing land in cities or towns. Evidence from Western Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and New England towns in the United States shows that inhabitants set aside lands near their towns, cities, or villages for the common use of their citizens. The citizens used these areas, or “commons” to graze livestock, and hold the animals before selling them or using them in the village or town (Newton, 1971 & Jellicoe, 1975). Over time, these grazing lands became important spaces in the city as people started to use them for other purposes.

In the western world, the modern concept of the urban park started in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the Industrial Revolution. At this early stage, planners recognized that urban parks were important features that could improve the quality of urban life, which declined during the rapid industrialization of this time. Parks became places to escape from the stresses of chaotic industrial cities. The idea swept the United States, England, and mainland Europe. Cities in Sweden, Denmark, and Holland started to develop urban parks to improve the quality of their cities (Jellicoe, 1975). During this time, parks were often built to serve multiple motives, which usually included:

“A philosophy of social reform to improve the physical and moral welfare of the working class, a utilitarian belief in the value of open spaces and recreation for labor productivity and the dampening of social unrest, a romantic desire to bring back nature into the cities, a sense of civic pride and a psychology of social hygiene” (Yuen, 1995, p. 955).

Urban parks are very important assets to city-states such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, because these countries are highly urbanized and industrialized. In addition, since the 1990's, the need and demand for urban parks has grown in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Philippines, as these countries have become more urbanized and industrialized, and have undergone massive demographic changes.

The urban park is an asset to cities and city dwellers. It provides spaces for leisure and passive and active recreation. History shows that the uses of urban parks have changed to match the needs of their societies and cities. For example, a change in lifestyle might increase concern for health and fitness, meaning more people might come to parks for exercise. Therefore, demands for different recreation areas and activities will affect park planning and design. Urbanization, on the other hand, means more people will be in the city, creating substantial demand for open spaces, family activities, and programs for the elderly and children (Yuen, 1995). Urban parks are expected to fulfill all these disparate needs. Failure to meet current social needs may lead to disuse and neglect of urban parks. Therefore, it is important to ask how urban parks can be designed to meet the needs of their users.

Research on social behavior can offer clues on how to better plan and design urban parks. Since the establishment of urban parks in the West, one of the primary concerns among social scientists, landscape architects, and park advocates is the question of how to gauge the impact of

social behavior, and use this information to help build better parks. Understanding who is doing what, when, where, and why is vital for designing better, and more popular, urban parks. However, there has been very little research on park use in Southeast Asian cities, and research results from Western cities may not be transferable because of differences in climate, culture, language, history, and lifestyle.

This research aims to understand the current demands on urban parks in Malaysia. It specifically looks at an urban park in the Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. Today, KLCC Park and Subang Recreation Park is apparently not meeting the needs of the public at large, even though it is near other active public spaces, such as the state mosque, the downtown area, public offices, shopping complex.

### **The definition of urban park**

The most famous definition of urban park was provided by Frederick Law Olmstead who defined the urban park as “a naturalized passive retreat” (Rutledge & Molnar, 1986, p.4). A park is “a pleasure garden where masses unable to flee overcrowding, disease and foul air, could find near their home a bucolic agrarian environment” (Eplan, 1988, p. 132). Olmsted’s definition has been widely used all over the world, particularly in the United States from the mid 1800’s to the early 1900’s. Professions other than Landscape Architecture, particularly those interested in the concept of space and place, also have defined the urban park. For example, Solecki and Welch (1995), both urban geographers, expanded the definition to “landscape features that serve many functions as providers of passive and active recreation, environmental benefits and wildlife habitats” (p. 93).

### **Factors influencing whether people use urban parks**

The “new view” of urban parks calls attention to the broader contributions they can make to the vitality of communities and their residents. These contributions include

- helping youth choose rewarding paths to adulthood by providing programs and opportunities to build physical, intellectual, emotional, and social strength;
- helping new entrants to the workforce find productive jobs by offering decent, entry-level employment opportunities in the community;
- helping community residents improve their health by providing a place to enjoy fresh air and exercise; and
- helping citizens join together to make their communities better, by encouraging them to participate in park planning and management.

### **Youth Development**

Parks can provide wonderful opportunities for children of all ages to build the skills and strengths they need to lead full and rewarding lives. The latest thinking about youth development makes a powerful case that children and adolescents are best served by a constellation of community-based activities that helps them build essential skills, knowledge, and aptitudes (Solecki and Welch, 1995). The assets children and youth need for healthy development fall into four major domains: physical, intellectual, emotional, and social. And parks can offer programs that are not only fun, but also help kids acquire assets in one or more of these domains.

## **Work Experience**

Youth have long found summer employment in parks as camp counselors and lifeguards. For many young people, these jobs introduce the world of work, close to home and in a relatively protected setting (Rutledge A.J. and Molnar D.J, 1986). But parks can also offer longer-term jobs for community residents, as well as valuable training opportunities that equip both young people and adults to enter the workforce with marketable skills and experience.

## **Health**

Park use is certainly a good (and generally free) way to engage in healthy exercise. Park programs can be particularly useful in promoting healthful exercise among youth and the elderly. A study in Cleveland confirms the promise of parks in promoting health for Americans age 50 and older (Payne et al. 1998). Older park users (bikers, joggers, walkers) were found significantly healthier than nonpark users and reported feeling “renewed” after using the park, with greater frequency of use linked to better health. These active users also reported fewer physician visits.

## **Social Capital**

In addition to their tangible contributions to youth development, employment opportunities, and public health, parks help build and strengthen ties among community residents by bringing people together, including those who are otherwise divided by race or class, and by helping them work together on common projects. These ties—often labeled “social capital”—represent subtle but

important assets for a community. They provide avenues through which information, values, and social expectations flow, and they empower people to tackle communitywide problems, embark on collective actions, and advocate effectively for their community. The promise of social capital as a vital ingredient in neighborhood health rests on a solid scientific foundation (Rutledge A.J. and Molnar D.J, 1986).

## **Problem Statement**

Unlike urban parks in the West, urban parks in Malaysia have received very little attention from researchers. Malaysia lacks a park tradition and history. The first urban park in Malaysia was instituted when the British colonized Malaysia in 1874. The British Colonial Government built urban park in the cities that they administered so that their colonial officers could have space in which to enjoy recreation. Despite the growing number of parks in the urban areas in Malaysia very little general base line information is known on why people goes to the park.

## **Aim and the objectives of the research**

The aim of the research is to study how users perceive urban parks in terms of providing them with the satisfaction from the utilization of the urban parks.

The research has the following objectives.

- To study the background of the users who go to the park.
- To determine the factors pulling the users to the park.
- To relate the background of the users to the factors pulling users to the park.
- To suggest what urban parks should have to satisfy people from different backgrounds.

## **Research methodology**

Research methodology normally refers to the principles and procedures of logical thought process applied to the scientific investigation. Bell (1993) suggested that the styles of research might vary from real actions to surveys, case study or experiment. To approach the study, a three (3) stage action was formulated. Stage one comprises of a literature search which surrounded the subject. Stage two comprises of a questionnaire survey involving consumers that visited Subang Lake and KLCC Lake, interviews with consumers, and one case studies seeking data over the studied subject. Stage three comprises of analysis of the findings, making conclusions and recommendations, all founded on the information from stage one and data collected from stage two.

## **Sample population**

The objective of sampling in this research was to provide a practical means of enabling the data collection and processing components of research to be carried out whilst ensuring that the sample provides a good representation of the population; i.e. the sample was representative. Unfortunately, without a survey of the population, the representativeness of any sample was uncertain, but statistical theory can be used to indicate the representativeness. Measurements of characteristics, such as the mean, of a sample were called statistics whilst those of a population was called parameters. How to obtain representativeness begins with consideration of the population. Almost invariably it was necessary to obtain data from only a part of the total population with which this research project was concerned; that part of the population was the sample.

The research population consisted of the public in the KLCC and Subang. The public was chosen because they are the potential users of KLCC Park and Subang Recreation Park. However, the population was restricted to adults above eighteen years of age. It was restricted to the adult population because the researcher assumed that children and teenagers have different reasons and needs for going to a park. In addition, the activities of children and teenagers in Malaysia are largely subject to their parents' approval and supervision. Even though children might be a reason for going to the park, parents still decide whether or not to go. Furthermore, adults are the largest segment of the population.

This restriction was important because it enabled the researcher to design the instrument to fit the focus group. Since one of the objectives of this research was to determine the factors pulling the users' to the parks, the population was surveyed inside the park. According to Bell (1993), for statistical analysis to be valid and reliable, the number of participants, or sample population, must be at least 30 people. Therefore, if more than one sample needs to be taken, each sample must have

a minimum of 30 people. Because of the age and ethnicity restrictions on this research, a stratified sample was used to query the population. According to Ahmad, I. & Minkarah, I. (1988), to make sure that the sample covers all groups of people in the demographic sample, it is important to obtain a representation of the different groups of people based on each group's percentage. However, to get more reliable results and minimize error in the statistical analysis procedure, an approximately equal number of each group was surveyed.

The next question was how many respondents were needed for this research. According to Ahmad, I. & Minkarah, I. (1988), the most common assumption about sampling is that 10% of the population must be surveyed to get a reliable result. However, if the population sample is too large, a sample population with sampling error less than 5% is justified.

## **Sample size**

A particular issue in sampling was determining of the size of the sample. By sampling, a statistic called an estimator is obtained. The behaviour of the population as well as possible was predicted by considering four main properties; they were:

- Consistent
- Unbiased
- Efficient
- Sufficient.

The variance of a consistent estimator decreases as the sample size increases. The mean of an unbiased estimator approximates to the mean of the population; there was an equal chance of the mean or the estimator being more than or less than the mean of the population; there was an equal chance of the mean of the population. This was described by saying that there was no systematic error. Systematic error (often called 'bias') was when the errors assume a regular pattern of under- or over-measurement, by a proportion or an amount; such error was revealed by checking and was compensated by an adjustment. Further, analysis of the errors revealed their sources as well as size and that it may be possible to reduce/eliminate the error. Systematic error was avoided. Unsystematic error, or *random error*, was almost inevitable, but its size was kept to a practical minimum by research design and rigorous execution and checking. An efficient estimator had the

minimum variance of all possible estimators drawn from the sample. A sufficient estimator was the one which makes most use of the sample data to estimate the population parameter; in particular, the mean square error was minimised. Mean square error was an error measure which was used widely; it was the arithmetic average (mean) of the errors squared. Each error was multiplied by itself, which eliminates the sign of the error terms since the square of a negative number was positive. The result was a 'magnified' measure of the average error of the measurements made. The value of the mean square error of the sample was that it provides an unbiased estimate of the variance of the population .

There were two sets of questionnaire. The first questionnaire was distributed to the KLCC Park users' and the second questionnaire was distributed to the Subang Recreation Park users' to measure the factors that pulling the users' to the park. This study is based upon data obtained from survey questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to 66 participants in KLCC Park and 50 participants in Subang Recreation park. The survey was done over a period of 6 months. Statistical analysis was used to evaluate the data. Among other factors, the analysis isolated mean, frequency, and content analysis. Factor and mean analyses were used to categorize and rank participant needs. The findings meet the research objectives. They suggest that, of people who come to KLCC and Subang Recreation park, and that all three ethnic groups use the park in relatively equal numbers.

## **The questionnaire**

The questionnaire is designed to meet the research objectives and to answer research questions. Closed-ended and open-ended questions were used to measure people's attitudes toward KLCC Park and Subang Recreation Park. According to Sommer and Sommer (1991), closed-ended questions are used when the researcher wants the participants to choose from a set of predetermined questions that have alternative answers. The researcher provides the alternatives. In other words, researchers want confirmation of the answers in a specific scale for a measurement.

On the other hand, open-ended questions give participants more freedom to answer the questions. According to Sommer and Sommer (1991), open-ended questions are desirable when the researcher does not know the answer to a question, the range of possible answers becomes so large that the questions would become unwieldy in multiple choice format, the researcher wants to avoid suggesting answers to the participants, or the researcher wants answers in participants' own words.

Furthermore, open-ended questions are very useful for gathering salient opinions from the participants. The questionnaire was designed to be as simple as possible, and variables were grouped within these factors: Youth Development, working experience, health, safety, social capital, sense of welcome/context, and sense of territoriality. Other questions were based on the list of peoples' needs and preferred activities, related to the needs identified in the literature review.

### **Organisation of the questionnaire**

For this research, related questions were grouped together within the questionnaire. This seemed logical, as it enabled easier variable connection for data analysis and was simpler for participants to have one question flow to another (Foddy, 1993). For example, Questions 1 - 5 are about the familiarity of participants with the parks, and Questions 6 - 10 are about how participants react in the park.

For open-ended questions, respondents were not given any choices or indications on how to answer. However, it was important to prevent participants from being influenced by suggestion from earlier questions. According to Zeisel (1979), "Early questions can influence the way respondents answer later ones" (p. 160). For example, Questions 17 to 20 are open-ended questions. There, they are placed at the beginning of a set of related questions in order to avoid any contamination from the closed-ended questions. For Question 16, 21 and 22, a Likert scale was used to rate participants' attitudes toward and understanding of the park. Rensis Likert developed this scale (1932), and it has been widely used by researchers because it provides opportunity for participants to indicate degree of agreement on a certain subject by using categories such as "agree," "strongly agree," and "disagree" (Sommer & Sommer, 1991).

Many researchers agree with the recommendation that questionnaires should begin with general questions and end with specific demographic ones. Demographic questions are considered easier to answer, and putting them at the end of a questionnaire allows participants to answer the least difficult questions when they are most fatigued and bored with the survey session.

The survey questionnaire was developed in two languages, Malay and English, to make sure that all Malaysians understood it. The survey form in the Malay language was intended for Malay

people, and the survey in English was provided for Chinese and Indian participants. Even though English is a second language in Malaysia, many Malay do not understand English very well.

### **Results and analysis data**

The purpose of this research is to analyze how the users' perceive the management of urban park. The research elements in the dissertation were conducted in order to fulfill the specific objectives of the dissertation that had been identified in the investigation.

Findings derived from the literature review and the research elements, which constituted the data analysis from the questionnaire survey and the case studies are elaborated in accordance with the research's objectives.

The Statistical Package For Social Scientist (SPSS) Software Version 12.0 was used to analyse the data. The results are presented in tables, pie charts and bar charts, with narration to summarise and explain the findings.

The factors influencing participants' decisions to go to KLCC and Subang Recreation Park are broad and varied. The literature review, combined with a contextual analysis of KLCC and Subang Recreation park, identified four potential influences on participants' choices to go to KLCC and Subang Recreation park: leisure preference, shopping enjoyment influence, and dispelling activities. In addition, research on human needs and preferences supports this choice of factors. Variables examined in this research were derived from the factors discussed in these categories.

**Table 1 (a):** KLCC park or Subang Park \* Activities during leisure time Crosstabulation (Case Processing Summary)

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
klcc or subang * leisuretime	116	100.0%	0	.0%	116	100.0%

**Table 1 (b):** KLCC park or Subang Park \* Activities during leisure time Crosstabulation

		leisuretime						Total	
		fitness	Picnic	Play with water	Shopp ing	cinem a	other	blank	
klcc or subang	klcc	8	3	2	7	2	39	5	66
	subang	9	5	0	0	0	28	8	50
Total		17	8	2	7	2	67	13	116

Table 1 (a), (b) and figure 1 (c) shows the relationship between the user's of KLCC park and Subang park with the activities during their leisure time. It was found that the user's of KLCC park and Subang park not only spend their leisure time on fitness, picnic, play with water, and shopping, but they still have other activities that can full fill their leisure time.

The user spend their leisure time on picnic at Subang rather than KLCC park. It can be seen there were 5 user spending their time on picnic at Subang park. Compared to visitors at Subang park, visitor at KLCC park prefers to shopping at KLCC and involve in water activities.

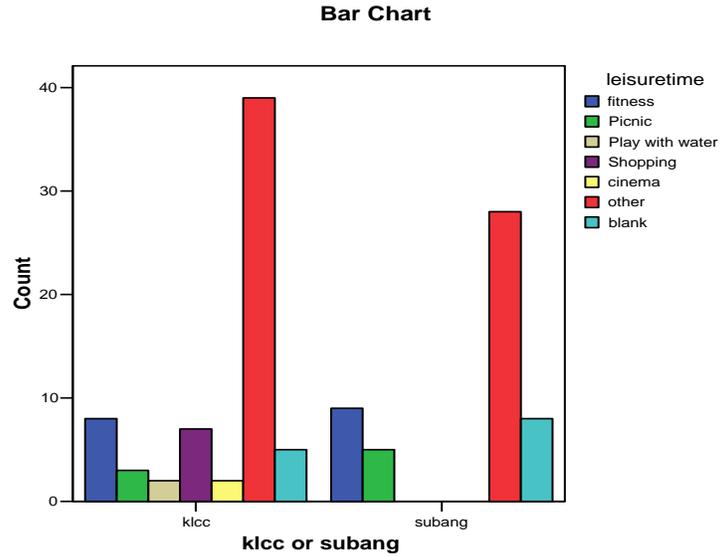


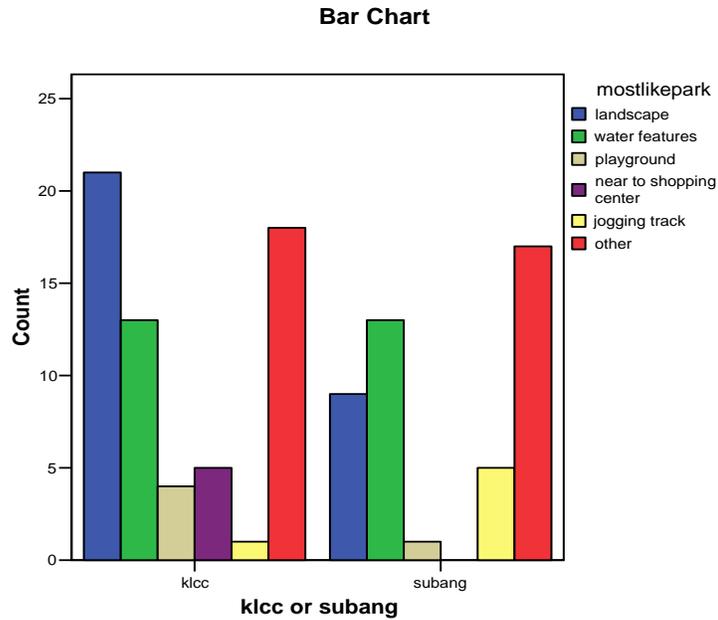
Figure 1 (c): KLCC park or Subang Park \* Activities during leisure time

Table 2 (a): KLCC park or Subang park\* favours activities Crosstabulation (Case Processing Summary)

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
klcc or subang * mostlikepark	107	92.2%	9	7.8%	116	100.0%

Table 2 (b): KLCC park or Subang park\* favours activities Crosstabulation

		favours activities						Total
		landscape	water features	playground	near to shopping center	jogging track	other	
klcc or subang	klcc	21	13	4	5	1	18	62
	subang	9	13	1	0	5	17	45
Total		30	26	5	5	6	35	107



**Figure 2 (c):** KLCC park or Subang park\* favours activities

Table 2 (a), (b) and figure 2 (c) shows what the KLCC and Subang park visitors favour most about the parks. These are the factors that influence users to go to the park. It was found that the landscape surrounding are the most important thing that users like about the KLCC park.

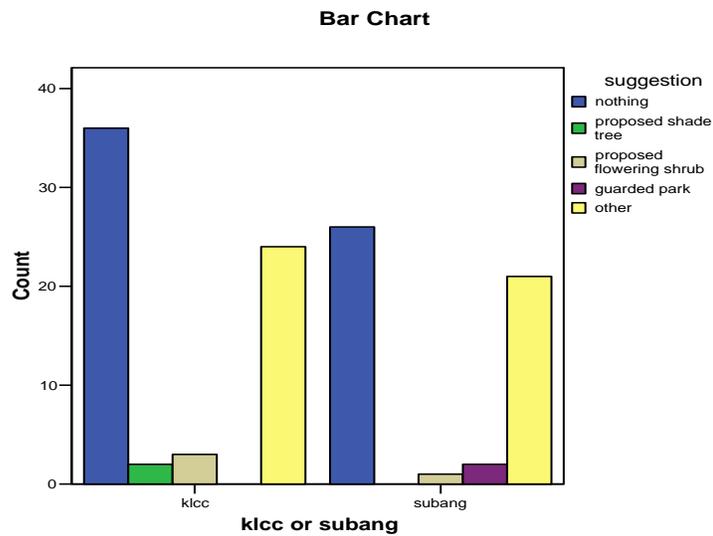
Interestingly, there was a contradiction between the KLCC and Subang park. It can be seen a few users like a landscape surrounding in the Subang park. The users of Subang park prefer the water features and fishing instead.

**Table 3 (a):** KLCC park or Subang park\* suggestion Crosstabulation (Case Processing Summary)

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
klcc or subang * suggestion	115	99.1%	1	.9%	116	100.0%

**Table 3 (b): KLCC park or Subang park\* suggestion Crosstabulation**

		suggestion					Total
		nothing	proposed shade tree	proposed flowering shrub	guarded park	other	
klcc or subang	klcc	36	2	3	0	24	65
	subang	26	0	1	2	21	50
Total		62	2	4	2	45	115



**Figure 3 (c): KLCC park or Subang park\* suggestion**

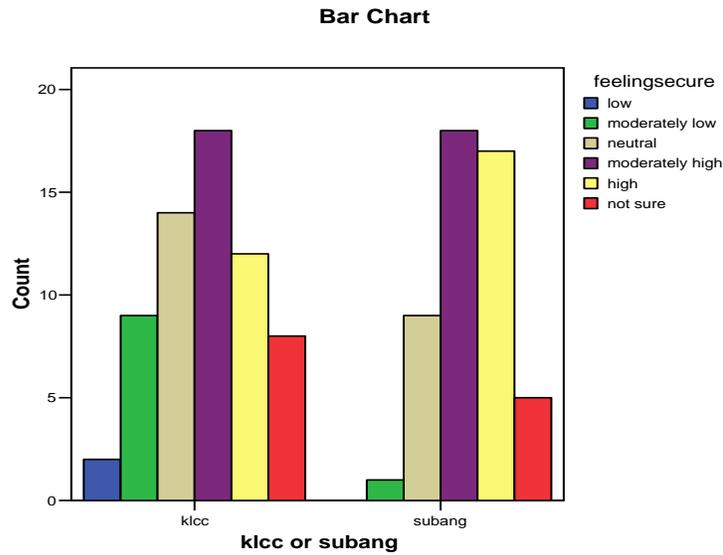
Table 3 (a), (b) and figure 3 (c) show the opinion of the KLCC and Subang park crosstabbed with the suggestion for improving the park. It was found that a higher rating is for no suggestion for both parks. The users of both park feel satisfied with the park.

**Table 4 (a): KLCC park or Subang park\* feeling secure Crosstabulation (Case Processing Summary)**

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
klcc or subang * feeling secure	113	97.4%	3	2.6%	116	100.0%

**Table 4 (b):** KLCC park or Subang park\* feeling secure Crosstabulation

		Feeling secure						Total
		low	moderately low	neutral	moderately high	high	not sure	
klcc or subang	klcc	2	9	14	18	12	8	63
	subang	0	1	9	18	17	5	50
Total		2	10	23	36	29	13	113



**Figure 4 (c):** KLCC park or Subang park\* feeling secure

Table 4 (a), (b) and figure 4 (c) show that the KLCC and Subang park cross-tabbed with secure feeling going to the park. It was found that the KLCC and Subang park user's feel moderately high in security going to the parks.

Both of the park users agree that they feel secure when going to the park. Feeling secure is the factors that influence users to go to the parks.

**Table 5 (a):** KLCC park or Subang park\* influence exercise Crosstabulation (Case Processing Summary)

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
klcc or subang * influenceexercise	111	95.7%	5	4.3%	116	100.0%

**Table 5 (b):** KLCC park or Subang park\* influence exercise Crosstabulation

		Influence exercise						Total
		not important	somewhat unimportant	neutral	somewhat important	very important	not sure	
klcc or subang	klcc	18	7	19	6	7	4	61
	subang	2	2	7	12	26	1	50
Total								
		20	9	26	18	33	5	111

**Figure 5 (c): KLCC park or Subang park\* influence exercise**

Table 5 (a), (b) and figure 5 (c) show that the opinion of the KLCC and Subang parks crosstabbed with using the parks for the place to exercise. It was found that the KLCC park users stated that exercise is not important to influence them to go to the park but the Subang park user stated that the exercise is very important to influence them to go to the park. It is because the Subang park have a green landscape and beautiful lake that are suitable to provide conducive environment for those who want to exercise.

### **Discussion of Significant Findings, Implications and Avenues for Future Research**

The discussion is divided into three sections. The first section considers the significant findings and their implications for the planning and urban design of the city of KLCC and Subang Recreation park. The second section discusses issues related to the renovation of KLCC and Subang Recreation park, and the third section critically discusses the methodology used in this research.

#### **A. Planning and Urban Design Implications for the City of KLCC and Subang Recreation Park**

##### *The Emergences of the Urban Park as an Important Public Space in Kuala Lumpur and Subang Park*

The data confirms that people still come to KLCC and Subang Park, regardless of its condition. The data also confirms that all ethnic groups use the park equally. People from different backgrounds come to the park. The data also confirms that more than 50% of survey participants come to the park to fill their leisure time.

Although patrons come to the park regardless of its condition, the research suggests that it is still necessary to upgrade its quality. Because the park is the main free public green space in these urban areas, it is likely to be popular regardless of its condition. However, in its current state, it simply does not fulfill the needs and desires of its patrons. Furthermore, the realization that people who live more than five kilometers from the park still come to it, clarifies not only the unique position that the park occupies, but also the size of its potential patron base. In light of this data, the needs and roles of the park become much clearer.

For future research, it is important to understand how urban spaces have become more important as a result of urban migration and rapid urbanization. The findings of this study should be applied to all park and open space systems main urban areas. A feasibility study on how to distribute open spaces in the city should also be done to uncover both the problems and benefits of such a program. It is also important to understand the status of traditional urban open spaces and public life in the city. This research did not analyze participant preferences for these traditional spaces, but it suggests that the urban park is emerging as an important urban space. Therefore, questions arise regarding public perceptions of these more traditional spaces. For example, is their popularity and importance declining? What are current user patterns in these spaces?

Future research to understand other public spaces, how best to distribute them, and their status among patrons is vital for planning and designing future parks and open spaces

in the city. It is also important for future researchers to understand recreation demands and trends in KLCC and Subang park. One useful research tool would be a survey of recreation facilities in the city. Future studies should address the status and quantity of recreation facilities, as well as patron satisfaction with and preference for spaces in which to indulge their recreation needs. This research would provide planners with a greater understanding of how to accommodate patron recreation and leisure needs.

## **B. Renovation of Urban Parks**

Urban Park is facing declining use due to its deteriorating condition and lack of maintenance. This dilapidated condition may lead to a negative public perception towards the park. Renovation is vital. Before this renovation can proceed, it is crucial for landscape architects to understand the factors influencing potential park participants, particularly their needs and preferred activities. Understanding these questions is important, not only for fostering greater usage of the Urban Parks, but also for planning the development of other parks in Malaysia. This research is a starting point for increasing knowledge of patron behavior, park design and planning, and landscape architecture in Malaysia.

In addition to these general findings, an in-depth analysis of the survey reveals other highly significant findings, which impact the planning and design of the urban parks. First, for the planning and urban design of the urban areas, it shows that the urban park has emerged as an important public space in urban areas. Changes in the way of life of urban citizens have transformed public life and the use of traditional public spaces. As public life in the city has shifted to utilize the urban park, urban parks have become more important than ever. Second, for the renovation of Urban Parks, an analysis of the survey reveals that landscape architects, planners, and park managers need to rethink their priorities regarding the activities that the park provides. It is important to consider the overall planning of the city before making any decisions about which recreational facilities the park must provide. For the Urban Parks, analysis of the survey suggests that the park should maintain its natural beauty because of its historical and ecological value. In spite of the numerous respondent requests that recreational facilities be built in the park, these facilities should be placed in other parts of the city. Next, it is important to recognize that people prefer to use Urban Parks for family and social gathering. These activities are matched perfectly with the natural environment that is abundant in the park. The findings also suggest microclimatic conditions should be taken into consideration when renovating the parks and the lakes. Finally, the survey indicates that it is important for park planners and administrators to reconsider their prioritization of park maintenance. The data suggests that

the park should develop systematic park maintenance programs to ensure that it remains in consistently good shape.

## **C. Methodology Evaluation**

In addition to these significant findings and their implications for the planning, urban design and the renovation of Urban Parks, this section also evaluates the research methodology used in this research. To refine the research findings, it is suggested that the sample populations should be carefully chosen and obtained. More participants are needed to validate certain findings and to answer certain research questions. In addition, it is also suggested that validity of the findings be increased through the use of more open-ended questions. These questions act as a check and balance system and furthermore, can offer more insight into various phenomena.

There are many other factors related to park use and preference. Further research must explore these factors, consider whether they are relevant, and explore their implications for park and open space design in Malaysia. However, it is important to understand that the factors vary from place to place. The more we understand why people prefer to go to certain places, the more effective we will be as designers, landscape architects, and managers of these places.

## **References**

- Ahmad, I. & Minkarah, I. (1988) Questionnaire survey on bidding in Construction, *ASCE Journal of Management in Engineering Divisions*, 4(3), July, 229-243
- Bell, J. (1993) *Doing Your Research Project*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, U.K.
- Bell, S. (1993) *Elements of Visual Design in the Landscape*, E & FN Spon.
- Cranz G. (1982). *The Politics of Park Design*. Cambridge: The MIT Press
- Eplan L.S. (1988). "Planning Urban Park System: The Charleston Experience." In Stein J. M. (Ed.), *Public Infrastructure Planning and Management* (pp. 131-148). Newbury Parks: Sage Publications
- Foddy, W. (1993). *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires*. Hongkong: Cambridge University Press.
- Jamil, A. (2002) *A Design Guide of Public Parks in Malaysia*, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor.
- Jellicoe G. and Jellicoe. S. (1975). *The Landscape of Man: Shaping the Environment from Prehistory to the Present Day*. New York: The Viking Press,
- Newton, N.T. (1971). *Design on The Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press
- Rutledge A.J. and Molnar D.J. (1986). *Anatomy of Park*. (2nd Ed.) New York: McGraw Hill Book Co.
- Solecki W. D and Welch J.M. (1995). "Urban Parks: Green Spaces or Green Walls?" *Landscape Urban Planning* Vol. 32. pp. 93 – 106
- Sommer B and Sommer R. (1991). *A Practical Guide to Behavioral Research: Tools and Technique* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). New York: Oxford University Press
- Yuen B. (1996). "Creating the Garden City; The Singapore Experience." *Urban Studies*. Vol. 33. No. 6. pp. 955-970
- Zeisel, John. (1979). *Inquiry by design: Tools for Environmental-Behavior Research*. Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.