



An Investigation into the Public Perception and Its Implications to the Provision of Urban Green Public Spaces Management: Focus on the Major Parks in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

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Abstract

The public is the ultimate shareholder in parks, as well as plays a crucial role in the development and implementation of parks. In connection, this study attempted to identify the general perception of the community about the major parks in Addis Ababa City through a mixed explanatory technique with sequential design or quantitative followed by qualitative. To have a good understanding of the perception, visitors were purposefully chosen as the key participants of this study. A total of ten parks were chosen as research locations. Furthermore, data was gathered from: primary and secondary data sources. The information acquired through a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview was analyzed. The findings revealed that the public has a favorable opinion of the parks' sufficiency, openness, accessibility, safety, and locations. But based on the study, the majority of the sample respondents believe that the park near their home is unsuitable for children to play in and lacks basic amenities. The majority believe that the plant diversity and the landscape design in parks near their houses were adequate. The respondents thought that Addis Ababa's major parks were beautiful, and the parks are clean and do not believe they have the problem with narrowness areas, however, one-third of respondents were unhappy with park management. Finally, it was shown that almost half of the respondents (48%) are unhappy with the overall quality and services of the major parks. As a result, the municipal administration's relevant bodies should address the identified shortfalls to enhance public park visits.

Key terms: Addis Ababa, Management, Perception, Parks, Provision, Urban Public Green Spaces

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I. Introduction

Green spaces and other nature-based solutions provide creative methods to improve the quality of urban settings, enhance local resilience, and promote sustainable lifestyles, so increasing both the health and well-being of city dwellers (Vargas-Hernández et al. 2018). In this regard, parks, playgrounds, and greenery in public and private spaces are key to these methods. Green space in cities is a component of "green infrastructure." It is an essential aspect of a city's public open spaces and common services, and it may serve as a health-promoting environment for all members of the urban community.

Significant studies have described the advantages and rising growth of green space (Hartig et al., 2014; WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2016). Urban public green spaces play an important role in nurturing the ecological quality, livability, and sustainability of metropolises and cities. They offer a variety of advantages at the countrywide and the local levels and provide numerous valuable prospects to the residents (Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2009). Urban green space protects and enhances the natural environmental system as the foundation of the natural balance of cities, the municipal residents, and neighborhoods. In addition, they contribute to the social and economic existence, and to the local environmental and planning methods, and to the quality of urban life.

Public green areas in cities can also help with social inclusion, health, sustainability, and urban revitalization (Vargas-Hernández et al. 2018). In this context, the goal of public space management is to build and maintain safe and appealing streets. The highway, tree spaces, sidewalks, and alleyways are all examples of

publicly held property between the property borders of a street. Everyone, regardless of ethnicity, age, or gender, is welcome in public urban parks and gardens. They provide a place for relaxation and recreation, as well as a sense of place and a democratic platform for people and society (Hartig et al., 2014).

There are various types of green spaces. Green spaces include places like parks, community gardens, and cemeteries (Lo & Jim, 2012). When considered as part of a broader green infrastructure system, they have the potential to generate a big and strong recreational, cultural, and social facility while also improving environmental quality and providing diverse and species-rich habitats (Hartig et al., 2014). Parks, playgrounds, and residential greenery in cities can improve mental and physical health while lowering morbidity and mortality by providing psychological relaxation and stress relief, stimulating social cohesion, supporting physical activity, and reducing exposure to air pollutants, noise, and excessive heat (Baycan-Levent&Nijkamp, 2009).

Cities are becoming increasingly densely inhabited, and there is growing worried about the effects of climate change. This makes planners, elected officials, and community activists are taking a fresh look at parks and their capacity to assist address significant urban infrastructure and public health issues. Parks are a sort of urban green space that gives numerous benefits to city dwellers. Parks are now widely recognized as vital resources for urban inhabitants and the local economy. City parks benefit the local economy and job possibilities. Parks, for example, attract citizens and businesses, increase local revenue, stimulate private investment, and create job opportunities. Additionally, it is thought that city parks increase community engagement while also lowering crime rates. Participation of residents in the design and programming of their local parks fosters a sense of community and ensures that the parks reflect the requirements of the community. Community involvement, for example, and the greening of vacant urban property have been shown to lower crime and improve support for surrounding park projects.

Furthermore, city parks have been shown to make cities more resilient. Cities are incorporating parks into their infrastructure projects to manage rainwater and reduce flooding. Cost-sharing among agencies can help cities save money on park development, maintenance, and programming, allowing them to fully capitalize on the numerous benefits parks provide to citizens. It appears that public issues are generally disregarded in poor countries, particularly Ethiopia. So far, the public's interest, contentment, and preferences have not been examined extensively as literature search shows. As a result, failing to address the public issue by assessing the users' perception have an influence on the country's socioeconomic, human, and political development. In this sense, the primary goal of this research is to investigate and describe public perception of using the public parks in Addis Ababa.

II. Overview: Perception and Urban Green Space

Perception, as defined by Swanwick (2009) cited in Farahani and Maller (2018), relates to both sensuous, frequently visual, experiences of green spaces and how residents attach meaning and value to them. It also refers to a person's subjective perception of and feelings about an existent entity, which communicates what he or she loves or hates, as well as what they think and feel about it. As a result, perception can be defined as "the sum of schemata that humans generate via interactions with their environment" as "the subjective interpretation of reality." As a result, consumers' views of green spaces can be investigated via the perspective of how such areas are valued, such as whether or not they are favored over other spaces (Farahani & Maller, 2018).

The physical characteristics of a site are not the only factors that influence visitors' views. Nasution and Zahrah (2014), for example, discovered that various public open space features had a significant relationship with public open space perception. Users' attitudes, experiences, and socio-cultural conditioning, in particular, influence how an environment is viewed (Scott, 2003). Understanding individual impressions of a situation is so complicated and nuanced. Farahani and Maller (2018), on the other hand, emphasized that knowing residents' opinions of and desires for green spaces, as well as engaging them in the planning process, can potentially provide additional benefits to residents. In line with this notion, the purpose of this study is to discover the community's perspective of urban public-sector operations.

Various studies have indicated that good perceptions of green space have the ability to increase green space visitation and benefit (Farahani & Maller, 2018). Nature orientation, which refers to how much residents love nature, has been found to be a greater predictor of park visitation than opportunity (Lin et al., 2014). Similarly, Madureira H, et al (2018) stated that a greater knowledge of people's perceptions and preferences about public urban green spaces should help urban planners offer and manage urban green spaces more efficiently to suit users' demands. As a result, improving green space availability and accessibility in neighborhoods may be more successful than increasing favorable impressions of green spaces and residents' connection to nature.

In this regard, this study sought to ascertain the general public's view of Addis Abeba City's major parks. Furthermore, the community's view of the real practices of Addis Abeba City's key parks and the

community's perspective of the opportunities provided by Addis Abeba City's major parks is examined. Furthermore, the community's impression of the quality and services of practices of the major parks in Addis Abeba City is analyzed in such a way that implies parks management.

III. Research Methods

The current study follows a pragmatic philosophical perspective. Accordingly, this study's ontological viewpoint favors the assumption that practitioners' impressions of the reality under examination (the reality of urban green space, with a focus on important participants) are the best method to comprehend it (performing organizations) and the stakeholders (public).

To achieve the study's objectives, a mixed explanatory technique with sequential design (quantitative followed by qualitative) is adopted. To have a well understanding of the contemporary practices, issues, and possibilities, park visitors and managers of the river basin and green area development and administration agencies were purposefully chosen as the key participants of this study. A total of ten parks were chosen as research locations.

Data was gathered from two sources: primary and secondary data sources. These data sources are thought to aid the research in obtaining relevant data for this investigation through in-depth face-to-face interviews.

The main purpose of the present study is to describe the perception, practice, and challenges of the community in urban public green space in Addis Ababa city. Thus, it is park customers and the managers of the river basin and green area development and administration agency were selected as the major participants of this study. This is because it was believed that they can provide the necessary data for the study. Specifically, the current study is intended to examine the public perception of urban public green space management in Addis Ababa. Hence, the target population, in this case, is the resident who visits the selected parks in the 10 sub-cities of Addis Ababa. To understand the practices, challenges, and opportunities to visit the major parks in Addis Ababa, the visitors or the public were also selected as the participants of the study. The participants were purposefully selected.

The target population from which the sampling frame was chosen for the current study is the monthly visitors of the selected parks of Addis Ababa. According to the data obtained from the river basin and green area development and administration agency of Addis Ababa City (May 2021) the average number of monthly visitors of the 10 randomly selected major parks in Addis Ababa was 50,732 individuals. The total populations for this study are 50,732 individuals who visit the selected parks in Addis Ababa. To select a specific sample of the study, Cochran's (1977) formula was used. Based on the formula Cochran (1977), the equation for calculating sample size is shown below. $n = n_0 / 1 + (n_0 - 1) / N$

N = Population size

n_0 = Cochran's Sample size

n = New adjusted sample size

According to the formula, 397 samples respondents were selected from the total population

In this mixed-method research, three methods are employed for investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The information acquired through a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. To assess the quantity, the completed questionnaire data were coded and entered into SPSS Version 23. Following that, the SPSS data was analyzed using a variety of statistical analyses, including frequency and percentage. On top of this, tables, bar graphs, pie charts, etc. were used to display the statistical study's findings. Finally, the qualitative data from the open-ended questionnaire, interview, and document analysis was used to evaluate and substantiate the quantitative results.

IV. Results and discussions

4.1. General Perception of the Public about the Major Parks in Addis Ababa City

The public's perception of parks influences how they use and visit. As a result, an attempt was undertaken to learn more about how the general population views the park that was chosen for this study.

Table 1: Publics' General Perception of the Major Parks in Addis Ababa City

No	Statements	The Extent of Respondents agreement									
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		F	%	f	%	F	%	F	%	f	%
1	The park in my residence is enough for the residents	22	6.2	52	14.6	146	41	75	21.1	61	17.1

2	The park in my residence is in good condition	20	5.6	46	12.9	113	31.7	94	26.4	83	23.3
3	The park located around my residence is well equipped with necessary facilities	47	13.2	95	26.7	134	37.6	47	13.2	33	9.3
4	The park in my residence is suitable for children to play in	47	13.2	74	20.8	103	28.9	77	21.6	55	15.4
5	The park around my residence is located in easily accessible are for the public to visit	12	3.4	34	9.6	112	31.5	127	35.7	71	19.9
6	The park in my residence is attractive in appearance	24	6.7	30	8.4	97	27.2	98	27.5	107	30.1
7	The park in my residence is a peaceful and safe place to stay	28	7.9	33	9.3	50	14	127	35.7	118	33.1
8	The <i>Park</i> in my residence is open and accessible for the general public to visit	15	4.2	21	5.9	41	11.5	152	42.7	127	35.7

The sample respondents' responses about how they generally see the parks in Addis Ababa are presented in Table 1. As can be seen in item 1 of table 6, 22 (6.2%) of the samples severely disagree, while 52 (14.6 %) disagree that the park located near their home is sufficient for the people. In addition, 146(41%) said that they are neutral with this regard. Nonetheless, 75 (21.1%) of respondents said they agree, with 61 (17.1%) saying they strongly agree. As a result, the aggregate data reveals that more than a third of respondents feel that a park near their home is sufficient for inhabitants.

Furthermore, the interviewees were asked to explain if they think that the available major parks in the Addis Ababa city administration are adequate for the residents. All of the interviewee respondents reported that the parks are inadequate for the public. For instance, Interview 6 has to say the following:

No, not adequate. There are still many potential park areas indicated on the structural plan of the city that will be developed in the coming years. As the number of inhabitants is growing time after time, the need for additional green spaces arises. Hence, the number of parks does not match the population of the city and so requires additional investment from the city administration.

Interviewee 2 went on to say that the population of Addis is now anticipated to be over 5 million people, which is insufficient when compared to 24 tiny parks. It appears that the number of people and the number of parks have little to do with each other. As a result, the interviewee felt that the available parks are insufficient for city people. This suggests the need to increase the number of parks in the city that matches the population of the city.

Generally, it is said that parks allow families to spend good time together and strengthen family bonding. Parks are a visible reflection of a community's quality of life. They give citizens a sense of belonging and pride in their town. Parks and recreation services are frequently regarded as one of the most important criteria in assessing a community's livability in surveys. Despite such positive advantages of the parks to the public, the analysis of the data collected via interview and survey questionnaire revealed that the parks are not sufficient for residents of the city.

In addition, in table 1 item 2, the respondents were asked to rate how much they agree with the statement "The Park in my Residence is in Good Condition". In response, 20(5.6%) of respondents strongly disagree, while 46(12.9%) disagree that the park in their neighborhood is in good shape.

Furthermore, 113 (31.7%) of them said they are neutral on the subject. However, 94 (26.4%) said they agree with this statement, and 83 (23.3 %) said they strongly agree. As a result, it appears that the majority of respondents believe that the park near their homes is in good shape. The public's positive perception of the parks' condition may encourage more people to visit and use them in Addis Ababa.

Aside from the general state of the parks, the availability of basic infrastructure has an impact on public access to and use of parks. In this regard, 47(9.5%) of respondents and 95(12.3%) of respondents respectively replied that they strongly disagree and disagree that the park located around their neighborhood is well equipped with necessary facilities (see item 3 table 1). On the other hand, 47 (13.2 %) of the samples agreed with the statement, and 33 (9.3%) said they strongly agreed with it. However, 134 respondents (37.6%) claimed they are neutral on the subject. According to the survey results, over 40% of respondents felt that a park in their surroundings is lacking in critical amenities.

Furthermore, the numbers of respondents who disagree with the statement outnumber those who agree.

This could indicate that the parks lack the required amenities for the public who visits the parks. This could in turn affect public visits and use of the parks. As a result, the responsible entities of the City Administration should clearly define what park facilities are lacking and help the parks to fill the missing amenities

In table 6 item 4 the respondents were asked to what extent they agree with the statement ‘‘The park in my residence is suitable for children to play’’ In response, 47 (13.2%) respondents answered they strongly disagree and 74(20.8 %) of them replied that they disagree with the statement, whereas 103(28.9 %) samples responded they are neutral about the statement. On the contrary, 77 (21.6 %) respondents agreed and 55 (15.4 %) strongly agreed with the statement.

As a result, one-third of the sample respondents stated that the park near their home is unsuitable for children to play in. This shows that the number of respondents who agree and disagree with the statement is almost the same.

With this regard, Elsayad, A (2014) noted recreation is a requirement at all periods of life, particularly childhood. Children have a greater need for recreation because it aids in the development of their growth, self-expression, and capacities. This divulges that the physical situation has been shown to affect both children's and adults' behavior and interactions. As a result, adequate physical space is required to establish a safe atmosphere in which children can investigate their surroundings while moving freely and energetically. Children's playgrounds should be made of durable materials.

Based on the result of his research Elsayad, A (2014) recommended that architects, landscape designers, and educators should all be interested in children's playgrounds since they must collaborate to create successful designs. From the standpoint of function and display, children's playgrounds must be developed and equipped. The playground should promote active, independent, and creative play rather than passive entertainment. Children must be fostered in a safe indoor and outdoor setting to meet their developmental demands.

Furthermore, table 1 (see item 5) shows that 12 (3.4 %) of the sample respondents strongly disagree and 34 (9.6%) of them disagree that the park surrounding their home is in a conveniently accessible location for the public to visit. However, 127 respondents (35.7%) agreed with the statement, and 71 respondents (19.9%) strongly agreed. On the other hand, 112 (31.5%) of them said they are neutral on the subject. According to the results, the majority of sample respondents (55.6%) believe that the park in their neighborhood is in a readily accessible location for the public to visit.

The accessibility of the parks in Addis Ababa could encourage the public to visit and use the parks. Besides, as indicated in table 6 item 6 the sample respondents were asked how much they agree that the Park around their house is nice in look.

As a result, 24 (2.4%) of respondents strongly disagreed, 30 (8.4%) disagreed, and 97 (27.2 %) said they were neutral on the statement. Despite this, 98 (27.5%) said they agree, and 107 (31.1%) said they strongly agree with the statement. This finding indicates that the majority of the sample respondents believe the park in their neighborhood is appealing, which may encourage community members to visit the park.

In item 7 of table 1, the respondent was asked to rate how much they agree with the statement ‘‘The Park in my residence is a peaceful and safe place to stay’’. In response, 28(7.9%) of respondents said they strongly disagreed with the statement, while 33(9.3%) stated they disagreed. Besides, 50(14%) replied that they are neutral. However, 127 (35.7 %) respondents said they agree with the statement, while 118 (33.1 %) said they disagree. The aggregate data divulges that a large majority of respondents feel that the parks near their homes are a peaceful and safe place to stay. As a result, the public is more likely to visit and spend adequate time in the parks.

Moreover, table 1 (see item 8) shows that 15 (4.4 %) respondents strongly disagree, while 21 (5.9%) disagree that the adjacent parks are open and accessible to the general public. In addition, 41 (11.5%) of those polled said they were neutral with the statement. On the other hand, 152 (42.7 %) said they agree with the remark, while 127 (10 %) replied they strongly disagree. As a result, the majority of the sample respondents believe that the neighboring parks are open to the public and accessible. The parks' openness and accessibility may make them more accessible to the general public.

In general, we may draw from the statistics in table 6 above that the public has a favorable impression of the parks' sufficiency, openness, accessibility, safety, and location. The public's visiting and use of the parks may improve as a result of this good perception. However, over 40% of respondents thought that a park in their neighborhood lacked essential facilities, according to the poll results. Furthermore, a sizable percentage of respondents claimed that the park near their home is unsuitable for children to play in. As a result, the involved parties should work to make the parks more child-friendly

4.2. Visitors Perception of the Qualities of the Major Parks in Addis Ababa City

Table 2: The Perception of the Public on the Qualities of the Major Parks in Addis Ababa City

No	Items	Ratings of the Parks									
		Excellent		Very Good		Good		Fair		Poor	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Vegetation diversity in the park located around your residence	54	15.2	94	26.4	110	30.9	69	19.4	29	8.1
2	Management of the Park located around your residence	44	12.4	88	24.7	98	27.5	83	23.3	43	12.1
3	Landscape design of the Park around your residence	99	27.8	115	32.3	78	21.9	53	14.9	11	3.1
4	Cleanliness the park located around your residence	87	24.4	104	29.2	71	19.9	64	18.0	30	8.4
5	Existence of water bodies in the park	31	8.7	28	7.9	48	13.5	62	17.4	187	52.5
6	Sufficient benches/Sitting areas in the Park	67	18.8	69	19.4	68	19.1	79	22.2	73	20.5
7	The attractiveness of the Park located around your residence	114	32.0	57	16.0	86	24.2	61	17.1	38	10.7

Table 2 above shows a representative sample of replies to a survey about the quality and services of Addis Ababa's major parks. As shown in item 1 (see Table 7), 54 (15.2 %) of the respondents said the vegetation diversity of the parks near their home is excellent, and 94 (26.4 %) said it is of very good quality. Furthermore, 11 (30.9%) of the sampled respondents said the vegetation in the parks was good, while 69 (19.4%) rated it as fair. However, 29 (8.1%) said the vegetation diversity is poor. Hence, the majority of the sampled respondents thought the vegetation diversity of the parks near their homes was good, according to the results. This good image of plantation diversity may encourage people to visit Addis Ababa's parks.

According to Biggs, Stefanie, and Mary (2017) many sensory benefits are provided by vegetation. It creates a sense of confinement while also defining and articulating space. Plants can act as a screen or a backdrop for other things in the surroundings. It can also add color to the environment. It is ways to manage water, increase levels of biodiversity, improve air quality, reduce wind speed, grow biomass, and even grow fresh "organic" food the following are the major objectives for achieving sustainability: developing plant communities that serve as a foundation for a healthy ecosystem and utilizing green spaces in multi-functional ways.

In item 2 Table 7 the respondents were asked to rate the current state of park management in their neighborhood. In answer, 44 (12.4%) declared excellent, 88 (24.7%) said very well, and 98 (27.5%) said the sampled parks' management is good. However, 83 (23.3 percent) of respondents said the park administration is fair, while 43 (12.1%) said it is poor. This could indicate that one-third of respondents are dissatisfied with park administration, which could affect public access to the parks. The concerned bodies must identify the shortcomings that have been found in park management and take corrective action to improve park management.

Furthermore, it is argued that urban parks are vital for improving the quality of life for people all over the world by offering a suitable outdoor space for urban residents to relish their relaxation and entertaining needs. As a result, the landscape design process in urban parks should adapt to changing environmental and socioeconomic situations. In this regard, 99(27.8%) and 115(32.3%) of respondents said the landscape design of the parks near their home is outstanding and very good, respectively (See item 3, Table2).

Furthermore, 78 (21.9 %) of the respondents said the park's landscape design is good, while 53 (14.9 %) said the landscape design is fair. From these responses, it can be concluded that the majority of the sample respondents are pleased with the landscape design of Addis Ababa's major parks. This, in turn, may encourage residents of the city administration to visit the parks and make use of the resources there.

The sample respondents were asked to rank the cleanliness of the parks near their homes in table 1 (See item 4). In response to this question, 87 (24.4 %) and 104 (29.2%) of respondents said the parks' sanitation is excellent and very good, respectively. However, 71 (19.9%) said the parks were in good condition, 64 (18%) said they were in medium condition, and the remaining 30 (8.4%) said they were in poor condition. The aggregate statistics show that the majority of respondents have a favorable opinion of the parks' sanitation. Such a positive image of park sanitation may encourage visitors to spend lengthy periods in the parks, enthralled by the parks' sanitary environment. It should be noted here that a clean and well-maintained park provides a safe

and comfortable environment for hiking, picnicking, recreational activities, or simply relaxing.

The water bodies in the parks, on the other hand, are rated as good by 48 (13.5%) and fair by 63 (17.4%). Furthermore, 187 (52.5%) of respondents said that the presence of water bodies in the Addis Ababa parks sampled is poor. Hence, the majority of the sample respondents believed that the availability of water in the parks is poor. UN-Habitat (2019) revealed that not even one of the public spaces in the city has a water fountain basic amenity.

However, according to Biggs, Stefanie, and Mary (2017), the public has access to the sea, a river, a stream, a lake, or a wetland in urban parks. Perhaps it's because people of all ages in urban settings enjoy public spaces with water. As a result, parks and open spaces serve as urban lungs, purifying the air that people breathe.

For this reason, water features must be included in urban park design at various scales, even to the extent of altering urban microclimates. A stream or a wetland can help to mitigate the heat island effect, improve air quality, and increase biodiversity in the area. As a result, the city will be more liveable and appealing to residents and companies (Biggs, Stefanie & Mary 2017)

Furthermore, as divulged in item 6(See table2) 67(18.8%) of the sample respondents rated the sufficiency of benches or sitting areas in the major parks as excellent; whereas, 69(19.4%) of them stated it is very good and 68(19.1%) of the respondents replied it is good.

Besides, 79(22.2%) of the respondents felt that the adequacy of benches in the parks is fair and 73(20.5%) reported the sittings areas in the major parks are poor. These responses revealed that 42.7% of the sample respondents rated that the adequacy of benches and sitting areas in the parks are poor and fair. This could indicate that there are shortages of benches/Sitting areas in the major Parks of Addis Ababa.

This finding is also consistent with UN-Habitat (2019). UN-Habitat reported that in Addis Ababa city the availability of seating furniture's in public spaces is limited. In this regard, it was discovered that only 20% (408) of the total collected 2,039 public spaces have seating facilities, even though that the majority are not in good and usable condition. Even the available seating facilities are in poor condition and are unusable. UN-Habitat (2019).

As can be seen from table 7(See Item 7) the sample respondents were requested how do they rate "the attractiveness of the park located around their residence" In response, 114(32%) of respondents consider the attractiveness of the park to be excellent, while 57(16%) consider it to be very good.

In addition, the attractiveness of parks was rated as good by 86(24.2%) and fair by 61 (17.1%). However, 38 (10.7%) of respondents said that the attractiveness of the major parks in Ababa parks is poor. These responses divulged that the majority of the respondents (72.2%) reported that the attractiveness of the park located around their residence is good, very good, and excellent. This may imply that half of the sampled major parks in Addis Ababa are attractive to the visitors of the city administration.

This could motivate the public in the city to visit the parks. However, it should be noted that almost more than one-fourth of the sample respondents (27.8%) felt that the attractiveness of the parks is fair and poor. This may in turn recommends that there are parks that are not attractive to the respondents that need due consideration from the concerned bodies of the city administration.

In addition to the attractiveness of the parks, the public could visit parks located around their residence to undertake several sports activities of their interest. For these reasons, it is argued that the availability of adequate space and facilities in the parks could be one of enabling or hindering factors for the residents to visit and use the parks in their neighborhood. With this regard, the main purpose of the present study is to describe the public perception, practices, and challenges of using major parks in Addis Ababa city.

Specifically, the study is intended to identify and describe how the public rate the qualities and services of the parks located around their residence in terms of various issues. For instance, the sample respondents were asked to rate the opportunities for sports activities in major parks of Addis Ababa. The next figure presents the summary of their responses.

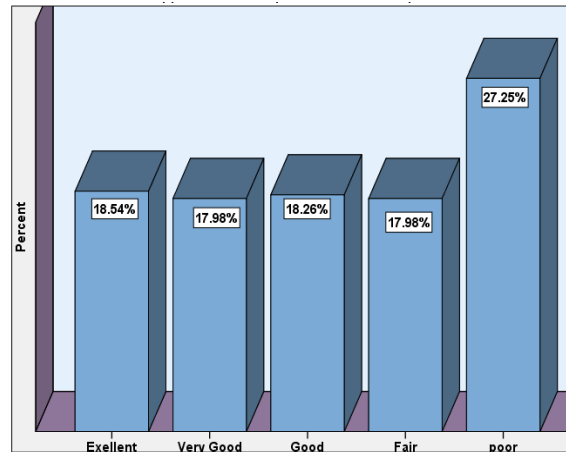


Fig 1. Respondents View on the Opportunities for Sports Activities in the Major Parks of Addis Ababa

Figure 1 shows that 66(18.54%) of the respondents replied that the opportunities for undertaking sports activities in the parks are excellent and 64(17.98%) of them reported it is good, while 65(18.26%) of the respondents stated that it is good. However, 64(17.98%) reported the opportunities for sports activities in the park, and 97(27.25%) of them said that the opportunity is good.

The aggregate response revealed that almost half of the sampled respondents felt that the opportunities for sports activities in the major parks of Addis Ababa are poor. This would affect those public sections who want to undertake sports activities in the parks not to visit the park. Hence, the lack of adequate chances to undertake sports activities in the parks can be one of the factors that can affect public visiting and use of the major parks in Addis Ababa.

Furthermore, public perception about the availability of quiet and private areas in the parks could enhance or hinder their visiting of the parks. In this regard, the sampled respondents were asked to rate the existence of quiet and privacy areas in the park. Below is the summary of their responses.

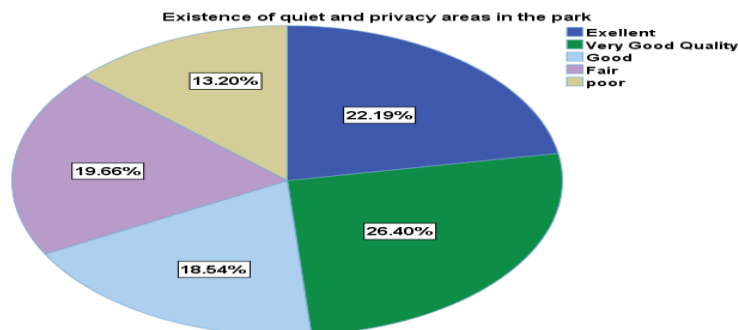


Fig 2. The Responses of Respondents Regarding the Existence of Quiet and Privacy Areas in the Major Parks of Addis Ababa

As depicted in figure 2 above, 79 (22.19%) of the respondents said the existence of quiet and private areas of the parks near their home is excellent, and 94 (26.40%) said it is of very good quality. Furthermore, 66 (18.54%) said it is good. However, 70(19.66%) of the samples respondents responded that the quiet and private areas in the parks are fair; while, 47(13.20%) said the presence of the quiet areas is poor.

Therefore, it can be deduced from these responses that almost half of the respondents believe that the existence of quiet and privacy areas in the major parks of Addis Ababa is excellent and very good. This may mean that major of the sampled major parks have quiet and private areas, which could motivate the public to visit the parks.

However, a significant number of the respondents (about (31.1%) reported that the availability of quiet and private areas in the major parks of Addis Ababa is fair and poor. This may imply some of the major parks lack private and quiet areas that the visitors need to relax and listen to themselves. Hence, this could be one of the areas that need attention and improvement by the concerned bodies of the City Administration.

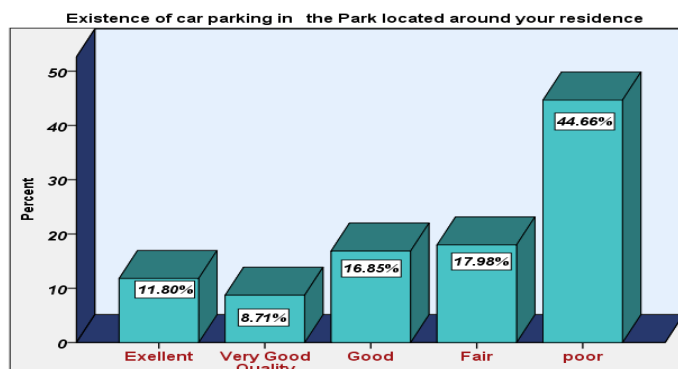


Fig 3. The Perception of Respondents on the Existence of Car Parking in the Major Parks of Addis Ababa

In Figure 3 the sample respondents were asked to rate the availability of car parking spaces in the parks located in their neighbourhood. In response, 42(11.80%) of the respondents rated the car parking space as excellent, while 31(8.71%) stated it is very good and 60(16.85%) replied it is good. But, 64(17.98%) of the respondents reported that the existence of car parking lot in the parks is poor and 159(44.66%) of the respondents said it is poor.

The aggregate response divulged that the majority of the respondents (62.2%) felt that the parking space is poor and fair. This may imply that majority of the sampled parks do not have adequate spaces for parking cars, which could affect public use of the parks. The other determinant factor for the visiting and use of parks is the availability of rich animal species in the parks. Thus, an attempt is made to identify how the public perceives the richness of the parks in animal species. The following figure (Fig 4) is the summary of the respondent's response.

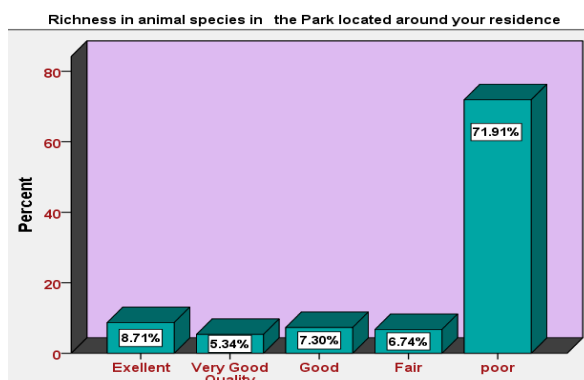


Fig 4. The Respondents' View on the Richness of Animal Species in the Major Parks of Addis Ababa

Figure 4 shows respondents' views regarding the richness of the parks located around their residence in a variety of animal species. Accordingly, 256(71.9%) of the respondents that the richness of the parks in animal species is poor and 24(6.7%) of them rated the richness in animal species of the sampled parks in Addis Ababa as fair. On the other hand, 31 (8.7 %) and 19 (5.3%) of respondents said the richness of the parks' in animal species is excellent and very good, respectively.

However, 26 (7.3%) said the parks were good in terms of the richness in animal species. Thus, it can be deduced from the above responses that the majority of the respondents (71.9%) felt that the richness of the sampled parks in Addis Ababa in terms of animal species is poor. This may show that the major parks in Addis Ababa lack varieties of animal species that could be visited by the public. This could be one of the factors that can affect public visiting and use of the parks in Addis Ababa. Accordingly, to increase the number of parks visitors, it is necessary to increase the varieties of animal species in the parks.

Finally, the respondents were asked to rate the overall qualities and services of the parks located around their residence. Below is the summary of their responses.

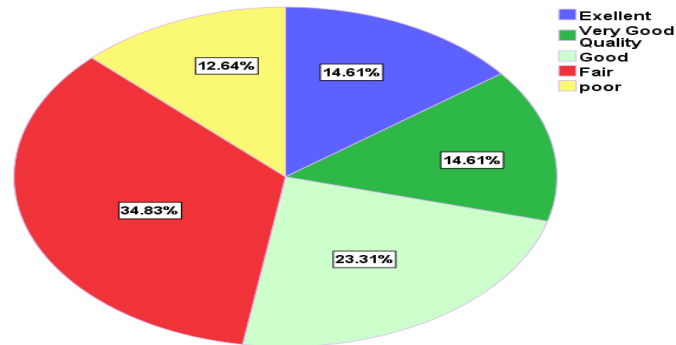


Fig 5 The Responses of the Sample Respondents on the Overall All Qualities of the Major Parks of Addis Ababa

As depicted in Figure 5, 52 (14.61%) respondents stated that they sampled parks' overall qualities and services are excellent, 54 (14.61%) said very well, and 83 (23.31%) replied is good. However, 124 (34.8%) of respondents said that the overall qualities of the sampled parks in Addis Ababa were fair, while 45 (12.64%) said it is poor.

This could indicate those almost half of the respondents (48%) are dissatisfied with the overall qualities and services of the major parks in the Addis Ababa City administration. This could indicate that the sampled parks lack the main qualities and services that the public expects to get from the parks. This may in turn be able to affect the public visiting and use of the parks.

Similarly, the interviewee respondents were asked to explain how they rate the provision of the services of the major Parks of Addis Ababa. Accordingly, the respondents forwarded several ideas. For instance, Interviewee 6 said that "Most parks give moderate to good service in terms of primary recreational space but lack additional facilities that need to be included." Similarly, Interviewee 4 responded that "Most parks have limited services and most visitors join the parks see green. Only a few parks include major components such as inclusiveness, accessibility, safety...etc." Hence, it can be said that the parks in Addis Ababa are not providing adequate services to their users. This could limit visitors' use of the services found in the parks.

Besides, the interviewee respondents were requested to explain how they describe and evaluate the qualities of the major parks in Addis Ababa City. In response to this particular question, interviewee 1 responded that the construction and component quality of parks in general meets national standards however, the number and quality of available facilities still need further improvement.

In addition, the interviewees were asked to explain how they describe and rate the qualities of the major parks in Addis Ababa. Interviewee 1 reacted to this issue by saying that while park construction and component quality generally satisfy national standards, the number and quality of available facilities still need to be improved.

The respondents responded that the quality of the parks varies depending on how new or old they are. For example, interviewee 3 indicated that freshly constructed public parks contain qualities made up of several components. In this regard, interviewee 2 indicated that the recreational infrastructure and facilities in older parks are inadequate, resulting in poor service quality. He went on to say that the new parks are being designed in such a way that they will alleviate these issues.

Consequently, it can be stated that, at the moment, the city's parks are not completely equipped to satisfy the needs of the city dwellers or visitors, and the quality of their services falls short of what visitors expect. To put it another way, each park in the city has flaws and will need a lot of maintenance in the future. This shows that a lot of work has to be done to improve the level of services provided by Addis Ababa's parks. Accordingly, the concerned bodies of the city administration should identify the missing qualities and facilities and then, should fulfill the identified shortages to increase public visiting of the parks.

V. Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the data and discussions in this study. Regarding public perception, it can be inferred that the public has a favourable opinion of the parks' adequacy, openness, accessibility, safety, and locations. The public's use of the parks may improve as a result of this good perception. That is, the public may be encouraged to visit the parks as a result of such favorable perceptions about the parks.

Besides, the public's positive perception of the parks' condition may encourage more people to visit and use the parks in Addis Ababa. In addition, the accessibility of the parks in Addis Ababa could encourage the public to visit and use the parks. Furthermore, respondents' perceptions of the parks' safety encourage visitors to visit and spend appropriate time in the parks. The parks' openness and accessibility may make them more accessible to the general public.

On the other side, the findings revealed that a significant proportion of the sample respondents believe the park near their home is unsuitable for children to play in and lacks essential amenities. This indicates that the respondents had a negative impression of the parks' facilities and suitability for children to play. This indicates that the parks do not provide the necessary amenities for visitors. This could have an impact on the number of people that visit the parks and how they use them. As a result, the City Administration's relevant bodies should clearly state what park facilities are lacking and assist the parks in filling in the gaps. Furthermore, the Addis Ababa city administration's responsible bodies should work to make the parks suitable for children.

As to the perception of the public on the qualities of the major parks in Addis Ababa City different conclusions were found. The majority of the studied respondents, for example, believed the plant diversity of the parks near their houses was satisfactory. The landscape design of Addis Ababa's major parks is praised by the majority of the sample respondents.

Furthermore, the results reveal that the majority of respondents think the parks' hygiene is good. People may be more likely to visit Addis Ababa's parks and utilize the resources there if they have a good attitude towards hygiene, plantation variety, and landscape design. It could also persuade visitors to participate. It may also entice people to stay in the parks for extended periods fascinated by the parks' clean atmosphere. Furthermore, nearly half of the respondents believe that the presence of quiet and solitude spaces in Addis Ababa's major parks is excellent or very good, which could encourage people visit.

However, one-third of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with park administration, which may limit public access to the parks. In addition, 187 (52.5%) of respondents indicated the availability of water bodies in the Addis Ababa parks tested is inadequate. As a result, the majority of the sample respondents thought that the parks' water supply is inadequate. Furthermore, nearly half of the tested respondents said that the chances for sports activities in Addis Ababa's major parks are insufficient, according to the survey. This would make it difficult for members of the public who wish to participate in sports activities in the parks to do so.

According to the study's findings, the majority of respondents (62.2 percent) believe that parking spot availability is inadequate and fair. This might indicate that the majority of the parks examined lack enough parking spots, which could limit public access to the parks. It was also shown that the majority of respondents (71.9 percent) believe the diversity of animal species in the Addis Ababa parks is inadequate. This might indicate that Addis Ababa's major parks lack a diverse range of animal species that can be viewed by the general population.

Overall, it can be said that the city's parks are now not completely equipped to satisfy the needs of both locals and visitors, and the quality of their offerings falls short of what tourists anticipate. To put it another way, every park in the city has issues and will need significant maintenance in the future. This shows that there is still room for improvement in the level of services offered by parks in Addis Abeba. In order to increase the number of public parks user, the local administration's relevant bodies should first identify the lacking features and amenities.

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