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Determining User Satisfaction of City Parks- Antakya District Atatürk Park And Defne District Sevgi Park Example

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Abstract

Urban parks are one of the most essential components of urban green spaces because they increase the quality of urban life and space. The effects of increasing construction, intense work tempo, and the obligation to work in closed areas have caused people to move away from built environments and turn to green areas. Urban parks are public spaces where citizens come together for their social, cultural, and recreational needs. Issues such as the variety of activities the park has, accessibility to the park, and security are effective on the satisfaction levels of its users in city parks. Within the scope of this study, we aim to question the user satisfaction and preferences of urban parks using the example of Atatürk Park in Antakya district of Hatay and Sevgi Park in Defne district. In this direction, as a result of the survey conducted with 323 people, the user satisfaction of the parks was tried to be determined. In the evaluation of the questionnaires, analyzes were made using SPSS statistical software. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the quality of the services provided in the park, the well-being, cleanliness, accessibility, and safety of the park are important for every element of society, and suggestions were made to improve the current situation

Key Words: *Hatay, urban open-green spaces, city parks, user satisfaction*

Introduction

The urban phenomenon is a dynamic concept that has different meanings in almost every period of history. So much so that it is seen that there is no definition of the city that may be necessary for every time and for every country in both the literature and legislative regulations (Karaman, 1998; Topal, 2004). A city is a living space where social, political, administrative and economic areas exist for all citizens (Kıvılcım, 2007; Hayta, 2016). The concept of city includes all dimensions that surround and are affected by urban dwellers. In addition, it has a quality that needs to be defined in a wide scope. The concept of city has a meaning beyond just being a physical space and population definition. Since it also refers to the process of deep-rooted structuring, studies and research on the city are carried out by many different disciplines. For this reason, the city is a multidimensional field of study with unclear boundaries, and trying to explain the concept of the city with a single definition is very difficult due to the fact that the city is a multidimensional element and changes from society to society in different time periods. When the definitions are combined, it comes to the fore that the city is a place where non-agricultural production is made, where control functions are gathered, and which has reached certain size, heterogeneity and integration levels (Hayta, 2016).

In the historical process, different approaches and definitions have been introduced for urban spaces throughout the civilizations that have existed in the world. According to Broadbent (1990), there have been three main approaches that have determined the design philosophy of urban spaces since the Ancient Greek era:

- It must begin and end with a perfect plan, which is a rationalist approach.
- It should start with a phenomenon that human senses can understand, which is an empiricist approach.
- Through trial and error, it should be determined what can stand in the city, which is a pragmatic approach (İnceoğlu, 2007).

In dictionary meaning, a place is defined as a place where something or someone is located, where an action or event takes place or takes place, a place reserved for a certain use. Space, together with time, is one of the two conditions necessary for the existence of all objects. The two are inseparable, existence cannot be considered independent of time. According to Konuk (1979), space in the urban system is a whole formed by buildings, perceived by urbanites and related to all urban events, or a multidimensional view of the environment from the perceptions experienced. Norberg Schulz, on the other hand, defines architectural space as a piece of space that meets the physiological, psychological and social needs of the users living in it (İnceoğlu and Aytuğ, 2009). It is the space delimiters that

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reveal and clarify the space. Earth, sky, shrubs, trees, ground covers, flowers, walls, ceilings, beams, columns or their combinations contribute to the definition of space by limiting the space (Erdönmez and Çelik, 2016).

Urban space is essentially the parts of the city that are defined by buildings but are outside the buildings. It is directly related to architectural space, which is basically the embodiment of existential space. In the past, urban space and architectural space were spaces in the same sense due to the continuity between them, but with modernism, architectural space became structurally and perceptually isolated and took on the character of the space of independent buildings. Despite the attention given to these independent buildings, the quality and organization of the spaces between the buildings were left to chance to a great extent, and as a result, urban spaces were left as spaces left over from planning (Çakmaklı, 1992; İnceoğlu, 2007).

Kentlerin oluşumundan bu yana, her kent içerisinde barındırdığı toplumu şekillendirmiş ve aynı şekilde bu toplumu oluşturan her bireyden birçok anlamda etkilenerek şekillenmiştir. Bu devinim hali, kentleri yaşayan organizmalar olarak tanımlamamızın temel nedenlerinden biridir (Erdönmez and Çelik, 2016).

O yüzden kentsel mekânlar, değişen sosyo- ekonomik koşullara ve kentlerin kültürel dokusuna cevap verebilen “yaşayan organizmalar” (Alexander, 1977; İnceoğlu, 2007) olarak da kabul edilmektedir. Kentsel mekânlar aynı zamanda insanların bütünlük/bütünleşme duygusunu oluşturmak için bir araya gelmelerine izin veren sosyal bağlayıcılar olarak hizmet etmektedirler. Kentsel mekânlar, kamusal mesajların ve fikirlerin paylaşıldığı, aktarıldığı yerlerdir. Bu aynı zamanda toplumsal bir aradalık ve kaynaşma sağlar. Bu mekânların kaybolması veya yok olması o kentte yaşayan insanların birbirinden uzaklaşmalarına ve birbirleriyle olan insani ilişkilerin azalmasına sebep olabilmektedir (İnceoğlu, 2007).

This important role of public spaces, especially open public spaces, in cities and in human life makes cities more livable and dynamic. Urban spaces, which are formed by the relationships and proximity of buildings with each other and with other elements in the outer space, and all the spaces between buildings in the city, are spaces with physical boundaries and forms and should give a sense of closeness. Urban spaces are also a set of spaces where people perform the four main functions related to human life: shelter, work, entertainment, rest and transportation, and they should have users (Erdönmez and Çelik, 2016).

City Parks as Urban Outdoor Spaces: Urban parks, which function as defined urban spaces, are places and symbols that bring people together and help to ensure communication between the individual and society. The gathering of multiple people in the same space constitutes a social activity at every moment. In this context, the more time people spend in urban open spaces, the more likely they are to encounter other urbanites. These encounters can take place through celebrations, actions, concerts, demonstrations and passive communication. Being together with other people, watching them and being influenced by them provide more positive effects and experiences than being alone and can lead to the formation of the desired urban identity (Özdemir, 2009). In modern societies, the first definition of planned urban green spaces was made by the American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted in the 19th century with the creation of the Boston Park System (Zaitzevsky, 1982). In this plan, pioneering steps were taken in recreational urban planning in parallel with the approach of bringing nature into the city, which started with Central Park in New York (Schuyler, 1988). In the planning process, geologists, engineers and public health professionals worked together to create spaces where people could live healthier and more comfortable lives (Little, 1995).

It can be seen that recreation is a type of need that includes many activities. Many definitions have been made regarding recreation and recreation activities have been tried to be explained. Recreation includes all physical and mental activities that a person does for resting, gaining strength and health, and having fun (Altinel, 1998; Özkır, 2007). The economic functions of urban open and green spaces are as multifaceted as their other functions. They increase the rent value of the area where they are located. If we consider agricultural areas while explaining the economic functions of urban open and green areas, although cities are defined as areas where non-agricultural activities are concentrated, the preservation of the agricultural system and culture in our traditional urban fabric is important in terms



of being considered as a part of urban green areas. In addition, production and consumption activities in agricultural areas have an economic character (Ertekin, 1992; Özkır, 2007).

User Satisfaction in Urban Parks: User satisfaction is defined as the environmental conditions that include facilities that will help the user to perform recreational activities efficiently in the recreation area without social, psychological and physiological disturbances. User satisfaction is affected by the personal characteristics of the users, the characteristics of the recreation area and the type of activities in the area. (Güngör, 2002; Uzun, 2005). In order to maximize the satisfaction of users with recreation areas, recreation areas are expected to serve the needs and desires of various age groups, gender, education and occupational groups separately. For this reason, designs that give users peace and confidence, relaxation and rest, and most importantly, ensure that they are satisfied with the space should be considered as a priority in planning. Users' criticisms, reactions, requests, suggestions, various observations, monitoring, investigations, etc. about the space should be systematized and decisions for planning should be produced (Kart, 2002; Uzun, 2005). Although the wishes and expectations of the people who will use the park are determined by various methods during the planning phase, there are very few studies that measure the impressions and reactions of the users about the park after the realization of the park (Tepe, 2010).

Karlier (2017) summarized the research objectives in user satisfaction studies conducted in urban parks as follows;

- To determine the socio-economic characteristics of park users,
- Identify the usage patterns of park users,
- To evaluate the performance, efficiency and functionality of parks by determining user preferences, satisfaction and dissatisfaction in parks,
- Identify design features that encourage users to be more physically active and socially engaged in urban parks (King 2012).
- Perceive the benefits of urban parks for people and the city in which they are located,
- It is to evaluate the data obtained and offer appropriate solutions (Gorner and Cihar 2011).

The strategy for a sustainable landscape development should not only focus on physical sustainability, but the sustainability indicators of cities for urban development should include more, and most importantly, it should guarantee that users can participate (Mahdavinejad and Abedi 2011). The fact that urban parks offer a variety of opportunities to users increases the duration of use by park users. The fact that the areas offer users different recreational uses together positively affects user satisfaction (Lee 2007). After the planning and implementation stages, it is of great importance to determine the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the users in the parks in order to maintain sustainable use in urban parks. Such studies allow parks to be revised in accordance with changing expectations and desires over time. Satisfaction or dissatisfaction rates and other requests and uses are determined through surveys conducted in the field. With the evaluation of the survey results, new revisions to be implemented are decided and necessary arrangements can be made regarding park management (King 2012). In urban parks, applications made without losing natural features and more effective uses increase the satisfaction level of urban users (Syme et al. 2001). The main purpose of this study is to determine the satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors of recreational park users in urban parks, which play an important role in social terms, and to support more sustainable planning and management of these areas by considering the data obtained (Karlier, 2017).

Materials and Methods

Hatay province is located in the eastern Mediterranean part of the Mediterranean Region of Turkey. It is bordered by Syria to the east and south, the Mediterranean Sea to the west, Adana to the northwest, Osmaniye to the north, and Gaziantep to the northeast. According to the results of the Address Based Population Registration System for 2021, the city has a population of 1,670,712 people (URL, 1). Although the city has a total of 15 districts, the district with the highest population is Antakya, which is the central district with 393,634 people. The surface area of the city is 5.524 km². In Hatay province, there are 302 people per square kilometer and the population density is 302/km² (URL,2). Within the scope of this study, Atatürk Park in Antakya district of Hatay province and Sevgi Park in Defne district were selected as the study area. While selecting the parks, their location, size, intensity of use and the landscape elements they contain were taken into consideration. The park



with the largest square meter area in the study area is Atatürk Park with 56770 m². At the same time, it is the largest green area used for recreational purposes within the urban fabric of Antakya (Bilgili, 2001).

The park, which is one of the oldest parks of Antakya, is also known as the Great Antakya Park, Antakya Municipality Park and Historical Antakya Park. This park is one of the most preferred parks for recreational activities of the city people. There are walking paths, semi-enclosed and open seating and recreation areas, children's playgrounds serving different age groups, outdoor sports areas, demonstration pools, artificial pond, ceremony area and cafes. In addition to its historical texture, the park is also important in terms of the variety of plant species it has (Çinçinoğlu, 2019).

Opened in 2017, Sevgi Park is 23000 m² in total and consists of two stages of 13000 m² and 10000 m². The park includes children's playgrounds, a barrier-free playground for disabled children, pergolas, gazebos and benches, outdoor sports areas, walking paths, a skateboard track, basketball and volleyball courts (URL, 3).

Population and Sample of the Study:

The population of the research consists of local people who visit Atatürk and Sevgi Parks. A total of 323 park users, 170 males (52.6%) and 153 females (47.4%), selected by simple random sampling method, were reached.

The scope of the study consists of 3 stages. In the first stage, the relevant literature was reviewed to create the theoretical framework of the study and to determine the study model. Then, in line with the researches conducted, the areas were visited, on-site observations were made and photographed. After the formation of the theoretical basis, data collection was started and a questionnaire was applied as the main technique. The questionnaire form prepared on Google Forms was applied to the participants both online and face-to-face. In the first part of the questionnaire form consisting of 3 parts and 25 questions, questions were asked to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second part, the characteristics of the park users, the purpose of visiting the parks and the reasons for preference were determined. In the last part, questions were asked to determine user satisfaction levels. A 5-point Likert scale was used for these statements. The 5-point Likert Scale consists of statements such as "Completely Disagree", "Disagree", "Neither Agree nor Disagree", "Agree", "Completely Agree". The questionnaire data obtained from Google Forms were organized in Microsoft Excel software and statistical analysis of the data was carried out by analyzing the study data in SPSS 20 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) statistical package program.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the data consists of three parts. In Section 1 and Section 2, descriptive analysis technique was used and the data obtained were presented according to frequency distributions supported by graphs. In Section 3, the answers given by the participants to the user satisfaction questionnaire were statistically analyzed according to gender, age, educational status and occupation variables. Independent groups t-test analysis was used for gender, and Kruskal Wallis analysis was used for age, educational status and occupation variables. Parametric analyses could not be performed because age, educational status and occupation variables were not normally distributed. In Kruskal Wallis analysis, Mann-Whitney-U analysis was performed one by one to determine which groups the difference was between.

Part 1

1- Distribution of the parks that the participants in Hatay city prefer to visit Which of the two big parks in the city the park users who participated in the research prefer to go to more: Accordingly, it was concluded that 226 of the 323 park users who participated in the research preferred to go to Antakya Atatürk Park more, while 97 users preferred to go to Defne Sevgi Park.

2. Participant opinions on whether the number of parks in the city of Hatay is sufficient The participant opinions on the proposition that the number of city parks is sufficient for the city of Hatay were examined and according to the results obtained, a large majority of 226 of the park users participating in the research found the parks in the city insufficient in number, while the number of people who found them fully sufficient was 38.

3. Distribution of participant opinions on whether the number of parks in Hatay city is sufficient or not according to gender

When the question asked to the participants about whether the number of parks in Hatay is sufficient was analyzed in terms of gender, it was seen that the number of men (f=73) who strongly disagreed was higher than the number of women (f=63). The number of men who strongly agree (f=24) is higher than women (f=14).

4. Distribution of participants' opinions on whether the number of parks in Hatay city is sufficient according to age categories



When the question asked to the participants about whether the number of parks in the city of Hatay is sufficient was analyzed in terms of age, it was determined that the age group that strongly disagreed was the group between the ages of 18-25 (f=31) and 46-55 (f=31).

5. Distribution of participant opinions on whether the number of parks in Hatay is sufficient according to educational level categories

When the question directed to the participants about whether the number of parks in Hatay city is sufficient was analyzed according to their educational levels, it was determined that the group who strongly disagreed was higher education graduates (f=61).

6. Distribution of participants' opinions on whether the number of parks in Hatay city is sufficient according to occupational categories

When the question asked to the participants about whether the number of parks in Hatay is sufficient was analyzed according to occupational groups, it was seen that the group that strongly disagreed was composed of public sector employees (f=50), followed by private sector employees with (f=25).

Part 2

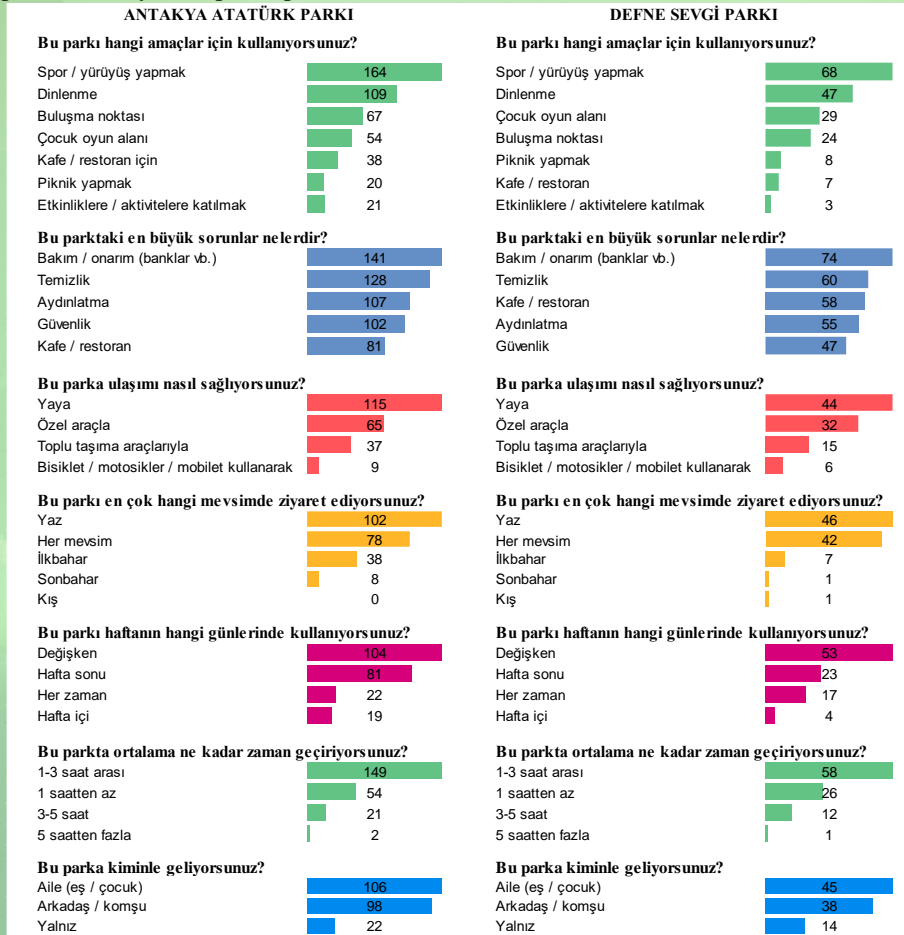
7. General evaluations of the participants about the urban parks in Hatay

Accordingly, it was determined that most of the individuals participating in the survey study conducted in Antakya Atatürk Park and Defne Sevgi Park use the parks for sports/walking and relaxation, and that they (f=232) access the parks on foot in all seasons (f=159). It was determined that the participants mostly preferred to come to these parks with their families and friends/neighbors (f=151) and spent 1-3 hours in the area (f=207). It was determined that the study areas were more frequently used on weekends and variable days, and in the summer season (f=148 summer, f=120 all seasons).

8. Participants' general evaluations of each urban park in Hatay

Comparative views of the participants about the parks in the city are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of participants' views



Accordingly, it is seen that most of the individuals participating in the survey study come to the parks for sports/walking and relaxation. The reason why Antakya Atatürk Park is preferred as a meeting point can be evaluated as the park is located in Antakya Köprübaşı in terms of accessibility, within walking distance to



important points of the city such as Hatay Metropolitan Municipality, Atatürk Street, governorship, Historical Long Bazaar. The reason why Defne Sevgi Park is preferred as a children's playground is that there are playgrounds for different age groups as well as basketball and soccer fields and a skateboard track for sportive activities. With the multi-response question analysis for the individuals participating in the survey study, it was concluded that the common problems in the parks are the lack of equipment elements and the general cleanliness of the parks. According to the users, one of the biggest problems identified in Antakya Atatürk Park is lighting, and users think that the night lighting is inadequate, especially in the fall / winter months, and that this situation poses a problem in terms of security. According to the users, one of the biggest problems identified in Defne Sevgi Park is the lack of a café/restaurant in the park area. The survey is quite positive in terms of accessibility. It can be concluded that users prefer to come to the parks on foot due to the fact that both parks are located in the center of Hatay and can be easily accessed, the variety of different uses in the immediate vicinity and the strong relationship with the residences. It is seen that the majority of the respondents use the parks in the summer months. It can be said that the reason why the parks are not preferred in winter months is due to the insufficiency of winter use and function areas in both parks.

The majority of the park users who participated in the survey study stated that they use the parks on variable days and spend between 1-3 hours. In addition, it was concluded that users prefer to come to the parks with their families and children. This may be due to the presence of children's playgrounds and sports fields in the parks. The high number of people who come to the parks with their neighbors and friends can be associated with the presence of places where people can engage in activities together, relax and chat.

9. Comparative analysis of participants' views on parks in the city by gender

According to the results of the analysis, Antakya Atatürk Park is the park that both women (f=109) and men (f=117) of the participants prefer to visit the most.

10. Comparative analysis of participants' views on parks in the city by age

According to the results of the analysis, it was determined that Antakya Atatürk Park was the park that the participants, especially those between the ages of 26-35 (f=68) and 46-55 (f=35), preferred to visit the most.

11. Comparative analysis of participants' views on parks in the city according to their educational level

According to the results of the analysis, it was determined that Antakya Atatürk Park was the park most preferred by higher education level participants (f=105), followed by secondary education with (f=75).

12. Comparative analysis of participants' views on parks in the city according to occupation variable

According to the results of the analysis, Antakya Atatürk Park was found to be the most preferred park especially by public sector employees (f=95) and private sector employees (f=42).

Urban parks, which are one of the important components of urban open green spaces, are multi-purpose public spaces that improve the quality of urban life, strengthen the image of the city, and contribute to the health and welfare of urbanites in terms of socio-cultural, psychological, ecological, economic and aesthetic aspects. These areas, which host a large number of users from different age groups, are not only recreational areas, but also places where celebrations, exhibitions and festivals are held, providing many benefits to the city and urbanites. For the efficiency and sustainability of urban parks, it is very important to determine the preferences, expectations, satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the users. From this point of view, this study was carried out on the examples of Atatürk Park in Antakya district of Hatay province and Sevgi Park in Defne district of Hatay province to determine the user profile / diversity, park usage characteristics, accessibility status, preferences and expectations and satisfaction levels of the park. Both observation and survey studies were conducted to determine user preferences. The data obtained from the survey study conducted with 323 participants on park samples were analyzed and evaluated with various statistical techniques. The majority of the park users who participated in the survey answered 'strongly disagree' to the proposition 'The number of urban parks in Hatay is sufficient' and stated that they found the number of parks in the city insufficient. When this question is analyzed in terms of gender, it is seen that male users find the number of parks more insufficient than female users. When analyzed in terms of age, it is seen that the age group that 'strongly disagree' is the group between the ages of 18-25 and 46-55. When the same question is analyzed according to education levels, it is seen that the group that says 'strongly disagree' is the group of higher education graduates. Again, when the same question is analyzed according to occupational groups, it is seen that the group that answered 'strongly disagree' consists of public employees.

It has been observed that users mostly use the areas in the summer season, especially in the afternoon and evening hours, and this coincides with the data obtained from the survey. Again, according to the observations, it was determined that the areas were mostly used for walking, sports, children's playgrounds, recreation and meeting points, and this situation coincided with the findings obtained from the survey. The use of the parks in the fall (f=9) and winter (f=1) months is quite low. This may be an indication that the use of these parks outside of summer is insufficient. During the field visits during the research, it was observed that the parks were used intensively especially on weekends. According to the data obtained from the questionnaire study, it was



concluded that the parks were used variably ($f = 157$). In this context, it can be concluded that parks are used to relieve the stress caused by work life or school, to spend time with family, children, friends and neighbors on weekdays and weekends after work and school, during lunch breaks. When the participants were asked with whom they preferred to go to the parks in the study area, it was found that ($f=151$) preferred to go with their family (spouse, siblings, children, etc.) ($f=136$) with friends and neighbors ($f=36$) alone. It was observed that similar results were obtained in previous studies. For example, Önal and Sağır (2018) stated that users prefer to visit parks mostly with their families, Ayhan and Atabeyoğlu (2020) stated that users prefer to visit parks with friends (62.7%) and family.

In the study, park users stated that they mostly prefer to come to the areas on foot. This is an important factor affecting the satisfaction of park users. It was observed that similar results were obtained in previous studies. For example, Çetinkaya, Erman, Uzun (2015) found that the most important factor affecting the satisfaction of park users is the accessibility factor. Users responded to the biggest problems they encountered in parks as maintenance/repair, cleaning, lighting, security, insufficiency of cafes and restaurants. In this case, the equipment and flooring elements used in the parks should be periodically maintained, and those that are not suitable for use should be replaced with new ones. Users find the restrooms in the parks inadequate in terms of cleanliness. Directional signs should be placed in the parks indicating the location of the toilets, the number of existing toilets should be increased, and cleanliness should be taken into consideration. The users who participated in the survey stated that the number of places where they can meet their food and beverage needs in the parks is low. In the case of Defne Sevgi Park, there is no organized space within the park. Therefore, they would like to have an indoor place that can be used for winter, which can be used for resting and eating and drinking. Parks should not only be used at certain times of the day. For this, a well-planned lighting design is needed. Functional and aesthetic lighting units that allow the use of parks especially in the evening should be used. Lighting design will reduce the security concerns of the users and increase the visual quality of the parks.

In the study, it was concluded that park users spend between 1-3 hours in the parks. This is an indication that parks are used only for walking/sports and relaxing and that there is a lack of activities for them to spend more time. The number of recreational activities should be increased and activity organizations suitable for all elements of the society should be organized in order to keep the visit time of the users longer. Appropriate playground and equipment elements should be placed so that parks can be used by people with disabilities without barriers. Winter garden designs should be considered in order to use parks actively in all seasons and to increase the intensity of use in winter months. Urban parks are very important prestige resources that increase the brand value and visual quality of the city they are located in. It is difficult to gain the appreciation of all levels of society in these areas. However, it is possible to determine the expectations and wishes of the users through user satisfaction surveys to be conducted from time to time and to transform the areas into a center of attraction with new strategies. User satisfaction surveys are an important source of data for meeting expectations and requests, as well as accessing many data such as users' participation in activities in parks, the status, frequency and duration of use of parks, strengths and weaknesses of parks. With the data obtained from the survey results, it is ensured that the parks can be maintained in a healthy way and that the satisfaction levels of the users reach the highest level. It also makes it easier to plan future urban parks in this direction and adapt them to the users. It is thought that the data obtained can be a reference for future satisfaction studies, and in line with the suggestions presented, both the space quality and user satisfaction level of Antakya Atatürk Park and Defne Sevgi Park will increase.

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