



Woman in Development and Politics

Evaluation of Citizens' Satisfaction with the Quality of Inner City Parks (A Case Study Women's Laleh Park in Noorabad)

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Today, urban parks, as the important component of the public space, play the most important role in the urban environment due to their various social, economic, and ecological functions, regarding the problems of urbanization, life patterns, and building density. In this regard, the quality of urban parks can significantly affect the quality of citizens' lives. In other words, public parks and green spaces form a part of the ecological fabric of cities to the extent that the environmental life and sustainability of cities depend on them. Therefore, it can be said that the appropriate designs of city parks, regarding their environmental, aesthetic, social values can improve the quality of parks and affect the lives of citizens. The existence of such places in the urban environment, in addition to environmental performance such as cleaning, filtering wind, reducing noise pollution, and improving microclimatic conditions, also improves the social and psychological conditions of urban residents. Walking in parks reduces nervous pressure while it increases people's intellectual ability. Besides, it provides urban residents with further vitality and helps them relax and moderate their behavior. It is stated in the description of women park services that these parks should have regional functions without conflicting characteristics. Geographical, economic and communicational ways are suitable. In this regard, Laleh Women Park, located in the city of Noorabad, on the beach street is considered. This park was opened in 2017. According to the latest statistics, the area of the park was built on a land of 6 hectares, and a credit, equal to 9 billion Tomans, was allocated to that. The facilities of this park include cycling track, skating, badminton court, and children's playground area. There exist contradictory comments regarding the success of the project from the point of view of urban policy makers and visiting women. In this regard, the aim of this research was to measure the level of citizens' satisfaction with the quality of the urban park. The case studied in this research was Laleh Women Park in the city of Noorabad. As a result, efforts were made to evaluate and analyze the quality this park from the point of view of women.

Methodology

The current research is an applied one deploying a quantitative method of study while using a descriptive-analytical approach based on the nature of the data. The statistical population of this research included all women who came to Laleh Park in a span from May to December 2022. The sample size included 200 women; this sample was assessed using Sample Power software with a confidence level of %95, the possible error of %5, and an alpha value of 0.01, 0.03, and 0.05. For data analysis, SPSS26 software was used due to its statistical capabilities. AMOS24 software was also deployed for structural equation modeling. To answer the hypotheses of the research, at the first stage, criteria and sub-criteria that explained the satisfaction of the multiple dimensions of Women Park were compiled through documentary and library studies. Then, a questionnaire, consisting of 66 questions in the

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form of a five-point Likert scale, was designed and distributed among the women who visited Laleh Park. The distribution of the questionnaire was also undertaken using a systematic sampling method during the peak hours of women's visiting of this public space. It should be noted that the measuring scales included 6 general questions, 11 questions on safety and security, 10 social-cultural questions, 10 physical questions, 9 questions about health and environment, 10 questions about the furniture and environment of the park, and 10 questions about physical and mental health.

Results

In the general evaluation of the quality of Laleh Park, the findings showed that most of the indicators under study were of poor quality, and there were plenty of weakness in Laleh Park. Thus, the results illustrated that the average and standard deviation of the indicators under study including dimensions, safety and security, furniture, health, physical-physical, socio-cultural and sanitary environment were far from the standard values and inappropriate. Also, in examining the importance of multiple dimensions of the Women Park, the findings of the path analysis, obtained through AMOS24 software, showed that the physical-physical dimension ($\beta=0.86$) had the greatest effect on the level of citizens' satisfaction with the quality of Laleh Park. According to the afore-interpretations points, it can be said that among the multifaceted factors of the quality of Women Park in Noorabad, the physical-physical factor had the most effect on the quality of the Women Park. The higher factor load of the physical-physical index indicated the confirmation of the research hypothesis.

Conclusion

Urban green spaces and forest vegetation play an important role in the environmental balance, the rate of vitality, happiness, and physical-psychological health of citizens in cities. The existence of these spaces is one of the basic necessities of a livable city, which contribute to citizens' lives in terms of beauty and amount of social interactions. Furthermore, the presence of parks and public spaces has such significance that their appropriate per capita use is regarded as one of the indicators of development in modern urban societies. Along that, creating suitable spaces for women, while meeting their needs and requirements, is one of the most important features of a healthy and sustainable city since it provides women with a ground for intellectual and social growth. Generally, despite the fact that women make up half of the population of society, less attention has been paid to women's demands and needs in the fields of urban planning; this fact makes such studies of particular importance. Such attention is significant to the extent that many urban thinkers are of the belief that the success of an urban space depends on the extent to which women use that space. The basic theory in this research is under then titles of green city, nature-friendly city, bio-philic city, and the physical and mental-health effects of urban green spaces on people. This explains the role of connection with nature in the freshness of life and the increase in the social interactions as well as the enhancement of physical and mental health. Also, the theoretical research depicts that different urban needs and necessities, on the one hand, and changes in urban life, especially in Islamic countries, while considering gender justice, have led to the formation of spaces for women. In the field of research literature, studies have shown that there is a positive and direct relationship between the existence of urban green spaces and mental and psychological peace, the treatment of diseases, a reduction in aggression, and an increase in the social interactions and the social vitality.

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