

Public Perception on Attributes of Walking Avenue in Urban Areas of Sri Lanka

**Dissertation Submitted to the
University of Sri Jayewardenepura
as a Partial Fulfillment for the
Requirements of the Final Examination of the
M.sc in Real Estate Management and Valuation Degree**

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Student Declaration

The work described in this dissertation was carried out under the supervision of Ms. Nisani Wickramaarachchi and any report on this have not been submitted in whole or in part to any university or any other institute for another degree/examination or any other purpose.

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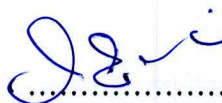
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Acknowledgement

First of all, I would like to thank Ms. N.C. Wickramarchchi, Senior Lecturer, Department of Estate Management and Valuation, University of Sri Jayewardenepura for being my supervisor and having faith in me for carrying the responsibility of doing research under her profound guidance. Her prominence in giving me this opportunity and her constant attention and support through out my research conferred me with a sense of responsibility. She was always there to help to me at all times. Apart from a wonderful teacher she is great human being and I respect her from the depth of my Heart.

I wish to my sincere thanks to Professor R.G Ariyawansa, Coordinator, Head of the Department of Estate Management and Valuation, University of Sri Jayewardenepura for giving valuable instruction regarding my research.

I wish to my sincere thanks to Ms. Janaki Edirisingha, Senior Lecturer, former Head of the Department of Estate Management and Valuation, University of Sri Jayewardenepura for giving valuable instruction regarding my research.

And also I would like to thank Urban Development Authority and Provincial Road Development Authority and Sri Lanka Land Reclamation Development Corporation for giving information regarding my research.

And my sincere thanks go to my batch mates and friends for providing support to of this task

Abstract

To find large areas close to urban areas to build recreational facilities is impossible when compare with the current demand for urban land resource. After identifying of narrow strips of stream bank reservations as a prime space available for this purpose created and designed the new concept of walking paths. The purpose of this study is to examine the public perceptual preferences on relevant attributes of walking avenues in selected case studies. The study also aims to analyze public preference willingness to maintain attributes. A total of 10 environmental attributes were identified from earlier Qualitative and Quantitative studies. Participants were asked questions basically focused on their preference and their social characteristics. Robust test of equality of Means and Homogenous Subsets techniques were used to analyze preference of respondents and descriptive analysis method was used to analyze willingness to maintain of attributes. The results were grouped in to five and then ranked. The most prioritized character is Safety (Safety of male, Safety of Female) while Facility of Toilet, Availability of Shading, Availability of landscape, Availability of Natural View were the next preferred attributes. The findings can assists those involved in designing and managing outdoor environment to identify salient environmental attributes and prioritize them in providing. The approach aids to understanding what are the attributes to be provided at what cost to the walking path users. This is a more research - exposed category of urban recreational settings due to walking paths is a newly introduced urban planning element to Sri Lanka. Therefore, association between walking paths and land value, formulating standards to walking paths, Controversy of river bank reservations with walking path construction etc areas to be further researched.

Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgement</i>	Page No <i>i</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Table of content</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>List of table</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>List of figure</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>List of map</i>	<i>xi</i>

Contents	Page No
CHAPTER ONE - Introduction	
1.1 Background of the study	01
1.2 Statement of problem	04
1.3 Significance of the study	05
1.4 Objectives of the study	05
1.4.1 General Objective	05
1.4.2 Specific Objectives	05
1.5 Methodology	06
1.6 Limitations of the study	06
CHAPTER TWO - Literature Review	
2.1 Introduction	07
2.2 Concepts related to Public Open Spaces	07
2.2.1 Recreation	07
2.3 History of Outdoor Recreation	09
2.3.1 Garden City and City Beautiful Movement Theory	09
2.3.2 The Neighborhood Unit Concept in theory and application	11
2.4 Public Open Spaces	13
2.5 Empirical Evidences	15
2.5.1 Factors affecting use of urban parks	15
2.5.2 Necessity of walking paths	17
2.5.3 Benefits of Urban Parks	19
2.5.4 Barriers on park visitation	22
2.5.5 Socio-demographic Factors concerned in other researches	24
2.5.6 Attributes concerned in other researches	26
2.5.6.1 Cafeteria and Sanitary	26
2.5.6.2 Availability of Benches	27
2.5.6.3 Quality of Environment	27
2.5.6.4 Landscape	27
2.5.6.5 Quality of footpaths	28
2.5.6.6 Scenic Beauty	28
2.5.6.7 Safety	29

2.5.6.8 Nuisance	30
2.6 History of Outdoor Recreation in Sri Lanka	31

CHAPTER THREE - Research Design

3.1 Research Design	32
3.2 Methodology	32
3.3 Problem Identification	33
3.4 Formulating objectives	34
3.4.1 Research Objectives	34
3.4.1.1 General Objective	34
3.4.1.2. Specific Objective	34
3.5 Selection of case study area	34
3.6 Sample Design	35
3.7 Data Collection	35
3.7.1 Primary Data Collection Method	35
3.7.2 Secondary Data Collection Method	36
3.8 Data Analysis	36
3.8.1 First Objective	36
3.8.2 Second Objective	36
3.8.3 Third objective	38
3.9 Data Arrange	38
3.10 Result Representation	39

CHAPTER FOUR - Case Study

4.1 Introduction	40
4.2 Diyawanna Oya Bank walking path at Parliment	41
4.2.1 Demographics - Population	42
4.2.2 Area	42
4.2.3 Topography	42
4.2.4 Soil type & Quality	42
4.2.5 Surface water	44
4.2.6 Ground Water	44
4.2.7 Images of the Location	44
4.3 Oruthota Walking path in Gampaha	45
4.4. Mahara Dalupitiya Walking path	50

CHAPTER FIVE - Data Analysis

5.1 Introduction	54
5.2 Descriptive Analysis	54
5.2.1 Locational Analysis	54
5.2.2 Analysis of the characteristics of selected case study areas	55

5.2.3 Analysis of the socio economic characteristics of users	56
5.2.3.1 Gender	56
5.2.3.2 Age categorization of respondents	57
5.2.3.3 Educational Level	57
5.2.3.4 Types of Employment	58
5.2.3.5 Time of visit of users	59
5.2.3.6 Number of visit per week	59
5.2.3.7 Purpose of using walking Area	60
5.2.3.8 Preferred time of visiting	60
5.2.3.9 Hours Spending in Walking Paths	62
5.2.3.10 Mode of Travel and Distance from Home	63
5.2.3.11 Income Level of respondents	64
5.3 To analyze the necessity of attributes in relation to each Social characteristics of users	67
5.3.1 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with facility of Toilet	68
5.3.2 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with Facilities of Changing rooms	69
5.3.3 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with Facilities of Cafeteria.	71
5.3.4 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with Street vendor	75
5.3.5 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with Car Parking Facilities	77
5.3.6 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with availability of bench	78
5.3.7 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with availability of Shading	80
5.3.8 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with availability of Land Scape	81
5.3.9 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with available Natural view	83
5.3.10 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with availability Safety	84

5.4 Compare dimensions	86
5.5 Test of Homogeneity of Variances used for determines whether all above variances are same or not.	86
5.5.1 Robust test of equality of Means were apply to check whether means of all dimensions are same or not	87
5.5.2 Using Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons for Observed mean, Check means of dimensions.	89
5.6 Identification of Homogenous Subsets	91
5.7 Ranking	92
5.8 To analyze the public preferences on the willingness to maintain the attributes	93
5.8.1 Preferred to pay for facility of Toilets	93
5.8.2 Preferred to pay for facility of Changing Room	94
5.8.3 Preferred to pay for facility of Car park	95
5.8.4 Preferred Type of Cafeteria Facility	96
5.8.5 Expected Service Facilities	99
5.8.6 Nature of Street Venders	100
5.8.7 Distance between Two Clusters of Bench	103
 CHAPTER SIX - Conclusion and Recommendation	
6.1 Conclusion	105
6.2 Recommendation	113
 References	115
Annexure	124

LIST OF TABLES

Table No	Page No
2.1 Characteristics of Recreational Open Spaces	14
4.1 Location of selected case study area	40
4.2 Water quality fluctuations in the Diyawanna Oya	44
5.1 Situation of selected locations	54
5.2 Characteristics of selected Walking Avenues	55
5.3 Gender composition of respondents in Parliment Walking path	56
5.4 Gender composition of respondents in Oruthota Walking path	56
5.5 Gender composition of respondents in Kiribathgoda Walking Path	56
5.6 Age categorization of respondents	57
5.7 Education levels of respondents	57
5.8 Types of Employment	58
5.9 Time of visit of users	59
5.10 Number of visit per week	59
5.11 Purpose of using walking Area	60
5.12 Preferred time of visiting in Parliment Walking path	60
5.13 Preferred time of visiting in Oruthota Walking path	61
5.14 Preferred time of visiting in Kiribathgoda Walking path	61
5.15 Hours Spending in Parliment Walking path	62
5.16 Hours Spending in Oruthota Walking path	62
5.17 Hours Spending in Kiribathgoda Walking path	63
5.18 Income Level of Parliment Walking path users	65
5.19 Income Level of Oruthota Walking path users	66
5.20 Income Level of Kiribathgoda Walking path users	66
5.21 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with Facilities of Toilet	68
5.22 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with Facilities of Changing rooms	69
5.23 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with Facilities of Cafeteria.	71
5.24 Analysis of the association of various income categories with Facilities of Cafeteria	72
5.25 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with Street vendor	75
5.26 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with Car Parking Facilities	77

5.27 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with availability of bench	78
5.28 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with availability of Shading	80
5.29 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with availability of Land Scape	81
5.30 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with available Natural view	83
5.31 Analysis of the association of social factors (Gender, Age, Education, Employment type and Income level) with availability Safety	84
5.32 Test of Homogeneity of Variances	86
5.33 Robust test of equality of Means	87
5.34 Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons for Observed mean	88
5.35 Identification of Homogenous Subsets	91
5.36 Median and Mode of Prefer to pay for facility of Toilets	93
5.37 Preferred to pay for facility of Toilets	93
5.38 Median and Mode of Prefer to pay for facility of Changing Room	94
5.39 Preferred to pay for facility of Changing Room	94
5.40 Median and Mode of Prefer to pay for facility of Car park	95
5.41 Preferred to pay for facility of Car park for Two Wheel	95
5.42 Preferred to pay for facility of Car park for Three Wheel	96
5.43 Preferred to pay for facility of Car park for Four Wheel	96
5.44 Median and Mode of Prefer Type of Cafeteria Facility	97
5.45 Preferences on Heavy Foods	97
5.46 Preferences on Short eats	97
5.47 Preferences on Healthy and herbal drinks	98
5.48 Preferences on soft drinks, water, juices	98
5.49 Preferences on Seating place	98
5.50 Preferences on Litter bins	99
5.51 Median and Mode of Expected Service Facilities	99
5.52 Expected Service Facilities	100
5.53 Median and Mode of Nature of Street Venders	100
5.54 preferred on ice cream Street Venders	101
5.55 preferred on Bun, Short eats - foods Street Venders	101
5.56 preferred on Water Bottles Street Venders	102
5.57 preferred on Herbal Drinks Street Venders	102
5.58 preferred on King Coconut Street Venders	103

5.59	Median and Mode of Distance between Two Clusters of Bench	103
5.60	Distance between Two Clusters of Bench	104

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No	Page No
2.1 Garden City	09
2.2 Garden City	10
2.3 The relationship between parks and physical activity.	20
5.1 Mode of Travel to Walking paths	63
5.2 Distance from Home to Walking paths	64

LIST OF MAPS

Map No	Page No
4.1 Location map of Diyawanna Oya walking path	41
4.2 Soil Maps of the Study Area	43
4.3 Location map of Oruthota Walking path in Gampaha	47
4.3.1 Description	47
4.3.2 Population	48
4.3. Location map of Mahara Dalupitiya Walking path	51

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Public open spaces such as city squares, parks, beaches and sidewalks tend to keep the city and integrate the function of the city with other urban components. These places become locations for people to meet, relax and exchange ideas as well as centers for various activities that improve the physical and social environment of the city. Public open spaces includes things such as Parks, playgrounds, Beaches, Natural Views, observation places etc. Most of the countries give priority for the urban parks and open space in the city design. Public open spaces play multiple roles in making our cities more sustainable. These are regarded as an essential element for people's recreation and healthy living and also include nature's services, ecological benefits e.g: preserving bio diversity, social benefits e.g: socialization and healthy living, and economic benefits e.g: tourism etc.

Designation of public open space is an integral component of urban development planning. It shows that open space benefits provide considerable potential cost savings to local authorities. e.g: preventing health problems, increasing worker's productivity, lessening infrastructure damage, attenuating flooding, etc. Strong evidence shows that when people have access to open spaces, they exercise more. Researches show that contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health. According to the view of Sherer, 2003, open space visionaries, parks were not amenities; they were necessities, providing recreation, inspiration and essential respite from the city's blare and bustle. And the visionaries were particularly concerned that open spaces be available to all of a city's residents.

Urban parks and open spaces are major part in the urban design in the world. Most of the countries give major priority for the urban parks and open space in the city design. Sherer, 2003, found that, many of the nation's great city parks were built in the second half of the 19th century. Urban planners believed the parks and open spaces would improve public health, relieve the stresses of urban life, and create a democratizing public space where rich and poor would mix on equal terms. By mid-20th century, city parks fell into decline as inner cities fled for the suburbs.