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Impact of Recreational Parks on the Quality of Life of Residents. Case Study: Temerloh Town, Pahang, Malaysia

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Abstract: Quality of life (QoL) can be incorporated into the ideas of expectation and satisfaction, which covers physical, social and health aspects. Participation in leisure or recreation activities is considered by many researchers as an essential component of an individual’s sense of QoL. A study had been carried out in Temerloh town to study the QoL impacts of the recreation parks. The study found that on the average, respondents were having lower “satisfaction” scores as compared to the scores for “expectation”. It means that the recreational parks should be improved for the purpose to increase the physical, social and health aspects of QoL.

Keywords: Quality of life (QoL), park visitors’ expectation, park visitors’ satisfaction

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INTRODUCTION

The recreational park is defined as an area that has a green area and equipped with facilities for people to do their recreational activities. Even though Malaysia is rapidly developing with various development projects, but the need for parks for people shall not be neglected. Unarguably, the purpose of parks is to encourage the social relationship among the community as well as to improve the quality of life (QoL) of the community through physical and social activities. Smith (2000) stated the definition of QoL usually incorporate ideas of satisfaction or dissatisfaction as well as happiness or unhappiness and associated with the general status of health and socio-economic background. A number of studies have shown a positive relationship between leisure or recreation participation and QoL, including the benefits of relaxation, self-improvement, family functioning, and cultural awareness (Kara and Demirci, 2010; Baker and Palmer, 2006). Participation in leisure or recreation activities is considered by many researchers as an essential component of an individual’s sense of wellbeing (Newman et al., 2014). In overseas publications, the importance of parks on the QoL is well documented. However, it is lacking in local research. Thus, this article aims to discuss the impacts of Malaysian recreational parks on the QoL of the residents.

CASE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

Two (2) recreational parks in Temerloh Town i.e. Taman Bandar Temerloh (Temerloh Urban Park) and Taman Awam Kubang Gajah (Kubang Gajah Public Park) had been chosen as study areas for the purpose of identifying the impacts of urban recreational parks on the QoL of residents living in the surrounding areas. The recreational parks are located at the centre of Temerloh Town which is adjacent to the commercial area, government buildings, and residential areas. The recreational parks were equipped with various types of facilities for active and passive recreational activities.
The impact on QoL was studied based on the conceptual framework shown in Figure 2. The QoL was affected by expectation and satisfaction of parks’ visitors on the physical aspects, social aspects and health aspects as a result of using the parks. The World Health Organization (WHO, 1994) outlined QoL as “individuals’ perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns”. In measuring the impact of the recreational parks on QoL, expectation and satisfaction of 111 visitors (as respondents) were collected through a questionnaire survey. Based on G-Power (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, 2018), the required sample size for a correlation analysis is 111 samples. This model (G-Power) had been used due to the unknown numbers of visitors for the study areas (the recreational parks). Thus, the required sample size was defined by the method of analysis.
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The studies found that in average, respondents were having higher expectation on the aspect of health with mean score 4.65 as compared to physical and social aspects with the mean score of not more than 4.35. In terms of satisfaction, health aspect also got the highest mean score value, 4.20 as compared to physical and social aspects with the mean score of not more than 3.91. By considering the gap between satisfaction and expectation (S – E), it is found that physical aspects were having the largest “S – E” value (-0.92 for safety and -1.10 for facilities) as compared to social and health aspects with the gaps of not more than -0.57. It means that respondents were having the lowest QoL for the physical aspects as the impact of using the parks.

| Table 1: Mean score for physical, social and health aspects of QoL |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                | Physical       | Social         | Health         |
|                | Safety         | Facilities     | Interaction    | Family life   | Chronic disease |
| Expectation (E)| 4.24           | 4.23           | 4.27           | 4.35          | 4.65            |
| Satisfaction (S)| 3.32           | 3.13           | 3.70           | 3.91          | 4.20            |
| S – E           | -0.92          | -1.10          | -0.57          | -0.44         | -0.45           |

Note: Scale for scoring range from 1 to 5.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, a successful recreational park should be well-equipped with good facilities, safe, able to increase interaction among the visitors, improve the family life, and maintain the good health as a result of using the parks for the QoL. It is because people are putting high expectation on these aspects. The mean score for expectation was more than 4.2 (for a scale of 1 to 5). On the other side, the satisfaction level was lower than 4 except for the health aspect.

REFERENCES


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