

Determinants of Public Interest in Visiting Urban Public Open Spaces: A Case Study of Taman Indonesia Kaya, Semarang, Indonesia

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Abstract. Urban development has increased the demand for public open spaces that support social interaction, recreation, and community activities. This study aims to identify the factors influencing public interest in visiting Taman Indonesia Kaya, Semarang. A quantitative survey approach was employed through field observations and questionnaires administered to 100 visitors. The analyzed variables included facilities, accessibility, safety, comfort, visual appearance, types of activities, and visiting interest. Data were analyzed using frequency distribution, cross-tabulation, chi-square tests, and correlation analysis. The results indicate that accessibility and visual appearance are the most influential factors affecting visiting interest, with correlation coefficients of 0.677 and 0.640, respectively. Facilities, safety, comfort, and activity types also contribute to visiting interest, although with relatively weaker relationships. These findings suggest that improving accessibility and enhancing the visual quality of urban parks can significantly increase visitor attraction. The study provides practical insights for urban park management by emphasizing inclusive access, landscape quality, and user-oriented public space development.

Keywords: *public open space; visiting interest; accessibility; visual appearance; urban park*

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Introduction

Rapid urbanisation has intensified the need for public spaces that can accommodate social interaction, recreation, mobility, cultural expression, and environmental functions within dense urban settings. In contemporary urban planning, public open space is not merely understood as an empty area between buildings, but as a strategic element of urban life where residents encounter one another, perform everyday activities, and construct collective meanings of the city. Public space therefore contributes to the social, ecological, and experiential quality of urban environments (Carr et al., 1992; Gehl, 2011). In this sense, the success of a public open space is not measured only by its physical presence in the urban fabric, but also by the extent to which it is accessible, usable, comfortable, attractive, and meaningful for the community that it is intended to serve.

Public open spaces have an important role in strengthening the relationship between people and the city. They support informal meetings, recreational activities, cultural events, physical movement, and psychological restoration, while also contributing to urban greenery and environmental quality. Hantono (2019) argues that public open spaces are closely related to user behaviour because they provide settings for diverse activities and social encounters. Similarly, Hantono and Ariantantrie (2018) emphasise that urban space cannot be separated from the activities, actors, and issues that develop within it. Public space quality therefore depends not only on formal planning standards, but also on users' everyday experiences, perceptions, and preferences.

In Indonesia, the provision of urban green open space is also a formal planning concern. Law Number 26 of 2007 on Spatial Planning requires urban areas to allocate at least 30% of their territory as green open space, consisting of 20% public green open space and 10% private green open space (Republic of Indonesia, 2007). At the local level, Semarang City has also regulated green open space through regional planning policies, including the recognition of green open space as an area that supports ecological balance, urban comfort, and public activities (Semarang City Government, 2010). These policies indicate that public open space is not only a design issue, but also a matter of urban governance, public service provision, and environmental sustainability.

However, the existence of parks and green open spaces does not automatically guarantee that they will be used intensively by the public. Several public spaces may remain underused when they are poorly maintained, difficult to access, visually unattractive, lacking facilities, or unable to accommodate the activities expected by users. Previous studies have shown that the attractiveness and use of public open spaces are influenced by multiple factors, including facilities,

accessibility, comfort, safety, visual quality, and activity diversity (Anisah, 2020; Iskandar & Sari, 2021). Pamungkas and Nurhasan (2020), for example, showed that inadequate supporting facilities and weak activity support can reduce public interest in visiting urban parks. These findings suggest that the planning and management of public open spaces must be grounded in user-oriented evaluation rather than physical provision alone.

Accessibility is one of the most frequently discussed determinants of public space use. A public open space can attract visitors when it is easy to reach, supported by adequate parking or public transport connections, and has internal circulation that allows users to move comfortably within the site. Comfort is equally important because visitors tend to choose spaces that provide shade, cleanliness, seating, psychological relaxation, and environmental pleasantness. Safety also affects the willingness of users to spend time in public space, particularly when visitors need to feel secure from physical hazards and social disturbance. In addition, the visual appearance of a park, including its beauty, uniqueness, arrangement, landmarks, lighting, and spatial identity, may strengthen visitors' emotional attachment and willingness to return (Carmona, 2019; Wulandari, 2020).

These factors are especially relevant in the context of urban park revitalisation. Revitalisation is often expected to transform underused or deteriorating spaces into more attractive, inclusive, and active public environments. Nevertheless, revitalisation should not be reduced to physical beautification. A visually improved park may still fail to sustain public use if it does not provide adequate facilities, ease of access, safety, comfort, and activity opportunities. Conversely, a revitalised park can become a meaningful public destination when physical design, management quality, cultural programming, and user needs are integrated. This perspective is consistent with Carmona's (2019) argument that public space design and planning should be judged by how well they support everyday use and better public life.

Semarang City provides an important case for examining these issues because the municipal government has revitalised several urban parks as part of its commitment to improving public facilities and green open space. Taman Indonesia Kaya is one of the most prominent examples. The park was formerly known as Taman Menteri Supeno or Taman KB and was later revitalised and inaugurated as Taman Indonesia Kaya in 2018. After revitalisation, the park became known as a cultural urban park with an open cultural stage, dancing fountain, lighting attractions, green areas, seating, pedestrian spaces, and other supporting facilities. Studies on Taman Indonesia Kaya have noted that the park functions as a public open space that

accommodates recreation, social interaction, cultural activities, and urban leisure (Fitra, 2021; Wulandari, 2020).

The transformation of Taman Indonesia Kaya is significant because it illustrates how urban park revitalisation can change public perception and visitation patterns. The park, which was previously less prominent as Taman KB, has become a lively public destination after the addition of cultural and visual attractions. The thesis on which this article is based also notes that the park is frequently visited, especially in the evening, when lighting, cooler weather, and the visual atmosphere encourage people to spend time there. This condition makes Taman Indonesia Kaya a useful case for understanding how visitors evaluate revitalised public open space and which factors are most strongly associated with their interest in visiting.

Although Taman Indonesia Kaya is widely perceived as a successful revitalised public space, there remains a need for empirical analysis of the specific factors that shape public interest in visiting it. Existing discussions often describe the park's physical transformation and public role, but fewer studies quantitatively examine how different attributes of the park are associated with visiting interest. This gap is important because urban planners and local governments require evidence on which aspects of public space quality should be prioritised in future park development. Identifying whether facilities, accessibility, safety, comfort, visual appearance, or activity types have stronger relationships with visiting interest can help improve public space planning, maintenance, and programming.

Accordingly, this study aims to identify the factors associated with public interest in visiting Taman Indonesia Kaya in Semarang, Indonesia. The analysis focuses on six factors derived from public open space literature and the empirical condition of the park: facilities, accessibility, safety, comfort, visual appearance, and types of activity. The contribution of this study is twofold. First, it provides empirical evidence on visitor characteristics, visit patterns, and perceptions of a revitalised urban public open space. Second, it clarifies which public space attributes show the strongest statistical association with visiting interest, thereby offering practical insights for the planning and management of urban parks in Semarang and comparable Indonesian cities.

Methods

This study used a quantitative survey design. The survey approach was selected because the research sought to describe visitor characteristics, measure visitor perceptions, and examine the statistical association between perceived public space qualities and visiting interest. The study was conducted at Taman Indonesia Kaya, an urban public open space located in Mugassari, South Semarang District, Semarang City, Central Java, Indonesia. The site was selected because it is a

revitalized city park, functions as a cultural and recreational public space, and has become a prominent destination for residents and visitors.

The study population consisted of visitors to Taman Indonesia Kaya. Because the exact number of visitors was not known, the minimum sample size was estimated using the Lemeshow formula with a 95% confidence level, $p = 0.50$, and precision level of 10%, resulting in a minimum sample of 96 respondents (Lemeshow et al., 1990). The final dataset used in the analysis consisted of 100 valid respondents. Data were collected through field observation and a closed-ended questionnaire. Observation was used to document the existing physical and non-physical conditions of the park, including facilities, accessibility, safety features, comfort, visual elements, and user activities. The questionnaire was used to capture visitor characteristics, visit patterns, perceptions of public space quality, and visiting interest.

The dependent variable was visiting interest, measured through respondents' level of interest in visiting the park. The independent variables consisted of facilities, accessibility, safety, comfort, visual appearance, and types of activity. The indicators were adapted from public open space literature and the empirical condition of Taman Indonesia Kaya (Asmulyany, 2014; Hantono, 2019; Iskandar & Sari, 2021; Wulandari, 2020).

Table 1.
Research variables and indicators

Variable	Indicators	Role in analysis
Facilities	Social and cultural facilities; recreational facilities; supporting facilities and infrastructure	Independent variable
Accessibility	Distance; parking availability; ease of reach; internal circulation	Independent variable
Safety	Safety in activities and use of facilities; feeling safe from social and physical risks	Independent variable
Comfort	Psychological comfort; environmental comfort	Independent variable
Visual appearance	Diversity; beauty; uniqueness	Independent variable
Types of activity	Range of activities accommodated in the park	Independent variable
Visiting interest	Level of public interest in visiting the park	Dependent variable

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, frequency distribution, cross-tabulation, chi-square tests, and Phi correlation coefficients. Frequency distribution was used to describe visitor characteristics and perceptions. Cross-tabulation and chi-square tests were used to examine whether each public space factor had a statistically significant association with visiting interest. A significance level of $p < .05$ was used. The Phi coefficient was used to assess the strength

of association. Following the interpretation guideline used in the original analysis, coefficients greater than 0 to 0.25 were interpreted as weak, 0.251 to 0.50 as moderate, 0.51 to 0.75 as strong, 0.751 to 0.99 as very strong, and 1.00 as perfect association (Sarwono, 2006). Because the study used a cross-sectional survey and association tests, the term “influence” is interpreted analytically as statistical association rather than causal effect.

Results

Visitor characteristics and visit patterns

The survey results show that visitors to Taman Indonesia Kaya were dominated by female respondents and by the 12-25 age group. This pattern is consistent with the park's role as a recreational, social, and informal gathering space, especially for students and young visitors. Most visitors reported coming with friends or peers, which suggests that the park functions as a social space rather than only as an individual recreational facility. In terms of mobility, visitors tended to use private vehicles more frequently than public transportation. This finding helps explain why parking availability emerged as one of the most important accessibility-related indicators.

Visit patterns also show that respondents more often visited the park at night and commonly visited twice a month. Evening visits were associated with cooler conditions, lighting, and the visual atmosphere of the park. The most common purpose of visiting was relaxation (57%), followed by attending cultural or art performances (19%), recreation or leisure (16%), exercise (5%), and other activities (3%). These results indicate that Taman Indonesia Kaya is primarily used as a leisure and relaxation space, while its cultural stage and performance-related facilities provide an additional attraction.

Visitor perceptions of public open space attractiveness

Respondents generally evaluated the park positively across the six public open space factors. Comfort received the highest proportion of “very attractive” responses (51%), followed by visual appearance (44%), facilities (42%), accessibility (39%), safety (32%), and types of activity (26%). The results indicate that the park's attractiveness is shaped by the combined experience of physical facilities, comfortable atmosphere, and distinctive visual character.

Table 2.
Visitor perceptions of public open space factors

Factor	Not attractive / less attractive	Attractive	Very attractive
Facilities	6%	52%	42%
Accessibility	0%	61%	39%
Safety	18%	50%	32%
Comfort	0%	49%	51%
Visual appearance	1%	55%	44%
Types of activity	2%	72%	26%

Association between public space factors and visiting interest

The chi-square results show that all six public space factors were significantly associated with visiting interest. Accessibility had the strongest association with visiting interest ($p < .001$; $\Phi = .677$), followed by visual appearance ($p < .001$; $\Phi = .640$), comfort ($p < .001$; $\Phi = .569$), facilities ($p < .001$; $\Phi = .547$), types of activity ($p = .002$; $\Phi = .409$), and safety ($p = .039$; $\Phi = .317$). Based on the Phi coefficient interpretation, accessibility, visual appearance, comfort, and facilities showed strong associations, while types of activity and safety showed moderate associations.

Table 3.
Relationship between visiting interest and public open space factors

Factor	Pearson square significance	chi- Phi	Association strength	Rank
Accessibility	$p < .001$	.677	Strong	1
Visual appearance	$p < .001$	.640	Strong	2
Comfort	$p < .001$	.569	Strong	3
Facilities	$p < .001$	.547	Strong	4
Types of activity	$p = .002$	.409	Moderate	5
Safety	$p = .039$	.317	Moderate	6

Key sub-variable findings

Several sub-variables showed particularly strong relationships with visiting interest. Within accessibility, parking availability had a strong association ($p < .001$; $\Phi = .650$), while distance ($p = .002$; $\Phi = .411$), ease of reach ($p = .002$; $\Phi = .413$), and internal circulation ($p = .022$; $\Phi = .338$) showed moderate associations. Within visual appearance, beauty had the strongest sub-variable association ($p < .001$; $\Phi = .686$), while diversity ($p = .004$; $\Phi = .394$) and uniqueness ($p = .013$; $\Phi = .357$) were moderately associated. Within comfort, psychological comfort ($p < .001$; $\Phi = .578$) and environmental comfort ($p < .001$; $\Phi = .523$) both had strong associations. Within facilities, supporting facilities and infrastructure had a strong association (p

< .001; Phi = .513), while social-cultural facilities and recreational facilities had moderate associations.

These findings indicate that visitors' interest is not driven by a single facility or attraction. Rather, it is shaped by the combination of accessible location, adequate parking, visually attractive design, comfortable atmosphere, and functional facilities. The park's cultural stage, green areas, lighting, seating, toilets, waste bins, drinking water taps, pedestrian paths, and security elements collectively support visitor use.

Discussion

The findings confirm that accessibility is the most important factor associated with visiting interest at Taman Indonesia Kaya. This result is consistent with public space literature, which emphasizes that public spaces must be reachable, legible, and easy to move through if they are to become part of everyday urban life (Gehl, 2011; Hantono, 2019). In this study, accessibility was not limited to distance from visitors' residence. It also included parking availability, ease of reaching the park, and internal circulation. The high correlation of parking availability is particularly relevant because many respondents used private vehicles. This indicates that transportation behaviour and urban mobility patterns strongly shape how public open space is used.

Visual appearance was the second strongest factor associated with visiting interest. This finding highlights the importance of spatial identity in revitalized public open spaces. Taman Indonesia Kaya offers a distinctive visual character through its cultural stage, lighting, fountain, green areas, mural elements, seating arrangements, and thematic zones. Public space theory suggests that people are attracted not only to functional spaces but also to places that are memorable, visually engaging, and capable of producing positive experiences (Carr et al., 1992; Carmona, 2019). The strong association between beauty and visiting interest supports this argument. In the case of Taman Indonesia Kaya, visual quality appears to reinforce emotional comfort, recreational value, and the desire to revisit.

Comfort also had a strong association with visiting interest. Psychological comfort was reflected in visitors' sense of calm, relaxation, and ability to relieve stress, while environmental comfort was associated with shade, coolness, cleanliness, and green vegetation. These findings correspond with studies showing that public open spaces contribute to wellbeing when they provide opportunities for rest, informal social interaction, and environmental relief from urban density (Hantono & Aziza, 2020; Wulandari, 2020). The dominance of relaxation as the main

purpose of visiting further supports the interpretation that Taman Indonesia Kaya functions primarily as a restorative urban space.

Facilities were also strongly associated with visiting interest. Well-maintained seating, toilets, pedestrian paths, waste bins, lighting, drinking water taps, and security facilities enabled visitors to carry out activities comfortably. This supports Asmuliany's (2014) argument that the use of public open space is related to the interaction between activity patterns, facilities, and design criteria. It also aligns with studies of recreational functions in urban green open spaces, where the availability and condition of facilities help determine whether visitors perceive a space as usable and attractive (Ratnafury et al., 2018).

Safety and types of activity were significant but showed weaker associations than accessibility, visual appearance, comfort, and facilities. This does not mean that safety and activities are unimportant. Rather, in this case, safety may have been perceived as adequate due to the presence of security posts and CCTV, making it less differentiating than access and visual quality. Similarly, the variety of activities was significant, but activities may depend on other supporting conditions such as facilities, comfort, and visual appeal. In other words, activity diversity becomes meaningful when the physical and experiential conditions of the park support it.

The results have several implications for urban planning and public space management. First, revitalization should prioritize integrated user experience rather than isolated beautification. A park that is visually attractive but difficult to access may not sustain public use. Second, visual identity should be supported by comfort and maintenance. Third, public space management should continue periodic facility maintenance, environmental cleaning, security monitoring, and programming of cultural or recreational activities. Fourth, public feedback mechanisms should be provided so that users can report problems and suggest improvements. These implications are consistent with the view that public space quality is co-produced through design, management, accessibility, and everyday use (Carmona, 2019; Hantono & Ariantantrie, 2018; Malik, 2018).

This study also has limitations. The use of cross-tabulation and Phi correlation identifies statistical associations but does not establish causal effects. The sample size was adequate for exploratory survey analysis but remained limited to 100 respondents. Future studies may use larger samples, regression modelling, structural equation modelling, behavioural mapping, or mixed methods to better understand how different visitor groups experience public open space

over time. Additional variables such as cleanliness, vendor presence, perceived satisfaction, thermal comfort, social inclusiveness, and maintenance quality may also enrich future analysis.

Conclusion

This study examined the factors associated with public interest in visiting Taman Indonesia Kaya as an urban public open space in Semarang, Indonesia. The results show that facilities, accessibility, safety, comfort, visual appearance, and types of activity were all significantly associated with visiting interest. Among these, accessibility and visual appearance were the strongest factors, followed by comfort and facilities. Types of activity and safety were also significant, although their associations were more moderate. The findings suggest that the attractiveness of Taman Indonesia Kaya is shaped by a combination of practical and experiential factors. Visitors are encouraged to come because the park is accessible, parking is available, internal circulation is understandable, the visual setting is attractive, the environment feels comfortable, and facilities are sufficiently maintained. The park's distinctive visual identity, cultural stage, green atmosphere, and evening lighting strengthen its role as a recreational and social public space. For urban policy and planning, the study underlines that public open space revitalization should not focus only on physical renovation. Successful revitalization requires the integration of accessibility, maintenance, safety, comfort, activity programming, and visual identity. For future research, broader samples and more advanced analytical models are recommended to test the relative contribution of each factor and to examine how different visitor groups experience revitalized urban parks.

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