

# Urban Parks and User Well-being in Lagos State: Evaluating Adequacy in Selected LGAs

Babamboni A. Solomon; Ogunleye V. Temitope; Ajayi O. O.; and Oladipo A. Dare-Abel

*Department of Architecture, College of Postgraduate Studies, Caleb University, Imota, Lagos State, Nigeria.*

Corresponding author: [victoria.ogunleye@calebuniversity.edu.ng](mailto:victoria.ogunleye@calebuniversity.edu.ng)

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## Abstract

Urban parks are very important in promoting physical, mental, and social well-being by providing recreational spaces for relaxation, exercise, and community interaction. However, the adequacy and effectiveness of these benefits in rapidly urbanizing cities like Lagos, Nigeria, remain questionable. This study evaluates the adequacy of urban parks and their impact on user well-being in Ikeja, Alimosho, Eti-Osa, and Badagry Local Government Areas. Using a quantitative research approach, primary data were collected through surveys, and statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS. Findings reveal that while parks positively influence well-being, their underutilization is linked to poor accessibility, inadequate maintenance, and safety concerns. A majority (78.4%) of respondents rarely visit parks, and only 31.1% perceive their impact on well-being as positive. Also, a significant correlation ( $r = 0.335$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was found between the level of park maintenance and people's sense of safety, underscoring the importance of improved facility upkeep. The study concludes that improving park accessibility, maintenance, security, and facility diversity is essential to maximizing their public health and social benefits. Recommendations made from this study include policy reforms, increased community involvement, and more effective management strategies to enhance the functionality of urban parks for all.

**Keywords:** Urban Parks, Well-being, Park Accessibility, Maintenance Culture, Recreational Spaces.

## Introduction

Sustainable urban development increasingly relies on urban parks as multifunctional spaces that offer environmental, social, and economic benefits. These green spaces provide opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and social interaction, especially in densely built environments where nature is often scarce (Roberts et al., 2019). Ecologically, urban parks play a crucial role in mitigating environmental degradation by preserving biodiversity, improving air quality, and reducing the urban heat island effect. In cities with high population density, such as Lagos, Nigeria, these functions are particularly vital due to the intense pressure on land, infrastructure, and environmental resources (Dipeolu & Ibem, 2022).

Globally, organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN-Habitat have advocated for equitable access to green spaces as a core tenet of sustainable and inclusive cities. Research by Nieuwenhuijsen et al., (2022) explained one influential framework, the 3-30-300 rule recommends that every urban resident should see at least three trees from their home, live in a neighborhood with at least 30% tree canopy coverage, and be no more than 300 meters from a public green space. This guideline reflects growing recognition of the strong links between access to nature and public health outcomes, including reduced stress, improved mental well-being, and enhanced social cohesion. Despite these global benchmarks, many African cities, including Lagos, struggle to provide sufficient, accessible, and functional urban green spaces. Lagos, one of the fastest-growing megacities in the world, faces mounting environmental challenges such as flooding, air pollution, and urban sprawl, which threaten both ecological balance and residents' quality of life. Public parks in Lagos are often marred by inadequate maintenance, vandalism, safety concerns, and poor infrastructure planning. In many cases, urban parks are either poorly located, underutilized, or inaccessible to the very populations they are intended to serve.

These gaps are more than infrastructural; they have public health, equity, and climate implications. When green spaces are lacking or mismanaged, the consequences range from biodiversity loss to increased vulnerability to heatwaves and reduced physical activity among residents (Jang et al., 2024). As the urban population continues to grow, there is an urgent need to assess whether existing parks in Lagos are adequately meeting the needs of their users and contributing meaningfully to urban well-being.

## **Problem Statement**

The utilization of urban parks in Lagos, Nigeria, is still lacking despite their significant role as spaces for recreation and social interaction. International guidelines promote equitable access to green spaces, but poor planning and urban structures in the city's dense population make it difficult to walk or use without restricted accessibility. Regular visitation is discouraged, particularly among those who are vulnerable, due to issues such as vandalism and insecurity, as well as the lack of comfortable resting places in a safe environment. These problems indicate a wider demand for more inclusive, user-centered design and maintenance approaches. The lack of empirical data on Lagos's parks and user feedback limits urban planners' capacity to make context-specific improvements. The study attempts to fill that gap by analyzing the suitability of urban parks in particular LGAs situated in Lagos State. Through a quantitative evaluation of user experiences, park conditions, and perceptions of safety and maintenance, this research seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations for park planning in Lagos and urban areas with greater accessibility.

**Aim of the Study**

Urban parks in certain Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Lagos State will be evaluated for their suitability and the well-being of users through this study. Through the analysis of park conditions, user experiences, and key factors influencing park usage, the research endeavours to gain insight into how urban parks can contribute to improving city life.

**Objectives of the Study**

This objective is accomplished through the following:

1. To determine the frequency of residents in selected LGAs utilizing urban parks and the reasons behind it.
2. To check the positive effects on users' physical, mental, and social well-being.
3. To investigate the impact of urban park maintenance culture on their usability.

In a city facing the challenges of urbanization and climate change, urban parks can serve as dreaded "green space". Their impact on cities will be significant in enhancing their liveability, fairness, and resilience. However, to achieve this potential, a comprehensive approach is necessary to address the challenges of park management and upkeep. As a result, this study serves as an invitation for policymakers and urban planners to focus on the sustainable development and maintenance of city parks in Lagos State.

**Literature Review****The Importance of Urban Parks in Urban Sustainability**

Urban parks have long been recognized as essential elements of sustainable city planning, providing social, environmental, and psychological benefits. Ecologically, urban parks provide essential ecosystem services such as improving air quality, reducing urban heat island effects, and conserving biodiversity (Ayala-Azcárraga et al., 2019). Researchers such as Mohamad Nadzri et al. (2023) and Jing et al. (2023) have emphasized their role in enhancing urban well-being through relaxation, recreation, and social bonding. Globally, urban green spaces are framed not only as leisure zones but as public health infrastructure, helping reduce stress, improve physical activity, and foster social cohesion (WHO, 2017; Edeigba et al., 2024). In addition, these spaces mitigate the impacts of climate change by sequestering carbon and providing natural cooling effects through vegetation and shade (Jing et al., 2023). Socially, urban parks contribute to physical and mental well-being by offering spaces for recreation, relaxation, and social interactions. Studies have highlighted their role in reducing stress, encouraging physical activity, and enhancing community cohesion (Zhao et al., 2024). For instance, green spaces in urban centers have been linked to lower rates of depression and anxiety among urban residents, particularly in high-density areas (Lydia Nkechi Philip, 2024). Economically, parks enhance property values and promote tourism, generating revenue for local governments and businesses. Despite these benefits, urban parks in developing countries often struggle to fulfill their potential due to management and maintenance challenges.

**Global Perspectives on Urban Park Management**

Globally, successful urban park management relies on robust policies, sustainable financing, and innovative practices. Developed nations often demonstrate exemplary models of park management through public-private partnerships (PPPs) and community involvement. For instance, New York City's Central Park is managed by the Central Park Conservancy, a nonprofit organization that combines private-sector funding with public oversight to maintain high standards of care (Liu et al., 2024). Similarly, London's Royal Parks benefit from a hybrid management model where private and public entities collaborate to ensure operational efficiency and financial sustainability (Dempsey et al., 2019). These global examples underline the importance of strategic planning, stakeholder collaboration, and sustained investment in urban parks. However, the applicability of such models in developing countries is limited by socio-economic and cultural barriers. For example, while PPPs have been successful in the Global North, their implementation in Nigeria faces challenges such as a lack of clear frameworks, mistrust among stakeholders, and insufficient incentives for private-sector participation (Dada et al., 2024). The adaptability of global best practices to local contexts remains a significant area for further research and innovation.

**Challenges in Urban Park Management in Nigeria**

Urban Park management in Nigeria faces multifaceted challenges, exacerbated by rapid urbanization and resource constraints. A critical issue is the underfunding of park maintenance and infrastructure, which leads to deteriorating facilities, overgrown vegetation, and inadequate services (Jang et al., 2024). In Lagos State, for example, budgetary allocations for green spaces are often overshadowed by competing priorities such as housing and transportation (Johnson, 2025). Policy gaps and enforcement weaknesses further undermine the management of urban parks. While policies may exist to protect green spaces, poor implementation and weak enforcement often result in land-use conflicts and the encroachment of parks for commercial or residential developments (Johnson, 2025). Also, limited technical expertise among park managers contributes to inefficient maintenance practices and a lack of innovation in park operations ("The Role of Green Spaces in Enhancing Residents' Subjective Well-Being in Urban Communities," 2024). Community engagement is another major challenge. Studies reveal that a lack of public involvement in park management leads to low levels of trust, vandalism, and misuse of facilities (Favretto et al., 2021). For instance, many urban parks in Nigeria are underutilized or avoided altogether due to safety concerns, poor cleanliness, and inadequate programming (Adedotun Dipeolu et al., 2024). The absence of community-driven initiatives limits the ability of parks to serve as vibrant public spaces that foster social connections and civic pride.

### **Opportunities and Emerging Solutions**

Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities to enhance urban park management in Nigeria. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are increasingly recognized as a viable solution to address financial and operational constraints. By leveraging private sector resources and expertise, PPPs can improve park infrastructure, introduce innovative programming, and ensure sustainable funding streams (Marx, 2019). For instance, tax incentives and branding opportunities could attract private investment while maintaining public oversight to safeguard community interests (Liu et al., 2024). Community engagement presents another promising avenue. Successful examples from other countries, such as volunteer programs and participatory planning processes, can be adapted to the Nigerian context. Initiatives like community clean-up drives, urban gardening projects, and educational workshops can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among residents (Author, year). Technological innovations also offer transformative potential. Smart Park technologies, including automated irrigation systems, environmental sensors, and mobile applications for visitor feedback, have been shown to enhance efficiency and user experience in park management globally (Obaideen, 2022). In Nigeria, integrating such technologies could address longstanding challenges, provided that infrastructural deficits and funding barriers are overcome. Capacity building for park management staff is equally critical. Training programs focused on sustainable landscaping, ecological management, and stakeholder engagement can equip park managers with the skills needed to implement effective practices (Favretto et al., 2021). International collaborations and knowledge exchanges could further enhance local expertise and introduce innovative approaches to urban park management.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a quantitative research approach using structured questionnaires which included a combination of Likert-scale items (5-point scale ranging from Very positive to Very negative) and closed-ended questions, with a few open-ended items to allow qualitative elaboration to evaluate the adequacy of urban parks in selected Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Lagos State and their impact on user well-being. The selected LGAs, Ikeja, Alimosho, Eti-Osa, and Badagry, were chosen due to their high urban density, socio-economic diversity, and the presence of key urban parks that serve as major recreational spaces. The study assesses park availability, maintenance, and factors influencing their usage through direct user feedback.

**Table 3.1: Selected Urban Parks**

| S/N | LGA      | Urban Park                             |
|-----|----------|----------------------------------------|
| 1   | Ikeja    | Johnson Jakande Tinubu Park (JJT Park) |
| 2   | Alimosho | Rafiu Jafojo Park                      |
| 3   | Eti-Osa  | Muri Okunola Park                      |
| 4   | Badagry  | Badagry Recreational Park              |

These parks were selected based on their accessibility, popularity, demographic reach, and role in providing recreational and social spaces to urban residents across various parts of Lagos State. The selection ensures that findings are inclusive of diverse socio-economic and environmental factors influencing urban park usage. Cochran's formula was used to determine the sample size for the study. Cochran's formula is expressed as  $n = Z^2 \cdot p \cdot \frac{1-p}{e}$ . Where: n = required sample size, Z = Z-score (corresponding to the desired confidence level), p = is the estimated proportion of the population with the characteristic of interest (assumed as 0.5 for maximum variability), q is 1, e = is the margin of error. With a margin of error set at 0.06. The calculation becomes  $\frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1-0.5)}{(0.06)^2}$ . Then,  $\approx 267$ . A total of 267 Questionnaires were sent out were surveyed across the selected parks to ensure diverse perspectives while maintaining a manageable sample size for analysis. The study relied solely on structured questionnaires distributed to urban park users within the selected LGAs. The data underwent analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency distributions, percentage analysis, and mean scores, were used to interpret user responses and identify patterns in park adequacy and well-being indicators. Ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and responses were collected anonymously to maintain confidentiality. Participation was entirely voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any point.

## Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings from the SPSS analysis, structured according to the research objectives. It includes descriptive statistics, inferential analysis, and a discussion of the implications of these results in the context of urban park adequacy and user well-being in Lagos State. The results are interpreted using existing literature and supported with relevant citations.

## Demographic Analysis

The demographic analysis in Table 4.1 shows that most people surveyed (54.5%) are in the 18-30 age range. Then we have the 31-43 group coming in at 23.5%, which tells us that urban parks are pretty much a major destination for young adults. This backs up what recent

studies are saying about younger folks being more inclined to enjoy outdoor activities for both socializing and unwinding (Ayala-Azcárraga et al., 2019). When it comes to gender, the numbers are fairly even, with 52.3% identifying as male and 47.7% as female, indicating both genders are enjoying urban park activities almost equally. Research from Zhang et al. (2020) also noted similar trends regarding the usage of urban green spaces, stressing that how accessible and safe a park is impacts who gets to use it. In the category of employment, it turns out that a number are employed (43.6%), while 34.5% are self-employed, and just 22.0% are unemployed. This shows that both people with regular jobs and those with flexible working conditions are making good use of these parks. Past studies have pointed out that those who are employed often use parks to de-stress and make connections, while those who are not working see them as a good spot for socializing (Jang et al., 2024). As for education, most respondents have at least a bachelor's degree (54.2%), with a solid 37.9% holding a master's. Only a small fraction has a doctorate (2.3%), HND (3.0%), or SSCE (2.7%). The large percentage of educated folks suggests that urban parks in Lagos State attract those who are likely aware of the health and social perks linked to green spaces (Dipeolu & Ibem, 2022). Plus, studies indicate that people with higher education often appreciate and seek out well-kept public parks for their recreation and wellness needs (Jing et al., 2023).

**Table 4.1: Distribution of Age, Gender, Occupation status, and Education level**

| Demographic Variable     | Category          | N   | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----|----------------|
| <b>Age</b>               | 18-30 years       | 144 | 54.5%          |
|                          | 31-43 years       | 62  | 23.5%          |
|                          | 44-55 years       | 38  | 14.4%          |
|                          | 56-65 years       | 17  | 6.4%           |
|                          | 66+ years         | 3   | 1.1%           |
|                          | Total             | 264 | 100%           |
| <b>Gender</b>            | Male              | 138 | 52.3%          |
|                          | Female            | 126 | 47.7%          |
|                          | Total             | 264 | 100%           |
| <b>Occupation Status</b> | Self-employed     | 91  | 34.5%          |
|                          | Employed          | 115 | 43.6%          |
|                          | Unemployed        | 58  | 22.0%          |
|                          | Total             | 264 | 100%           |
| <b>Education Level</b>   | Bachelor's Degree | 143 | 54.2%          |
|                          | Master's Degree   | 100 | 37.9%          |
|                          | Doctorate Degree  | 6   | 2.3%           |
|                          | HND               | 8   | 3.0%           |
|                          | SSCE              | 7   | 2.7%           |
|                          | Total             | 264 | 100%           |

**Objective 1** – To evaluate the frequency and purpose of urban park usage among residents in the selected LGAs.

The results in Figure 1(Bar chart) indicate that most respondents (78.4%) rarely visit urban parks, while only 1.9% visit daily and 4.2% visit once a week or several times a week. This infrequent park usage suggests potential barriers such as poor accessibility, inadequate facilities, or low maintenance standards, as noted in studies by Zhao et al. (2024). The results align with findings from African cities where park use remains low due to insufficient urban planning and maintenance issues (Okunlola et al., 2022).

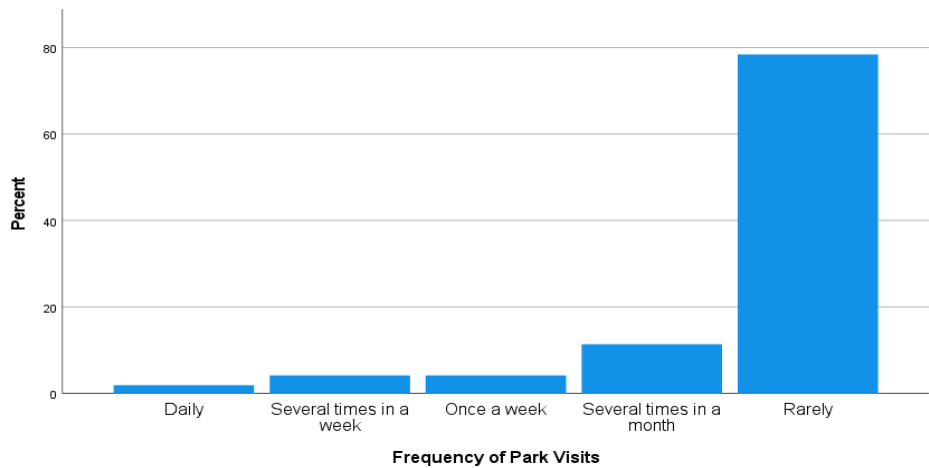


**Figure 1:** Bar chart showing the Frequency of Park Visits.

The results in Figure 2 show that among respondents who do visit parks, Johnson Jakande Tinubu Park (43.9%) is the most frequent, followed by Muri Okunola Park (31.4%), Badagry Recreational Park (18.6%), and Rafiu Jafojo Park (6.1%). This suggests that park preference may be linked to location, amenities, and overall attractiveness. Research by van Vliet et al. (2021) highlights that urban park popularity is strongly influenced by accessibility, green infrastructure, and recreational diversity.

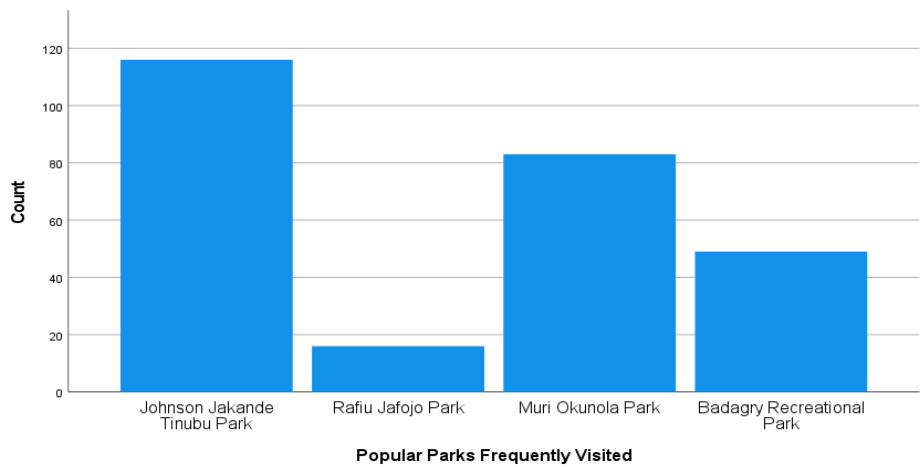


**Figure 2:** Bar chart showing the Popular parks frequently visited.

The most common activities in urban parks, as shown in Table 4.2, include picnicking (27.3%), socializing (26.0%), relaxing/reading (25.5%), and walking/jogging (13.0%). These findings align with studies suggesting that urban parks serve as multifunctional spaces that support both social interactions and individual relaxation (Adedotun Dipeolu et al., 2024). However, the low engagement in sports (8.2%) could indicate a lack of sporting infrastructure or safety concerns.

**Table 4.2: Activities done in parks Frequencies**

|                                          |                                     | Responses |         | Percent of Cases |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------|------------------|
|                                          |                                     | N         | Percent |                  |
| \$Activities_done_in_parks <sup>a</sup>  | Picnicking                          | 120       | 27.3%   | 46.0%            |
|                                          | Sports (e.g., football, basketball) | 36        | 8.2%    | 13.8%            |
|                                          | Socializing                         | 114       | 26.0%   | 43.7%            |
|                                          | Relaxing/Reading                    | 112       | 25.5%   | 42.9%            |
|                                          | Walking/Jogging                     | 57        | 13.0%   | 21.8%            |
| Total                                    |                                     | 439       | 100.0%  | 168.2%           |
| a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1. |                                     |           |         |                  |

**Objective 2** – To examine the perceived impact of urban parks on the physical, mental, and social well-being of users.

The results in Table 4.3 show that most respondents feel relaxed and calm (54.2%) or refreshed and rejuvenated (22.7%) after visiting parks. However, 4.2% feel stressed, and 8.7% experience no noticeable change. These findings support the stress-reducing effects of natural environments, as established in studies by Jang et al. (2024) and Johnson (2025), which show that exposure to green spaces significantly reduces cortisol levels and enhances mental restoration. A significant proportion of respondents in Table 4.4 shows that (75.4%) of respondents report health benefits from visiting parks, corroborating literature that highlights improved cardiovascular health, stress reduction, and enhanced mood as primary benefits of green space exposure. However, the 24.6% who report no health benefits may indicate that infrequent visits limit the impact of green spaces on well-being (Ayala-Azcárraga et al., 2019).

**Table 4.3: Perceived Well-being Benefits of Urban Parks**

|                           | N   | %     |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|
| Refreshed and rejuvenated | 60  | 22.7% |
| Relaxed and calm          | 143 | 54.2% |
| Energized                 | 27  | 10.2% |
| Stressed                  | 11  | 4.2%  |
| No noticeable change      | 23  | 8.7%  |

**Table 4.4: Health Benefits as a result of visiting urban Parks**

|     | N   | %     |
|-----|-----|-------|
| Yes | 199 | 75.4% |
| No  | 65  | 24.6% |

Most respondents in Table 4.5 perceive parks as having a fair (34.1%) to positive (27.7%) or very positive (31.1%) impact on their well-being. A small percentage reports negative (4.2%) or very negative (3.0%) experiences, which may stem from factors such as poor park maintenance, inadequate security, or overcrowding (Zhang et al., 2024). These results highlight the importance of park management in enhancing user experiences.

**Table 4.5: Overall Impact of Parks on Wellbeing**

|               | N  | %     |
|---------------|----|-------|
| Very Negative | 8  | 3.0%  |
| Negative      | 11 | 4.2%  |
| Fair          | 90 | 34.1% |
| Positive      | 73 | 27.7% |
| Very positive | 82 | 31.1% |

### **Objective 3 – Maintenance Culture & Usability of Parks**

The results in Table 4.6 show that the cleanliness of parks is rated as good (43.9%) or fair (37.1%), with only 8.7% rating them as excellent. However, 9.1% of respondents rate parks as poor, indicating that sanitation remains an issue. Prior studies emphasize that poor waste management in parks discourages use and diminishes user experience (Okunlola et al., 2022).

**Table 4.6: Cleanliness Rating of Parks Visited**

|           | N   | %     |
|-----------|-----|-------|
| Excellent | 23  | 8.7%  |
| Good      | 116 | 43.9% |
| Fair      | 98  | 37.1% |
| Poor      | 24  | 9.1%  |
| 5         | 3   | 1.1%  |

The results in Table 4.7 show that a significant number of respondents (62.5%) acknowledge that park facilities are maintained, while 29.2% disagree. This suggests that while some parks are adequately managed, there are maintenance gaps that may limit usability (Jing et al., 2023).

**Table 4.7: Maintenance rating of frequently used facilities in Parks**

|                | N   | %     |
|----------------|-----|-------|
| Yes            | 165 | 62.5% |
| No             | 77  | 29.2% |
| Not Applicable | 22  | 8.3%  |

Perceptions of safety vary in Table 4.8, with only 19.3% feeling very safe, 32.2% somewhat safe, and 37.5% remaining neutral. 10.6% feel somewhat unsafe, and 0.4% feel very unsafe. Studies suggest that safety concerns significantly impact park visitation rates, with higher levels of perceived insecurity discouraging frequent use (Zhang et al., 2020).

**Table 4.8: Safety Perception**

|                 | N  | %     |
|-----------------|----|-------|
| Very safe       | 51 | 19.3% |
| Somewhat safe   | 85 | 32.2% |
| Neutral         | 99 | 37.5% |
| Somewhat unsafe | 28 | 10.6% |
| Very unsafe     | 1  | 0.4%  |

The Pearson and Spearman correlation analyses in Tables 4.9 and 4.10 show a positive correlation between maintenance and safety perception ( $r = .335$ ,  $p < 0.01$  and  $r = .373$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , respectively). This suggests that better-maintained parks are perceived as safer. Literature supports these findings, indicating that well-maintained environments reduce crime rates and increase user confidence in public spaces (Dada et al., 2024; Favretto et al., 2021).

**Table 4.9: Correlation Between Maintenance and Usability (Pearson correlation)**

|                                                              |                     | Maintenance rating of frequently used facilities in Parks | Safety Perception |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Maintenance rating of frequently used facilities in Parks    | Pearson Correlation | 1                                                         | .335**            |
|                                                              | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                                                           | <.001             |
|                                                              | N                   | 264                                                       | 264               |
| Safety Perception                                            | Pearson Correlation | .335**                                                    | 1                 |
|                                                              | Sig. (2-tailed)     | <.001                                                     |                   |
|                                                              | N                   | 264                                                       | 264               |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). |                     |                                                           |                   |

**Table 4.10: Correlation Between Maintenance and Usability (Spearman's rho correlation)**

|                |                                                           |                         | Maintenance rating of frequently used facilities in Parks | Safety Perception |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Spearman's rho | Maintenance rating of frequently used facilities in Parks | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000                                                     | .373**            |
|                |                                                           | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .                                                         | <.001             |
|                |                                                           | N                       | 264                                                       | 264               |
|                | Safety Perception                                         | Correlation Coefficient | .373**                                                    | 1.000             |
|                |                                                           | Sig. (2-tailed)         | <.001                                                     | .                 |
|                |                                                           | N                       | 264                                                       | 264               |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 4.11 suggest that respondents who rarely visit parks (78.4%) still report feeling relaxed (56.0%) after visits, indicating that even infrequent exposure to nature has restorative benefits (Lydia Nkechi Philip, 2024). However, daily visitors tend to report more positive experiences.

**Table 4.11: Frequency of Park Visits & Wellbeing After Park Visit Crosstabulation**

|                          |                       | Wellbeing After Park Visit |                  |           |          |                      | Total |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|-----------|----------|----------------------|-------|
|                          |                       | Refreshed and rejuvenated  | Relaxed and calm | Energized | Stressed | No noticeable change |       |
| Frequency of Park Visits | Daily                 | 1                          | 3                | 0         | 0        | 1                    | 5     |
|                          | Several times a week  | 4                          | 4                | 0         | 1        | 2                    | 11    |
|                          | Once a week           | 3                          | 4                | 3         | 0        | 1                    | 11    |
|                          | Several times a month | 11                         | 16               | 2         | 0        | 1                    | 30    |
|                          | Rarely                | 41                         | 116              | 22        | 10       | 18                   | 207   |
| Total                    |                       | 60                         | 143              | 27        | 11       | 23                   | 264   |

The chi-square test results in Table 4.12 ( $\chi^2 = 16.618$ ,  $p = 0.411$ ) suggest no statistically significant relationship between park visit frequency and reported well-being. This finding suggests a degree of uniformity in park-related experiences across the selected LGAs. This may indicate that, regardless of geographical location, challenges such as poor

maintenance and insecurity are consistently perceived across Lagos, reflecting systemic urban park issues. The lack of statistical significance could be due to factors such as low frequency of visits, underutilization of park amenities, or external stressors affecting well-being.

**Table 4.12: Relationship Between Park Use and Wellbeing (Chi-Square Test)**

|                              | Value               | df | Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 16.618 <sup>a</sup> | 16 | .411                              |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 18.550              | 16 | .293                              |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .036                | 1  | .849                              |
| N of Valid Cases             | 264                 |    |                                   |

a. 16 cells (64.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .21.

### Summary of Discussion

The study examined the impact of urban parks on user well-being in Lagos State Local Government Areas (LGAs). Youngsters were the most frequent users, with 54.5% aged 18-30. Most respondents were employed (43.6%) and self-employed (44.5%), with a majority holding a bachelor's degree (54.2%). 78.4% of respondents reported infrequent visits to urban parks, indicating low patronage. Johnson Jakande Tinubu Park was the most visited park with 43.9% of visitors, followed by Muri Okunola Park with 31.4%. Most park visitors engaged in leisure activities such as picnicking (27.3%), socializing (26.0%), and relaxing/reading (25.5%). 54.2% of respondents reported feeling relaxed and peaceful upon entering a park, with 75.4% stating positive effects on their health. However, the overall impact of parks on well-being was only rated at very good levels, suggesting that factors such as proximity, quality, and upkeep may limit their efficacy. Park maintenance and usability were rated poorly by only 8.7% of participants, with 43.9% deeming it good and 37.1% considering it fair. 62.5% reported well-maintained facilities, while 29.2% reported being understaffed. Safety perceptions were mixed, with 17.5% feeling secure but not as protected. Park maintenance had a moderately positive correlation with safety perceptions, suggesting that more maintenance leads to greater perceived safety. The study concluded that park visitation is not the sole factor in improving well-being, suggesting other environmental and individual factors also play a role.

### Conclusion

This study has examined the adequacy of urban parks in supporting user well-being across four LGAs in Lagos State. The results affirm that accessibility, maintenance, and safety are crucial determinants of park usage and perceived benefits. Although there were no statistically significant differences in well-being across LGAs, consistent patterns suggest systemic challenges in park planning and management. Limitations include the cross-

sectional nature of the study, which limits causal interpretation, and reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce bias. Future research could adopt longitudinal or mixed-method approaches, explore a wider range of LGAs, or investigate the impact of gender, age, and income on park perceptions and usage patterns.

## Recommendations

To improve the adequacy and effectiveness of urban parks in Lagos, the following strategies are recommended:

### A. Accessibility

To enhance park accessibility, it is essential to ensure the equitable distribution of public parks across all Local Government Areas (LGAs), improve transportation links and signage, and design inclusive spaces that accommodate people with disabilities

### B. Safety & Maintenance

To enhance park safety and security, it is essential to implement regular maintenance schedules and sanitation protocols, deploy trained security personnel, install adequate lighting and CCTV cameras, and conduct periodic safety audits in collaboration with park users

### C. Community Involvement

To foster community engagement, it is important to encourage participatory governance where community members contribute to park management decisions, launch awareness campaigns to promote responsible park usage and environmental stewardship, and establish feedback systems to gather user suggestions and complaints

By focusing on these areas, urban parks in Lagos can become more user-friendly, welcoming, and beneficial for everyone's well-being, creating a healthier and more sustainable urban setting.

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