

## **An Assessment of the User's Satisfaction with Urban Public Spaces in Alsancak-Kyrenia region of Cyprus**

**Vedia Akansu<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Adeel<sup>2</sup>, Özge Özden<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>M. Arch, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Near East University, Nicosia, Cyprus  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1915-2744>

<sup>2</sup>Department of Landscape Architecture, Faculty of Agriculture, Near East University, Nicosia, Cyprus

<sup>3</sup>Department of Landscape Architecture, Faculty of Agriculture, Near East University, Nicosia, Cyprus  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7938-6927>

### **Abstract**

Urban public spaces meet people's needs in their living spaces. Nowadays, with the increase in rapid construction, cities are growing irregularly towards suburban areas, disregarding the importance of designing urban public spaces that cater to resident's needs. For this reason, urban public space arrangements, which have a very important place in the settlement, need to be designed considering user satisfaction. In this way, it is important to create usable urban public spaces that meet user needs. At this point, when creating urban designs, it is necessary to provide event venues that will meet user needs and opportunities for organizations that aim to carry out these events. It can be argued that urban public space planning, design, and implementation in the district centres of the northern part of Cyprus are in adequate or insufficient. At this point, the Alsancak (Karavas) suburban settlement sample, which has recently shown rapid progress in construction and integration with the city, was selected. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between urban public spaces and user satisfaction in the Alsancak-Girne region. Additionally, the effect of space arrangements on user satisfaction was discussed within this research.

**Keywords:** Community, Cyprus, Public Spaces, Public User Satisfaction.

### **1. Introduction**

While urban spaces are being designed, they contain the necessary living conditions (accommodation, entertainment, shopping, sports, health, recreation etc.) for their users. The role of urban public spaces is important for increasing the quality of space. These areas bring together the various communities of a city/town, integrate people and develop the sense of being a community (Madanipour, 1999), (Mumcu, 2009).

Globalization and modernization trends that started in the last century bring serious environmental disasters in settlements (Asilsoy, Laleci, Yildirim, Uzunoglu, & Ozden, 2017), (Yildirim, Asilsoy, & Ozden, 2020). After this, urban environments have become places mostly symbolized with noise, vehicular traffic, pollution, environmental crisis and social or cultural degradation (Watson, 2009). Ecosystems provide essential human resources. However, human actions, such as urbanization, are jeopardizing ecosystem capacity to support the human population (Niemela, ve diğerleri, 2010).

In this continuity, with urban growth and urbanization, rural and suburban settlements are becoming an essential home for humans. Thus, this area has become more influential than human-built structures on planet Earth. This surge in human population has led to a global threat to wildlife and natural resources (Al Masri, Ozden, & Kara, 2019). Urban growth has changed the habitat of mosaics; this contributes to loss of biodiversity and vegetation within the settlements, and in urban public spaces. The biodiversity system plays a vital role in supporting human activities, sustaining natural life, enhancing air quality and ecotourism benefits (Ratih & Febrianto, 2016).

Currently, the role of urban public spaces becomes important. These area act as connectors between different parts of a city, fostering integration among people and nurturing a sense of social belonging [1], (Mumcu, 2009). Urban public facilities meet people's needs in the space they occupy, and contribute to their contentment. Therefore, urban public space arrangements, which have a very important place in the settlement, should be built with user safety and satisfaction in mind.

In this way, when the problem with the fact that urban open spaces are not used is addressed in terms of human-environment interaction system, it indicates that such spaces do not meet user needs (Canter, 1977), (Whyte, 1980). Thus, the objective of environmental designers is to develop activity areas that satisfy user requirements and space arrangements that facilitate these activities (Gür, 2000), (Zeisel, 2006).

It can be argued that urban public spaces planning, designing and applications are not sufficient and adequate also in North Cyprus sub urban districts. At this point, Alsancak's sub-urban settlements have been picked because of their recent rapid progress in rapid construction and integration with the city. Within this perspective, this study aimed to investigate the relationship among the user satisfaction with urban public spaces in Alsancak-Kyrenia.

## 2. Methodology

### A. Research Context

Cyprus carries lots of the qualities that are typical of the Mediterranean region. It lies in the East Mediterranean, at the crossroad of Europe, Asia and Africa. The

neighbors of North Cyprus are Syria (100 km to the east), Turkey (65 km to the north) and Egypt (420 km to the south) (Nadiri & Hussain, 2005). Besides, it is the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea after Sicily and Sardinia. It is located between the latitudes of 30.33 and 35.41 and the longitudes of 32.23 and 34.55. The Northern part of the island covers an area of 3,355 km<sup>2</sup> (Nadiri & Hussain, 2005).

The Kyrenia district is the general name given to the region that includes various different scaled settlement areas and lies along the North Coast of Northern Cyprus (Dreghorn, 1975). This area known as the North Coastal Line is shown in Fig. 1. It has accelerated the architectural development with its natural features, topographic structure and the genuine settlement samples. With its political developments encouraging, it is one of the top regions that is under a fast development in Northern Cyprus.

Kyrenia has four suburban districts. These are Çatalköy, Esentepe (east districts) and Lapta, Alsancak (west districts). The towns of Alsancak and Lapta in Kyrenia have experienced extremely quick construction (Tozan & Akin, 2009).

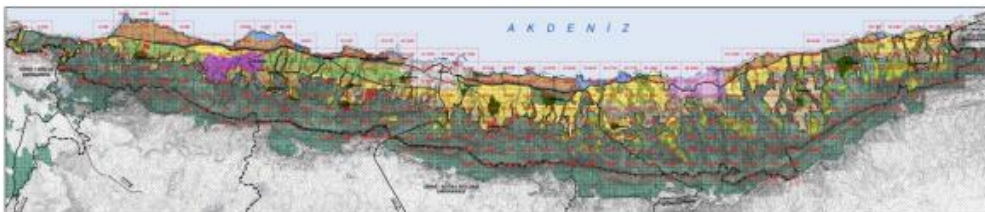


Fig. 1. Kyrenia, North Coastal Line. (Urban and Regional Planning Agency, 2011)

This study was carried out in Alsancak (Karavas) shown in Fig. 2, which is located at latitude 35.3420796,

longitude 33.2082318. These regions are one of the important sub-urban settlements in the city of Kyrenia



Fig. 2. General View from Alsancak Suburban Settlement.

(<https://www.alsancakbelediyesi.org/video/alsancak-belediyesi>)

According to the latest 2011 census data, the total number of permanent municipal population was 6,597 in Alsancak (<http://devplan.org>). The settlement is located in the north of the Beşparmak mountains.

The study area as Alsancak (Karavas) settlement features a coastline with sloping topography. It was particularly dense with citrus and olive trees prior to the quick construction period. However, these areas

have decreased considerably due to the increasing constructions and the maximum land use of the contractor companies.

**B. Research Design, Measures and the Sample:**

The research is based on a questionnaire including two main parts. In the first part, socio-demographic data such as gender, age, education, place of birth and duration of stay of the participants was collected. Five questions were asked to determine the demographic data. In total, 55 people were interviewed. The contestants were chosen randomly from among Alsancak-Kyrenia residents. Given that Alsancak has a permanent municipal population of 6,597 individuals, according to the 2011 census (<http://devplan.org>), it has been suggested as an adequate sample size for the research.

In the second part, opinions and views of the participants about public spaces as user satisfaction data in Alsancak, Kyrenia were examined. This part involves eight items which aim to learn participant’s perceptions regarding various issues, such as adequacy and functionality of existing user satisfaction with urban public spaces, urban furniture, cycling and pedestrian routes, sport fields and municipality’s role

on urban landscape planning implementations. All items in the second section were based on a Likert-type five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”, with respondents providing their answers directly on the questionnaire.

**3. Results**

**A: Findings of Section 1**

In the first portion, there were 5 items assessing gender, age, place of birth, education, and duration in Alsancak-Girne.

**Gender:** Regarding the gender profile, 62% of the participants were female and the rest 38% were male as shown in Table. 1.

**Table. 1: Gender profile of participants.**

Gender	Female	Male
Participants	62%	38%

**Age:** According to the findings, 44% of the respondents were between 26-40 years old, 27% were between the ages of 16-25, further 22% were 41-55 years old, another 7% were between the ages of 56-65 and the remaining 0% was among 66-75 years old, as shown in Table. 2.

**Table. 2: Age profile of the participants.**

Age	16-25	26-40	41-55	56-65	66-75
Participants	27%	44%	22%	7%	0%

**Education:** 49% of the participants had high school degree, the other 35% had university degree, 9% with Master’s degree, and further 7% had graduated

elementary-middle school and no PhD degree holder found, as revealed in Table. 3.

**Table. 3: Education profile of the participants.**

Education	Elementary-Middle School	High School	University Degree	Master’s Degree	Ph.D.
Participants	7%	49%	35%	9%	0%

**Place of Birth:** 49% of the respondents had a place of birth as Turkey, the other 44% had a place of birth as Cyprus, and the remaining 4% were born in foreign countries Table. 4.

**Duration in Alsancak:** 35% of the respondents had duration in Alsancak from 1-5 years. Another 29% had lived in Alsancak more than 20 years, 18% had duration in the town for 6-10 years, 15% had duration in Alsancak for 11-20 years, and the rest 4% had lived in Alsancak for less than 1 year as shown in Table. 5.

**Table. 4: Place of birth profile of participants.**

Place of Birth	Cyprus	Turkey	Foreigners
Participants	44%	49%	7%

**Table. 5: Duration in Alsancak profile of the participants.**

Duration in Alsancak	Less than 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	20+ years
Participants	4%	35%	18%	15%	29%

**B. Findings of Section 2**

The second part contains eight Likert-scale type questions with five-point scale (strongly disagree to

strongly agree) items as shown in Fig. 3. These items were designed to learn participant’s perceptions about issues such as adequacy and functionality of existing

user satisfaction with urban public spaces, urban furniture, cycling and pedestrian routes, sport fields and municipality's role on urban landscape planning and implementations etc.

For the first item "I am pleased that avenue/street afforestation has been made in the arrangement in Alsancak Town", 42% replied strongly agree and 40% agree, 5% replied unsure while 7% disagreed and another 5% strongly disagreed.

For the second question of section 2, which was "I think that urban plantations and other urban green areas have a shadow effect and increase my quality of life", 60% strongly agreed, 29% agreed, 5% disagreed, 4% replied unsure, and the rest 2% strongly disagreed.

In addition, 36% of the participants disagreed, 22% were unsure, 20% of them agreed, 11% strongly disagreed and the rest 11% strongly agreed with the item "I find the urban furniture (stop, bench, lighting) used in the arrangement in Alsancak town to be sufficient in terms of quantity and quality".

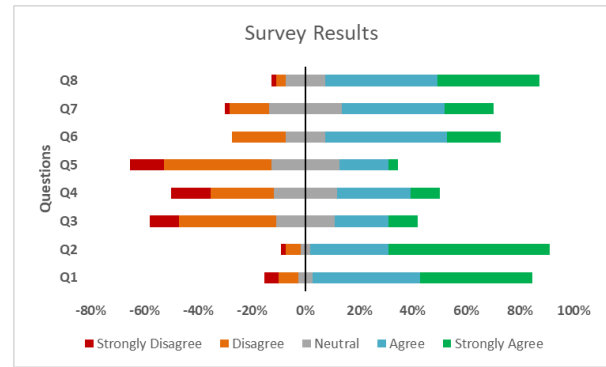
When the question "In this arrangement, I find it positive that the vehicle road is narrowed for afforestation, pavement and bicycle path", was asked to the respondents, 27% agreed, 24% was unsure, 24% replied disagree, 15% strongly disagreed and the rest 11% strongly agreed with the item.

40% of the participants were disagreed 25% was unsure, 18% agreed, 13% strongly disagreed, 4% strongly agreed and with the items "I find the car parks in this arrangement sufficient in terms of quantity and design".

Furthermore, 45% agreed, 20% disagreed, 0% replied strongly disagree, 15% was unsure and 20% respondents strongly agreed with the item "such an urban design practice makes a positive contribution to my walking or cycling".

For the item "I am generally satisfied with this urban design work in Alsancak Town", 38% suggested agree, 27% was unsure, and 18% of the respondents replied strongly agree, 15% disagreed and 2% chose strongly disagree.

As the last question of the second section, 42% replied agree, 38% strongly agreed, and 15% was unsure, 4% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed for the question "I demand the continuation of such urban design practices".



**Fig. 3. Survey results of questions.**

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

Urban public spaces, in their essence, represent the most important accessible areas within cities, open to the use of all citizens. They form the basis of the formation of a common social life, make a city and keep it alive. On the other hand, this multidimensional system can meet the needs of urban people, such as entertainment, resting, spending time and communication (Erdönmez & Çelik, 2016), (Kokarca & Batuhan, 2023), (Ramlee, Omar, Yunus, & Samadi, 2015). It is important to ensure social harmony in meeting these needs, because community-led initiatives are practical approaches to create an inclusive urban public space. These initiatives engage community members in designing and implementing urban public spaces, promoting ownership, and ensuring that the urban public spaces meet the needs of the diverse groups of the community (Ni & Cattaneo, 2019). These initiatives also foster a sense of community and encourage responsible use of public spaces (Zhou, 2019) and highlighted the role of citizen's participation in creating inclusive urban public spaces (Itair, Shahrour, & Hijazi, 2023).

This survey has shown that in general, the majority of people living in the region are satisfied with the city design works, carried out by the local municipality. The people are also satisfied with the "green spaces" creation efforts of the municipality. However, it has been found that there is a lower level of satisfaction regarding the urban furniture.

Afforestation works have an important place in making the necessary arrangements for user satisfaction in urban public spaces and streets. In addition, urban afforestation and other green area practices increase the quality of life by creating a shadow effect (Jim, 2004). Furthermore, urban furniture used in urban public spaces (stalls, bench, lighting, etc.) is also necessary in terms of user needs (Julier, 2007).

The concept of a sustainable city has grown out of the principles of a livable city and ought to guide future urban development. The local government officials would work to apply theoretical concerns to difficulties related to sustainable environments. It will be a multifaceted and multifactorial project that, by necessity, calls for a number of government and non-government initiatives.

It is essential for a sustainable future to carry out conscious urbanization studies and include more green areas, especially in the fight against regional natural disasters caused by sudden weather changes due to the effect of climate change.

#### References

- [1] A. Madanipour, "Why are the design and development of public spaces significant for cities?," *Environment and planning B: Planning and Design*, vol. 26, no. 6, pp. 879-891, 1999.
- [2] S. Mumcu, "Behavior setting in open spaces: Analyzing the variations in sitting behavior," University of Karadeniz Technical, Turkey, 2009.
- [3] B. Asilsoy, S. Laleci, S. Yildirim, K. Uzunoglu and O. Ozden, "Environmental awareness and knowledge among architecture students in North Cyprus," *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, pp. 136-143, 2017.
- [4] S. Yildirim, B. Asilsoy and O. Ozden, "Urban Resident Views About Open Green Spaces: A Study in Guzelyurt (Morphou), Cyprus}," *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, pp. 441-441, 2020.
- [5] V. Watson, "The planned city sweeps the poor away, Urban planning and 21st century urbanisation," *Progress in planning*, pp. 151-193, 2009.
- [6] J. Niemela, S. R. Saarela, T. Soderman, L. Kopperoinen, V. Yli-Pelkonen, S. Vare and D. J. Kotze, "Using the ecosystem services approach for better planning and conservation of urban green spaces: a Finland case study," *Biodiversity and Conservation*, pp. 3225-3243, 2010.
- [7] A. Al Masri, O. Ozden and C. Kara, "Green corridor development as an approach for environmental sustainability in Jordan," *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, pp. 418-418, 2019.
- [8] Y. Ratih and J. Z. Febrianto, "Biodiversity as part of urban green network system planning case study: Pontianak City," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, pp. 583-586, 2016.
- [9] D. Canter, *The psychology of place*, Architectural Press, 1977.
- [10] W. H. Whyte, *The social life of small urban spaces*, Conservation Foundation Washington, DC, 1980.
- [11] Ş. Ö. Gür, *Türkiye'de Konut Sorunu*, Konut Kültürü, YEM Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000.
- [12] J. Zeisel, "Inquiry by Design: Environment/ Behavior/ Neuroscience in Architecture, Interiors, Landscape and Planning," 2006.
- [13] H. Nadiri and K. Hussain, "Perceptions of service quality in North Cyprus hotels," *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, pp. 469-480, 2005.
- [14] W. Dreghorn, *Tectonic Landforms in the Kyrenia Range Northern Cyprus*, University of London, 1975.
- [15] A. Tozan and G. Akin, "İngiliz sömürge dönemi ve sömürge sonrası Kuzey Kıbrıs' ta kent ve mimarlık," *İTÜDERGİSİ/a*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2009.
- [16] E. Erdönmez and F. Çelik, "Kentsel mekânda kamusal alan ilişkileri," *TÜBA-KED Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi Kültür Envanteri Dergisi*, vol. 14, pp. 145-163, 2016.
- [17] Ş. Z. Kokarca and T. Batuhan, "Kent meydanlarının kalitesi ve dirençliliğinin ölçülmesi: Erzurum Havuzbaşı Kent Meydanı ve Yakutiye Meydanı örnekleri," *Artium*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2023.
- [18] M. Ramlee, D. Omar, M. R. Yunus and Z. Samadi, "Revitalization of urban public spaces: An overview," *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 201, pp. 360-367, 2015.
- [19] M. Ni and T. Cattaneo, "Design for urban resilience: a case of community-led placemaking approach in Shanghai China," in *Cross-Cultural Design. Culture and Society*, Orlando, FL, USA, 2019, pp. 207-222.
- [20] S. Zhou, "Sustain.ubc.ca," 20 September 2019. [Online]. Available: <http://sustain.ubc.ca/about/resources/understanding-inclusiveness-public-spaces-learning-existing-approaches>. [Accessed 19 October 2023].

- [21] M. Itair, I. Shahrour and I. Hijazi, "The Use of the Smart Technology for Creating an Inclusive Urban Public Space," *Smart Cities*, vol. 6, no. 5, pp. 2484-2498, 2023.
- [22] C. Y. Jim, "Green-space preservation and allocation for sustainable greening of compact cities," *Cities*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 311-320, 2004.
- [23] G. Julier, "Urban Designscapes and the Production of Aesthetic Consent," in *Culture-Led Urban Regeneration*, Routledge, 2007.