

Abstract

Urban green spaces refer to land covered with vegetation such as forests, street trees, parks, gardens, and water bodies in an urban setup. In this study, we sought to investigate the attributes of urban green spaces in Nairobi County and their relationships to visitor preferences. The Garden City Model advanced by Howard (1898) guided the study. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data while a cross sectional survey designs and stratified random sampling of the green spaces was employed, based on the location within the urban core and peri-urban of Nairobi County. Four green spaces (Karura Forest, Ngong Road Forest, Nairobi Arboretum, and City Park) with diverse characteristics and attributes was selected. A sample population of 384 visitors to the green spaces were surveyed for their perceptions of the functions, use, and benefits of the green spaces. Our findings showed that attributes of green spaces including location, accessibility, security, hygiene, and infrastructure could explain the interaction between green space provision factors and the frequency of visits, time spent in the green spaces and overall satisfaction of the visitors. Green space provision should be equitable in regard to distance to residents, quality of spaces, facilities and services and should be designed to meet the needs of diverse residents. Further, they should provide services and benefits such as shade, recreation, and health which are the main attractions to the green spaces. To achieve maximum benefits for visitors, green spaces need to be safe and physically accessible to all.