

URBAN PARKS ON HUMAN WELL-BEING IN TERMS OF SOCIAL RELATIONS - CASE OF DIYAWANNA OYA PARK IN COLOMBO

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Previous research has shown that the presence of natural areas is beneficial to human well-being. However, to date there have been only few published studies about the effects of such natural areas on human well-being. It is hypothesized that urban parks which are perceived to be in better condition are visited more often by visitors, and will develop a stronger social interaction which will in turn lead to a higher quality of life. A survey was conducted to test this hypothesis in the Diyawanna Oya Park, Sri Lanka to find out the critical pathway from Park Visiting Value (PVV) to Social Relation (SR) as a main objective. SR was one of the latent variables which consisted of variables referred to as social interaction, sense of place and health. The second latent variable of the model was PVV which is consisted with variables called motives for nature, emotional dimensions and social cohesion. A conceptual model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used in the data analysis. Structural Equation Model (SEM) was used as analysis tool which has two correlated latent factors and three predictors per latent factor. Statistical figures show social cohesion affecting to PVV than other variables and social interaction affecting SR than other predicted variables. It can be identified as a critical path of the conceptual model. Results confirm that the experience of nature in urban environment is a source of positive feelings and beneficial services, which fulfil important immaterial and non-consumptive human needs.

Keywords: Humanwell-being, Path analysis, Social relation, Urban park