Diverse Park Settings and Users' Behaviors and Preferences.

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Abstract
This study aimed to provide an insight towards public urban park design. In order to gain deeper understanding of the relationship between user behaviors and diverse settings associated, research was conducted on a neighborhood park named Walnut St. Park, Cary, NC, USA. The main questions followed were "What is the relationship users’ characteristics and diverse settings in the park?" "What is the pattern of social interaction in the park settings?" Data was collected through the combination of multi-methods: behavior mapping, survey, interview, cognitive mapping, and video observation. First method, behavior mapping was conducted by observing and recording people’s location and behaviors with standard protocols. User’s spatial data recorded on paper map, and protocols as tabular data were combined and analyzed using GIS. Protocols include user profile, behavior, level of physical activity, group size and characteristics, and shade. Second, two sections of survey were conducted for 62 adults and teens. The conveniently selected participants were involved in face-to-face or self-administrated surveys. The data from survey was analyzed by descriptive statistics. Additionally, two sections of interview and cognitive mapping were conducted for children and adults. Structured, open-ended interviews and cognitive mapping were designed to assess participants' actual use, preference and behavior in relation to settings. The data from interview and cognitive mapping were coded and analyzed qualitatively and statistically. Lastly, regular video and time-lapse video observation were used to record frequency of use, flow of users, and behaviors. Data from video observation were described as texts and compared with the results from other methods. Data from multi-method approach were analyzed to assess overt and covert behavior in relation to settings indicating the correlation of the different types of data. Two levels of data analyses were conducted: pattern of use and preference for settings. The results of the behavior mapping combined with other methods of data collection revealed difference between the pattern of use and preference for setting while in some aspects they confirmed each other. The results of this study can contribute to the design implications for park settings to afford the spatial requirement of various users.

Suggested Citation