

## Quality of Urban Parks as Public Spaces Based on Users' Perceptions (Case Study of Majene City Park)

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### ABSTRACT

*Urban parks are one of the important public spaces that function as facilities for social interaction, recreation, and support for urban environmental quality. The quality of urban parks needs to be evaluated periodically to ensure that they meet users' needs and comfort. This study aims to analyze the quality of Majene City Park as a public space based on users' perceptions. The research employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design. Primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 105 park users and supported by field observations, while secondary data were obtained through a literature review. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics with univariate analysis techniques to determine park quality categories based on the variables of user services, activity level, meaningfulness, and accessibility. The results indicate that the overall quality of Majene City Park based on users' perceptions falls into the fair category, with an average score of 49.78%. Several aspects were rated as good, including seating comfort, vegetation condition, air circulation quality, and accessibility to the park. However, several elements received low ratings, particularly park lighting quality, cleanliness of public toilets, availability of trash bins, diversity of facilities, and clarity of directional signage. These findings suggest that although Majene City Park functions as a public space, improvements in facility quality, cleanliness, safety, and area management are still necessary. In conclusion, optimizing the quality of Majene City Park requires comprehensive improvements through physical arrangement, enhancement of supporting facilities, strengthening of security, and community involvement to ensure that the park functions optimally as a comfortable, safe, and sustainable public space.*

**Keywords:** urban park; public space; user perception

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## INTRODUCTION

Public space is one of the urban elements that functions as a center for interaction and communication within society (Carmona, 2021, Md Alwi, 2020, Suryanto et al., 2020, Ujang et al., 2018). Public spaces have their own characteristics and serve social interaction functions for the community, economic activities, and cultural appreciation (Darmawan, 2009). In general, open spaces are divided into two types: Private Open Space and Public Open Space. Urban Green Open Space (Ruang Terbuka Hijau/RTH) is part of open spaces that are filled with vegetation to support ecological, socio-cultural, and architectural benefits, which can also provide economic value to the community (Gunawan et al., 2022). One example of a public open space with diverse activities is known as a City Park.

Majene Regency is one of the regencies in Indonesia located in West Sulawesi Province. Majene Regency has various types of Urban Green Open Spaces (RTH), one of which is the City Park. The Majene City Park is located in the Pangali Ali neighborhood, Pangali Ali Subdistrict, Banggae District. The Majene City Park functions as a main public space accessed by various community groups. In addition to serving as a recreational space, this park also plays a role as a venue for social interaction, cultural activities, and informal economic activities, as commonly found in urban public spaces in Indonesia (Ali et al., 2021, Rahman et al., 2020, Behzadfar & Tahmasebi, 2013). However, the dynamics of space use often place pressure on the quality of facilities and environmental comfort within the park.

Various studies indicate that user perception is an important indicator in evaluating the quality of public spaces. User perception includes aspects of comfort, safety, accessibility, aesthetics, and the completeness of facilities. Users have direct experiences that reflect the extent to which a public space is able to meet community needs. Perception-based evaluation is a relevant approach for assessing the quality of city parks, as it is able to capture the alignment between spatial design and the actual needs of users.

In the context of city parks, indications of problems such as poorly maintained facilities, uneven use of space, lack of aesthetic elements, and potential disturbances to comfort are issues that frequently arise in public spaces managed without periodic evaluation. Based on these conditions, this research is important to analyze the quality of the Majene City Park based on user perceptions. This study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the park's strengths, weaknesses, and development potential. The results of this study can serve as input for local governments and urban planners in improving the quality of public spaces that are inclusive, safe, comfortable, and sustainable.

## Literature Review

### 1. Public Space

Public space is a space in which citizens have full access to independently carry out public activities, including expressing opinions verbally or in writing. Although some experts state that public spaces are generally open spaces, public spaces can be divided into two types: enclosed public spaces (located inside buildings) and open public spaces (located outside buildings or commonly referred to as open space). Several definitions of public space are as follows:

- a. Public space is a shared space where people carry out functional activities and rituals within a community bond, both in daily life and in periodic celebrations that have been designated as open spaces, where people engage in individual and group activities (Carr, 1995).
- b. Public space is an urban element that has its own characteristics and functions for social interaction, economic activities, and cultural interaction (Darmawan, 2009).
- c. Urban public space is natural or man-made land within urban areas, including public facilities, serving as places for activities such as city parks, sports parks, urban forests, and others (Joga, Nirwono, 2011).

Specifically, public space is often understood as outdoor space that can be utilized by the entire community for various activities. Examples of public spaces include roads, pedestrian paths, neighborhood parks, plazas, sports fields, city parks, and recreational parks. Open space itself can be classified into two types: general open spaces such as roads, pedestrian paths, neighborhood parks, plazas, sports fields, city parks, and recreational parks; and special open spaces such as residential gardens, ceremonial fields, airport areas, and military training areas.

### 2. City Park

City parks are part of urban green open spaces (RTH). A city park is an open space that has social and aesthetic functions as a place for recreational, educational, and various other activities within an urban context. Its existence is intended for the entire urban community or for certain parts of the city. City parks contain various values and meanings, making them one

of the important assets of a city. As assets, city parks have distinct characteristics, harmony with their surrounding environment, and emotional attachment to the city. Therefore, city parks reflect the identity, glory, and character of a city as the result of the ideas and works of planners and designers of their time, and they serve as vital elements capable of activating and enlivening the surrounding areas.

Based on the scale of service, city parks are divided into four categories: National Parks, Downtown Parks, Neighborhood Parks, and Mini Parks.

City parks have criteria as open land that serves socio-cultural and aesthetic functions as a means for recreational, educational, or other activities intended to serve the population of one city or urban area. City parks have a service radius of 5,000 m (five thousand meters) and a minimum area of 50,000 m<sup>2</sup> (fifty thousand square meters). The proportion of green open space in city parks consists of at least 85% green coverage, with the remainder being environmentally friendly non-green coverage.

### 3. Elements of City Park Quality as Public Space

The presence and arrangement of elements in public spaces, in this case city parks, influence the interactions that occur (Carr, 1995). For example, if a city park does not provide seating or park benches, visitors may feel uncomfortable enjoying the park, which can also reduce social interaction.

The understanding of park quality as a public space according to Carr (1995) in the book *Public Space* begins with understanding the aspects that form the quality of public space, which include: needs, rights, and meanings.

- a. Needs, which include comfort, relaxation, passive engagement, and active engagement.
- b. Rights, which include accessibility and ease of access, freedom of activity, diversity of activities, and place claims.
- c. Meanings, which include legibility, relevance, individual relationships, group relationships, and relationships with the broader layers of society.

### 4. Perception

User perception is an important component in assessing the quality of public spaces because it reflects the subjective experiences of the community toward the spaces they use. User perception includes assessments of comfort, safety, aesthetics, accessibility, and the availability of supporting facilities. These perceptions are formed through direct experience and user interaction with the environment. Perception is a process by which individuals assess and interpret objects, events, or relationships they encounter, resulting in conclusions about the presence of information and the holistic interpretation of messages (Kurniawan et al., 2007).

Perception is influenced by internal factors such as knowledge and experience, as well as external factors such as the physical condition of the space and the facilities provided. Therefore, perception-based evaluation provides a more realistic picture of how public spaces are experienced and utilized by the community.

### 5. Theoretical Synthesis

The quality of a city park as a public space in an urban area is highly dependent on the relationship between park users and the physical arrangement of the city park itself (Gunawan et al., 2022). Therefore, the variables selected in this study are those related to park users and measurable through park users. Thus, the quality of a city park emphasizes how users can utilize the park comfortably, supported by the park's ability to meet user service needs,

accommodate user activities, provide meaning to users, and ensure ease of access, both access to the park and access within the park. Consequently, the quality of a city park can be categorized as good if it meets the criteria of user services, activities, meaningfulness, and accessibility; conversely, a city park is categorized as poor if it fails to meet these criteria.

## METHOD

### 1. Time and Location of the Study

This study was conducted from 1 September to 5 December 2025. During this period, the research team carried out several research stages, including data collection by distributing questionnaires, processing the questionnaire results, and preparing the research report.

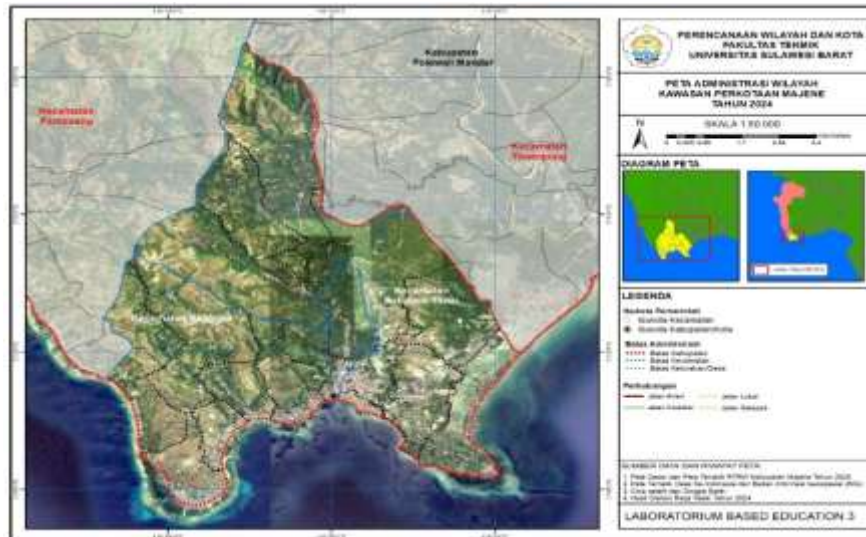


Figure 1 Map of the Majene Urban Area  
(Source: Google Earth)

The research location was Majene City Park, located in the Pangali Ali Neighborhood, Pangali Ali Subdistrict, Banggae District.



Figure 2 Research Location  
(Source: Google Earth)

## 2. Type and Research Approach

The research approach used in this study is a quantitative approach conducted deductively. The type of research employed is explanatory research. The research variables were derived from the theoretical synthesis described earlier. The research variables include:

- a. User Service, which refers to the ability of the city park to meet users' needs, measured by the level of responsiveness of the city park, including:
  - 1) Comfort: assessed based on users' opinions regarding their comfort while in the park, measured through perceptions of seating facilities and park lighting.
  - 2) Cleanliness: assessed based on users' opinions regarding the availability and condition of trash bins and public toilets.
  - 3) Health: assessed based on the air quality perceived by users while in the park, related to vegetation and plants in the city park.
  - 4) Safety and Security: assessed based on users' opinions regarding the presence of gazebos and park lighting.
- b. Level of Activity, which refers to the ability of the city park to fulfill users' rights, measured by the level of democracy in the city park, particularly freedom of activity:
  - 1) Freedom of Activity: identified through users' opinions regarding the availability of play facilities or playgrounds.
  - 2) Diversity of Activities: identified through users' opinions regarding the availability of playgrounds and the variety of activities present in the city park.
- c. Level of Meaningfulness, which refers to the ability of the city park to be easily recognized by users, measured by the level of meaningfulness of the city park, including:
  - 1) Clarity of Place: identified through community opinions regarding the clarity of park signage and wayfinding.
  - 2) Sociability: identified through users' opinions regarding the ease of interacting with other users in the city park, which can be observed through the availability of play areas.
- d. Ease of Access, which refers to the ease with which park users can reach the city park, related to the availability of physical access to the park, such as roads and transportation modes:
  - 1) Ease of Access to the City Park: the ease with which users can reach the city park, observed through the availability of bus stops.
  - 2) Ease of Access within the City Park: the ease of movement within the city park, assessed through users' opinions regarding pedestrian pathways.

## 3. Types and Techniques of Data Collection

This study uses both primary and secondary data. Primary data consist of questionnaire data collected from users of Majene City Park. In addition, primary data were obtained through observation. Area observation was conducted by directly observing the site, identifying the existing conditions of the park and supporting elements (facilities) such as access to the park, parking areas, facility conditions, lighting, safety, and cleanliness.

Secondary data were collected by searching for data to compile information relevant to the topic or problem being analyzed, in order to support direct observations, including reviewing several journals related to the quality of city parks.

The questionnaires were distributed through social media and directly to visitors who were present at the research location. A total of 105 respondents completed the questionnaires.

**4. Analysis Technique**

This study applies descriptive statistical analysis, which is a statistical technique focused on processing research sample data. The type of descriptive statistics used is univariate analysis, conducted by examining each variable separately as predetermined. Each variable was analyzed using frequency distribution tables to identify the central tendency of the data, particularly the mode or the most frequently occurring response category for each variable.

Table 1 City Park Quality Categories

No.	Score Category	Description
1	1–45%	Quality of the city park based on users' perceptions: low
2	46–55%	Quality of the city park based on users' perceptions: moderate
3	56–70%	Quality of the city park based on users' perceptions: good
4	71–100%	Quality of the city park based on users' perceptions: very good

(Gunawan et al., 2022)

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

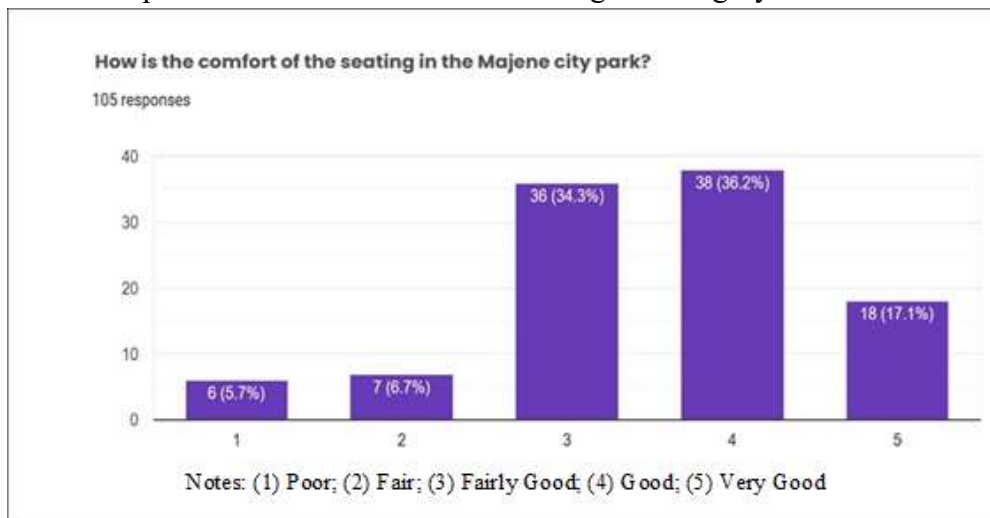
As explained in the theoretical synthesis, the results of this study discuss the quality of the city park based on users' perceptions across several criteria, namely user services, activities, meaningfulness, and ease of access.

**1. User Services**

Based on respondents' assessments of user services at Majene City Park, the findings can be described as follows:

**a. Comfort of Seating**

Based on respondents' assessments of Majene City Park users, as illustrated in the diagram, users' evaluations of comfort—particularly regarding seating facilities in the park area—reached a total percentage of 53.3% (good and very good categories). It can be concluded that respondents' assessments fall into the good category.



**Figure 3** Diagram of Seating Comfort Assessment Results

(Source: Google Form)

b. Quality of Park Lighting

Respondents' assessments of the quality of park lighting at Majene City Park, as shown in the diagram, indicate that users' evaluations of lighting quality reached a total percentage of 38.1% (good and very good categories). This suggests that respondents' assessments are still in the low category.

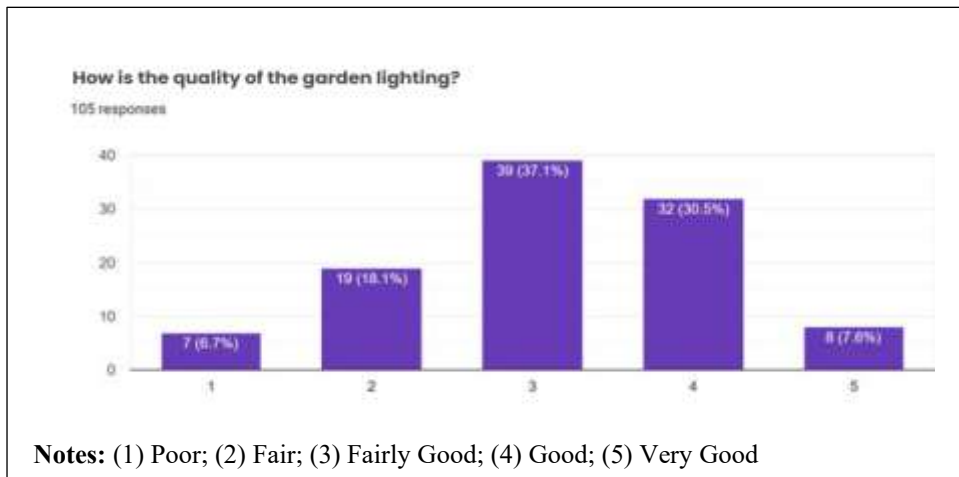


Figure 4 Diagram of Park Lighting Quality Assessment Results

(Source: Google Form)

c. Condition of Vegetation/Plants

Users' assessments of the condition of vegetation/plants in Majene City Park show a total percentage of 50.4% (good and very good categories). This indicates that the condition of vegetation is categorized as good.

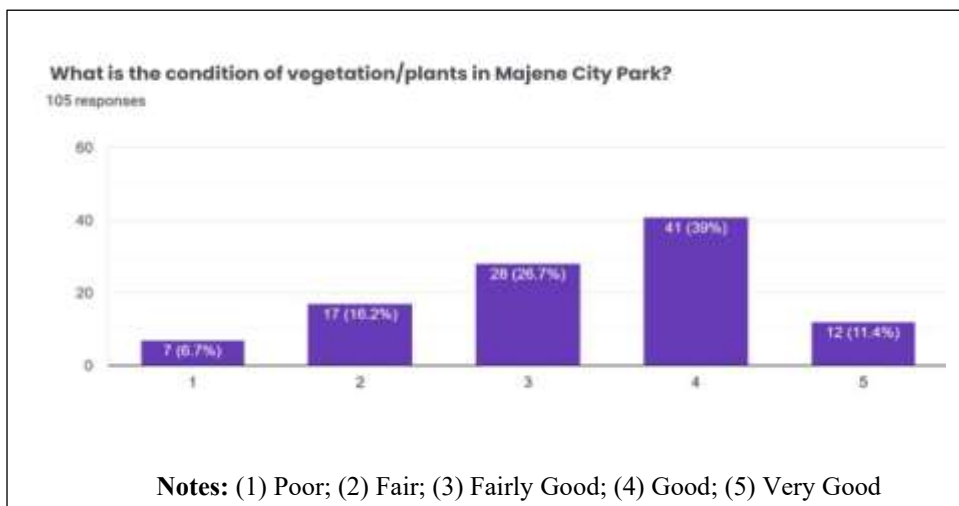
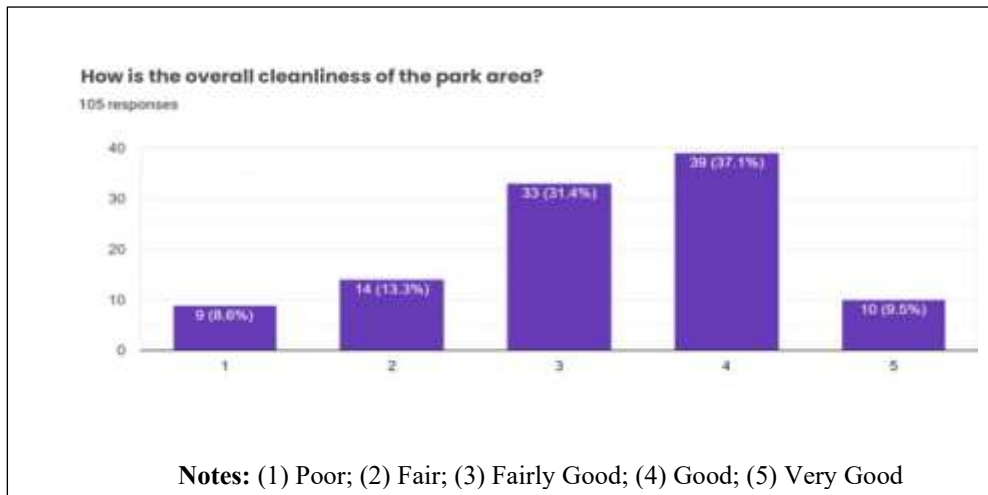


Figure 5 Diagram of Vegetation Condition Assessment Results

(Source: Google Form)

d. Overall Cleanliness of the Park Area

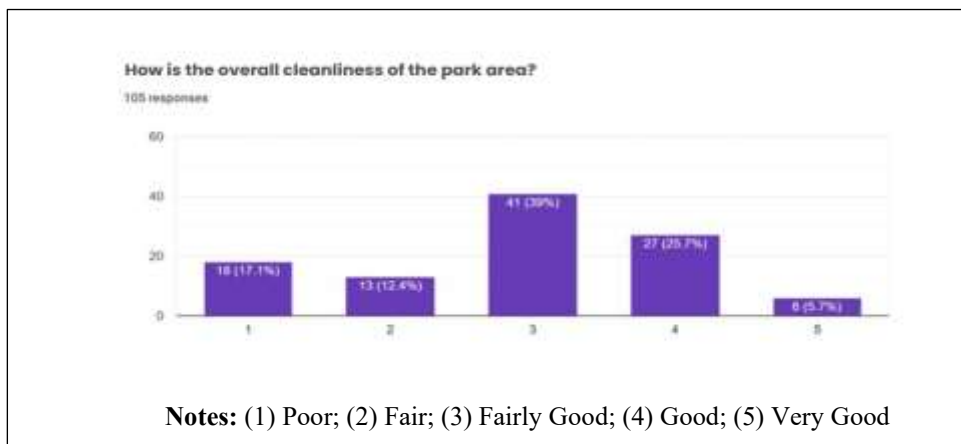
Users' assessments of overall cleanliness in Majene City Park show a total percentage of 46.6% (good and very good categories). This indicates that the cleanliness of the city park area is categorized as moderate.



**Figure 6** Diagram of Overall Park Area Cleanliness Assessment Results  
(Source: Analysis Results via Google Form)

e. Cleanliness of Public Toilets

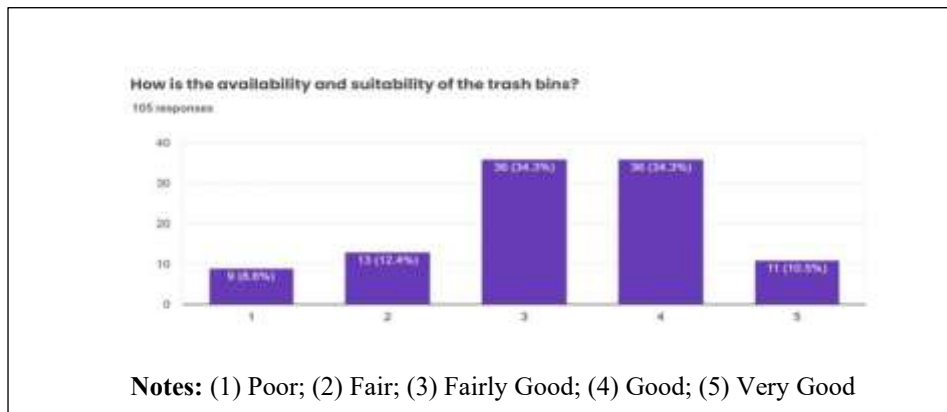
Assessments of the cleanliness of public toilets in the city park show a score of 31.4% (good and very good categories). This indicates that toilet cleanliness remains in the low category.



**Figure 7** Diagram of Public Toilet Cleanliness Assessment Results in the City Park  
(Source: Analysis Results from Google Form)

f. Availability and Adequacy of Trash Bins

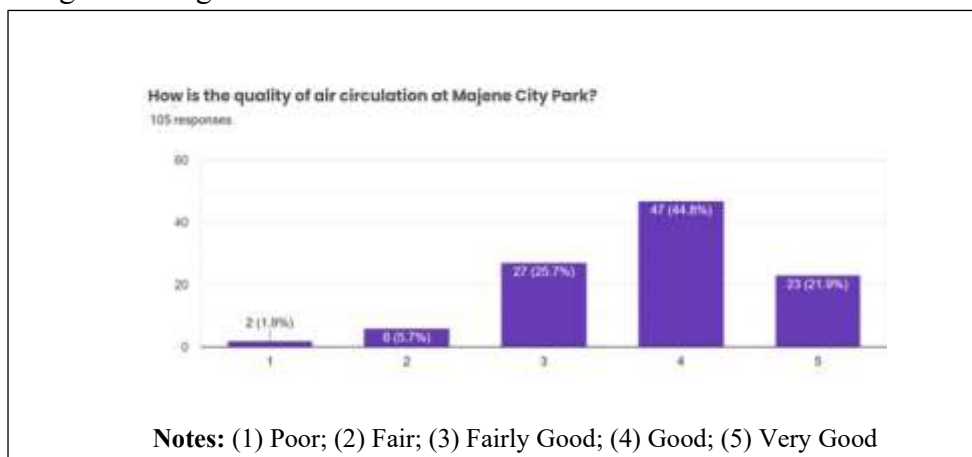
Assessments of the availability and adequacy of trash bins in Majene City Park show a score of 44.8% (good and very good categories). This indicates that the availability and adequacy of trash bins are still low.



**Figure 8** Diagram of Availability and Adequacy of Trash Bins Assessment Results  
(Source: Analysis Results via Google Form)

g. Air Circulation Quality at Majene City Park

Users' assessments of air quality in the park show a score of 66.7% (good and very good categories). This indicates that the air quality perceived by users while in the city park is categorized as good.



**Figure 9** Diagram of Air Circulation Quality Assessment Results  
(Source: Questionnaire Results via Google Form)

h. Safety at Night

Assessments of safety perceived by users while in the park, particularly at night, show a score of 52.3% (good and very good categories). This indicates that nighttime safety at Majene City Park is categorized as moderate.

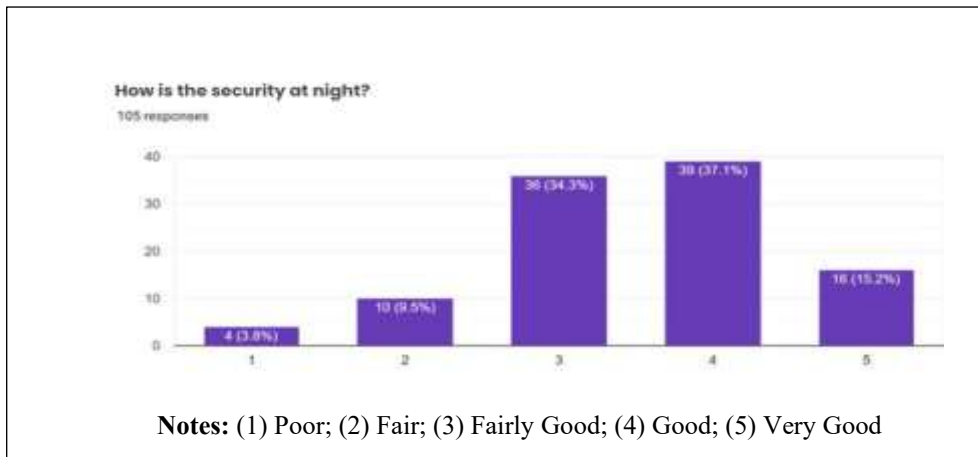


Figure 10 Diagram of Night-Time Safety Assessment Results in the City Park (Source: Questionnaire Results via Google Form)

2. Level of Activity

Respondents' assessments of the level of activity of Majene City Park users are described as follows:

a. Availability of Facilities for All Age Groups

Assessments of the availability of facilities for all age groups show a percentage of 48.6% (good and very good categories), indicating that facility availability is categorized as moderate.

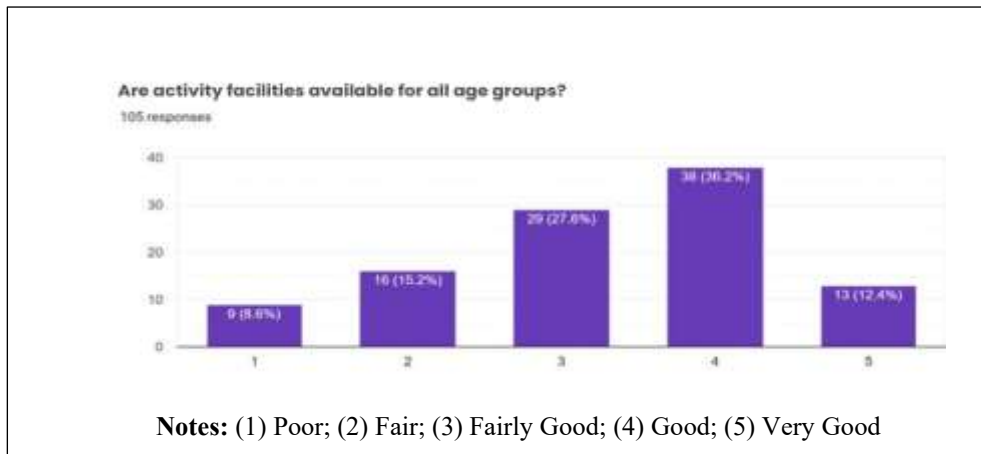


Figure 11 Diagram of Availability of Facilities for All Age Groups Assessment Results (Source: Questionnaire Results via Google Form)

b. Comfort in Conducting Activities in the Park

Assessments of user comfort while engaging in activities at Majene City Park show a percentage of 60% (good and very good categories). Thus, user comfort during activities in the park is categorized as good.

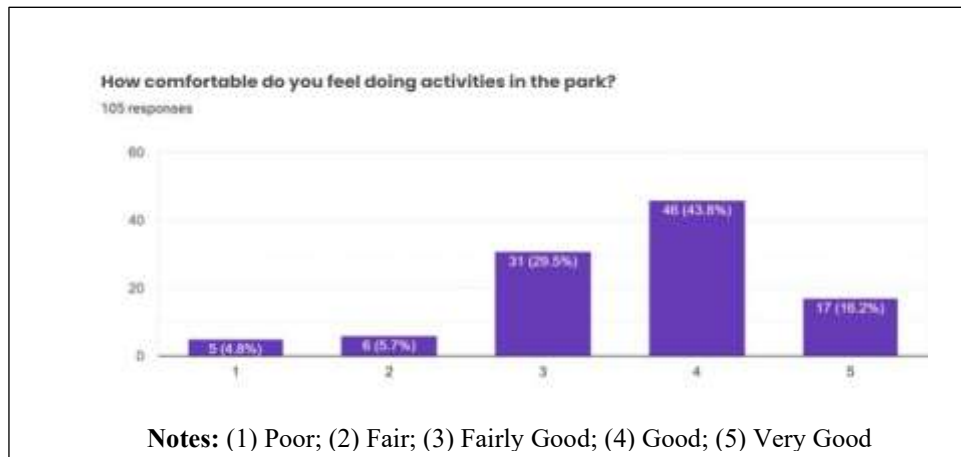


Figure 12 Diagram of Comfort in Carrying Out Activities in the Park Assessment Results (Source: Questionnaire Results via Google Form)

c. Availability of Diverse Facilities

Assessments of the availability of diverse facilities—such as those supporting sports, educational, economic, social, and cultural activities—show a percentage of 38.1% (good and very good categories). This indicates that facility diversity is categorized as incomplete or still low.

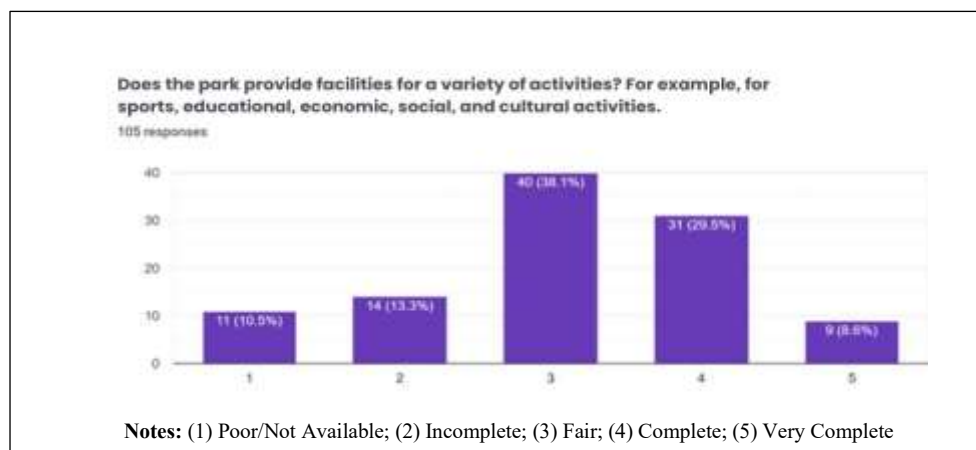


Figure 13 Diagram of Availability of Diverse Facilities Assessment Results (Source: Questionnaire Results via Google Form)

3. Level of Meaningfulness

Respondents’ assessments of the level of meaningfulness at Majene City Park are described as follows:

a. Clarity of Directional Signage

Assessments of the clarity of directional signage that facilitates access within the park show a score of 44.7% (good and very good categories). This indicates that signage clarity is categorized as incomplete or still low.

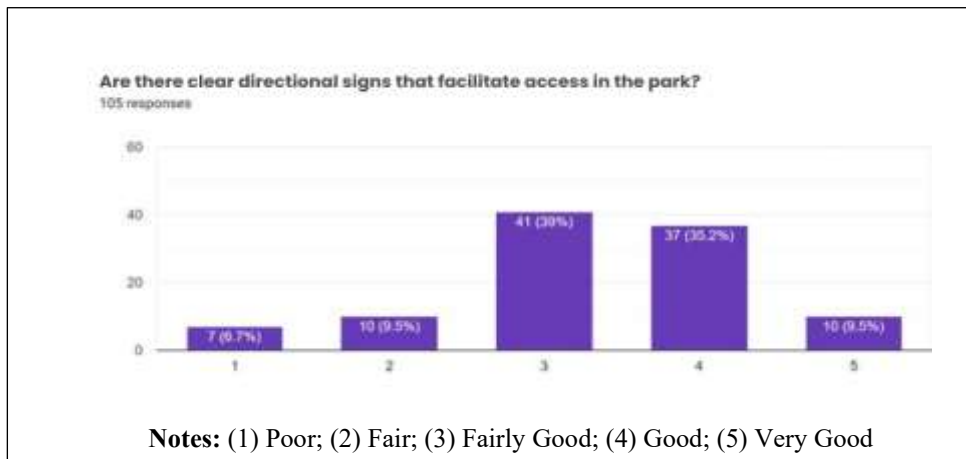


Figure 14 Diagram of Directional Signage Clarity Assessment Results (Source: Questionnaire Results via Google Form)

b. Ease of Interaction with Other Users

Assessments of the ease with which users can interact with others in the city park show a score of 54.3% (good and very good categories). This falls into the moderate category.

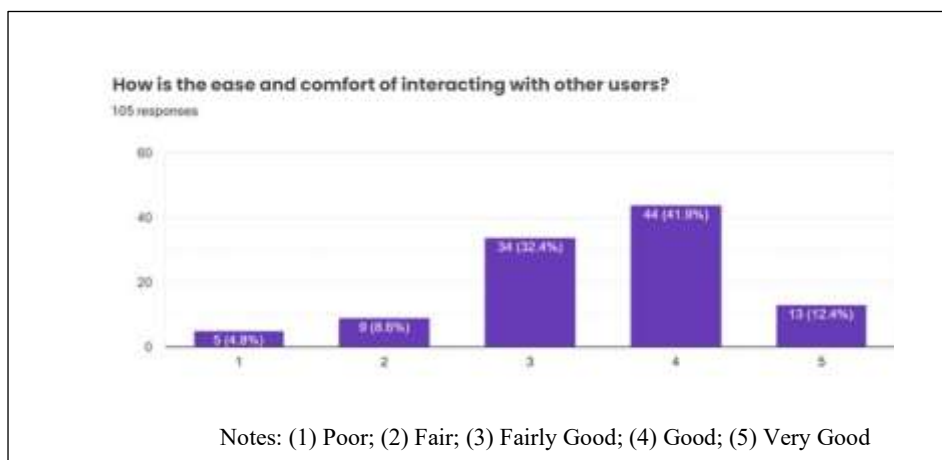


Figure 15 Diagram of Ease of Interaction with Other Users Assessment Results (Source: Questionnaire Results via Google Form)

4. Ease of Access

Respondents' assessments of ease of access to Majene City Park are described as follows:

a. Ease of Access to the Park

Assessments of ease of access to the park—including the availability of entrances, bus stops, and convenience for private and public transportation users—show a score of 56.1% (good and very good categories). This indicates that access to the park is categorized as good.

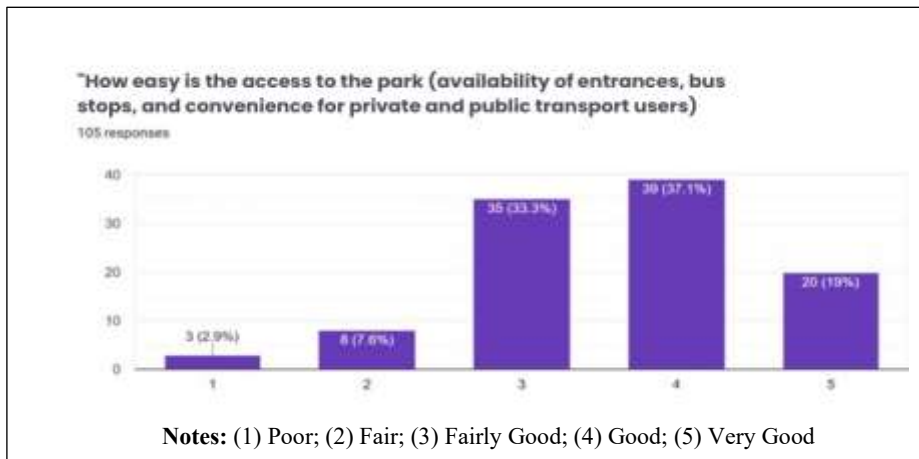


Figure 16 Diagram of Ease of Access to the Park Assessment Results (Source: Questionnaire Results via Google Form)

b. Ease of Access within the Park

Ease of access within the park, particularly related to pedestrian pathways, received a score of 49.5% (good and very good categories). This indicates that internal access, especially pedestrian use, is categorized as moderate.

Summary of Quality Assessment

Table 2 Results of City Park Quality Analysis

No.	Quality Variable	Score	Category	Description
1	User Services	47.95%	Moderate	Average score of 49.78% falls within the 46–55% range (moderate)
2	Level of Activity	48.9%	Moderate	
3	Level of Meaningfulness	49.5%	Moderate	
4	Ease of Access	52.8%	Moderate	

(Source: Author’s Analysis)

Based on the analysis of each quality variable of Majene City Park, the user service variable scored 47.95% (moderate), the level of activity scored 48.9% (moderate), the level of meaningfulness scored 49.5% (moderate), and ease of access scored 52.8% (moderate). The average score of 49.78% indicates that users’ perceptions of the overall quality of Majene City Park fall into the moderate category.

Elements of Majene City Park that received good ratings in the user comfort variable include seating comfort, vegetation/plant conditions, and air quality. Based on direct observation, facilities for resting activities such as sitting, relaxing, reading, and other activities are available; however, the condition of seating/benches and park gazebos has begun to deteriorate.

Based on observations, vegetation in the area still lacks ornamental plants, with only a few trees providing shade. Interestingly, the park contains a wooden monument built by the Tourism Office in 2020, bearing a brief history of Afdeling Mandar. The inscription states that in 1905, three Dutch military brigades and a doctor first set foot on Mandar land at this location.



Gazebo



Tempat duduk



Prasasti



Gazebo

Figure 17 Existing Conditions of the City Park  
(Source: Personal Documentation)

In the user comfort variable, elements that received moderate or low ratings include the quality of park lighting, cleanliness of the park area, cleanliness of public toilets, availability and adequacy of trash bins, and nighttime safety. Based on direct observation, several park lights have dim lighting quality, and some are not functioning. This condition reduces visitor comfort at night and may raise concerns about crime or negative activities.



Figure 18 Condition of Park Lighting  
(Source: Personal Documentation)

Overall park cleanliness remains in the moderate category. Observations show that trash is scattered in several areas, and trash bins are not always available. Public toilet cleanliness is still rated low. Observations reveal one toilet building with separate facilities for

men and women located at the far left end of the park. The front area appears poorly organized, with construction tools placed nearby, reducing aesthetic value and potentially disrupting visitor comfort.



Figure 19 Conditions of Trash and Public Toilets

(Source: Author's Documentation)

In the activity level variable, the availability of facilities for all age groups is rated moderate, comfort during activities is rated good, while the availability of diverse facilities remains low.



Figure 20 Street Vendors in the City Park Area

(Source: Author's Documentation)

Activity facilities in the city park are relatively diverse, including economic, social, and cultural activities, indicating the park's multifunctional role as a public space. Economic activity is evident through the presence of vendors around and within the park. However, no designated trading area exists, leading some vendors to operate inside the park, affecting cleanliness due to inadequate waste management. Improved spatial organization is needed to enhance functionality, aesthetics, and visitor comfort.

In the meaningfulness variable, clarity of signage remains low, while ease of interaction is moderate. Signage and name boards are limited, and some are no longer legible.

For ease of access, access to the park is rated good, while access within the park is rated moderate. Majene City Park is located on Ammana Wewang Street, a busy road during mornings and evenings, connected to several other roads. Accessibility is good via public transportation, private vehicles, and on foot.



Salah satu titik akses masuk ke Taman Kota



Pedestrian di Taman Kota



Area Parkir



*Jogging Track*

Figure 21 Parking Areas and Accessibility Inside and Outside the City Park

(Source: Author's Documentation)

Majene City Park has 28 entrance points along the front area, accessible only by foot due to narrow pathways (approximately  $\pm 1.5$  m). Pedestrian paths connect different points within the park; however, entrance conditions are not optimal for people with disabilities due to rocky surfaces and cracked paving blocks. Inside the park, jogging tracks and pedestrian paths facilitate movement. Parking facilities exist along the roadside, causing congestion, and can only accommodate about 20 motorcycles and 5 cars. Parking space is insufficient, leading most visitors to park on the roadside (Syamsiar & Asriana, 2023).

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of MajeneCity Park's quality based on user perceptions indicates a moderate overall condition, necessitating improvements across all elements to enhance its ecological benefits and role as a vibrant public space fostering urban social interaction. Key

priorities include better park lighting, cleaner public toilets, more trash bins, diverse activity facilities, and clearer signage, with recommendations for local government to reorganize layouts and aesthetics, upgrade facilities, manage vendors systematically, strengthen maintenance and safety, engage communities, and conduct regular user-feedback evaluations. For future research, longitudinal studies tracking post-intervention changes in user perceptions and park usage patterns could validate these recommendations and identify emerging needs in similar Indonesian urban green spaces.

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