



Examining The Parks in Rize City Coastal Filling Areas in Terms of Activity Opportunities and Quality Indicators

Rize Kenti Kıyı Dolgu Alanlarındaki Parkların Aktivite Olanakları ve Kalite Göstergeleri Bakımından İncelenmesi

ABSTRACT

Coastal recreational areas are the most visited and essential places in coastal cities. This study aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of three parks planned on coastal reclamation sites in the city of Rize. To achieve this, a field analysis was first conducted to reveal the current state of these areas. In the second stage, we evaluated all the parks in terms of the adequacy of the quality indicators compiled from the literature. Finally, the possibilities for activities were determined. The evaluation shows that the parks generally have different activity opportunities and provide adequate and sufficient conditions in terms of quality indicators. Batı Park was found to be the most adequate park in terms of quality indicators.

Keywords: Coastal Recreation, Urban Parks, Quality Indicators

ÖZET

Kıyı rekreasyon alanları, kıyı kentlerinin en çok ziyaret edilen ve vazgeçilmez mekanlarıdır. Bu çalışmada Rize kentinde kıyı dolgu alanları üzerinde planlanmış üç adet park alanının detaylı bir değerlendirmesi yapılmak istenmiştir. Bu amaçla bu alanlar için öncelikle alan analizi yapılarak mevcut durum ortaya konulmuştur. İkinci aşamada tüm parklar literatürler ışığında derlenen kalite göstergelerinin yeterliliği açısından değerlendirilmiş ve son olarak aktivite olanakları belirlenmiştir. Yapılan değerlendirmede parkların genel olarak farklı aktivite olanaklarına sahip olduğu, kalite göstergeleri açısından uygun ve yeterli koşullar sağladığı görülmüştür. Kalite göstergeleri açısından en yeterli olan park ise Batı Park'tır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kıyı Rekreasyonu, Kent Parkları, Kalite Göstergeleri

INTRODUCTION

In changing and transforming cities, the presence of open green areas is decreasing day by day, and they are turning into different areas of use to meet the needs of the increasing population. However, the environmental and aesthetic problems that arise in cities experiencing this transformation further increase the importance of urban green areas. Green areas, which contribute to the urban texture both functionally and aesthetically by softening the hard surfaces of cities, also have positive effects on the physical and mental health of urban residents.

The positive effects of urban green areas have been demonstrated in many studies. Urban green spaces such as parks, forests, woodlands, green roofs, streams, community gardens, road-boulevard-median greens, and cemeteries provide critical ecosystem services (Wolch et al. 2014). Such green spaces vary in diversity, size, vegetation, species richness, environmental quality, proximity to public transport, facilities, and services (Dahmann et al. 2010). Parks, which are the main part of the urban ecosystem and landscape system, improve environmental quality by cleaning water and air, reducing wind and noise, carbon sequestration, and microclimate regulation (Chiesura 2004; Mexia 2018). They provide space for rest, exercise, communication, and recreation and help improve residents' mental health and reduce stress (Ayala-Azcárraga, 2019; Dong and Qin, 2017; Zhang et al. 2022). In addition, parks provide a social environment for residents and encourage social interaction (Maas et al. 2009). Parks generally have higher species richness than other types of urban green spaces (Liang et al. 2008; Turner et al. 2005). Urban parks are biodiversity hotspots and integral components of green infrastructure in urban areas (Talal and Santelmann, 2019). Current studies on urban parks have shown that they effectively and sustainably reduce temperature through evaporation, heat absorption, and shading and that they have significant cooling effects that alleviate the urban heat island (Chen et al. 2023; Kong et al. 2021; Liao et al. 2023; Wang et al. 2023). Many studies have shown that land and housing near urban green areas increase their value (Crompton, 2001; Liu et al. 2023).

People visit urban parks for various purposes such as rest, sports, relaxation, games, cultural events, sightseeing, and walking (Zannin et al. 2006). In our country, urban parks are indispensable places for children and parents with children's playgrounds. In addition, city parks are ideal places for physical activity and exercise. Running paths, cycling paths, sports fields, and fitness equipment help people maintain a healthy lifestyle. Programs such as yoga, pilates, or group sports activities held in parks encourage people to move. Thus, parks promote a healthy lifestyle and play an important role in combating common health problems such as obesity. During the period of social change that started with the pandemic, the importance of open green areas, especially of city parks, has once again been

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revealed. Parks, which host many activities, must contribute to the city's image and have adequate equipment and activity opportunities in terms of quality and quantity, serving the city's regular guests in the best possible way.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Located in the Eastern Black Sea region, Rize is situated between 40°22' and 41°28' east meridians and 40°20' and 41°20' north parallels. It is surrounded by of district of Trabzon in the west, İspir district of Erzurum in the south, Yusufeli and Arhavi districts of Artvin in the east, and the Black Sea in the north. The average annual temperature in the province is 15.5 °C, with the highest average temperature in August (26.5 °C) and the lowest average temperature in February (3.7 °C). The total annual rainfall is 2302 mm, and the annual number of rainy days is 172.6 (MGM, 2023). Rize is a city where new flat areas have been created by coastal filling at many points over the years due to its sloping topography. In recent years, urban parks have been prioritized over filling areas.

The main material of the study consists of Doğu Park, Islampaşa Park, and Batı Park, which are the 3 largest parks located in the coastal filling areas of Rize city (Figure 1). While selecting the parks in the city, their offering different opportunities in terms of activity and usage diversity, having been newly landscaped, and being the largest parks in the city were taken into consideration.

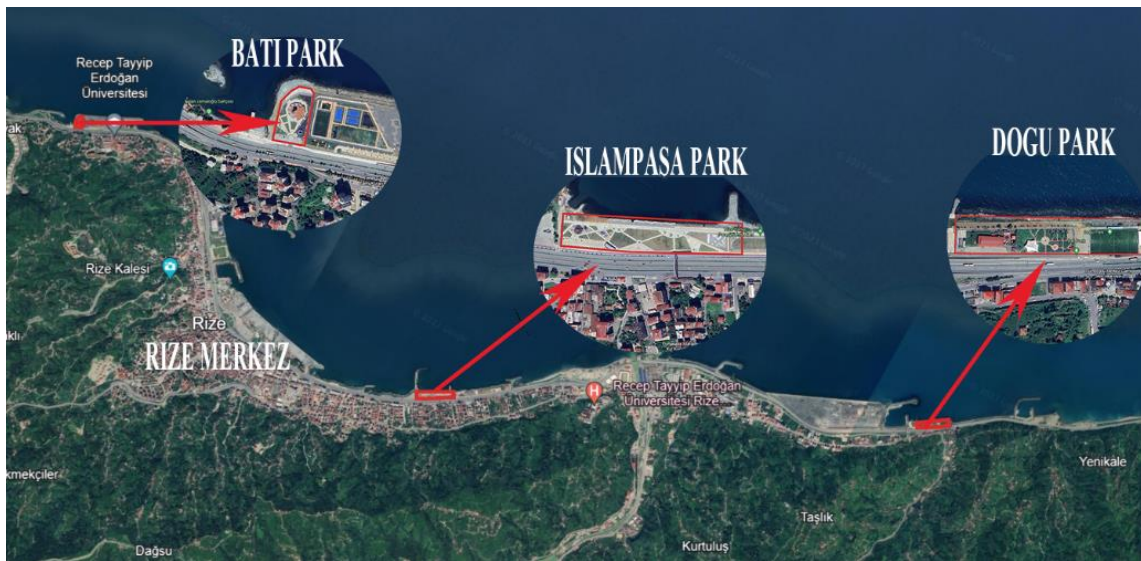


Figure 1: Locations of study areas.

Reference : (URL.1).

First, on-site observations and examinations were conducted in the parks selected within the scope of the study. In this context, area analysis of the parks was performed (Mohandespor and Caymaz, 2019), and the results were presented in tabular form. These data were used to determine the adequacy of the quality criteria. Park areas were examined in terms of quality criteria, and then the diversity of activities and uses, which is one of the quality criteria, was evaluated in detail. Quality indicators control chart was created based on the charts prepared by Yücel and Yıldızcı (2006) and Başalma et al. (2017). In the tables, scores were assigned to each criterion (0-none, 1-poor, 2-fair, 3-good). The scores were then collected to make a quantitative comparison of the parks in terms of quality indicators.

FINDINGS

Doğu Park (Figure 2), located in the coastal area of Hamidiye neighborhood, was opened in 2019 and includes children's playgrounds, walking paths, indoor and outdoor seating areas, an amphitheater, a buffet covered with a suspended tensioning system, a car park, and a social facility consisting of a masjid, toilet and shower buildings.



Figure 2: Doğu Park location

Reference : (Url.1).

Children's playgrounds are covered with rubber flooring, asphalt and concrete printing are used on the walking paths, an area is reserved for disabled access and cobblestone paving is used in the car park area. The park area also has a small square surrounded by flagpoles of 16 Turkish states (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Use of the areas in Doğu Park.

Reference : Produced by The Author

İslampaşa Park was opened in 2022, located close to the city center (Figure 4). The skatepark, bicycle path, play groups, and sports equipment are positioned independently of each other in the same area for older children, younger children, and disabled people, and egg sole rubber and cast rubber are used on the floors. The sports equipment floor is made of acrylic paint. Unlike other parks, interactive play groups are preferred in this area.



Figure 4: Location of İslampaşa Park.

Reference : (Url.1).

There is a pier under construction in the area. A sandy beach area is being built by the sea. There is a plant tunnel, bench, dustbin, lighting, and bicycle parking. Most of the ground is concrete and formed by natural stone moulding and borders the green area. It has area uses such as neighbourhood field, street workout, two social facilities, toilet, masjid, car park (Figure 5).

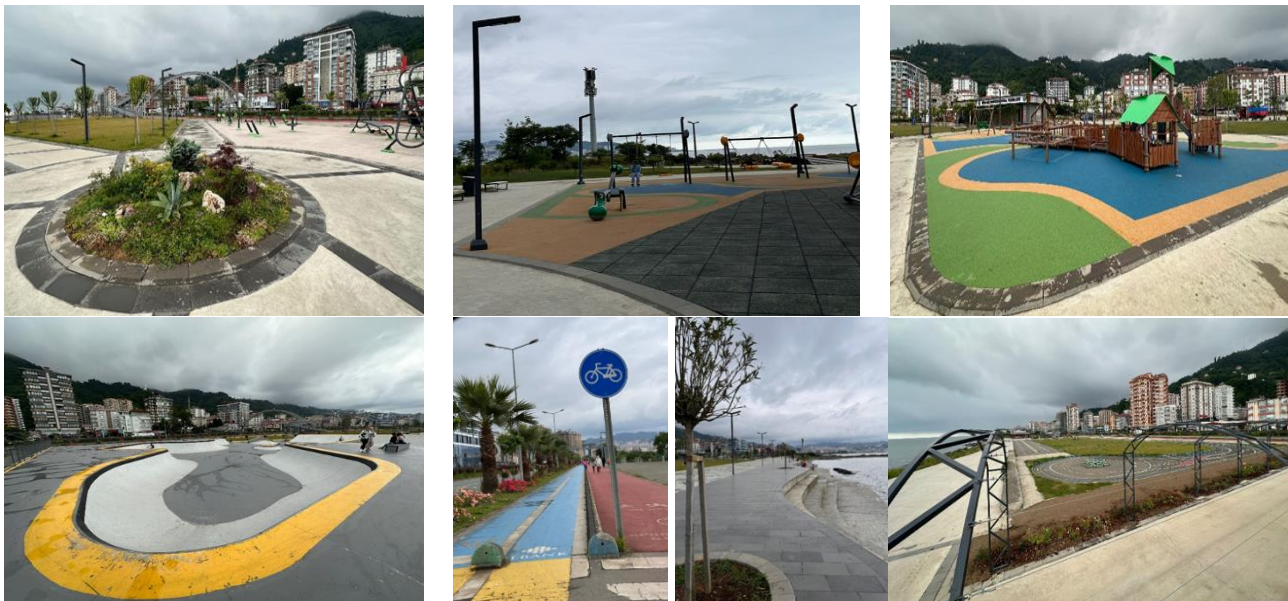


Figure 5: İslampaşa Park area uses.

Reference : Produced by The Author

Batı Park was opened in 2023 in the western part of the city (Figure 6) and is the newest among the study areas. The restaurant made of natural cut stone, which resembles the old stone houses of Rize, the lighthouse, and the maritime museum, which tells the history of Rize's relationship with the sea, are intended to be highlighted in the area. A classical playground is used in the park area. As in İslampaşa Park, there are separate areas for older and younger children. In addition to the playground, there are two track areas for children.



Figure 6: Batı Park location

Reference : (Url.1).

In the part of the park close to the sea, wooden benches have been built on the wall separating the path from the area. At the entrance to the park, a compass is made of podima stone, and the other axes are made of natural stone, granite, and basalt. As the car park is on the side of the motorway, a pocket was made to enter the area, surrounded by a low wall of natural cut stone. There are facilities such as a suspended canopy, rubbish containers, benches, lighting, toilets, and prayer rooms (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Batı Park area uses.

Reference : Produced by The Author

In order to demonstrate the suitability of the parks in terms of design standards, field analysis tables were constructed in the light of the literature, and these analysis tables were filled in with on-site observations and investigations (Table 1).

Table 1: Results of the site analysis

	Doğu Park	İslam Paşa Parkı	Batı Parkı
Location			
Is the park centrally located in the neighbourhood?	-	✓	-
Is the park accessible by public transportation?	✓	✓	-
Is there a bus stop near the park?	✓	✓	-
Is the park accessible by bicycle?	✓	-	-
Park entrance			
Does the entrance design encourage entry for users?	-	✓	✓
Are there multiple access/exit points along the park?	✓	✓	-
Are vehicle and pedestrian crossings separated from the car park entrance?	✓	✓	✓
Are there seating areas at the entrance of the park?	✓	✓	-
Car park			
Is the parking area close to the park entrance?	✓	✓	✓
Is there parking area for bicycles?	✓	✓	-
Is there disabled parking space?	✓	✓	✓
Roads			

<i>Are vehicle and pedestrian paths separated?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Are pedestrian paths connected to destinations?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Is the surface of the pedestrian paths smooth, uninterrupted, non-slip and smooth?</i>	-	✓	✓
<i>Is the one-way ramp width 90 cm?</i>	-	-	-
<i>Are there bicycle paths in the park?</i>	✓	✓	-
<i>Is the two-way ramp width 150 cm?</i>	-	-	-
<i>Is the ramp slope appropriate?</i>	-	-	-
<i>Are there gutters or manholes placed outside pedestrian paths?</i>	✓	-	✓
Playgrounds			
<i>Are there seating facilities for parents around the children's playground?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Is the playground separated from other areas by bushes or benches?</i>	✓	-	✓
<i>Are there separate playgrounds for ages 0-5 and 6-14?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Is it possible to play with sand in the playgrounds?</i>	✓	-	-
<i>Is there a buffer zone around play equipment?</i>	✓	-	✓
<i>Are wooden materials preferably used in game equipment?</i>	✓	✓	-
<i>Are deciduous plants used mostly in the playground?</i>	-	✓	-
<i>Are movable equipment, such as swings, placed in a corner, side or edge of the playground?</i>	-	✓	✓
<i>Are the slide exits located in an uncongested area of the playground?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Is soft-surface flooring used under play equipment?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Is there a sports area that allows physical activities of adults?</i>	✓	✓	-
Park furniture			
Seating elements			
<i>Are the seating elements located in areas with high pedestrian traffic?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Are there benches in shaded areas?</i>	✓	-	✓
<i>Are benches provided in areas overlooking open green spaces?</i>	✓	-	✓
<i>Are resting places provided at regular intervals between 100.00 m and 200.00 m?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Is the seating within 60 cm of the road?</i>	✓	✓	-
<i>Is the height of the seating element 42.5 cm?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Is the depth of the seat 35-40 cm?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Are there armrests on the seating unit?</i>	✓	-	-
<i>Are there seating elements combined with top covers?</i>	✓	-	✓
Bins			
<i>Are there rubbish bins at access points and/or near activity areas?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Is there a bin every 500 metres along the main road?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Are bins placed 30 cm from the road?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Are bins placed every 30 metres?</i>	✓	-	✓
<i>Is the height of the bins 90 cm?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Is the opening of the bin at least 25 cm?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Are rubbish bins securely fixed?</i>	✓	✓	✓
Direction and information signs			
<i>Do signs at entrances provide clear directions to key points of interest, such as the location of public toilets, safe routes, park activities, and nearby public transportation?</i>	-	-	-
<i>Are there signs at decision points (entrances, activity areas, road junctions)?</i>	-	-	-
<i>Is there a sign at the park entrance?</i>	✓	-	✓
<i>Are there warning signs around the park?</i>	-	✓	✓
<i>Can the signs be read from a distance of at least 20m?</i>	-	✓	✓
<i>Are key sections of the park and trails marked on park maps?</i>	-	-	-
<i>Are there information signs used for regulatory information or notices?</i>	-	-	✓
Lighting			
<i>Are the luminaires installed high and vandal proof?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Are lighting columns positioned so that plants do not cover the columns?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Are luminaires positioned to avoid blind spots at night?</i>	✓	✓	✓
Fountain			
<i>Is there a fountain for every 1000m²?</i>	✓	-	-
<i>Are the fountain mouths approximately 0.90 m high?</i>	✓	-	-
WC			
<i>Is there a toilet in the park?</i>	✓	✓	✓
Plant material			
<i>Have deciduous and evergreen plants been used together?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Have thorny, broad-leaved plant species been avoided in areas adjacent to footpaths and designed for active and passive use?</i>	-	✓	✓
<i>Have low shrubs and ground covers been used that do not obstruct sight lines or create potential 'hiding places'?</i>	✓	-	✓
<i>Are trees set back at least 2 metres from roads?</i>	-	-	-
<i>Are conifers planted 4.5 m from the roadside?</i>	-	-	-
Security			
<i>Are there security checks around the park?</i>	-	✓	-
<i>Are there clear lines of sight in passive and active use areas?</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Are there seating areas on main routes to observe passers-by?</i>	✓	✓	✓

Maintain

Are there any signs of vandalism in the park?

Are there uniformed maintenance staff?

Is rubbish cleared regularly?

Are the plants pruned regularly?

Disabled people

Are there ramps on the roads?

Are ramp gradients less than 8.33%?

Are there rest areas with benches that allow at least 1.20 m of space for a wheelchair?

-	-	-
✓	✓	✓
-	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓
-	-	✓
-	-	✓
-	-	-

Reference : Produced by The Author

In the light of the data obtained as a result of the field analysis, the suitability of the parks in terms of quality indicators was evaluated through interviews with 6 landscape architect experts working in the Landscape Architecture Department at Engineering and Architecture Faculty of Recep Tayyip Erdogan University Faculty. Considering all the subheadings of the quality indicators and the total score, it can be seen that Batı Park has the highest score. This is followed by İslampaşa Park and Doğu Park (Table 2).

Table 2: Adequacy of quality indicators in parks.

	Doğu Park	İslampaşa Park	Batı Park
Comfort and Image			
General impression of the park	2	3	3
Visual impact of the park	2	3	3
General layout of the park	2	3	3
Seating and resting places (quality)	3	2	3
Seating and resting areas (quantity)	3	2	3
Location of seating and resting areas	3	2	2
Lighting elements and bins (quality)	2	2	3
Lighting elements and bins (quantity)	1	2	3
Different uses of water elements	0	0	0
Location of elements that can be the focal point of the park	2	3	3
Presence of elements that can give the park an identity	3	3	3
Compatibility with various user profiles	3	3	3
Feeling of safety	2	2	3
Maintenance	1	3	3
Cleaning	1	3	3
Total	33	36	41
Sociability			
Perception of activity areas from the park environment	3	3	3
Use of seating units in each activity area	3	3	3
Status of meeting points in the park	1	3	3
Sensitivity of users to the cleanliness of the park	1	1	2
Total	8	10	11
Accessibility			
Openness of park entrances and exits	2	2	3
Visibility of the park's internal structure from the outside	2	2	3
Circulation in the park	3	3	3
Pedestrian routes within the park	3	3	3
Cycle paths within the park	3	3	1
Transport to the park	2	3	3
Public transport stops near the park	1	1	1
Number of parking spaces	3	3	3
Total	19	20	20
Area use-activity diversity			
The park offers a variety of activities.	3	3	3
Use of activities by different user groups	3	3	3
Day and night use of the park	3	3	3
Seasonal use of the park	3	3	3
Total	12	12	12
Grand total	64	78	84

(3 Good- 2 Fair -1 Poor- 0 None)

Reference : Produced by The Author

Parks that constitute work areas offer diversity in terms of open, closed and covered spaces, walking and promenade paths, bicycle paths, seating units, water surfaces, children's playgrounds (Table 3).

Table 3: Activity opportunities of parks

Park	Walking Path	Bike Path	Playground	Fitness Area	Covered Spaces	Indoor Spaces	Benches	Water Bodies	WC
Doğu Park	Available	Available	Available	Absent	Available	Available	Available	Absent	Available
İslampaşa Parkı	Available	Available	Available	Available	Absent	Available	Available	Absent	Available
Batı Park	Available	Absent	Available	Absent	Available	Available	Available	Absent	Available

Reference : Produced by The Author

The diversity provided by the vegetal design of the 3 parks in the study area, which was previously reported by Polat, Z et al. (2022), is shown in detail in Table 4, based on the charts prepared by Varol, E. (2023).

Table 4: Plant materials in parks

Park	Grass Areas	Bush Groups	Trees	Shadow Places	Color Effect	Flower	Fruit	Maintenance	Plant Diversity
Doğu Park	Available	Available	Available	Available	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Available
İslampaşa Parkı	Available	Available	Available	Absent	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available
Batı Park	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available

Reference : Produced by The Author.

CONCLUSION

Rize is a city where flat areas are created by filling due to its sloping topography. The E70 motorway, which passes through the city close to the coast, separates the coast from the city and makes it difficult to use the coast and reduces coastal activity opportunities. It is seen that this problem is tried to be solved with the recreation areas created on the filling areas on the coast. Similar results were found in the studies of Muhacir, E. S. A., (2018), Özdemir Işık, B., & Demirel, Ö. (2014), Gül, S. and Yılmaz, A. (2019)., Güven, P. (2000), Korkut, D. S. A. and Şimşek, D. S. (2009), Karaçuha, E. Y. (2007). When the parks created on 3 filling areas in the city are examined, it is seen that the park areas have many different activities and usage diversity and have very good scores in terms of quality indicators. It was determined that the park with the highest score was Batıpark in terms of quality indicators such as Comfort and Image, Sociability, Accessibility, Area Use-Activity Diversity, walking paths, bicycle paths, children's playgrounds, fitness areas, covered spaces, indoor spaces, water surfaces, plant diversity, seating elements, being well-maintained. Although Doğu Park is located in the east of the city and far from the centre, it is accessible by bicycle and public transport. The park has more than one entrance point, and the main entrance is not emphasized. There is sufficient parking space for vehicles and bicycles. Pedestrian paths are connected to the arrival points. There are playgrounds and seating areas in the park. It is seen that the quality and quantity of playgrounds, seating areas and equipment elements meets society's needs. However, there are not enough direction signs.

İslampaşa Park is located at a central point and is accessible by public transport. The entrance design encourages access, and there are multiple access/exit points. The car park area is close to the park entrance, and there is parking space for bicycles. Pedestrian and vehicle paths are separated from each other, and it is seen that the materials used on the ground in this park are appropriate. There are playgrounds, seating areas, and a disabled parking space in İslampaşa Park. Since the park is located on a flat area, there are no ramps and stairs. Guidance and information signs are also insufficient in this park. Batı Park is located in the western part of the city, which is not a central location and is not accessible by public transport. There is also no bus stop near the park. The entrance design and seating areas are present, and the park has a single entrance. The car parking area is close to the park entrance, but there is no parking space for bicycles. Pedestrian and vehicle paths are separated, and the surfaces of the pedestrian paths are smooth, continuous, non-slip and uniform. There are playgrounds in the park. These places, which have the characteristics of coastal parks, do not have a water surface.

In Batı Park and İslampaşa Parks, it is seen that fitness areas are also included for park users. Doğu Park and İslampaşa Park have a bicycle path and thus bicycle transport is possible. İslampaşa Park is mainly preferred by young people. Doğu Park area, on the other hand, is used more by families and middle-aged individuals because it is a picnic area. Since there is a restaurant in the Batı Park area, and it is more difficult to reach than the others, it appeals to working and high-income users. All three parks attract intense interest in the evenings.

It has been observed that the plant design is sufficient in the study areas. İslampaşa Park has the most appropriate plant design in terms of plant diversity, aesthetics, and functionality. It was observed that grass, shrub, and tree groups were used as plant material in the study areas. In İslampaşa Park, it has been observed that the trees used in vegetative design have not reached sufficient size yet and cannot create shade areas. However, when it is foreseen that the plants have reached a certain size, it can be said that there are quite sufficient and appropriate plant preferences. In general, it is seen that plants with colour effect, flower and fruit presence are used in all parks. It has been determined that

any attention is not paid to general maintenance of the plants in Doğu Park, such as pruning, watering, etc. and therefore they remain neglected.

Regarding the parks included in the study area in general, regular maintenance and repair of vegetative and structural landscape elements will both contribute positively to the city in ecological terms and increase the degree of preference of the parks for the city people and tourists.

The diversity of activities and uses in park areas is possible with the correct design of spatial organizations. The need-activity-space constructions should be solved by considering the functional, aesthetic, and ecological features of the parks in harmony with the city identity, in accordance with the socio-cultural structure of the users. Only in this way, the activity areas in urban parks can be transformed into living and habitable spaces.

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