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"Warning in Spaces: Blending Heritage, Nature and Design"

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"Harmony in Spaces : Blending Heritage, Nature and Design"

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Evaluating the Effect of Vandalism on Park Facilities and User Satisfaction: A Case Study at Taman Maluri, Cheras

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of vandalism to park facilities and user satisfaction within the Taman Maluri, a neighbourhood park in Cheras in Kuala Lumpur in view of the fact that urban parks play vital roles in the community health, socialisation, and recreation activities in high-density cities. Although significant, vandalism which is expressed as graffiti, damaged playground equipment and other physical degradation pose threats to the operation, safety and aesthetic value of these public areas and may lower the utilization and perceived importance of these places. This study involved a systematic physical audit of the physical facilities, vandalism statistics and user satisfaction survey that facilitated this research in determining the status of the park facilities and understanding of the extent of damage as a factor on the perception of safety, comfort and general satisfaction by the visitor. Findings indicated that the more the vandalism, the less the user satisfaction and the less often the use of the park as the respondents linked a degraded environment to neglect and insecurity. The study identified the necessity of better maintenance programs, design solutions that are resistant to vandalism, and community involvement programs that will augment resilience of parks and support long-term recreational and social amenity. This research has an actionable implication to the park administrators and urban planners that are keen on ensuring that their focus efforts include giving attention to the allocation of resources, reinforcement of management practices, and the development of more resilient public spaces that can sustain the healthy and vibrant communities.

Keyword: Vandalism, User Satisfaction, Urban Parks, Facility Condition, Taman Maluri, Cheras

INTRODUCTION

The parks located in the urban areas are crucial in promoting social, ecological, and recreational health of communities, playing a key role in a sustainable city (Salleh et al., 2024; Rosli et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the growing rate of vandalism, including the destruction of benches and other facilities in parks, harms the perception of the area in question, security, and general satisfaction with it (Adrianto, Zulaikha & Syairudin, 2024; Madani et al., 2024). In addition to the fact that vandalism aesthetic and practical value, it increases the maintenance expenses of the local authorities and reduces participation in the community (Robertson et al., 2020; Hamzah et al., 2022). Consequently, environmental designing measures and crime prevention have been suggested in order to address these difficulties.

Environmental Design (CPTED) is one of the methods that have been applied to minimize vandalism and enhance the user experience in the open areas (Adrianto et al., 2025; Saeedi and Habibi, 2023). According to the findings of previous studies, the state of the physical infrastructure of facilities in urban parks, the quality of their maintenance,

and the concepts of safety define the level of user satisfaction (Au and Yong et al., 2023; Sugiyama et al., 2023). Although research has been conducted on design and management practices in such Malaysian cities as Subang Jaya, Batu Gajah, and Temerloh, the literature still lacks insight into how vandalism can influence the level of user satisfaction and the quality of parks in neighbourhood parks directly (Kurzi, 2022; Leh et al., 2021; Rosli et al., 2020).

In spite of identified relevance of urban parks, there is a lack of empirical research on the correlation between vandalism and user satisfaction in the Malaysian settings. A case of interest is the Taman Maluri Park in Cheras as it is most frequently used and there has been a constant problem of vandalism which can affect the perception and experience of visitors. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the effects of the vandalism on the physical appearance of the park facilities, as well as to determine the satisfaction of the users with the Taman Maluri Park in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur. This study will use physical facility audit, user satisfaction surveys, and data analysis to provide evidence-based advice on the use of parks and creation of park maintenance and design in ways that improve the level of safety, functionality and usability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Role and Significance of Urban Parks

The parks within the urban areas are a valuable resource to the cities because they provide the recreational amenities and the environment. protection. Urban parks have spaces that can enable individuals to exercise and form social relationships and get away. city density resulting in improved mental and physical health. Research has revealed that parks generate well being. community benefits because they enable the regulation of temperature and eliminate pollution and also provide. space to socialize (Salleh et al., 2024). Research has been done in Malaysia and the quality of parks has been found to be low. such aspects as facilities and maintenance requirements have a direct impact on the amount of visitors and the degree of. satisfaction with parks (Rosli, Leh, Amira and Marzukhi et al., 2020). Research has revealed that delivery of basic is beneficial. green spaces is not satisfactory since users appreciate parks depending on their access and the quality of their facilities and maintenance standards.

Aspects that are associated with seating, lighting, usable courses, signage, cleanliness, and perceived safety. facilities, which impact on satisfaction among the visitors to the park. Although not directly, it can be said that (Sugiyama, Nurhikmah, Rini and Wigati et al., 2023) Users will express greater satisfaction when facilities are maintained and equated with requirement. This finding indicates that a pre-eminence in the management of parks should not be based on the number of facilities but the condition and functionality of the facilities. Lack of this emphasis means that the parks would not have the potential to attract visitors and generate the intended social, recreational and health outcomes.

Parks are also becoming more important based on the growing urbanization and urban density in Malaysia. Parks should be treated and preserved to a large extent to stay relevant as local citizens seek green around them. open spaces and recreation. It is thus strategically necessary to have such facilities to be available. healthy, functional and preserved and convenient to the urban living and well-being.

Urban Parks Vandalism: Definitions, Extent and Causes.

Willful violation of care of park infrastructure, e.g. graffiti, broken benches, theft of. degradation of playgrounds, littering and lighting cables, are generally known as vandalism in urban parks. A case study conducted in Malaysia states that the visitors to parks are of the opinion that poor facility is linked with vandalism. equipment's, improper maintenance, poor design, poor oversight. According to studies vandalism, being conducted all over the world, is largely affected by the factors of environmental design. For example, more dense vegetation cover, low supervision, high visitor turnover and poor visibility areas. has a high probability of incidents (Khani and Rastkhadiv et al., 2023); Kurzi et al., 2022).

A research study was carried out by Adrianto, Zulaikha, and Syairudin et al., (2024) in Indonesia, in which they used the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) framework to make open spaces green in. Surabaya. They discovered that locations that experienced high traffic of visitors and low resilience to CPTED attributes experienced elevated. effects on facilities as a result of vandalism. Their contribution pointed out that the physical contributes to vandalism. design, maintenance and oversight of space besides personal behavior. The design of well another study reveals that the existence of operational parks facilities promotes abuse and, therefore, vandalism. 3 in 2025, also by the same authors, but based on the Function-Behavior-Structure (FBS) framework (Adrianto, Richo et al., 2025).

Thus, the issue of park vandalism should be considered as a systemic one, which is influenced by the context of the environment. surveillance, design and management. In order to establish the likely areas of vandalism and how to control or In order to design spaces that will minimize its occurrence, it should be noted that these environmental precursors should be noted.

Effects of Vandalism on the Facility Condition.

The short-term effects of vandalism are the destruction of the park infrastructure such as broken benches. broken or defective playground equipment, broken lights, absent walkways, cans of overflowing or broken trash. The gap between the real state of park facilities and Au-Yong et al., (2023) identified that there is a drastic deviation between the current condition and the aspirated condition of park facilities. the hopes of tourists in Malaysia, who tend to blame the gap on destruction or disregard. In addition to reducing functionality, this degradation raises the cost of maintenance and requirements.

Facilities that are clearly vandalized create a poor perception about the level of safety to the visitors of a park. management responsiveness. The research indicates that people are likely to consider damaged or vandalized facilities as. signs of carelessness that undermine their confidence in the management of the park and dilutes their interest in communicating with the area. One of the best predictors of lower use and satisfaction is, obviously, the case with a recent study. vandalism (Felappi et al., 2024).

Due to the reduced functionality, impacted aesthetic, and compromised safety and channeling resources to vandalism, the impact of vandalism is severe. instead of improvements it is something that facilitates the degradation of the facilities. The effects have a potential. to radically shorten the life, usefulness and popularity of the facilities in neighbourhood parks like Taman. Maluri, which will eventually have an impact on the value of the park and the visitor experience.



Figure 1: Location Map
Source: Google Earth (2024)



Figure 1: Outdoor fitness equipment



Figure 2: Park signage on fence
Source: Aisyah (2025)



Figure 3: Sports court and field

Satisfaction of the user and park usage

User satisfaction in terms of urban parks is a complex phenomenon that indicates the way visitors rate the parks. facilities, surroundings, comfort, security and contentment with their leisure forecasts. Using online data on satisfaction in Shenzhen, Liu & Xiao et al., (2020) revealed that satisfaction was highly anticipated as based on commentary data. cleanliness, aesthetic appearance of the landscape and upkeep of facilities. Malaysia studies reveal that how. design, maintenance, accessibility and safety are critical in determining the experience people would have at their park. (Kurzi, 2022; Leh et al., 2021)

The condition of facilities leads to less frequent visits and avoidance of some areas in the park by the users that experience lower levels of satisfaction. is damaged, either through old age, or neglect or vandalism. This is adverse to social interaction, accessibility (reduced physical activity) and health in the city. Parks serve the communities less well. with poor deteriorating facilities or supposed safety issues. Since parks in Malaysia target high-density neighbourhoods and can be used to enhance the quality of life, high user satisfaction should be implemented. Keeping the facilities safe and of good quality stimulates the use of the park, interaction and other social and health events besides visitor satisfaction.

Combining Vandalism, Facility Condition and Satisfaction by Users

Studies on vandalism in parks and the state of amenities and user satisfaction have been conducted but less. integrate all the three into one model: vandalism - degradation of amenities - reduced user satisfaction. To some extent, this model is supported by a research of Saeedi and Habibi et al., (2025) that indicates the role of environmental. design has an impact on vandalism and the incivility perception and its effects on satisfaction. However, there is little applied in Malaysian neighbourhood parks.

They do not fully capture the influence on the condition of the facilities and consequently user satisfaction, but they do that. give an idea on how vandalism is perceived in the Malaysian park environment. Physical damage by itself is insufficient to cause a significant loss to the company. Physical damage alone is not sufficient to bring a severe loss to the company. facility condition and user satisfaction survey measures and/or vandalism incidents audits into a. coherent framework, the Taman Maluri case provides the possibility to put this model to test and operationalize it. This study bridges the gap between theory and practice because it uses an integrative approach. At a theoretical level, it augments understanding of the relationship amid the park settings, administration, and guest experiences; in practice, it is a valuable source of knowledge that assists the park managers and urban planners and community. stakeholders care about maintenance, develop designs that are not vandalized, and improve visitor satisfaction.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

In theory, the models like the Functional Behavioral Structure (FBS) design logic and Crime. Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) offer a valuable perspective upon the study of how the layout, design, visible, materiality, and supervision and maintenance of facilities diminish the risk of vandalism and its. effect on a user experience (Adrianto et al., 2024; Adrianto et al., 2025). These structures are credible. to the supposition that it is the management and design of spaces which affect vandalism, rather than behavior alone.

An integrated facility design-vandalism-satisfaction model has results whose practical solutions include the durable material, improved lighting, enhanced visibility and natural surveillance, fast repairs of damaged, etc. infrastructure, and community and user engagement in surveillance programs. To prevent vandalism and ensure the satisfaction of the users and, as an illustration, the findings of the Taman Maluri audit might lead to revisions of the. design, operations processes, and repairs of high risk facilities (trash cans, benches, and) lights). Thus, this paper is valuable addition to the knowledge and practice of urban gardens in Malaysia because it provides. evidence-supported guidelines in regard to neighbourhood gardens. The acquired knowledge will be used to support. local authorities, planners and designers in sustaining animated, secure and user-friendly park areas in spite of the. challenges of vandalism.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a descriptive research design, which is suitable for documenting and analyzing the physical condition of park facilities in relation to vandalism and user satisfaction. The descriptive approach allows for systematic observation and recording of tangible evidence of facility damage without relying solely on subjective responses, making it suitable for investigating observable phenomena such as vandalism in neighbourhood park

environments.

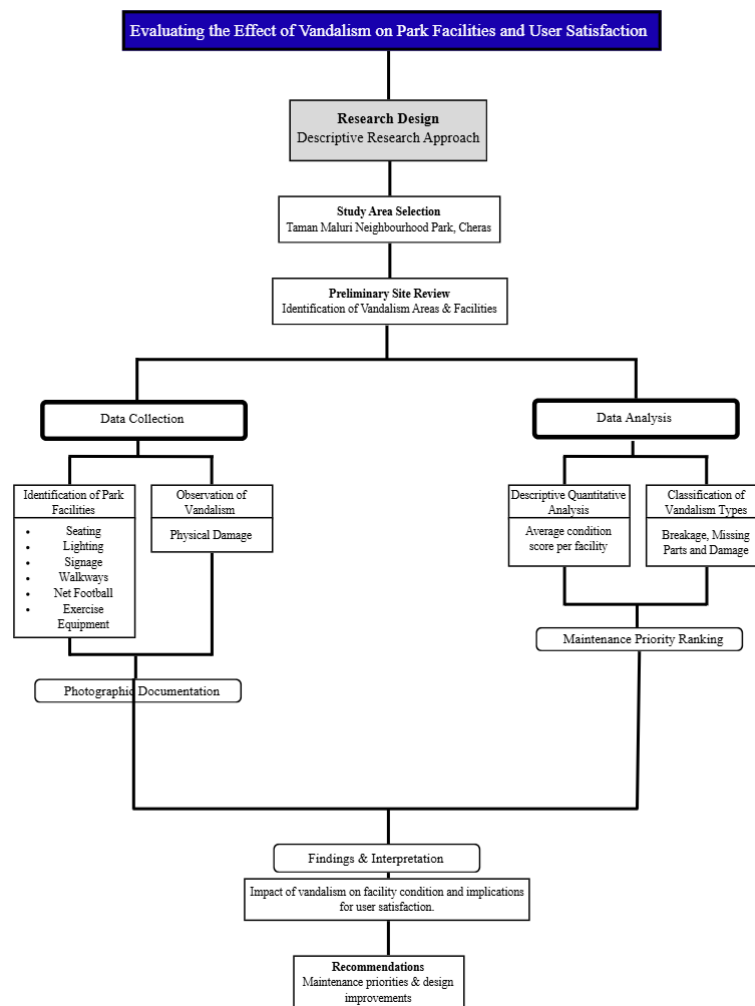


Figure 1: The diagram of methodology

Study Area

This research was carried out in Taman Maluri, which is a public neighbourhood park in Kuala Lumpur. The park was chosen on the preliminary surveys and reports that vandalism and its potential are present. effect on the park structure and the tourist experience. An elaborate physical context description of the park, usage patterns, and available facilities gave the backgrounds that were needed to conduct the focus of this study.



Figure 1: Key Plan (left) and location plan (right) of Neighbourhood Park, Taman Maluri

Source: Google Earth (2024)

Data Collection

Field observations were conducted by going to Taman Maluri, Cheras systematic field observations and recording the status and presence of major park infrastructure including seating, lighting, signage, trash containers, walkways, and play devices. In these visits, images were taken of the condition of facilities to be analyzed later where great care was taken to ensure that no identifiable information regarding the park users featured. The cases of vandalism, such as graffiti, physical damages, missing parts, and other deteriorating forms were also reported by observers. The facilities were rated on a standardized Rating Scale to measure the degree of vandalism and to help in prioritizing the maintenance requirements. It was a well-organized method of assessing the impact of vandalism on the physical surroundings and the satisfaction of the users at the park. (Adrianto, Richo et al., 2025).

Data Analysis

Descriptive quantitative methods were used to analyze the obtained data with the aim of calculating average scores on conditions in each type of facility and evaluate overall performance. Damage observed was classified as certain types of vandalism, including graffiti, physical damages, and parts missing to determine the most common types of vandalism on Taman Maluri (Au-Yong et al., 2023; Adrianto et al., 2024). It also analyzed questionnaire data of park users to understand their perception of the facility quality, safety perception, and overall satisfaction to compare the physical conditions and user experience (Liu, 2020; Kurzi, 2022). Maintenance priority rankings were generated by the average severity and frequency of observed damage, whereas the results of questionnaires were used to correlate the impacts of vandalism with the level of user satisfaction (Madani et al., 2024; Eisya et al., 2024). This combined analysis offered empirical data to inform any given recommendations that could be used to improve targeted maintenance, design, and the strategies to improve overall user satisfaction with the park in line with prior studies that have underpinned the value of facility management and environmental design in vandalism reduction and promoting positive experiences at the park (Khani and Rastkhadiv, 2023; Au-Yong et al., 2023; Adrianto et al., 2025).

Samples / Respondents

The sample used in this research was the visitors of Taman Maluri during the process of collecting data. The convenience method was adopted which incorporated voluntary participation of the visitors at the park who took part in the survey. The participants were of different ages, genders, and the purpose of usage (e.g., recreation, exercise, family activities). This was the method that enabled the research to get varied user opinions on facilities in the parks, safety and satisfaction. Only the respondents that used the facilities of the parks previously were considered to ensure the related and valid feedback.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Stage 1: Data Observation

The observations at the sites were carried out to record the physical status of the park facilities at Taman Maluri, Cheras, and to establish the signs of vandalism that can influence the functional use, perception of users and its general quality. The approach supported the questionnaire survey because it addresses hard and measurable factors of facility damage and aids in corroborating perceptions of vandalism, safety concerns and maintenance priorities. As compared to self-reported data, field observations gave empirical evidence of the real situation of the facilities and the surrounding context.



Figure 1: Location Map

Source: Google Earth (2024)



Figure 1: Outdoor fitness equipment



Figure 2: Park signage on fence

Source: Aisyah (2025)



Figure 3: Sports court and field

The results of the triangulation between the site observation data and the results of the questionnaire will be used to verify the patterns of the perception and real conditions. Combining quantitative data collected by surveys and qualitative data collected by the observation notes makes the results more reliable and helps to give more appropriate recommendations to the park management and design changes.

Table 1: Observation Summary Table of Damage to Outdoor Gym & Net Football Area at Taman Maluri

Facility	Type of Damage Observed	Specific Location	Implication on Safety & Satisfaction
Outdoor Gym Equipment	Bent and deformed bars Surface cracks Loose/faulty fixtures	Exercise zone near central lawn	Reduced usability and increased risk of injury Low satisfaction with recreational quality Users may avoid the area
Net Football Area	Torn or missing nets Bent or unstable goalposts Worn perimeter barriers	Football field close to seating area	Impaired play quality Discourages sport activities, especially for youth Negative impact on overall park recreation experience

Outdoor Gym Damage

As it was observed, there were high levels of vandalism to outdoor gym equipment at Taman Maluri. Structural deformation surface cracks and loose parts were always apparent at different fitness zone stations. This damage affected the safety and functionality of the equipment, augmented the chances of the user being injured, and diminished the desirability of the facility as a regular exercise. This aligned with the survey results which showed a reduced level of satisfaction in the areas connected to the quality of amenities and recreational areas in the park.

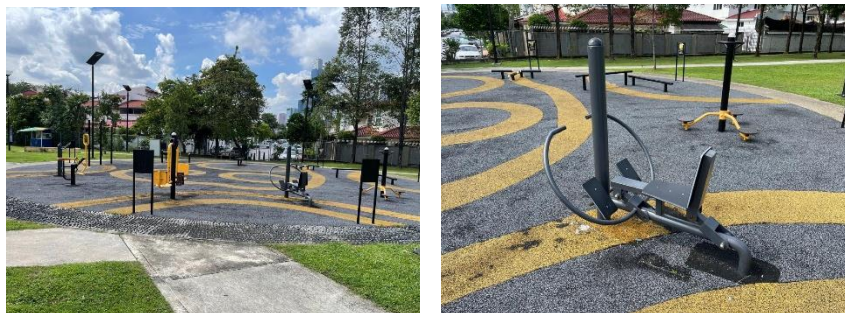


Figure 1: Outdoor fitness equipment
Source: Aisyah (2025)

Net Football Damage

There are evident material wear and tear in the soccer field such as ripped nets and bent goals postings, which is probably as a result of intentional abuse or neglect. The protective elements and the perimeter barriers are also worn and deformed. This state of affairs is a direct decrease in the suitability of the space to sporting activities, an inhibitor of the active involvement and user satisfaction among visitors who want to use the space as a means of recreation based on sporting activities. Since soccer and group activities are one of the key community functions in the neighbourhood park, this type of damage impacts the social and recreational value of the park.



Figure 2: Sports court and field
Source: Aisyah (2025)

Stage 2: Questionnaire Survey

To carry out this research, a questionnaire survey was carried out to achieve primary data on interaction between park users and their environment. To ensure that the instrument is able to capture both the quantitative tendencies and the qualitative information, the survey instrument was constructed using a mixture of pre-coded, scaled and unstructured questions. Formatted questions were particularly applied to draw a first-hand explanation of other factors regarding the park usage such as the number of visits made, safety perception, and physical conditions of facilities.

The population of this study was the group of respondents who are the park users found in Taman Maluri, Cheras. The survey was directed at people with various demographic profiles aiming at absorbing the information on the representation of various age groups and genders since a comprehensive representation of the user base of the park was required. The participants were given the opportunity to select their main reason to visit, as they were jogging and exercising or visiting the recreational center and their family. Moreover, the research divided the respondents according to their patterns of usage, as it was distinguished between those who visited the restaurant on a daily, weekly, and occasional basis.

Results

In this study, a questionnaire survey was conducted online through the application of Google Forms to obtain primary data provided by people who encounter the park environment. The survey instrument was developed based on pre-coded, scaled and open-ended questions to obtain both quantitative and qualitative evidence on the state of the park. The respondent sample was 26 visitors to Taman Maluri (primarily male visitors 61.5 per cent, $n=16$), who were mostly young adults (18-25 years) (57.7 per cent, $n=15$). These users are frequent ones, with 46.2 percent ($n=12$) of them using the facilities weekly, mostly to jog and exercise (50%; $n=13$) or recreation (46.2%; $n=12$). Table 1 below reveals more information about the demographic background.

Table 2: Respondent Characteristics for the Taman Maluri Sample

Participants	Park User	
Distributions	(n)	%
Overall Participants	26	100
Gender		
Male	16	61.5
Female	10	38.5
Age group		
<18	3	11.5
18 – 25	15	57.7
26 – 35	6	23.1
36 - 50	2	7.7
Frequency of Visit		
Daily	7	26.9
Weekly	12	46.2
Monthly	5	19.2
Rarely	2	7.7
Purpose of Visit		
Jogging / Exercise	13	50.0
Recreation / Relaxation	12	46.2
Family / Children Activities	1	3.8
Prevalent Vandalism		
Damage facilities	14	53.8
Broken / Net	12	46.2
Effect on Experience		
Uncomfortable	8	30.8
Cannot use gym equipment	6	23.1
Safety Concerns	4	15.4
Others	8	30.7

Vandalism and User Experience Analysis

The findings demonstrated that there are a number of reasons why people visit the park, with some difference between genders. Although jogging and exercise are still the ultimate priority of the two, relaxation is the second one. Nonetheless, the reactions show that almost everyone knows of the deteriorating condition of the park. A vast majority of 76.9% (n=20) of the respondents witness vandalism acts regularly. These actions were singly singled out as destruction to park facilities (53.8%) and broken outdoor gym equipment (23.1%). The vandalism was commonest in the darkest spots mostly in the outdoor gym zone, the football area, and the less frequented pathways.

Vandalism has a direct psychological and functional effect on the users. The survey indicates that 61.5% (n=16) of the users do not consider the areas safe because it is poorly lit and is the location where vandalism is being practiced. The levels of satisfaction are also significantly low especially on the state of furniture in the park (57.7% dissatisfied) and exercise equipment (50% dissatisfied). Finally, the percentage of users who stated that they were uncomfortable is 30.8 (n=8) which shows that vandalism is not only maintenance problem but also something that makes people avoid using the park actively.

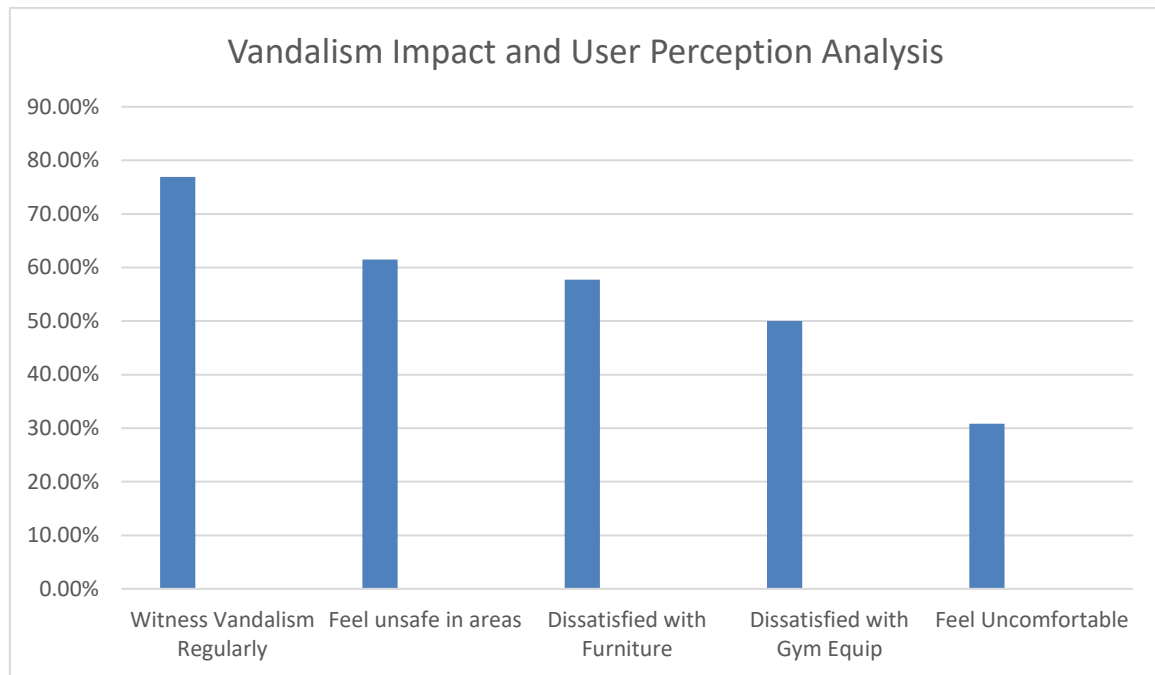


Table 3: Table of Vandalism Impact and User Perception Analysis
Source: Questionnaire Survey (2025)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper was able to establish that vandalism has adverse effects on the physical aspect of facilities in the park as well as user satisfaction at Taman Maluri. Existence of graffiti on many occasions, and rotting play equipment further reduced the image of safety and fun among the visitors. Those facilities that were most susceptible to vandalism were graded lower than other aspects like the general landscape, meaning that there is a direct correlation between the state of the facilities and the satisfaction of users. All in all, it can be concluded that the quality of facilities is of key essence in ensuring recreational pleasure and social importance of urban parks in densely populated cities..

In resolving the vandalism problem and making Taman Maluri a better place to visit, it is advisable that the local authorities should focus on ensuring that most of the facilities that have been extensively damaged are repaired and maintained in time and have in place reporting systems that are responsive to enable visitors promptly report to the management on the damages. The feeling of ownership can be earned by engaging the surrounding community in stewardship programs and setting up awareness programs to discourage destructive behaviours. Other strategies such as positive activation by encouraging organised events and activities, and use of permanent, vandal proof materials in high risk places can also enhance natural surveillance in the future and decrease the cost of damages and maintenance expenses. The assessment of conditions in the facilities and the feedback of the users should be performed on a regular basis as well to provide safety, the enhancement of recreational satisfaction, and the long-term sustainability and social value of the park.

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