

ABSTRACT

Open spaces play a great role in the well-being of built up areas as well as the residents therein. The presence of an open space provides a wide range of opportunities to the different categories of people in a specific neighborhood. Over the years, open spaces have been left for themselves since there has been very less attention on how they are used or how best they should be used. This has resulted to them finding a variety of uses in places where they are found. The reasons behind why someone uses an open space and what determined how they perceive an open space in what the research seeks to find. It seeks, more specifically, to find the ways open spaces are used in the low income neighborhoods of Kenya, which a case of Kangemi. The research seeks to assess the different perception from different categories of users such as gender, age, economic status, education status etc.

The study was done strategically in stages where several techniques were employed. It started with reviewing secondary data from various sources such as past research projects, journals and government documents which gave a hint of existing perceptions worldwide from different parts of the world with different economic levels. Mapping of the area using various remote sensing platforms and the ArcGIS enabled produce graphical representations of existing situations in form of maps and images. Gaps were identified from the secondary data which prompted a field survey where several methods and tools were used to collect primary data. These were questionnaires and interview guides which were administered both as direct and indirect interviews. Observations made were recorded in an observation checklist and photographs were also taken.

The study found that various aspects play in determining the perception of use of open spaces in any part of the world. People use the open spaces with reference to their immediate needs and they all aspire to have their needs met, at whatever place that might be available for them, which in most cases, are open spaces. The study also appreciated the fact that needs vary from one person to another, with a whole bunch of differences between people that contribute to the different uses.

The impact the uses have to the environment, general public and individual health, serenity and even aestheticism of a built environment was kept in check by the study. The study, therefore provides several recommendations to ensure equity and sustainability in use of spaces are achieved.