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Assessing Urban Public Space Quality: A Short Questionnaire Approach

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Abstract: This study introduces a concise questionnaire designed to evaluate the quality of urban public spaces as a simplified method for collecting community needs and perspectives, enabling these insights to be effectively combined with metrics and viewpoints from policymakers and decision-makers. The case study was carried out in one of the smallest municipalities of Attica, in the town of Kaisariani, Athens, with an emphasis on the central square and the park of the area. Findings show that the majority of respondents prioritize improving the vegetation and lighting of Kaisariani Square, as well as demands for more benches and cultural/art elements. The most important negative experience was the feeling of neglect and lack of cleanliness. Concerns about lighting and lack of care/cleanliness were also key at the park. Addressing current gaps in the public space assessment literature, the study lays the groundwork for future research and supports the creation of easy-to-use quality assessment tools. In contrast to more analytical approaches, the proposed questionnaire tool provides a streamlined and efficient method for capturing users' perceptions of public spaces. Its design ensures that evaluations are not time-consuming or resource-intensive, allowing citizen feedback to be seamlessly integrated into various public space management processes rather than being limited to exhaustive and costly research efforts. As urban environments continue to expand, the adoption of such techniques will be essential for fostering sustainable and resilient communities that prioritize the well-being of their citizens.

Keywords: urban public spaces; urban space quality; questionnaire; users' perceptions; urban square; urban park

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background Information and Problem Statement

Urban public spaces are an integral part of city life, significantly influencing the well-being of residents [1]. These spaces facilitate social interactions, economic activities, and environmental sustainability [2–5]. In addition, they preserve cultural heritage, promoting community identity [6,7]. However, contemporary urbanization confronts several challenges, including environmental degradation, socioeconomic inequities, and insufficient efforts to control development, all of which are contributing to a reduction in the quality of public space throughout the world [8,9].

Given the importance of public places, it is clear that they must be assessed; nevertheless, this evaluation is multifaceted and enigmatic. Currently, there exists a

notable absence of a precise methodological framework applicable across diverse contexts, thereby rendering the evaluation process inherently complex. The availability (the actual number of spaces, the ratio per resident, etc.), accessibility and walkability of these spaces, safety, maintenance and cleanliness, urban equipment, greenery, comfort, inclusion, element of culture and identity (city branding), etc., are some of the very specific elements that compose the quality of public space [1,10,11]. Traditionally, attempts to evaluate these factors have required extensive surveys and the use of complicated tools for data collecting, which may be challenging and time-consuming for both respondents and researchers [10,12]. Therefore, it is imperative to develop new, comprehensive, and efficient methods of data collection that will encourage public participation and involvement in issues related to public space quality [10,13]. Overall, these strategies may be applied in a wide range of dimensions, from gathering data for municipal investigations and business planning to community debates and decision-making for urban solutions [14,15]. To address this need, a short survey for measuring the quality of urban spaces is proposed in the present article.

The inspiration for this study is the difficulties posed by current evaluation techniques, especially in light of the quickly changing urban landscapes and the growing need for immediate, practical solutions [16–18]. By utilizing recent developments in survey design, we want to create a brief yet effective tool that quickly conveys the essential aspects of urban space quality. This strategy fits in with the larger movement toward adaptable and responsive planning techniques that prioritize data-driven decision-making and stakeholder involvement [19].

1.2. Literature Review

Urban spaces are a key aspect of city operations and frequently have several effects on the quality of life for residents [20]. Given suitable urban planning and well-regulated administration of all linked challenges, there is an urgent need to recognize and analyze the quality of public green spaces [10]. The findings are based on an overview literature study of methodologies and instruments for assessing the quality of the urban environment.

Primary research on the idea of public space alongside the way its attributes affect users was conducted by Whyte (1980), who also looked at behavioral patterns, how public spaces interact with the physical environment, and how these factors affect social interactions and citizen mobility [21]. A decade later, Carr and Francis (1992) provided a thorough analysis of public space, with particular emphasis on its social component and providing information on the best planning and management techniques [22]. They underlined the importance of taking into account the requirements of the actual users of the public space, the physical parameters of the public space, as well as the search for active meanings during the design and management phases. Public space management is a set of procedures meant to maintain its operation while attending to the various requirements and interactions of users [23]. These procedures involve controlling usage and settling disputes, upholding safety and sanitation standards, funding upgrades, and organizing interventions. Good management maintains safety and usefulness while promoting public spaces as centers of social interaction via continuing maintenance and curation of key elements [9]. However, even with a diverse set of assessment approaches, the evaluation of public space quality is typically fragmented, focusing on certain features at different times and locations, resulting in specialized but limited perspectives [24].

The analysis of public space assessment tools highlights the strengths of the most influential frameworks that have significantly shaped urban planning and design practices [25]. The Project for Public Space (PPS), developed by Project for Public Spaces

(USA), remains a cornerstone in public space assessment, emphasizing accessibility, activities, comfort, and sociability. Its participatory and adaptable methodology ensures broad applicability across diverse urban environments [26]. The Gehl Assessment Toolkit, created by Jan Gehl, offers a groundbreaking approach to human-centered urban design. By focusing on social interaction, livability, and sensory experiences, this tool provides invaluable insights into the relationship between people and public spaces [27]. The Good Public Space Index (GPSI) integrates subjective user feedback with accessible tools, balancing qualitative insights and human needs. This index ensures inclusivity and relevance to contemporary public space challenges, making it particularly effective for evaluating the social dimensions of urban spaces [22,28,29]. The Space Shaper, developed by CABE (UK), stands out for its structured participatory methodology, facilitating dialogue between planners and communities. Its inclusive approach ensures that public spaces are designed with a strong emphasis on stakeholder engagement [30]. The UN-Habitat Public Space Assessment framework integrates diverse assessment methodologies, including observations, surveys, and participatory approaches. Aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, this tool ensures global applicability and supports sustainability-driven urban planning [31]. The Public Spaces Index (PSI), designed by Vikas Mehta, provides a multidimensional evaluation framework that balances spatial metrics with user perceptions. Its flexibility enables its use in a variety of urban contexts, making it one of the most adaptable tools available [32]. Studies utilizing the PSI, such as those by Evans et al., have extended its application to varied environments, providing empirical evidence on dimensions like inclusiveness, safety, and comfort [33]. The Place Standard Tool, developed by NHS Scotland and Architecture Design Scotland, is renowned for its simplicity and accessibility. Encouraging broad participation, it facilitates inclusive planning and community-driven urban improvements [34]. The Public Space Quality Index (PSQI) by Praliya and Garg introduces a structured, multi-criteria approach to evaluating public spaces. This tool is notable for integrating accessibility, safety, comfort, and usability into a comprehensive assessment framework [35]. Together, these tools provide a robust foundation for assessing public space quality, each contributing distinct methodologies and perspectives that inform best practices in urban design and planning (Table 1).

Table 1. Existing indicators and questionnaires for studying the quality of public spaces.

	Creator/Institution	What It Evaluates	Main Advantages	Main Disadvantages
1. Project for Public Space (PPS) [26]	Project for Public Spaces (USA)	Accessibility, activities, comfort, sociability	Easy to use; focuses on improving social interaction and usability	Primarily focuses on social and aesthetic aspects; focuses only on positive aspects, ignoring negative experiences and proposing improvements
2. Gehl Assessment Toolkit [27]	Jan Gehl	Protection, comfort, enjoyment	Integrates human-centered design principles and structured observational methods; emphasizes the quality of pedestrian experiences	Lacks direct evaluation of negative experiences, user-driven improvement suggestions, and differentiation of safety perceptions between day and night; limited focus on accessibility for people with disabilities; does not include detailed demographic analysis to assess space usage by different social groups
3. Good Public Space Index	Vikas Mehta	Accessibility, safety, comfort,	Applicable in diverse urban contexts;	Limited focus on cognitive and self-actualization needs; does not

(GPSI) [36]		maintenance	focuses on spatial dimensions and maintenance	include participatory data or user perceptions
4. Public Spaces Index (PSI) [32]	Vikas Mehta	Inclusiveness, safety, comfort, pleasurability, meaningful activities	Multidimensional; user-centered; widely validated; replicable	Lacks specific methods for identifying negative experiences and proposing improvements
5. Space Shaper [30]	CABE (UK)	Appearance, maintenance, usage, design quality	Flexible tool for diverse types of spaces	Lacks user-driven improvement suggestions and differentiation of safety perceptions between day and night; limited focus on accessibility for people with disabilities; does not include detailed demographic analysis to assess space usage by different social groups
5. UN-Habitat Public Space Assessment [31]	UN-Habitat	Comfort, safety, sociability, accessibility, environmental quality	Holistic approach; participatory methodology; combines quantitative and qualitative analysis; adapts to local needs	Complex to implement; resource-intensive
7. Place Standard Tool [34]	NHS Scotland Architecture + Design Scotland	Physical and social connectivity, safety, participation	User-friendly; simple tool for data collection	Lacks direct evaluation of negative experiences, user-driven improvement suggestions, and differentiation of safety perceptions between day and night
8. Public Space Quality Index (PSQI) [35]	Seema Praliya and P. Garg	Accessibility, maintenance, attractiveness, comfort, safety, inclusiveness, activities, purposefulness	Builds on global concepts (e.g., PPS Place Diagram), user-informed design, and clear evaluation criteria	Lacks direct evaluation of negative experiences, user-driven improvement suggestions, and differentiation of safety perceptions between day and night

Complementing these technological advancements, participatory approaches have been increasingly incorporated into survey designs, emphasizing the engagement of diverse user groups. Studies such as those by Dhasmana et al. and Selanon et al. have employed mixed-methods approaches encompassing qualitative and quantitative elements to holistically understand diverse stakeholder needs in public space design [37,38]. This methodological blend is considered effective for capturing comprehensive user experiences and addressing inclusivity. Several studies focus specifically on the inclusivity and accessibility of public spaces for vulnerable groups, including those with disabilities or specific gender considerations [37,39,40]. Research by Mrak et al. and Ahmad et al. underscores the significance of tailoring surveys to understand accessibility barriers, emphasizing the need for stratified sampling methods to include various demographic groups [40,41]. Cultural and contextual nuances also play a pivotal role in public space assessment, with research highlighting variations in perceptions and preferences across different socio-cultural settings. Cross-cultural studies, such as those

by Belaroussi et al., examine how cultural biases may influence public space satisfaction, indicating the complexity and necessity of context-sensitive assessment methodologies [42]. Questionnaire surveys in public space assessment are marked by a blend of traditional and innovative methodologies designed to encapsulate user experiences comprehensively.

The comparative table underscores the need for a targeted, user-centered, and experience-driven tool for urban space quality assessment. While existing methodologies provide structured evaluation frameworks, they often fail to capture negative user experiences, overlook direct input on necessary improvements, and lack extensive demographic data collection. The proposed questionnaire bridges this gap by focusing on real user challenges, differentiating safety perceptions between day and night, incorporating actionable user suggestions, and gathering detailed demographic information. Given that existing frameworks often lack direct user input or practical adaptability, this study proposes a complementary questionnaire that integrates with other assessment methods to create a more comprehensive evaluation tool. This approach ensures a more responsive, adaptable, and practical tool for urban planners and policymakers seeking immediate, user-informed insights tailored to diverse population groups.

1.3. Research Objectives

This research aims to develop a structured yet accessible tool for assessing urban public space quality, designed to complement on-site spatial analyses, environmental measurements, and broader investigations into the characteristics of the location, the community, and its spaces. By integrating user perceptions with empirical data, this tool ensures a holistic understanding of urban public space quality.

The primary objectives of this study are:

- To develop a concise and practical questionnaire that captures key aspects of public space quality while remaining user-friendly and adaptable to different urban contexts. The questionnaire integrates questions on negative experiences, user-driven improvement suggestions, and open-ended responses to provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of public space perceptions.
- To bridge the gap between community perceptions and urban planning metrics by integrating qualitative user insights with existing assessment frameworks. This approach facilitates more responsive, data-driven decision-making for public space improvements.
- To test and refine the questionnaire through a case study, ensuring its ability as a tool for identifying vulnerabilities, evaluating public space conditions, and informing targeted interventions.

By focusing on these objectives, the study contributes to the development of an assessment methodology that is both efficient and adaptable, providing a structured yet flexible approach to understanding urban public space quality from a user-centered perspective.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Study Design

The development and validation of the questionnaire followed a structured, multi-phase process. Initially, an extensive literature review was conducted to identify key factors relevant to the quality of public spaces, which guided the conceptualization of the questionnaire items. Following this, the questionnaire was drafted, and the sample for the study was determined. The questionnaire was distributed through a combination

of face-to-face distribution in public spaces (in situ and door-to-door) and via e-mail. After collecting the responses, the data were entered into SPSS for statistical processing. The final results provided insights into both the effectiveness and the reliability of the questionnaire itself, as well as valuable findings specific to the quality of the public space in the area studied. This study seeks to address the existing literature gap, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive and methodologically robust approach to developing quality assessment questionnaires for public open spaces. While numerous studies advocate for a structured, multidimensional approach, challenges persist in ensuring thorough coverage of all relevant quality dimensions. By integrating user perceptions with structured observational frameworks, this study aims to offer valuable insights that can enhance urban planning efforts and improve the overall quality of public spaces.

2.2. Questionnaire Development

Researchers often prioritize a multidimensional approach that balances user perceptions with objective evaluations when developing quality questionnaires for assessing public open spaces. Surveys and structured observations are widely regarded as effective methods [43]. Carmona's framework highlights the importance of function, form, and appearance, promoting public spaces that support diverse uses and foster community interaction [23,44]. Gehl's work emphasizes human scale, social interaction, and the need for spaces encouraging social activities, aligning closely with studies focused on user experience and comfort [11,20]. A recurring theme in the literature is integrating multi-criteria analysis and developing indices for comprehensive spatial quality assessments. The context of long-term structured observations contributed to creating the Public Space Index (PSI), which evaluates inclusiveness, safety, and comfort [45]. Similarly, the Public Space Quality Index (PSQI) has synthesized user feedback and observational data, illustrating the synergy between qualitative and quantitative methods [35]. User perception surveys are commonly employed to capture subjective experiences, underscoring their importance in public space assessments [46,47]. The critical dimensions frequently assessed in these studies include availability, accessibility, safety, comfort, urban equipment features and maintenance, identity value, etc. [10,48]. However, some studies place less emphasis on other dimensions, such as identity value or negative experiences, indicating opportunities for broader evaluation [49]. Best practices in questionnaire design stress the need for clarity, relevance, and inclusiveness [50]. Additionally, cultural sensitivity is seldom discussed, indicating a need for future studies to adapt questionnaires to diverse user demographics and cultural contexts more effectively [51].

One of the primary principles of the current methodology is that the questionnaire's format should be clear, concise, and take the least amount of time to complete. Longer surveys have been demonstrated to cause respondent weariness, decreased focus, and a higher chance that the findings will not accurately represent reality since respondents will provide fewer thoughtful replies [52–54]. Therefore, there is no an absolute standard for when to terminate respondents' interest since human attention spans might differ based on several variables, including the study topic, the respondents' demographics, and the research setting. Nonetheless, it is widely acknowledged that to reduce respondent tiredness and preserve the quality of the data, surveys should be brief, lasting no more than 20 min [55]. Previous studies have demonstrated that longer surveys negatively impact data quality, leading to increased response fatigue and less accurate feedback. The results demonstrated that the quality of the responses began to deteriorate after the 10-min mark, which, depending on the platform, equates to around 40–50 questions. A drop in the quality of replies to open-ended questions, a move toward more neutral responses, an increase in randomized responses, and a decline in respondent

satisfaction ratings were among the noteworthy developments [56].The selection of items for the questionnaire was guided by a thorough review of theoretical frameworks and empirical studies, and each dimension was chosen based on its critical role in shaping user experiences and perceptions of public space quality. To ensure that the questionnaire remains concise yet effective, it was designed to capture the most critical dimensions of public space quality without unnecessary complexity. Despite its concise format, it covers several thematic areas that provide a deeper understanding of public space vulnerabilities. For instance, sections related to negative experiences and desired improvements include a broad range of predefined response options, ensuring that multiple aspects of public space quality are considered. Additionally, open-ended response fields allow participants to express specific concerns or priorities that may not be captured through fixed response choices. This structure enhances the efficiency of the tool while ensuring the identification of key weaknesses in urban spaces.

2.3. Evidence Generation

A focused review of relevant methodologies and frameworks was conducted to inform the questionnaire design, ensuring alignment with established urban space assessment approaches. Key references from urban space assessment literature were reviewed to identify essential evaluation dimensions, and these insights guided the structure and thematic areas of the questionnaire. The design of the questionnaire was guided by established theoretical frameworks, incorporating insights from urban design methodologies and spatial quality assessment models. Specifically, the work of Carr (1992) and Carmona (2010) on public space dimensions, which highlights physical, social, and functional aspects of urban environments, informed the structuring of key survey categories [22,23,44]. Additionally, Gehl's principles of human-centered urban design provided a foundation for assessing accessibility, walkability, and social interactions in public spaces [20]. The Public Space Index (PSI) and Public Space Quality Index (PSQI) also contributed to the conceptual framework, ensuring that the questionnaire integrates validated dimensions of urban space quality assessment [29,33,35]. The survey questions were designed to assess both general perceptions of urban spaces and specific experiences within the area being studied. By aligning with these frameworks, the questionnaire captures users' interactions with their environment, their perceived challenges, and their expectations for improvement. Key challenges addressed in the questionnaire include accessibility barriers, safety concerns, environmental comfort, and the overall identity of public spaces. Moreover, the structure of the questionnaire ensures flexibility in application, allowing it to be used across different urban contexts while maintaining theoretical robustness. The combination of established urban design theories with empirical research findings enhances its applicability in evaluating urban space quality from a user-centered perspective.

2.4. Questionnaire Structure

The questionnaire was structured into several sections:

a. Research Information and Consent: Participants were first introduced to the study and provided a consent form to ensure informed and voluntary participation.
b. Questions on the Wider Area/Neighborhood: This section focused on participants' broader perceptions of their neighborhood, such as:
    - Sufficiency and quality of public spaces
    - Frequency of use/visits
    - Awareness of upcoming renewals or urban developments
    - Receptiveness to planned metro extensions

c. Questions on Specific Public Spaces: Participants evaluated key public spaces within the municipality (e.g., central square, parks), with questions targeting:
   - The overall quality of the space
   - Accessibility and walkability
   - Safety during both day and night
   - Quality of urban equipment (benches, bins, lighting, flooring)
   - Quantity and quality of greenery/vegetation
   - Open-ended improvement suggestions ("If I could improve something in this space, it would be...")
   - Evaluation of the space's role in contributing to the identity of the city/neighborhood
   - Reporting any negative experiences

This section also allowed for a comparative analysis between public spaces, focusing on two major sites—the central square and Skopeftirio Park—as case studies for the questionnaire's effectiveness and adaptability.

d. Demographics: To explore how demographic factors influenced participants' assessments of public space quality, this section collected information on:
   - Gender identity
   - Age
   - Presence of disabilities
   - Parental status (whether participants had minor children)
   - Educational background
   - Relationship with the municipality (whether participants were permanent residents, worked in the area, or frequently visited for other reasons)

These demographic factors provided additional context for understanding how different groups perceive and experience public spaces. To ensure the questionnaire effectively captured both the quality of public spaces and relevant demographic information, a series of meetings were held with experts in inclusion and anthropological data analysis. These experts provided critical insights into formulating questions that were not only comprehensive but also accessible to diverse populations. Their contributions focused on identifying the most efficient and deductive approaches for collecting meaningful data, with an emphasis on maximizing the amount of useful information while minimizing the number of questions. This collaborative approach helped to ensure that the questionnaire was both inclusive and streamlined, enabling the collection of rich, actionable data from a broad range of respondents. A standardized version of the survey used in this study can be found in Appendix A, to ensure transparency and replicability.

2.5. Study Population and Data Collection

2.5.1. Location

Urban planning and community engagement have become pivotal themes in discussing sustainable development and socio-cultural resilience in cities. This review pivots on studies conducted in Athens, Greece, highlighting insights applicable to the specific context of Kaisariani, an area known for its historical, cultural, and environmental heritage. While the studies highlighted provide broad insights into urban planning and community engagement in Athens, a specific focus on Kaisariani remains underexplored. The identified themes point toward sustainable planning practices and participatory governance as crucial pathways for future research specific to its unique attributes.

Kaisariani is an urban municipality in the Central Sector of Athens, located just 3 km east of the city center at an elevation of 130 m, on the northwest slopes of Mount Hymettus. It shares borders with the municipalities of Zografou and Athens to the north, Vyronas and the Pagrati district of Athens to the south, and Athens again to the west. To the east lies Mount Hymettus, offering a natural backdrop. The municipality covers approximately 8500 acres, of which 7500 acres consist of mountainous forest and green spaces, while the remaining 1000 acres are residential and communal areas. The actual habitable area is around 780 acres. Kaisariani is triangular in shape and well planned, with a central avenue and a network of horizontal and vertical streets radiating from it. In the 2021 census, the population of Kaisariani was 26,269 [57] (Figure 1). The urban identity of Kaisariani is closely intertwined with the historical developments that marked modern Greece, culminating in the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the issue of refugee resettlement during the interwar period. The settlement's evolution can be distinguished in three phases. The first phase spans from the initial settlement in 1922 to 1935. The second phase, from 1935 to 1960, saw the development of the eastern part of the area around the Skopeftirio and the National Gymnasium, with expansion along the main avenue (Ethnikis Antistaseos Av.). The third phase, from 1960 to the present, is characterized by the settlement extending towards the foothills of Mount Hymettus [58].

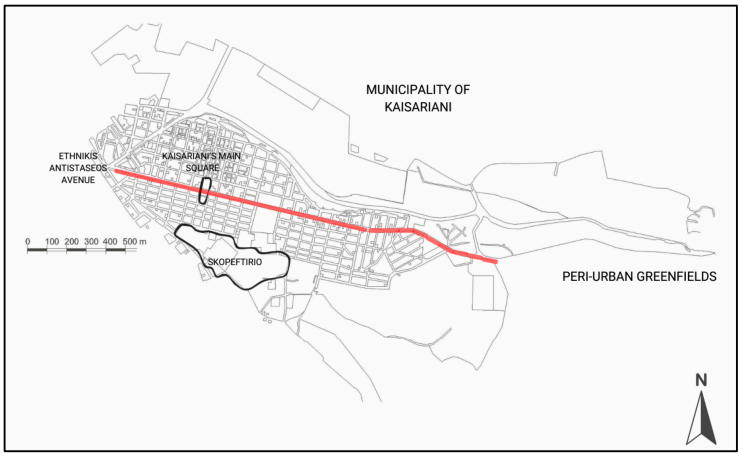

Figure 1. Map depicting the boundaries of the municipality of Kaisariani, highlighting the key public areas under study, including the central square of Kaisariani and Skopeftirio Park, outlined in black. The central avenue is marked in red.

2.5.2. Sampling

For this study, a representative sample was determined based on the area's population (municipality of Kaisariani, Athens), which was 26,269 in the 2021 census. Using a sample calculation system, it was determined that 379 or more responses would be required to achieve a 95% confidence level, ensuring that the true population values fall within ±5% of the measured values. A total of 458 questionnaires were collected, exceeding the minimum required sample size, thus enhancing the reliability of the data. The questionnaire was distributed across various groups and locations within the municipality of Kaisariani to ensure a diverse and representative sample. Distribution points included the main square during field research, businesses along Kaisariani's main avenue, employees of local companies and schools, KAPI (the municipal senior center), and the municipality's cultural center. In addition to an in-person collection, the questionnaire was distributed door to door and via email to cultural and sports associations, as well as to other interested citizens who expressed a willingness to participate in the research. This approach ensured a broad coverage of different social

and demographic groups in the area. The sample included variations in age, gender, occupation, and frequency of public space use, closely aligning with census data for the municipality. The data collection took place between September and February, covering both autumn and winter months. Athens experiences a Mediterranean climate, and during this period, there was significant temperature variation. Autumn days included warmer conditions exceeding 25 °C, while colder winter days saw temperatures dropping below 5 °C. This range of weather conditions ensured that public space usage was captured under diverse climatic circumstances, minimizing seasonal biases. To ensure a comprehensive dataset, data collection was conducted throughout the week, including both weekdays and weekends. Additionally, data collection covered an extended range of time slots throughout the day to reflect variations in space utilization. Specifically, surveys were conducted from early morning (7:30 AM) until late evening (11:00 PM), allowing the study to capture public space use across different periods of the day and under various lighting and activity conditions. This methodology provided a well-rounded perspective on how public spaces are perceived and used under varying temporal and environmental conditions. The sample deviates from the general population distribution, with an overrepresentation of women and older age groups. This was a deliberate choice to ensure the inclusion of perspectives from typically underrepresented populations in public space research, such as older women, whose experiences and needs are often overlooked. While this sampling approach provides valuable insights into these groups, it may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population.

2.5.3. Instructions for Respondents

Participants were provided with the following instructions to guide them through completing the questionnaire:

i. Purpose: The questionnaire is designed to assess the quality of public spaces in your area. Your answers will help us better understand and explore the needs of the real users of these public spaces, allowing for improvements that reflect the community's actual needs.
ii. Confidentiality: All answers are anonymous and will be used solely for research purposes. No personal information will be linked to your responses.
iii. Eligibility: You must be an adult (18 years or older) and agree to voluntarily participate in this survey.
iv. Completeness: Please answer all questions to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers, and your honest input is important.
v. Response Format: Some questions require selecting an option, while others allow for open-ended responses. For multiple-choice questions, choose the option that best reflects your view. For open-ended questions, feel free to provide additional details or suggestions.
vi. Time Required: The questionnaire should take no more than 5 min to complete.

These instructions ensured that participants understood their role in providing valuable insights into the quality and needs of public spaces, as well as the steps for completing the questionnaire.

2.6. Validation Process

a. Pilot Tests

A preliminary version of the questionnaire was tested to assess its clarity, ease of use, and effectiveness in collecting relevant data. Based on feedback from participants and initial findings, several improvements were made. These adjustments included

refining certain questions to reduce ambiguity and adjusting the response scales to improve clarity and relevance. This ensured that the final version of the questionnaire was more concise and effective at capturing the desired information about public space quality.

b. Statistical Validation

To measure the reliability and accuracy of the questionnaire, several statistical methods were employed:

- Content Validity: Expert reviews and pretests were carried out to ensure that the questionnaire adequately measured the intended factors related to the quality of urban spaces. This ensured that the content covered all relevant aspects of the study's objectives.
- Factor Analysis: Factor analysis was conducted to explore the dimensional structure of the questionnaire, determining which items clustered together to form significant constructs related to public space quality.
- Construct Validity: The questionnaire was tested against existing theories and measures of urban space quality to confirm that it accurately reflected the constructs it aimed to measure. This process helped ensure that the instrument was aligned with established research in urban planning and public space analysis.
- Reliability Testing: Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the questions about the quality of Kaisariani Square, ensuring that the items within each construct were measuring the same underlying concept. This method also helped evaluate the potential impact of any missing questions on the overall reliability of the scale.

c. Statistical Methods and Data Analysis

- Quantitative Variables: Expressed as mean (standard deviation) to summarize central tendencies and variability.
- Qualitative Variables: Reported as absolute and relative frequencies to provide an overview of categorical data distributions.
- Spearman Correlation Coefficients: Used to assess the correlation between ordinal variables, such as the relationship between frequency of use and perceived quality of public spaces.
- Kruskal–Wallis Test: This non-parametric test was employed to compare qualitative variables across more than two groups, ensuring robust comparisons across different segments of the population.

d. Statistical Significance

All p-values were two-tailed, with statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS statistical software (version 25.0).

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3. Results

In this specific application, a 24-question survey was created, following the detailed guidelines outlined in the field materials and methods, and included several key sections: an informational text about the research along with a consent form, questions related to the broader Kaisariani area, questions focused on specific public spaces within the municipality (such as Panagiotis Makris and Kimiseos Theotokou (Pangitsa) Square, and Skopeftirio Park), demographic questions, and a section for open-ended comments. Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 17 focused on the broader area of Kaisariani, addressing topics such as the adequacy of public open spaces, their overall quality, the frequency of use or visits, awareness of upcoming renovations (e.g., the redevelopment of Kaisariani Square), and residents' receptiveness to the planned metro expansion (Athens Metro Line 4).

Also, a pilot survey was first conducted with a sample of 10 citizens to assess the questionnaire's validity and reliability. Based on the feedback, revisions were made, focusing primarily on simplifying the wording and adjusting the coding of the questions for better clarity. Additionally, a section was introduced at the end of the questionnaire, allowing respondents to leave comments aimed at gathering more comprehensive insights. Based on insights from the pilot survey and previous experience, it was observed that participants, particularly in face-to-face settings, were more inclined to complete the questionnaire when it began with research-related questions rather than personal or demographic ones. This approach increased engagement and willingness to participate. The questionnaire was distributed across various groups and locations within the municipality of Kaisariani to ensure a diverse and representative sample. Key distribution points included the main square during fieldwork, local businesses along the central avenue, employees of nearby companies and schools, KAPI (the municipal senior center), and the municipality's cultural center. In addition to these in-person methods, the survey was delivered door to door and e-mailed to cultural and sports associations, as well as to interested citizens who volunteered to participate. This multi-faceted approach ensured broad coverage of different social and demographic groups in the area.

Following these, the questionnaire included questions related to specific public spaces within the municipality. These focused on the two central squares of Kaisariani, where the research was conducted (questions 5–13), and Skopeftirio Park (questions 14–16) to gather more targeted data on user experiences. These questions assessed the general quality of the spaces, accessibility and walkability, safety during day and night, the condition of urban amenities (benches, bins, lighting, paving materials, etc.), and the quantity and quality of greenery. Respondents were also asked to suggest improvements for these key areas by selecting from multiple options or providing open-ended feedback. Additional questions evaluated the spaces' significance to the city's identity and asked participants to record any negative experiences. Finally, questions 18 to 24 focused on demographic data to explore the respondent's level of connection to the municipal unit. These questions investigated whether the participant is a permanent resident working elsewhere, works in the area but lives elsewhere, both lives and works in the area, or visits frequently for family or other reasons. Additional demographic information gathered included gender identity, age, presence of a disability, parental status (specifically if they have minor children), and educational background. Responses were gathered using two formats: a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and close-ended multiple-choice questions. This approach provided a balance between capturing nuanced opinions and enabling clear, easy-to-interpret responses. Additionally, participants were allowed to add their comments at the end,

offering further insights and suggestions that enriched the data collected.The sample consisted of 458 participants, whose demographic characteristics are presented in Table 2. Most of the participants were women (67.7%), bachelor's-degree holders (36.7%), and permanent residents of Kaisariani (44.1%). Moreover, 25.8% of the participants were 41–50 years old, and 60.7% did not have underaged children. Furthermore, 84.1% of the participants were not business owners in Kaisariani, and 73.6% did not have mobility difficulties.

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of survey responders (N = 458).

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	N (%)
Gender identity	
Women	310 (67.7)
Men	146 (31.9)
Non-binary/other	2 (0.4)
Age (years)	
18–30	49 (10.7)
31–40	75 (16.4)
41–50	118 (25.8)
51–60	106 (23.1)
>60	108 (23.6)
Having underaged children	
None	278 (60.7)
1 child	79 (17.2)
2 children	78 (17.0)
>3 children	15 (3.3)
N/A	1 (0.2)
Educational level	
Primary school	21 (4.6)
Secondary school	26 (5.7)
High school	102 (22.3)
Institute of vocational training	49 (10.7)
University/technical university	168 (36.7)
Master's degree	75 (16.4)
PhD	5 (1.1)
N/A	1 (0.2)
Contact with Kaisariani	
Living but not working in Kaisariani	202 (44.1)
Living and working in Kaisariani	137 (29.9)
Working but not living in Kaisariani	78 (17.0)
Visiting often Kaisariani for family or business reasons	39 (8.5)
Business owner in Kaisariani	
Yes	67 (14.6)
No	385 (84.1)
No, but I intend to own a business	2 (0.4)
Difficulty in mobility (in terms of disability)	
Yes	39 (8.5)
Sometimes	74 (16.2)
No	337 (73.6)

When asked about the availability of free public spaces in Kaisariani, a significant portion of respondents (41.6%) indicated that there are several such spaces, including

parks, squares, and playgrounds. Another 29.8% felt that the number of public spaces is moderate, neither too many nor too few. However, 16.4% of participants believed that the availability of free public spaces is limited, while 4.2% perceived it as very limited. Only 8% of respondents felt that Kaisariani offers a wide range of free public spaces (Figure 2).

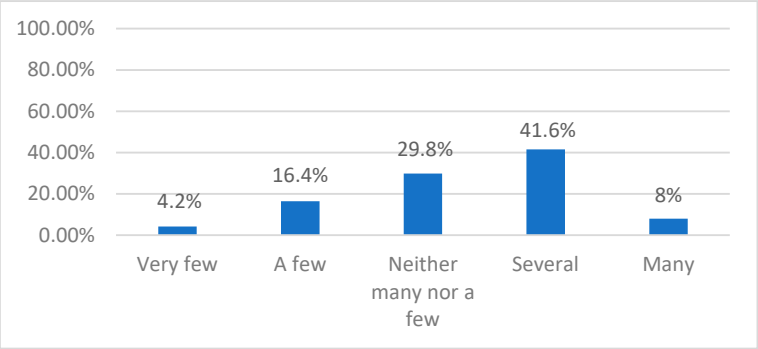

Figure 2. Opinions about the number of free public spaces (squares, parks, playgrounds, etc.) in Kaisariani.

Regarding the frequency of use, the majority of respondents indicated visiting public spaces frequently, with 40% reporting daily visits, and a notable portion (25.1%) visiting often (3 to 4 times a week). Additionally, 18.6% visit twice a week, while 12% pass through public spaces once a week. Only 3.7% (17 respondents) stated that they never choose to visit these spaces (Figure 3).

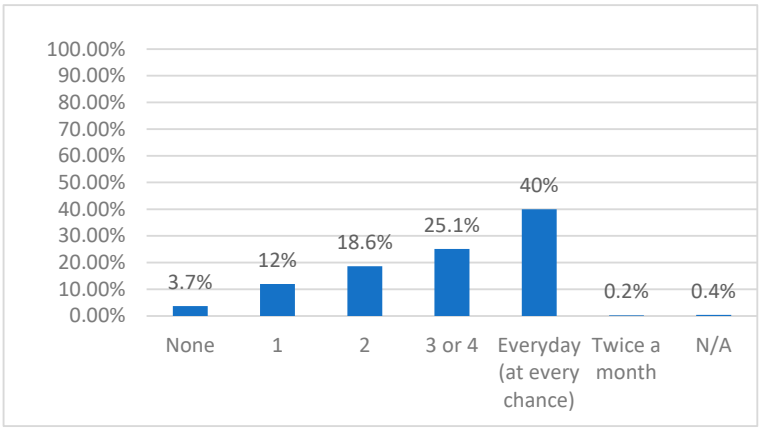

Figure 3. The frequency of respondents' visits per week to a public space in Kaisariani.

When asked about the quality of free public spaces, the majority of respondents (59.2%) rated them as mediocre. Another 18.3% described the quality as poor, while 16.4% viewed it as good. A smaller portion, 5.9%, rated the quality of public spaces in Kaisariani as very poor (Figure 4).

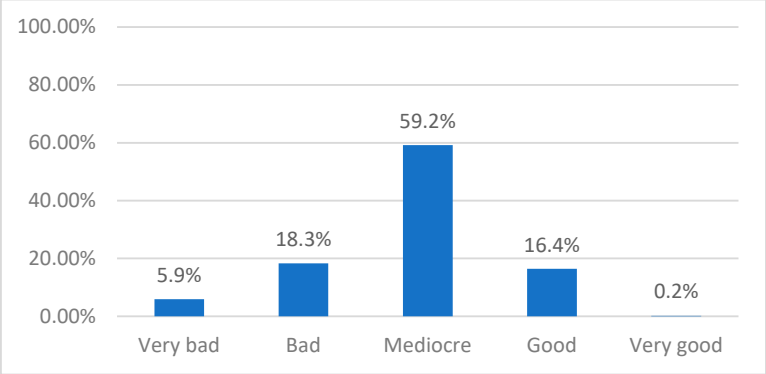

Figure 4. Opinions regarding the overall quality of urban public spaces in Kaisariani.

Regarding the redevelopment of Kaisariani Square, most respondents were aware of the project but expressed skepticism (28.8%), while 28.6% viewed it positively. Additionally, 16.7% were aware of the redevelopment but had no opinion, and 13.6% were unaware of it entirely. A smaller group (12.3%) reported being well informed through presentations by the municipality, local newsletters, the internet, and other sources. Regarding the construction of the metro station in Kaisariani, 36.6% of respondents viewed the project positively, though they noted some negative aspects. Another 33.6% considered it highly positive for the area. Meanwhile, 14.9% felt the project had an equal mix of positive and negative outcomes, while 7.6% believed it was mostly negative, with a few positive elements.

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between age, business ownership, having children under 18, and education level with opinions regarding the square in Kaisariani and Skopeftirio Park. Results showed a weak but statistically significant negative correlation between age and perceptions of free public spaces (Spearman's rho = −0.105, $p = 0.025$), suggesting that older respondents tend to perceive fewer public spaces compared to younger ones. Similarly, there was a weak but statistically significant negative correlation between age and the perceived quality of the square in Kaisariani (Spearman's rho = −0.127, $p = 0.007$), indicating that older individuals rated the square's quality lower than their younger counterparts. A comparable weak but statistically significant negative correlation was found between age and perceptions of urban equipment quality (Spearman's rho = −0.103, $p = 0.029$), meaning that older respondents tended to rate urban equipment slightly lower than younger individuals. Conversely, a weak to moderate, statistically significant positive correlation was observed between age and the view of the square as a key part of Kaisariani's identity (Spearman's rho = 0.192, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that older respondents might have a stronger attachment to or sense of the square's significance as part of Kaisariani's identity. Additionally, a statistically significant positive correlation (Spearman's rho = 0.207, $p = 0.000$) between age and opinions about the new metro station in Kaisariani indicates that older individuals tend to hold more favorable views of the metro station than younger respondents (Table 3). There was a statistically significant positive correlation between business ownership and the frequency of passing per week from the square in Kaisariani (Spearman's rho = 0.156, $p = 0.001$), indicating that individuals who own or plan to own a business tend to visit the square more often than those who do not. Additionally, a positive correlation was found between business ownership and the perceived quality of the square (Spearman's rho = 0.159, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that business owners or prospective owners tend to rate the square's quality higher compared to non-business owners. There was a statistically significant negative correlation between having children under 18 and the perceived quality of free public

spaces (Spearman's rho = −0.116, p = 0.014), indicating that as the number of children under 18 in a household increases, perceptions of public space quality tend to decline. The positive correlation between having children under 18 and the frequency of visits to the square in Kaisariani (Spearman's rho = 0.099, p = 0.036) suggests that individuals with children are more likely to visit the square more often than those without children.

Additionally, there was a negative correlation between having children under 18 and perceived safety at the square during the day (Spearman's rho = −0.105, p = 0.026), implying that households with more children under 18 tend to feel less safe at the square during the day. Finally, a negative correlation was found between having children under 18 and the perceived quality and quantity of greenery in the square (Spearman's rho = −0.099, p = 0.035), suggesting that households with more children tend to view the greenery in the square as being of lower quality and quantity.

Table 3. Spearman correlation coefficients of scales about free public spaces, the main square of Kaisariani and Skopeftirio Park concerning age, business ownership, having children under 18, and education level.

	Age	Business Owner	Having Children Under 18	Education Level
Number of free public spaces	−0.105 *	0.003	0.071	0.091
Quality of free public spaces	−0.022	0.045	−0.116 *	0.021
Times passed per week	−0.018	0.156 ***	0.099 *	0.058
Regeneration of Kaisariani	0.072	−0.031	−0.001	−0.161 ***
The overall quality of the square	−0.127 **	0.159 ***	−0.036	0.016
Accessibility in the square	0.017	0.023	−0.023	−0.063
Square's safety by day	0.027	0.021	−0.105 *	0.060
Square's safety by night	−0.057	0.016	−0.078	0.101 *
Quality of urban equipment	−0.103 *	0.086	−0.040	0.081
Greennery in the square	−0.030	0.042	−0.099 *	−0.128 **
The square as an "identity element" of Kaisariani	0.192 ***	0.029	0.027	−0.081
Skopeftirio Park as an "identity element" of Kaisariani	0.049	0.050	−0.006	0.071
Opinion about the metro station in Kaisariani	0.207 ***	0.071	0.000	−0.007

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

There was a statistically significant negative correlation between education level and perceptions of regeneration in Kaisariani (Spearman's rho = −0.161, p = 0.001), indicating that individuals with higher education levels tend to have less positive or informed views on regeneration efforts. Additionally, a positive correlation between education level and perceived safety in the square at night (Spearman's rho = 0.101, p = 0.034) suggests that those with higher education levels are more likely to feel safer in these urban spaces during the night. A negative correlation was also observed between education level and the perceived quality and quantity of greenery in the square (Spearman's rho = −0.128, p = 0.007), suggesting that as education increases, perceptions of the greenery's quality and abundance tend to decline. Table 4 summarizes participants' opinions on how to improve Kaisariani Square. A significant portion of respondents expressed the need for better accessibility and walkability, making it one of

the key suggested improvements. Men were slightly more inclined to prioritize this aspect compared to women, though both groups acknowledged its importance for enhancing mobility within the space. In terms of safety, more than a third of participants indicated concerns about the square's overall safety, emphasizing the need for improvements. Women were more likely to highlight this issue compared to men, reflecting potential differences in perception regarding safety conditions. The responses suggest that while accessibility and safety are widely recognized as important aspects of public space quality, there are slight variations in how different demographic groups prioritize them.

The majority of participants emphasized the importance of improved lighting, making it one of the most commonly suggested enhancements. Similarly, the need for upgrades to greenery was widely supported, with a large proportion of both men and women recognizing its significance for enhancing the space. A notable portion of respondents also expressed a preference for the addition of water features, with men showing slightly higher interest in this improvement. Noise reduction was another commonly mentioned concern, with a balanced number of men and women advocating for a quieter square. Weather protection, such as shaded areas or canopies, was also a frequent suggestion, with men being slightly more inclined toward this improvement than women. Regarding seating and rest areas, a considerable number of respondents, particularly women, emphasized the need for more benches to improve comfort. Waste disposal was another key issue, with more women than men highlighting the necessity for additional trash bins to maintain cleanliness. Similarly, the integration of cultural and artistic elements received broad support, with a higher proportion of women favoring this addition compared to men. Access to free WiFi was suggested by a substantial portion of respondents, with men showing a slightly greater interest in this feature. While the demand for exercise equipment was relatively low overall, it was somewhat more popular among men. Public toilets were another suggested enhancement, with men indicating a greater preference for their installation. Additionally, a significant number of respondents, particularly women, advocated for designated areas for children, emphasizing the importance of creating family-friendly public spaces. A small fraction of participants also proposed other minor improvements to further optimize the square's functionality and appeal.

Table 4. Responses to the multiple-choice question, "If I could improve something in Kaisariani Square, it would be…" regarding gender identity (N = 458).

	Women	**Men**	**Non-Binary/Other**	**Total**
	N (%)	**N (%)**	**N (%)**	**N (%)**
Better accessibility/walkability	118 (38.2)	62 (42.8)	1 (50.0)	181 (39.7)
Inspire a greater sense of safety	115 (37.2)	49 (33.8)	0 (0.0)	164 (36.0)
Has better lighting	170 (55.0)	77 (53.1)	1 (50.0)	248 (54.4)
Upgrading and care of the existing greenery	244 (79.0)	113 (77.9)	2 (100)	359 (78.7)
Water element	118 (38.2)	51 (35.2)	1 (50.0)	170 (37.3)
Less noise	115 (37.2)	57 (39.3)	1 (50.0)	173 (37.9)
Greater protection from the weather (e.g., canopy/shade, etc.)	134 (43.4)	54 (37.2)	1 (50.0)	189 (41.4)
More benches and rest areas	187 (60.5)	82 (56.6)	2 (100)	271 (59.4)
More trash cans	153 (49.5)	50 (34.5)	1 (50.0)	204 (44.7)
More pronounced culture and/or art	184 (59.5)	72 (49.7)	2 (100)	258 (56.6)

Access to free WiFi	116 (37.5)	61 (42.1)	1 (50.0)	178 (39.0)
Exercise equipment	43 (13.9)	13 (9.0)	1 (50.0)	57 (12.5)
Public WC	75 (24.3)	47 (32.4)	1 (50.0)	123 (27.0)
Special areas for children	145 (46.9)	52 (35.9)	1 (50.0)	198 (43.4)
Other	18 (5.8)	7 (4.8)	1 (50.0)	26 (5.7)

Participants reported a variety of negative experiences in Kaisariani Square, with issues related to neglect and lack of cleanliness being the most frequently mentioned (Table 5). Women were slightly more likely than men to highlight this concern, indicating a possible difference in perception regarding maintenance standards. Discomfort from extreme temperatures or loud noise was another common issue, affecting both men and women, though women tended to mention it slightly more often. Similarly, difficulties in crossing the square were raised by a notable number of respondents, with men reporting this issue more frequently than women. Fear due to poor lighting was also a concern, particularly among women, who expressed greater unease about safety conditions in low-light environments. Fall-related accidents were mentioned by a portion of respondents, with women reporting such incidents more often than men. Theft was another issue identified by participants, with men slightly more likely to report such incidents. Harassment cases were mentioned by a small fraction of respondents, with women being more affected by these experiences. Reports of racist attacks were rare, but when mentioned, they were slightly more frequent among women than men. Car accidents were the least reported issue, with only a few participants mentioning them. Lastly, a substantial portion of respondents indicated that they had not encountered any negative experiences in the square, with men being slightly more likely than women to report a trouble-free experience.

Table 5. Negative experiences in Kaisariani's main square regarding gender identity (N = 458).

	Women	**Men**	**Non-Binary/Other**	**Total**
	N (%)	**N (%)**	**N (%)**	**N (%)**
Difficulty in crossing	49 (15.8)	34 (23.6)	0 (0.0)	83 (18.1)
Car accident	8 (2.8)	1 (0.07)	0 (0.0)	9 (2.0)
Fall accident	37 (11.9)	10 (6.9)	0 (0.0)	47 (10.3)
Harassment	11 (3.5)	2 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	13 (2.9)
Racist attack	5 (1.6)	1 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	6 (1.3)
Theft	18 (5.8)	11 (7.6)	0 (0.0)	29 (6.4)
Memory of discomfort (e.g., due to heat, cold, loud noise, etc.)	59 (19.0)	23 (16.0)	1 (50.0)	83 (18.2)
Fear due to lack of lighting	46 (14.8)	14 (9.7)	0 (0.0)	60 (13.2)
Lack of care/cleanliness	149 (48.1)	62 (43.1)	1 (50.0)	212 (46.5)
Other	7 (2.3)	3 (2.1)	0 (0.0)	10 (2.2)
No negative experience	75 (24.2)	38 (26.4)	1 (50.0)	114 (25.0)

Participants expressed a variety of preferences for improving Skopeftirio Park, with accessibility being one of the commonly mentioned aspects (Table 6). Men were slightly more likely than women to highlight the need for better accessibility, although both groups recognized its importance. Safety was a major concern, with a significant majority of respondents indicating that the park should provide a greater sense of security. Women were somewhat more likely than men to emphasize this issue, reflecting potential differences in how safety is perceived in public spaces. Improved lighting was another widely supported enhancement, with women showing slightly stronger support for this change. The maintenance and upgrading of greenery was also a priority for most

participants, with both men and women recognizing the importance of well-maintained natural elements in enhancing the park's atmosphere. Additionally, a notable number of respondents expressed interest in the addition of water features, with men showing slightly more enthusiasm for this improvement. Noise reduction was mentioned by a smaller portion of respondents, with relatively equal support between men and women. Weather protection, such as shaded areas or shelters, was another suggested improvement, with men showing a slightly greater preference for this feature. Seating and rest areas were frequently mentioned as a necessary upgrade, with equal support from both men and women. The need for additional waste bins was also a common concern, reflecting the importance of proper waste management in public spaces. Cultural and artistic elements were another well-supported suggestion, with strong interest from both genders in enhancing the park's identity through creative installations. Access to free WiFi was considered a useful addition, with men showing slightly higher interest in this feature. The installation of exercise equipment was mentioned by a portion of respondents, with men expressing a greater preference for this improvement. Public toilets were also identified as a necessary facility, with men being more likely to highlight this need. Finally, a significant number of participants expressed the need for designated children's areas, with men slightly more inclined to suggest this enhancement. A smaller portion of respondents also proposed other minor improvements to further optimize the park's usability and overall experience.

Table 6. Responses to the multiple-choice question, "If I could improve something in Skopeftirio Park, it would be…" regarding gender identity (N = 458).

	Women	Men	Non-Binary/Other	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Better accessibility/walkability	86 (27.7)	43 (29.9)	1 (50.0)	130 (28.5)
Inspire a greater sense of safety	237 (76.7)	105 (72.9)	1 (50.0)	343 (75.4)
Has better lighting	226 (72.9)	98 (68.1)	2 (100)	326 (71.5)
Upgrading and care of the existing greenery	221 (71.3)	106 (73.6)	2 (100)	329 (72.1)
Water element	144 (46.5)	78 (54.2)	2 (100)	224 (49.1)
Less noise	51 (16.5)	21 (14.6)	0 (0.0)	72 (15.8)
Greater protection from the weather (e.g., canopy/shade, etc.)	142 (45.8)	75 (52.1)	2 (100)	219 (48.0)
More benches and rest areas	175 (56.5)	82 (56.9)	2 (100)	259 (56.8)
More trash cans	166 (53.5)	74 (51.4)	1 (50.0)	241 (52.9)
More culture and/or art	174 (56.1)	81 (56.3)	2 (100)	257 (56.4)
Access to free WiFi	103 (33.2)	54 (37.5)	2 (100)	159 (34.9)
Exercise equipment	86 (27.7)	47 (32.6)	1 (50.0)	134 (29.4)
Public WC	122 (39.4)	77 (53.5)	1 (50.0)	200 (43.9)
Special areas for children	141 (45.5)	73 (50.7)	0 (0.0)	214 (46.9)
Other	33 (10.6)	15 (10.3)	1 (50.0)	49 (10.7)

The most commonly reported concern among participants was inadequate lighting, with women more likely than men to highlight this issue as a significant safety risk (Table 7). This was followed by perceptions of neglect and poor cleanliness, which were also mentioned frequently, with women expressing slightly higher dissatisfaction than men regarding maintenance conditions. Theft was another prevalent issue, with both men and women reporting incidents, though women were somewhat more likely to have experienced or observed such occurrences. Harassment was also noted by a portion of respondents, with similar rates reported between genders. Discomfort caused by extreme temperatures or loud noise was acknowledged by several participants, with both men

and women mentioning this issue at comparable levels. Similarly, some respondents reported difficulties crossing the area, with a relatively balanced distribution between genders. Fall-related accidents were mentioned less frequently, but they were slightly more commonly reported by women than men. Reports of racist attacks were rare, but they were observed by both genders in small numbers. Traffic accidents were the least reported issue, with very few participants indicating they had witnessed or been affected by such incidents. A notable portion of respondents stated that they had not experienced any negative incidents in the Skopeftirio area, with men slightly more likely than women to report a trouble-free experience. Additionally, a small fraction of participants mentioned other negative experiences that did not fall into the common categories identified in the study.

Table 7. Negative experiences in Skopeftirio Park regarding gender identity (N = 458).

	Women	**Men**	**Non-Binary/ Other**	**Total**
	N (%)	**N (%)**	**N (%)**	**N (%)**
Difficulty in crossing	43 (13.9)	19 (13.2)	0 (0.0)	62 (13.6)
Car accident	4 (1.3)	2 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	6 (1.3)
Fall accident	22 (7.1)	9 (6.3)	0 (0.0)	31 (6.8)
Harassment	51 (16.5)	22 (15.3)	0 (0.0)	73 (16.0)
Racist attack	12 (3.9)	7 (4.9)	1 (50.0)	20 (4.4)
Theft	84 (27.1)	33 (22.9)	1 (50.0)	118 (25.9)
Memory of discomfort (e.g., due to heat, cold, loud noise, etc.)	41 (13.2)	20 (13.9)	0 (0.0)	61 (13.4)
Fear due to lack of lighting	190 (61.3)	69 (47.9)	2 (100)	261 (57.2)
Lack of care/cleanliness	142 (45.8)	56 (38.9)	2 (100)	200 (43.9)
Other	12 (3.9)	5 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	17 (3.7)
No negative experience	50 (16.2)	34 (23.6)	0 (0.0)	84 (18.5)

There seems to be a statistically significant difference in gender regarding their opinion about the subway, but after conducting a post hoc analysis, no statistically significant difference was found between the groups. An exploratory principal factor analysis was used to test the questions regarding the quality, accessibility, safety, and greenery (Table 8). The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin value was 0.828 and significance with Bartlett's test of sphericity had a $\chi 2$ of 783.83 (df = 21, $p > 0.00$), indicating significant sampling adequacy. For the current sample, these items resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of 0.791 for the total score, demonstrating very good internal consistency. Each dimension contributes meaningfully to this reliability, as the removal of any individual question results in only a slight decrease in Cronbach's alpha, ranging between 0.745 and 0.780. This suggests that all questions are useful and contribute to the overall cohesion of the questionnaire, making the instrument a reliable tool for assessing the quality and accessibility of public spaces (Table 9).

Table 8. Kruskal–Wallis correlation coefficients of scales about free public spaces in Kaisariani concerning gender identity.

	Gender						*p*-Value
	Female		Male		Non-Binary/Other		Kruskal–Wallis Test
	Mean (SD)	Median	Mean (SD)	Median	Mean (SD)	Median	
Existence of free public spaces	3.34 (0.97)	3	3.34 (0.99)	4	3.5 (0.71)	3.5	0.974
Quality of free public spaces	2.89 (0.75)	3	2.84 (0.74)	3	3.5 (0.71)	3.5	0.273
Times passed per week	3.95 (1.18)	4	3.78 (1.19)	4	4 (0.00)	4	0.241
Regeneration of Kaisariani	2.95 (1.25)	3	3.02 (1.34)	3	3 (1.41)	3	0.889
Quality of the square	2.65 (0.83)	3	2.57 (0.73)	3	4 (0.00)	4	0.025
Accessibility in the square	3 (0.89)	3	3.04 (0.84)	3	3 (1.41)	3	0.998
Square safety by day	3.7 (0.77)	4	3.74 (0.77)	4	4.5 (0.71)	4.5	0.253
Square safety by night	3 (0.9)	3	3.1 (0.9)	3	4.5 (0.71)	4.5	0.063
Quality of urban equipment	2.52 (0.82)	3	2.57 (0.83)	3	3.5 (0.71)	3.5	0.236
Green in the square	2.45 (0.9)	2	2.4 (0.84)	2	3 (0.00)	3	0.371
The square as an identity of Kaisariani	3.83 (1.21)	4	3.89 (1.21)	4	4.5 (0.71)	4.5	0.664
Skopeftirio Park as an identity of Kaisariani	4.63 (0.78)	5	4.71 (0.68)	5	5 (0.00)	5	0.369
Opinion about the metro station in Kaisariani	4.7 (1.31)	5	4.99 (1.14)	5	4 (0.00)	4	0.029

Table 9. Cronbach's alpha reliability results and the impact of a missing question regarding the quality of Kaisariani Square.

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (SD)	Median	Cronbach's If Item Deleted	Cronbach's a
Quality of free public spaces	1	5	2.87 (0.76)	3	0.776	
Quality	1	5	2.62 (0.81)	3	0.745	
Accessibility	1	5	3.00 (0.88)	3	0.756	
Safety by day	1	5	3.71 (0.77)	4	0.766	
Safety by night	1	5	3.04 (0.91)	3	0.769	
Quality of urban equipment	1	5	2.54 (0.83)	3	0.755	
Greenery	1	5	2.44 (0.88)	2	0.780	
						0.791

The selection of results presented was carried out following careful consultation to determine which findings best align with the research objectives. The questionnaire used in the study generates an extensive range of data, offering the potential for more comprehensive and complex analyses beyond what is included in this report. This research forms part of a larger, more comprehensive study of the public spaces of the region, which incorporates more detailed social and spatial correlations.

4. Discussion

In this discussion, we interpret the key findings of the study concerning existing literature and urban planning practices. The results provide valuable insights into how different demographic factors, such as age, business ownership, having children, and education level, influence perceptions of public space quality in the urban areas of Kaisariani. By examining these correlations, we aim to better understand the diverse

needs and expectations of different user groups. Furthermore, the study highlights critical aspects of urban space design, such as safety, lighting, and greenery, which have emerged as central concerns for respondents. These findings not only align with broader urban planning trends but also offer practical guidance for enhancing public spaces through informed interventions.

The findings of this research align closely with existing literature on public space perceptions and usage in Greece. Public spaces are used frequently, with many residents visiting daily or many times per week [12,59,60]. The perception of a moderate, but not abundant, number of public spaces corresponds with studies noting better spatial distribution in suburban areas compared to central locations like Athens [59,61]. Kaisariani, despite its proximity to the city center, benefits from ample public green spaces like Mount Hymettus, Panepistimioupoli, and Skopeftirio Park. The literature also highlights issues of cleanliness, accessibility, and safety—key concerns reflected in this study, particularly regarding nighttime security [48,62]. The study's findings align with previous research emphasizing the importance of residents' interaction with public spaces in strengthening social cohesion [3]. The need for lighting and cleanliness consistently emerges as a top priority in international studies, confirming the significance of managing public space infrastructure [4]. The findings from this study highlight the urgent need for improvements in urban spaces like Kaisariani Square, where most participants prioritized enhancements in greenery, lighting, and cleanness. This reflects broader research emphasizing the vital role of green spaces in promoting health and well-being, as well as their aesthetic and restorative contributions to urban environments [63–66]. Issues of neglect and cleanliness, identified by almost half of the participants, further underscore the importance of maintenance in shaping user satisfaction and space quality [67,68]. Addressing these concerns through thoughtful urban planning can create environments that are safe, welcoming, and conducive to community well-being [59]. Additionally, more than a half of the respondents expressed a need for more seating and rest areas, reinforcing existing literature that emphasizes the importance of comfort amenities in making urban spaces more usable and enjoyable [65,69,70]. Safety also emerged as a key issue, with many participants advocating for improved safety measures in Skopeftirio Park. This aligns with studies indicating that perceptions of safety are critical for encouraging the use of public spaces [48,71]. Lighting improvements were identified as essential for addressing safety concerns, echoing studies that link poor lighting with heightened perceptions of safety and reduced nighttime use of public spaces [65]. Older individuals often perceive public spaces differently due to shifts in mobility, social inclusion, and safety expectations. The negative perceptions of older residents are likely linked to mobility challenges and a sense of detachment from the community. Fear due to inadequate lighting emerged as one of the most significant issues, particularly affecting women and the elderly, consistent with previous studies on public space safety [40]. The insufficient presence of green spaces affects perceptions of quality of life, with multiple studies highlighting the link between greenery and psychological well-being (Cabe Space, 2013). Research indicates that older adults prioritize accessibility, safety, and comfort more than younger generations, driven by physical limitations and a need for restful environments. Studies in urban design and gerontology emphasize the importance of features like smooth pavements, adequate seating, and clear signage for older adults, which may not be as crucial for younger populations, who tend to value recreational and social opportunities [72]. This aligns with our findings, where older respondents expressed lower satisfaction with public space quality, emphasizing safety and ease of movement. In terms of urban design expectations, older adults often seek spaces that foster ease of movement and social interaction in secure environments. They also tend to have higher expectations for

well-maintained, accessible facilities [73,74]. Urban planning literature highlights the importance of age-friendly spaces that address these concerns, suggesting that public spaces should be designed to support the well-being and quality of life of aging populations. Our study reinforces this, revealing that older individuals rate urban equipment and space quality lower, but place greater value on their identity and role within the community [73,74].

Business owners tend to rate public space quality higher due to their economic interests. Vibrant, well-maintained public spaces can attract more foot traffic, directly benefiting their businesses. Research shows that well-designed urban areas foster increased visitor engagement, encouraging longer stays, which in turn leads to more purchases and interaction with local businesses [7,75]. This economic incentive likely explains the more favorable assessments from business owners. Numerous studies underscore the strong connection between public spaces and local economic growth. Squares and parks that are well maintained often serve as focal points for community events, drawing visitors to nearby shops and restaurants, thereby supporting local economies. Literature on place-making highlights how successful public spaces contribute to urban regeneration, spurring economic vitality and increasing business owners' positive perceptions of these areas [76].

Also, parents with children under 18 often express greater concerns about the safety and quality of public spaces. They tend to be more critical of areas lacking child-friendly features, such as secure fencing, adequate lighting, or engaging play equipment. Such concerns over safety risks can result in lower overall perceptions of public space quality, as parents prioritize environments that ensure the well-being and enjoyment of their children [77–79]. Urban planning research highlights the importance of family-oriented amenities like playgrounds, restroom facilities, and shaded areas, which are essential for making public spaces accessible and enjoyable for families. Cities that prioritize these features tend to receive more favorable evaluations from parents. Studies show that incorporating child-friendly designs not only enhances safety but also increases the overall satisfaction of families, contributing to more positive perceptions of urban spaces [73,75,80].

Individuals with higher education levels often hold more critical and informed perspectives on urban regeneration and greenery, a trend observed across studies in urban planning and environmental psychology. Educated individuals are typically more exposed to urban design concepts and sustainability principles, enabling them to assess whether development projects meet global best practices in sustainable urban planning. This demographic tends to demand higher standards for urban aesthetics and ecological integration, reflecting a deeper appreciation of green spaces and a commitment to long-term sustainability [75]. Educated individuals are generally more likely to understand the diverse benefits of green spaces, such as ecological sustainability, social cohesion, and improvements in physical and mental well-being. Their exposure to environmental sustainability and urban resilience frameworks, often through academic channels, shapes their more nuanced perspectives on how public spaces can foster both environmental and social benefits. This critical awareness tends to create higher expectations for urban spaces that balance functionality with ecological integrity [81–83]. However, it is important to recognize that these perspectives are not universal; cultural and social characteristics unique to each region can significantly influence how these factors are perceived and prioritized.

The results reveal mixed opinions regarding the redevelopment of Kaisariani Square and the construction of the new metro station. While many respondents were aware of these projects, their views varied, with a significant portion expressing skepticism or uncertainty. For instance, 28.8% of respondents felt skeptical about the square's

redevelopment, while 28.6% viewed it positively. Similarly, opinions about the metro station were largely positive, with 36.6% supporting the project but noting some concerns, and another 33.6% seeing it as particularly beneficial for the area despite a balanced mix of positive and negative aspects.

Regardless of whether deficiencies were identified in these projects, it is clear that more information and active involvement of the community would be beneficial. Engaging the public early on and providing clear, transparent communication about the details and potential impacts of these developments could help mitigate skepticism and foster stronger community support. Enhanced communication through presentations, local newsletters, and other means would ensure that residents feel informed and included, particularly given that only 12.3% of respondents felt well informed about the square's redevelopment. Extensive literature highlights that enhanced and effective information exchange with local communities significantly improves the acceptance of public space regeneration projects. This engagement not only fosters greater community support but also provides valuable data that can be leveraged for more effective management and resolution of related issues [84–87]. By prioritizing community involvement, future urban projects could better address local concerns and improve public perception from the outset. Our findings align with Gehl's concept of public space vitality, which emphasizes the importance of accessibility and safety in fostering active urban environments. However, in contrast to the PSI's structured observational methodology, our user-centered approach captures subjective experiences, providing additional insights into how users perceive space identity and social interactions. This highlights the need for hybrid methodologies that integrate both structured observations and direct user feedback.

5. Conclusions

This study contributes to the evaluation of urban public spaces by developing a concise yet highly effective questionnaire that captures user perceptions while maintaining methodological rigor. The findings emphasize the multidimensional nature of public space quality, demonstrating the importance of integrating subjective experiences with objective assessments to gain a more comprehensive understanding of urban environments. The questionnaire is specifically designed to collect the maximum amount of critical insight with the fewest possible questions, ensuring that essential information regarding citizens' needs and potential urban space deficiencies is efficiently gathered. The results indicate that, while public space availability in Kaisariani is generally perceived as moderate, concerns regarding maintenance, cleanliness, and infrastructure deficiencies remain prominent. Respondents prioritized improvements in greenery, lighting, seating, and overall accessibility, reflecting broader urban planning challenges. Perceptions of the redevelopment of Kaisariani's main square were mixed, with skepticism regarding its effectiveness, while safety concerns were particularly pronounced in Skopeftirio Park, especially related to poor lighting and a lack of maintenance. Reports of theft and harassment in the park further underscore the need for targeted interventions to improve safety and public space usability. While these findings provide valuable insights, the study has limitations. The research focuses on specific urban spaces within a single municipality, which may affect its broader applicability. Additionally, the sample overrepresents women and older individuals to ensure the inclusion of perspectives from typically underrepresented groups in public space research. Although this approach offers a more nuanced understanding of their experiences, it may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should aim for a broader demographic balance and examine additional socio-economic and systemic factors influencing public space quality. Despite these limitations, the questionnaire

serves as a targeted and efficient tool for urban space evaluation, complementing existing assessment methodologies. Its primary strength lies in its ability to gather substantial and actionable data with the fewest possible questions, making it an accessible and adaptable tool for urban planners and policymakers. Rather than functioning as a standalone assessment, this questionnaire is designed to be a valuable component within broader measurement frameworks and other data collection tools for public space evaluation. By systematically capturing citizen needs and challenges, it provides a structured yet flexible method for integrating community perspectives into urban planning. As urbanization continues to pose new challenges, adopting adaptable assessment methodologies will be essential for fostering more sustainable, responsive, and user-centered urban environments. This study lays the groundwork for future applications of this tool in combination with environmental measurements, spatial analyses, and participatory urban planning strategies, ensuring a holistic and data-driven approach to improving public spaces.

6. Patents

The questionnaire and its methodology are not patented but are protected under copyright laws.

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Appendix A

Appendix A presents a structured version of the survey used in this study, summarizing the key elements of the questionnaire distributed to participants. While it captures the core aspects of the assessment, it is designed to be combined with additional measurement procedures for a comprehensive evaluation of urban space quality.

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