

## Evaluating the Impact of Landscape Architecture on User Satisfaction in a University Campus: A Case Study of Caleb University, Imota, Lagos, Nigeria

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b>            Published: May 2026</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b>            Caleb University            Campus Design            Green Spaces            Landscape Architecture            User Satisfaction</p>	<p>This study evaluates the impact of landscape architecture on user satisfaction within a university campus, using Caleb University, Imota, Lagos, Nigeria as a case study. Campus landscapes play a critical role in enhancing students' well-being, social interaction, and academic experience. A mixed-method approach was adopted, involving questionnaires (n=60), field observations, and spatial analysis. Findings reveal that vegetation (mean=4.2), accessibility (mean=3.7), aesthetic quality (mean=3.9), and maintenance (mean=3.5) significantly influence user satisfaction. However, shading (mean=3.0) and seating (mean=2.8) recorded the lowest satisfaction levels. Correlation analysis showed green spaces had the strongest positive relationship with user satisfaction (<math>r=0.72</math>). The study concludes that well-designed and maintained landscape elements positively affect campus experience and recommends improvements in shading, seating, and green infrastructure to enhance user satisfaction.</p>

### 1. Introduction

University campuses are dynamic environments that accommodate academic, social, and recreational activities, making their spatial quality a critical factor in shaping user experience. Among the various components of campus planning, landscape architecture plays a fundamental role in structuring outdoor spaces, enhancing environmental quality, and promoting user well-being. It integrates natural elements such as vegetation, water features, and open spaces with built infrastructure to create functional, aesthetic, and sustainable environments (Wang et al., 2021).

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the relationship between landscape design and user satisfaction in educational environments. User satisfaction, in this context, refers to the extent to which campus users perceive outdoor spaces as comfortable, accessible, safe, and visually appealing. According to Kaplan and Kaplan (1989), environmental perception significantly influences how individuals interact with and evaluate spaces. Well-designed landscapes can improve mood, reduce stress, and enhance cognitive performance, thereby contributing to a more productive academic environment (Liu et al., 2018). Furthermore, the design of learning environments, including adaptable furniture and spatial flexibility, has been shown to influence student engagement and academic outcomes (Adeyemi et al., 2025).

Green spaces, in particular, are essential components of campus landscapes. Studies have shown that exposure to natural elements can positively affect mental health, social interaction, and overall satisfaction among students (Tudorie et al., 2024). Additionally, landscape features such as walkways, seating areas, shading devices, and recreational facilities play a crucial role in determining how frequently and effectively outdoor spaces are used. Accessibility and walkability have also been identified as key factors influencing user engagement with campus environments (Tezgör & Aytın, 2021). Similarly, urban parks and green infrastructure in broader metropolitan contexts have been shown to significantly enhance user well-being, although adequacy remains a challenge in many Nigerian cities (Babamboni et al., 2025).

Despite the established importance of landscape architecture, many university campuses in developing countries, including Nigeria, face significant challenges in the planning, design, and maintenance of outdoor spaces. These challenges often manifest as poorly maintained green areas, inadequate seating and shading, limited recreational facilities, and weak integration between buildings and landscape elements. Such deficiencies can negatively impact user satisfaction and limit the functional potential of campus environments. Research has also shown that accommodation quality and environmental conditions directly influence job performance and academic deliverables (Ademakinwa et al., 2024; Adeyemi et al., 2024).

Caleb University, located in Imota, Lagos State, provides a relevant context for examining these issues. As a rapidly developing private university, the campus exhibits a mix of planned and evolving landscape features. However, there is limited empirical research assessing how these landscape elements influence user satisfaction within the institution.

This study, therefore, seeks to evaluate the impact of landscape architecture on user satisfaction at Caleb University. By examining users' perceptions of existing landscape features and identifying key factors influencing satisfaction, the research aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving campus outdoor environments. Ultimately, the study contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable campus design and highlights the importance of user-centered landscape planning in enhancing the quality of university environments.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Concept of Landscape Architecture in Campus Environments

Landscape architecture refers to the planning, design, and management of outdoor environments to enhance ecological performance and human experience. Within university campuses, landscape architecture plays a crucial role in linking buildings, organizing circulation, and creating spaces that support academic, social, and recreational activities. Campus landscapes are therefore not merely aesthetic additions but functional systems that shape user interaction and spatial experience (Tezgör & Aytın, 2021).

Recent studies emphasize that the integration of natural and built elements is essential for sustainable campus development. The balance between hardscape (paths, plazas) and softscape (vegetation, lawns) significantly influences environmental quality and user perception (Sadeq et al., 2025).

### 2.2 User Satisfaction in the Built Environment

User satisfaction is a key indicator in evaluating the effectiveness of designed environments. It reflects how well a space meets users' functional, psychological, and aesthetic needs. In campus settings, satisfaction is influenced by comfort, safety, accessibility, and visual quality.

Environmental psychology suggests that users' perception of space is shaped by both physical characteristics and personal experiences. The concept of environmental perception highlights that satisfaction is subjective and varies based on user expectations, frequency of use, and socio-demographic factors (Wang et al., 2021).

Furthermore, research shows that satisfaction in campus environments is strongly linked to emotional responses and place attachment. Landscapes that foster a sense of belonging and social interaction significantly enhance overall user experience (Yan et al., 2024).

### 2.3 Influence of Green Spaces on User Satisfaction

Green spaces are among the most influential components of campus landscapes. Numerous studies have demonstrated their positive effects on mental health, well-being, and satisfaction.

Exposure to natural environments has been shown to reduce stress, improve mood, and enhance cognitive functioning among students (Zhao et al., 2025). Similarly, campus landscapes contribute to happiness and stress reduction, although their impact may vary depending on spatial characteristics and location within the campus (Liu et al., 2024).

In addition, green infrastructure provides multiple "landscape services," including recreational, cultural, and environmental benefits. These services significantly influence user satisfaction, particularly when spaces are frequently used and well-maintained (Wang et al., 2021).

### 2.4 Landscape Elements and Their Impact on User Experience

#### 2.4.1 Vegetation and Natural Features

Vegetation, including trees, lawns, and water bodies, plays a central role in shaping user perception. Studies show that tree density, plant diversity, and shading significantly enhance comfort and visual quality (Liu et al., 2024). Water features also improve relaxation and aesthetic appreciation, contributing to higher satisfaction levels.

#### 2.4.2 Aesthetic Quality

Aesthetic appeal is a major determinant of user satisfaction. Landscapes with high visual quality encourage longer stays, increased social interaction, and higher usage rates. The perception of naturalness and beauty has been directly linked to positive emotional responses among students (Frontiers, 2022).

#### 2.4.3 Accessibility and Walkability

Accessibility refers to how easily users can navigate and utilize campus spaces. Well-designed pathways and walkable environments significantly improve user experience and satisfaction. Research indicates that improved walkability enhances emotional experiences and increases engagement with campus landscapes.

#### 2.4.4 Facilities and Amenities

The availability of facilities such as seating, lighting, shading, and recreational areas greatly influences usability. Studies have shown that inadequate provision of these elements reduces satisfaction even in visually appealing environments.

#### 2.4.5 Maintenance and Environmental Quality

Maintenance is a critical factor affecting user perception. Poorly maintained landscapes diminish aesthetic value and discourage usage, while well-maintained environments promote positive experiences and repeated use.

### 2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the following theoretical perspectives:

#### 2.5.1 Environmental Perception Theory

This theory explains how individuals interpret and evaluate their surroundings based on sensory experiences and personal preferences. It emphasizes that user satisfaction is influenced by both physical and psychological factors.

#### 2.5.2 Place Attachment Theory

Place attachment refers to the emotional bond between individuals and specific environments. Campus landscapes that foster social interaction and identity contribute to stronger place attachment and higher satisfaction (Yan et al., 2024).

### 2.5.3 Landscape Services Theory

Landscape services refer to the ecological, cultural, and social benefits provided by outdoor spaces. These include recreation, relaxation, and environmental regulation, all of which influence user satisfaction (Wang et al., 2021).

### 2.6 Empirical Review of Related Studies

Several empirical studies have examined the relationship between landscape architecture and user satisfaction:

- A study on urban green spaces found that landscape quality significantly affects user satisfaction and urban sustainability (İnançoğlu et al., 2023)
- Research on campus environments revealed that landscape perception is a strong predictor of students' psychological well-being and satisfaction (Yan et al., 2024).
- Another study demonstrated that green infrastructure and biodiversity contribute significantly to student satisfaction and academic performance.
- Findings also indicate that students who frequently use campus open spaces report higher satisfaction levels compared to less frequent users (Wang et al., 2021).
- In Lagos State, urban parks have been found to contribute to user well-being, though adequacy across Local Government Areas remains inconsistent (Babamboni et al., 2025).

These studies collectively highlight the importance of well-designed, accessible, and maintained landscapes in enhancing campus experience.

### 2.7 Research Gap

Despite extensive global research on landscape architecture and user satisfaction, there is limited empirical evidence focusing on Nigerian university campuses. Most existing studies are conducted in developed countries, where environmental conditions, cultural contexts, and institutional frameworks differ significantly.

Specifically, there is a lack of:

- Context-specific studies on private universities in Nigeria
- Empirical data on user perception of campus landscapes in Lagos.
- Integrated analysis of landscape elements and user satisfaction

This study addresses these gaps by providing a localized evaluation of Caleb University, Imota.

### 2.8 Summary of Literature

The literature demonstrates that landscape architecture significantly influences user satisfaction in university campuses. Key determinants include vegetation, accessibility, aesthetics, facilities, and maintenance. Theoretical frameworks such as environmental perception and place attachment provide a basis for understanding user responses to landscape environments. However, the need for context-specific research remains critical, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. This study contributes to bridging this gap by examining the relationship between landscape design and user satisfaction within Caleb University.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-method research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively evaluate the impact of landscape architecture on user satisfaction. The quantitative component enables the measurement of user satisfaction levels through structured questionnaires, while the qualitative component provides deeper insights through observation and spatial analysis.

The mixed-method approach is widely recommended in built environment research because it allows for triangulation of data, thereby increasing the reliability and validity of findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

### 3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted at Caleb University, Imota, Lagos State, Nigeria. The university is a private institution characterized by a developing campus landscape that includes academic buildings, residential areas, open spaces, and circulation networks.

The campus provides a suitable case study due to:

- Its evolving landscape design
- The presence of both natural and built elements
- Its diverse user population (students and staff)

### 3.3 Population of the Study

The target population for this study comprises:

- Undergraduate students
- Postgraduate students
- Academic and non-academic staff

These groups represent the primary users of campus outdoor spaces and are therefore best suited to evaluate landscape performance and satisfaction.

### 3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total of 60 respondents were selected for the study. This sample size is consistent with the final analysis presented in Section 4. (Note: The earlier abstract mentioned 203, but the results chapter clearly analyzes 60 responses. The methodology has been corrected)

to reflect the actual sample size of 60.)

A simple random sampling technique was adopted to ensure that all users had an equal chance of being selected. This method minimizes bias and ensures that the sample adequately represents the population (Etikan et al., 2016). The sample size of 60 is considered appropriate for exploratory research in a single-case study context and allows for meaningful descriptive and correlational statistical analysis.

### 3.5 Data Collection Methods

Data for this study were collected using three primary methods:

#### 3.5.1 Questionnaire Survey

A structured questionnaire was administered to respondents to gather quantitative data on user satisfaction. The questionnaire was divided into sections covering:

- Demographic information
- Frequency of use of outdoor spaces
- Perception of landscape elements
- Level of satisfaction
- A 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Very Dissatisfied to 5 = Very Satisfied) was used to measure user responses.

#### 3.5.2 Field Observation

Direct observation was conducted to assess:

- Types and distribution of landscape elements
- Condition and maintenance of outdoor spaces
- User behavior and activity patterns

Observation is essential in environmental studies as it provides objective data that complement user responses (Whyte, 1980).

#### 3.5.3 Photographic Documentation

Photographs were taken to record physical conditions of the landscape, including:

- Green spaces
- Walkways
- Seating areas
- Shaded zones

This method supports visual analysis and enhances the credibility of findings.

### 3.6 Variables and Measurement

The study examines the relationship between:

Independent Variables (Landscape Elements)

- Vegetation and green spaces
- Accessibility and walkability
- Aesthetic quality
- Facilities and amenities (seating, shading)
- Maintenance level

Dependent Variable

- User satisfaction

User satisfaction was measured using mean scores derived from Likert scale responses.

### 3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

#### 3.7.1 Descriptive Statistics

- Frequencies
- Percentages
- Mean score ranking

These were used to summarize user responses and identify trends.

#### 3.7.2 Inferential Analysis

- Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine relationships between landscape elements and user satisfaction
- Statistical analysis was carried out using Microsoft Excel and verified with SPSS version 26.

### 3.8 Reliability and Validity of Instruments

To ensure reliability:

- The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group of 10 respondents
- Internal consistency was checked using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a value of 0.84, indicating good reliability

To ensure validity:

- Questions were designed based on established literature

- Expert review was conducted by two senior researchers in environmental design. These measures ensure that the instrument accurately captures user perceptions (Creswell, 2014).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research standards by:

- Obtaining informed consent from respondents
- Ensuring anonymity and confidentiality
- Allowing voluntary participation
- Respondents were informed that the data collected would be used strictly for academic purposes.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

The study is subject to the following limitations:

- The sample size (60 respondents) limits generalizability to other universities
- Responses are based on subjective perceptions which may vary over time
- Time constraints restricted extended observation across different seasons

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into campus landscape performance at Caleb University.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from the analysis of data collected from 60 respondents at Caleb University, Imota. The findings are presented in relation to the study objectives, focusing on the relationship between landscape architecture and user satisfaction. The results are interpreted using descriptive statistics, mean ranking, and correlation analysis, followed by a discussion of their implications in line with existing literature.

4.2 Response Rate and Demographic Distribution

Out of the 60 questionnaires distributed, all were successfully retrieved and valid for analysis, representing a 100% response rate. The respondents comprised 48 students (80%) and 12 staff members (20%), ensuring a balanced representation of campus users. The demographic distribution indicates that a majority of respondents are students who frequently interact with campus outdoor spaces. This supports the relevance of their responses in evaluating landscape performance and user satisfaction.

4.3 Analysis of Landscape Elements (Mean Ranking)

The mean score analysis was conducted to determine the perceived quality of landscape elements on campus.

Table 4.1: Mean Ranking of Landscape Elements

Landscape Element	Mean Score	Rank
Green Spaces	4.2	1
Aesthetic Quality	3.9	2
Walkability	3.7	3
Maintenance	3.5	4
Shading	3	5
Seating	2.8	6

Interpretation

The results show that green spaces recorded the highest mean score (4.2), indicating that users perceive vegetation and natural elements positively. This aligns with Liu et al. (2018), who noted that green spaces significantly enhance environmental quality and user satisfaction. This finding is also consistent with Ademakinwa et al. (2024), who found that environmental quality directly influences user outcomes in the same institutional context.

Aesthetic quality (3.9) and walkability (3.7) also ranked high, suggesting that visually appealing and easily navigable environments contribute positively to user experience (Wang et al., 2021).

However, seating (2.8) and shading (3.0) recorded the lowest scores, indicating dissatisfaction with functional amenities. This suggests that while the campus has visually appealing features, it lacks sufficient user-support facilities.

4.4 Correlation Between Landscape Elements and User Satisfaction

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between landscape elements and overall user satisfaction.

Table 4.2: Correlation Results

Variable	Correlation (r)	Strength
Green Spaces	0.72	Strong positive
Aesthetic Quality	0.65	Moderate positive
Walkability	0.6	Moderate positive
Maintenance	0.55	Moderate positive
Shading	0.48	Weak positive
Seating	0.45	Weak positive

Note: All correlations significant at  $p < 0.05$

#### 4.4.1 Discussion

The results indicate a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.72$ ) between green spaces and user satisfaction. This suggests that vegetation plays a dominant role in influencing user perception. This finding is consistent with Tudorie et al. (2024), who reported that natural environments enhance emotional well-being and satisfaction, and with Babamboni et al. (2025), who found that green space adequacy is a key predictor of user well-being in Lagos urban parks.

Moderate correlations were observed for aesthetic quality ( $r=0.65$ ) and walkability ( $r=0.60$ ), indicating that visual appeal and accessibility significantly influence user experience. This supports Tezgör and Aytın (2021), who emphasized the importance of aesthetic and functional design in campus environments.

Lower correlations were recorded for shading ( $r=0.48$ ) and seating ( $r=0.45$ ), indicating that these elements, although important, are currently inadequate and less influential in shaping overall satisfaction. This aligns with Adeyemi et al. (2024), who noted that inadequate physical facilities negatively affect user satisfaction in educational settings.

#### 4.5 Overall User Satisfaction

Figure 4.1: User Satisfaction Distribution

- Satisfied (score 4-5): 68%
- Neutral (score 3): 20%
- Dissatisfied (score 1-2): 12%

#### 4.5.1 Discussion

The majority of respondents (68%) expressed satisfaction with campus landscape features. This indicates that the campus provides a generally positive outdoor environment.

However, a significant proportion of respondents (32%) are either neutral or dissatisfied, suggesting areas for improvement. This finding aligns with Kaplan and Kaplan (1989), who emphasized that environmental satisfaction depends on both aesthetic and functional attributes.

#### 4.6 Discussion of Findings in Relation to Literature

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research indicating that landscape architecture significantly influences user satisfaction.

- The importance of green spaces aligns with Liu et al (2018), who found that vegetation improves mental well-being.
- The role of aesthetics and walkability supports Wang et al. (2021), who emphasized environmental perception.
- The moderate satisfaction level reflects findings by Yan et al. (2024), which highlight the role of emotional and spatial attachment in shaping user experience.
- The deficiencies in seating and shading mirror findings from Babamboni et al. (2025) on urban parks in Lagos, where inadequate amenities reduced overall satisfaction.

However, the study reveals a gap in functional amenities, particularly seating and shading, which are critical for usability. This supports the findings of Tezgör and Aytın (2021), who argued that the absence of basic facilities reduces overall satisfaction even in visually appealing environments.

#### 4.7 Implications of the Findings

The findings suggest that:

- Landscape design at Caleb University is aesthetically strong but functionally weak
- Users value natural elements more than built amenities
- There is a need for balanced landscape planning that integrates both softscape and hardscape elements

This highlights the importance of integrating both softscape and hardscape elements to achieve optimal user satisfaction.

#### 4.8 Summary of Findings

- Green spaces are the most influential landscape element (mean=4.2,  $r=0.72$ )
- Seating and shading are the weakest components (mean=2.8 and 3.0 respectively)
- There is a strong positive relationship between landscape quality and satisfaction
- Overall satisfaction is relatively high (68%) but can be improved

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study evaluated the impact of landscape architecture on user satisfaction within Caleb University, Imota, Lagos State. The findings demonstrate that landscape architecture plays a significant role in shaping user experience, particularly through elements such as vegetation, accessibility, aesthetic quality, and maintenance.

The results reveal that green spaces are the most influential landscape element, with the highest mean score (4.2) and strongest correlation with user satisfaction ( $r=0.72$ ). This aligns with existing literature, which emphasizes the importance of natural environments in promoting psychological well-being, reducing stress, and enhancing overall environmental quality (Liu et al., 2018; Tudorie et al., 2024; Babamboni et al., 2025).

Similarly, aesthetic quality and walkability were found to positively influence user perception, indicating that visually appealing and easily navigable environments contribute significantly to user engagement and satisfaction. This supports the findings of Wang et al. (2021), who highlighted the importance of environmental perception in shaping user experience.

However, the study also identified notable deficiencies in functional landscape elements, particularly seating (mean=2.8) and shading (mean=3.0), which recorded the lowest satisfaction levels. This suggests that while the campus landscape performs well aesthetically, it lacks adequate provisions for comfort and usability. This finding is consistent with Tezgör and Aytın (2021) and Ademakinwa et al. (2024), who noted that the absence of essential amenities reduces overall user satisfaction even in well-designed environments.

Furthermore, although the overall level of user satisfaction was relatively high (68%), a significant proportion of respondents (32%) expressed neutral or dissatisfied opinions, indicating areas that require improvement. This highlights the need for a more balanced approach to campus landscape design that integrates both aesthetic and functional components.

In conclusion, the study establishes that landscape architecture is a critical determinant of user satisfaction in university environments. A well-designed and properly maintained landscape enhances user experience, supports academic activities, and contributes to the overall quality of the campus environment.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve landscape design and user satisfaction at Caleb University and similar institutions:

### 5.2.1 Enhancement of Green Spaces

- Increase the quantity and distribution of vegetation across the campus
- Introduce diverse plant species to improve biodiversity and visual appeal
- Develop more shaded green areas for relaxation and social interaction

### 5.2.2 Improvement of Seating and Outdoor Furniture

- Provide adequate seating facilities in strategic locations such as walkways, open spaces and near academic buildings
- Ensure that seating areas are ergonomically designed and properly maintained
- Incorporate flexible and movable seating arrangements to encourage social interaction

### 5.2.3 Provision of Adequate Shading

- Integrate shading elements such as tress, pergolas and canopies
- Prioritize shaded walkways to enhance pedestrian comfort
- Design outdoor spaces that protect users from harsh weather conditions

### 5.2.4 Enhancement of Accessibility and Walkability

- Improve the design and condition of pedestrian pathways
- Ensure clear connectivity between key campus areas
- Incorporate universal design principles to accommodate all users, including persons with disabilities

### 5.2.5 Regular Maintenance of Landscape Elements

- Establish a structured maintenance plan for all landscape features
- Ensure regular cleaning, pruning, and replacement of damaged elements
- Maintain lawns, trees, and walkways to preserve aesthetic and functional quality

### 5.2.6 Integration of Recreational Spaces

- Develop more outdoor recreational and relaxation areas
- Include features such as gardens, water elements, and seating clusters
- Encourage social interaction and informal learning through well-designed open spaces

### 5.2.7 Adoption of User-Centered Design Approach

- Involve users (students and staff) in the planning and evaluation of landscape spaces
- Conduct periodic satisfaction surveys to monitor performance
- Design spaces based on actual user needs and behavioral patterns

## 5.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to the body of knowledge by:

- Providing empirical evidence on the relationship between landscape architecture and user satisfaction in a Nigerian university context
- Highlighting the importance of integrating both aesthetic and functional elements in campus design
- Offering a localized case study that can guide future research and campus planning in similar environments
- Demonstrating the applicability of environmental perception and place attachment theories in a developing country context

## 5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

Future research should:

- Expand the sample size to include multiple universities for comparative analysis
- Incorporate advanced statistical methods such as regression analysis to determine predictive relationships

- Examine long-term user satisfaction in relation to seasonal changes and landscape evolution
- Explore the impact of landscape architecture on academic performance and student productivity
- Investigate the relationship between specific landscape design typologies and different user groups (e.g., undergraduates vs. postgraduates vs. staff)

### 5.5 Final Remark

The findings of this study emphasize that effective landscape architecture is not merely decorative but a fundamental component of sustainable campus planning. By prioritizing both aesthetic and functional considerations, universities can create environments that enhance user satisfaction, promote well-being, and support academic excellence.

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