Perceived Ecosystem Service Value Shapes Willingness to Participate in Urban park ecosystem service co-creation: case of Šiauliai City, Lithuania

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Abstract: Citizen involvement in the co-creation of urban parks is crucial for sustainable local governance and ecosystem resilience. This study investigates the social–cognitive mechanisms underlying residents' willingness to participate in such initiatives by extending the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The model incorporates perceived ecosystem services value and perceived institutional support as antecedents to core TPB predictors: attitudes toward participation, perceived social pressure, and perceived behavioral control.

A structured survey was conducted among 1,064 residents of Šiauliai city and its surrounding suburban areas. Responses were analyzed using structural equation modeling and multiple regression. The results indicate that perceived behavioral control and social pressure are the strongest direct predictors of intention to co-create, while attitudes exert an indirect effect via these pathways. The perceived value of ecosystem services in green urban parks significantly influenced all core TPB variables, underscoring its foundational motivational role. The results show that institutional environmental support influences willingness to participate both through subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. The effect is not only normative but also instrumental/empowering. Institutional support helps people feel more capable and equipped with the means and opportunities to participate.

The extended model explained 61% of the variance in co-creation intention. These findings confirm that civic engagement in urban environmental co-creation is primarily driven by perceived benefits, social expectations, and self-efficacy, rather than top-down institutional prompts. Local governments can leverage these insights by promoting awareness of ecosystem services in urban green parks, reinforcing supportive community norms, and enhancing citizens' perceived capacity to participate in co-creation processes.

Keywords: willingness to participate, perceived ecosystem service value; Theory of Planned Behavior, urban parks

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