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AN ASSESSMENT OF RESIDENTS' RECREATIONAL BEHAVIORS AND PREFERENCES IN OSOGBO METROPOLITAN AREA OF OSUN STATE.

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Abstract
The study appraised the level of involvement and preferences of residents in recreational activities in the Oshogbo metropolis. The data for the study were sourced from both primary and secondary sources. The survey research design was adopted whereby structured questionnaires were used to elicit information from 411 randomly selected residents of the study area, this represents 0.095% of the sample frame of 449, 099. The secondary data were sourced from the internet, journals, textbooks, magazines, and the Ministry of Youth, sport, and social development. Descriptive statistical tools were used in the analysis of the data. Results of the investigation reveal that recreational activities occupy about 65% of the respondents' leisure time and only 35% of the sample residents usually engaged in non-recreational activities. The result revealed the five most preferred activities of recreation by a majority (79%) of the sampled population which include; watching soccer, playing soccer, taking beer/other drinks, visiting places of interest, and trekking/walking. However, the results also indicate that the preferred recreational activities also vary with the age, gender, educational attainment, and income level of the residents. For effective planning therefore, the study recommends that the allocation of resources for recreational facilities in the metropolitan areas should reflect the different social classes; age, gender, education, and income levels.

Keywords: Recreation, recreational behaviors, recreational preferences.

Introduction

Recreation is described as the activity that people choose to engage in when at leisure, and it may be multifaceted, comprising physical, cognitive, emotional, and social components (Broad Hurst 2001). Recreation involves activities that people do for enjoyment, usually to refresh the body and mind. Recreation, therefore, includes kind of activities like visiting areas such as parks, wilderness areas, lakes, rivers, and forests as well as engaging in different exercises such as trekking, fishing, hunting, and camping. Participating in recreational activities is of great importance for maintaining the mental and physical health of individuals, families, and communities (Neuvonen et al 2007). As indicated in various studies, engaging in recreational activities two or three times a week or for half an hour, a day is beneficial for human health (Pouta and Sievanam, 2001, Oja, 2000). Every human being needs leisure time which could be utilized in a certain recreational activity for rejuvenation, positive recreation is neither a luxury nor unproductive activities but a fundamental human need required to stay healthy. However, attitude can be one of the most difficult barriers to recreation participation (Bedni 2000; Smith et al, 2005). (Obina et al, 2009) equally contend that attitude to recreation is one of the recreation challenges in the rural and urban areas in Nigeria.

Kachoub (2010) report that attitude is an intrinsic component that reveals one's thought and beliefs in a language, culture, people, or activity which consequently helps to predict the behavior of the individuals.

Crow and Crow (1999) described the attitude as the effective by-product of an individual's experience, having bases in their inner urge, acquired habits, and the environmental influence by which he is surrounded. Henry (1991) explains attitudes as serving as an index of how he thinks about people, objects, and issues in our environment. They provide clues to future behavior, predicting how

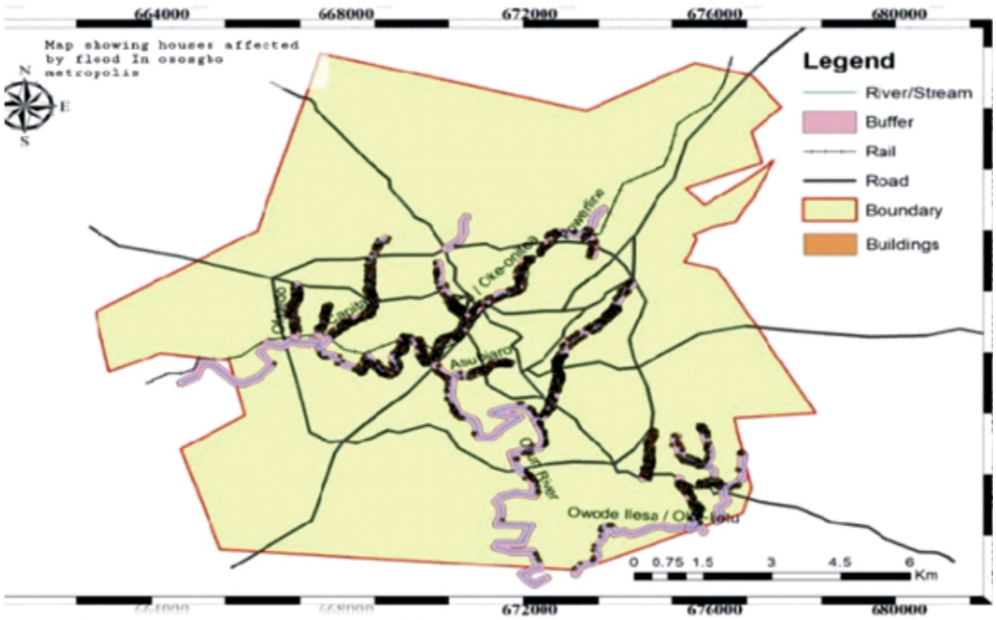
we will act when we encounter the object of our belief. However, many people feel limited in participating in recreational activities due to various constraints. Lack of knowledge, overcrowding, distance to recreational areas, family problems, and lack of money and companionship were indicated as the most significant recreational constraints in many studies (Coyle and Kinney, 1990: Kay and Jackson, 1991). Gender has been found as an important constraint in many studies, especially for females who are participating in recreational activities less frequently than males (Johnson et al; 2001: Henderson and Bilaesehki (1991). Health problems and aging are other constraints on the participation of people in recreational activities. Distance to recreational areas is another factor affecting the participation of people in recreational activities (Neuvononet et al 2007). Recreational areas are visited more frequently if they are located near urban areas (Grahn and Stigsdotter; Roovers et al, 2002).

The Study Area

Osogbo is the capital of Osun state, it is located on latitude $7^{0}42^{1}10^{11}$and $7^{0}51^{1}10^{11}$N, and longitude $4^{0}28^{1}43^{11}$ and $4^{0}40^{1}12^{11}$E. It has an area of approximately 2875 km^{2}. It is some 88km by road from northeast of Ibadan. It is about 195km or approximately three hours drive from Lagos. Osogbo shares boundaries with Ikirun, Ilesha, Ede, Egbedore, and Iragbiji and it is easily accessible from any part of the state because of its central nature.

The projected population for Osogbo in 2023 was put at 771,515 (World Population Review, 2023). Most of the population are members of the Yoruba ethnic group. Osogbo has a tropical climate with rainfall and an average annual temperature of 25.5^{0} Celsius (77.8^{0}Fahrenheit) and 1361 millimeters (55.6 inches) of precipitation. The height is about 500m above sea level (Falade, 2000) and it is drained by the Osun River and its tributaries such as Gbonmi, Ogbaagba, and Omu. Osogbo is located in the tropical hinterland of Nigeria.

The Osun Osogbo sacred groove, a forested area with shrines and sanctuaries, harboring Osun State and other deities was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2015. Osogbo is the trade center for a farming region; yam, cassava, grain, and tobacco are grown. About 27% of the population is engaged in farming as their primary occupation, 8% are traders and 30% are clerks, teachers, etc.



of the study area of Osogbo Metropolis

Map of the Study Area of Osogbo Metropolis

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Recreation is from two Latin words “RE” meaning to do again and 'CREARE' meaning to create. Recreation is a reviewing experience, a different and refreshing change from daily routine and workday experience (Fadamiro, 2003). Leisure according to Nixon (2003) is from the Latin word, “Licere” meaning to be allowed or licensed. Recreation is the expenditure of time with the intent to gain some refreshment. It is a break from monitoring and a diversion from a daily routine. It is a positive change from the stereotypical lifestyle and involves active participation in some entertaining activities (Oak, 2010). Recreation activities involve an element of enjoyment and happiness obtained from engaging in something one likes. Different recreational activities serve as a source of immense pleasure and provide relaxation to one's mind and body. Boniface and Cooper (1987) and Roberts (2001) agreed that recreations are the varieties of activities we choose to undertake during leisure. Recreation, therefore, is a pursuit taken up during leisure time other than those to which people have high commitments. Recreation also is a means of escaping from work, boredom, and a body renewed in preparation for routine and necessary work. Leisure according to Boniface and Cooper (1987) is a measure of time, after personal household chores have been completed. Akogun (2006) reported that leisure and recreation are classified as tourism activities which involve other sectors of the economy; Transportation, education, industry, urban development, forestry, telecommunications, etc. at national, state, and local socio-economic policies and socio-politics tradition. While caught in the rut of hectic jobs and routine chores, everyone needs sometimes to revitalize their mind and body to indulge in recreational activities. Opportunities to combine work, rest, and play should not be taken for granted because as Swann (2004) explains, recreation is an essential component of emotional, physical, and cultural well-being required for a balanced lifestyle and a complete person.

Recreation gives us more opportunities to spend time with our dear ones and ourselves. They allowed us to meet new people, make new friends, and socialize. Some of the recreational activities help us in developing leadership qualities and interpersonal skills. Aside from work to meet the basic needs of man (i.e. hunger, warmth, and safety), leisure and recreation are regarded as one of the basic human needs as sources of pleasure, relaxation, and excitement (Fadamiro,2003).

The California state parks (2005) authorize the values of recreation this way; physical activity reduces obesity and diminishes the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes. There are over 2 million people in California with diabetes mellitus. Physical activity also boosts immune systems, increase life expectancy, reduces depression, relieves stress, improves the quality of life, reduces crime, unites families, supports youths, etc. Okunrotifa (1995) observed that recreation could be seen as an antidote to work. That is, it reduces the pressure on the individual that participates in it after the day's tedious work. Recreation provides the capacity to escape from boredom. Recreation may be the main reason for participation in tourism, and tourism may represent a particular form of recreation. Industrial recreation for employees cut down drastically the main hours lost in going to health clinics (Okafor, 1986). Recreation, therefore, increases the efficiency of work. This is the reason why many developed countries have set aside specific periods in between working hours for compulsory recreation for workers.

Understanding the recreational behaviors and preferences of residents is of great importance for cities to have a sustainable recreation plan. It is only then that city managers and decision-makers will make sure that the number of recreational facilities and other characteristics is adequate to meet the various recreational needs of residents, (Zandersen and Tol, 2008; Jensen 2008). Surveying the residents is still the best way to understand their recreational behavior and preference (Zandersen and Tol, 2008). The survey is conducted in cities and countries by researchers and government agencies to collect data about locations or most preferred recreational areas, frequency of participation, type of recreational activities to engage in, problems of existing recreational areas, and recommendations for

further development. The survey also includes some questions on gender, age, occupation, educational level, and income to make further analysis among different groups of participants to determine recreational constraints within the community. These are important factors that shape the way they behave, Malalchlan (2009) emphasizes that attitude towards a product is a function of the sum of perceived attributes weighted as to the importance possessed by that product. That is an individual attitude towards any product is a function of that perception about production in terms of product attributes and the importance of these attributes, people prefer the products towards which they express a more favorable attitude.

Research Methods

Data for the study were generated from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was used to solicit information from the sampled population in the study area through the use of structured questionnaires. Using the projected 2006 population of Oshogbo and Olorunda Local Government that makes up Oshogbo Metropolis of 449,099 sample frame, 430 questionnaires representing a sample size of 0.095% were administered in 10 randomly selected wards of 26 (INEC) wards in the two Local Government of Oshogbo Metropolis.

Table 1: Political Wards in Oshogbo

Local Government Areas	Political Wards
Oshogbo	Alagbaa Afonja, Ekerin, Otun Balogun 1, Are Ago, Ataoja 1, Ekefa, Otun Balogun 2, Ataoja 2, Atoaja 3, and Jagun 1, Otun Jagun 1, Ataoja 4, Bakekere Jagun 2.
Olorunda	AgoWande, Akogun, Atelewo, Ayetoro, Balogun, Ilie, Obaoke, Oba Ile, Owode1, Owode 2, Owope.

Source; Authors fieldwork 2023.

Table 2: Selected Political Wards

S/N	Political Wards	Local Government Location
1	Alagbaa	Oshogbo
2	Otun Balogun 1	Oshogbo
3	Ataoja 1	Oshogbo
4	Are Ago	Oshogbo
5	Jagun 1	Oshogbo
6	Agowande	Olorunda
7	Atelewo/Ayetoro	Olorunda
8	Oba-Oke	Olorunda
9	Owode1	Olorunda
10	Owope	Olorunda

Source; Authors fieldwork 2023.

A systematic random sampling method was adopted in the administration of the questionnaires which was based on the principle that the first house is selected, one in every 5th house is selected, and others follow in sequential pattern. Household heads were interviewed. (411) questionnaires representing 96% of the questionnaires were retrieved and analyzed. The secondary data was used to obtain information from the journal, textbooks, Ministry of Sports, youth, and social development. A simple tabulation method was used to analyze the collected data.

Results and Discussion

This study discusses the recreational behaviors and preferences of the residents of the Oshogbo metropolis. Indices such as the most preferred recreational activities, and preferences based on gender, age, education, and income status; were used to determine the degree of people's participation in the recreational activities and their preferences in the study area. 430 questionnaires were distributed for the analysis and 411 came out successfully.

Table 3: Respondents' Activities during Spare Time

Activity	Frequency	Percentage%
Visiting Friends and Relatives	75	6
Outdoor Recreation	152	37
Indoor Recreation	115	28
None	199	29
Total	**411**	**100**

Source; Authors fieldwork 2023.

As presented in Table 3, it was discovered that 65% of the sampled residents indicate that they indulge in various forms of recreational activities such as indoor recreation (28%). Outdoor recreation (37%) while 29% of the sampled residents indulge in non-recreational activities. 6% however use their spare time to visit friends and relatives. This result, therefore, provides a remarkable understanding of the extent to which recreational activities occupy the resident spare time in the study area.

Table 4: Outdoor Recreational Activities Preference

Activity	Frequency	Percentage%
Taking drinks at the relaxation Centre	86	21
Watching soccer at the viewing Centre	111	27
Playing Tennis	33	8
Basket/Volleyball	37	9
leisure walking	25	6
Hunting Games	8	2
Visiting Historical Site	21	5
Taking Photograph	8	2
Bicycle Riding	8	2
Swimming	16	4
Playing Soccer	14	14
Total	**411**	**100**

Source; Authors fieldwork 2023.

Table 4 indicates that watching a soccer game at viewing Centers, taking drinks at a relaxation Centre and playing soccer games are the most preferred recreational activities in the study area with 27%, 21%, and 14% respectively. Playing basket/volleyball, playing tennis and leisure walk however follow with 9%, 8%, and 6% respectively. Others such as visiting historical sites (5%) swimming (4%), taking photographs (2%), and riding bicycles (2%) however account for the least outdoor recreational activities engaged in by the residents of the study area.

Table 5: Most Preferred Recreational Activities in Terms of Age

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES	AGE CATEGORY	
	Below40yrs %	**Above 40yrs %**
Watching soccer/Other sports	19.7	21.5
Playing Soccer/Other sports	15.5	13.4
taking beer/Other drinks	23.8	19.8
Bicycle Riding	12.8	10.2
Visiting Historical Site	14.2	11.2
Taking leisure walks	7.2	9.4
Playing Basket/Volleyball	2.2	2.9
Taking Photograph	0.9	1.7
Others such as swimming etc.	3.7	9.9
Total	**100**	**100**

Source; Authors fieldwork 2023.

Table 5 above shows that the most preferred activities by the greater percentage of participants below 40 years of age are taking beer/other drinks with friends in public and relaxation centers (23%) and watching soccer and other sports (19.7%). Also, watching soccer matches and other games in public places is the most preferred by participants that are 40 years and above. Playing soccer and visiting museums are still important recreational activities for the two age groups. Again, from the responses, interest in playing soccer seems to decrease with age as the level of participation drops from 15.5% among the younger participant below 40 years to 13.4% among the older participants of 40 years and older population.

Table 6: Most Preferred Recreational Activities in Terms of Gender.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES	GENDER	
	Male	**Female**
Watching soccer/Other sports	31.0	10.6
Playing Soccer/Other sports	21.1	11.1
taking beer/Other drinks	33.2	6.6
Bicycle Riding	2.7	9.5
Visiting Historical places	2.2	23.8
Taking leisure walks	6.5	16.9
Playing Basket/Volleyball	0.8	3.9
Taking Photograph	0.6	4.7
Others such as swimming etc.	1.9	12.9
Total	**411**	**100**

Source; Authors fieldwork 2023.

Table 6 indicates differences in the most preferred activity between male and female respondents, the larger percentage of the male respondents (33.2%) mostly prefer taking beer/other drinks with friends in relaxation centers or pubs during leisure time, while the most preferred activity to the greater percent of the sampled female population (23.8%) preferred visiting places of historical interest.

Table 7: Most Preferred Recreational Activities in Terms of Educational Qualification.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES	EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	
	graduate	**non-graduate**
Watching soccer/Other sports	20.2	18.3
Playing Soccer/Other sports	17.3	14.5
taking beer/Other drinks	12.2	22.7
Bicycle Riding	2.8	8.3
Visiting Historical places	12.3	11.4
Taking leisure walks	21.4	8.6
Playing Basket/Volleyball	5.7	6.1
Taking Photograph	6.5	3.0
Others such as swimming etc.	1.3	6.9
Total	**411**	**100**

Source; Authors fieldwork 2023.

Table 7 shows that variation also exists based on participants' level of education. To the larger percent (20.2%) of participants with at least a University degree or its equivalent, watching soccer/other sports in the viewing center is the most preferred outdoor recreational activity. The second and third larger percent (17.3% and 12.5%) of the group still preferred playing soccer and taking beer/other drinks at relaxation centers, pubs, and hotels. These figures, however, change with the group of participants who had lower educational qualifications. To the larger percentage of this (22.9%), taking beer/other drinks at public places and pubs is the most preferred activity followed by watching soccer and other sports and games.

Table 8: Most Preferred Recreational Activities in Terms of Income

RECREATIONALACTIVITIES INCOME		
	Less Than#100,000	**Above #100,000**
Watching soccer/Other sports	24.7	23.3
Playing Soccer/Other sports	14.7	10.4
taking beer/Other drinks	18.4	12.8
Bicycle Riding	8.4	9.0
Visiting Historical places	10.5	14.7
Taking leisure walking	13.0	23.7
Playing Basket/Volleyball	3.6	1.9
Taking Photograph	2.1	1.4
Others such as swimming etc.	4.6	2.8
Total	**411**	**100**

Source; Authors fieldwork 2023.

The study according to Table 8 also reveals the influence of income on recreational activity preference. The most preferred types of recreational activities seem to change with participants' monthly incomes. It shows that though watching a soccer game in viewing centers, playing soccer and other games, and taking beer and other drinks at pubs are the three most important preferred activities by families earning below #100,000 monthly and those earning #100,000 and above, the level of interest in these activities significantly declines with increase in monthly income. On the other hand, visiting places of historical importance with 10.5% and 14.7% and taking leisure walk with 13.0% and 23.7% seem to increase with participants' family income.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The conclusion is hereby drawn with attention to the findings in the research to address the salient discoveries made to ameliorate the recreational deficiencies of the residents in the study area; for effective recreation planning, allocation of resources for the provision of recreational facilities in the city should not be with due consideration of the preferences of the larger percentage of the categories but should also reflect that of the minorities in the same age, gender, educational level, and monthly income categories. This will act as a guide toward the adequacy of the facilities for the needs of all groups, thereby averting abandonment or underutilization of facilities due to high pressure on them. The following measures are recommended in recreational activities to enhance the quality of life.

Sustainable Advocacy Program; There should be a sustained advocacy campaign through the collaborative effort of the government, non-government organizations, and community-based organizations using symposia workshop radio, television, and news media to enlighten and correct poor attitudes toward active recreation.

Insurance schemes and paid recreation policy; to encourage residents' participation in physical activities the government and corporate organization should float insurance covers for them to eliminate the fear of sustaining injuries, the fear of which hinders many from taking part in the active form of recreation. Provision of residents' choice of recreational facilities; desired recreational facilities should be provided for the youths to encourage them to participate actively in recreation and enhance their skills in competitive recreational activities.

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