

Original Research Article

PERFORMANCE AND VISITOR'S SATISFACTION OF RECREATION FACILITIES IN AKURE METROPOLIS: A VERITABLE TOOL FOR IMPACTS STUDIES IN UNDP MDG'S CITIES IN NIGERIA.

ABSTRACT

Performance of recreational centers and level of satisfaction derived by participants are considered as veritable tool to explore the economic and social impacts of recreational activities on the host communities in UNDP MDG's cities. This research work was undertaken in four of the randomly selected recreation centers in Akure Metropolis through multiple research techniques including site observation, personal communication, questionnaire administration and collection of secondary data. The research was undertaken during the weekends over a period of six months between January and June 2013. It was observed that greater percentage of the participants (80%, 90%, 100% and 71.4%) expressed their willingness to revisit; this is an indication that the satisfaction and purpose of their visits have been achieved. Over 50% of the respondents in all the centres also indicated that the quality of services being provided was good. None of the staff working in any of the centers received less than \$1 daily this form part of the target of UNDP MDG to eradicate poverty and hunger by year 2015. While facilities being enjoyed most by the visitors need to be maintained others need to be improved upon and additional ones need to be acquired to boost customer's patronage. Private and government operators of recreation centers as well as other policy makers in tourism industry will benefit tremendously from this research out in their quest to meet the economic and social needs of their communities.

Keywords : Recreation Centers, UNDP MDGs Cities, host communities, social and economic impacts , tourism industry

1.INTRODUCTION

If the proverb "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" (Randle, 1611) is anything to go by then it is highly expedient for men to take enough time to relax, refresh and recreate most especially during their leisure hours. Recreation and leisure are very synonymous with multiple meaning depending on the author. Leisure is defined as free or unobligated time that does not involve work or performing other life sustaining functions (1). Recreation from an individual perspective involves as example watching Television, attending an Opera, base jumping, moving the lawn, taking your children to zoo, playing snookers/checkers, downloading music, writing book, an evening in the town (2).

Leisure and recreation have become important concerns in modern day societies and they became recognized as cause for concern during the Great Depression of 1930s (3). Both anxiety and extensive stress are as a result of overwork and they have been identified as indications of depression. Sustained instances of depressed mood might result to a complex condition evolving into mental illness that is regarded as a major depression. The negative impacts of depression can be devastating. Depression disrupts relationship and interferes with work and daily activities and must therefore be afforded. (4) recalled that the result of increased leisure that is not properly utilised can manifest in various societal problems ranging from idleness, depression, violence, alcoholism, drug abuse and other related vices. Study revealed that more than 6 million in the U.S have depression each year with an estimated 19 million adults living with major depression (5). This is contrary to happening in Nigeria, considered that there were lots of other avenues for releasing tension in time of stress, anxiety or overwork during leisure to become well adjusted (6). With seven established National Park, game reserves, two UNESCO world heritage sites (the third being enlisted), opportunities to visits and participate in traditional and cultural festivals, moonlight stories, fishing, and playing various types of games, Nigeria is a rich tourists and recreational destination.

Tourism and recreation are synonymous and they are used interchangeably in this context. Both tourism and outdoor recreation activity involve travel and interaction with other people, and with environment in its widest meaning (3). Apart from improving the state of health, the social, economic, ecological and spiritual importance of involving in recreational and tourism activities cannot be overemphasized. While tourists visit to in-situ conservation areas like park, lake, game reserves, waterfalls, hills, amusement parks, mountain tops can be regarded as outdoor recreation, visit to museum, playing snookers, watching television are categorised as in-door recreation. If recreational centers can provide accommodation for the people that come to visit then visitors can decide to spend more than twenty four (24) hours and thereby regarded as tourists.(7) recalled that visit to outdoor recreational centres has drawn hundreds of thousand people in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States and other industrialized nations and this has recorded rapid growth since World war II. Incidentally, with exception of New Zealand all other countries as mentioned were listed among the World's top fifteen tourism earners (8).

Tourism has grown rapidly to become a major social and economic force in the world. Tourism is a major contributor to the World's economy, accounting for greater than nine percent of global GDP and almost nine percent of jobs globally, thereby making it one of the largest categories of international trade (9). Tourism is an industry where there is a growing positive balance of trade flowing from developed countries to developing countries (10). Recreation industry, is relatively labour intensive, hence, tends to generate a larger and more rapid increase in employment than equal investment in other economic activities (11). In Nigeria the Industry is one of the growing sectors of the country's economy (Nigerian Tourism Development Master Plan, (12).

Different categories of people visit recreation centers to experience one thing or the other. Changes in socio demographic characteristics, technological advances and disposable income of the visitors to recreational centres have imposed several dimensions to the way the leisure is spent, and on the extent and nature of recreational participants.(13)and (14) claimed that whether a tourists is satisfied or not towards a destination is related to tourists characteristics such as socioeconomic and demographic factors, motivations and future intention to travel to another similar destination.Tourists' characteristics also have significant relationships with satisfaction. Differences in characters can contribute to the differences in expectation and satisfaction towards tourism destination. (15) mention that different types of tourists tend to undertake different patterns of activities, which will have different types and levels of impact on a destination. Since there is no particular or clear method of measuring the value of recreation experience except by circumstantial evidence. If visitors don't complain, if they speak enthusiastically and if they come back, one assumes that they find the experience worthwhile. Recreation is a discretionary, If it doesn't seem worthwhile, the individual can choose to avoid the experience or to participate somewhere or somehow else. (16).

In recent years researches have been carried out pertaining to recreation, these researches include visitor perceptions, planning for outdoor recreation and tourism, recreation environment relationships and impacts of outdoor recreation (17),the benefits of outdoor recreation (18) and outdoor recreation demand (19).However there is dearth of information on recreational facilities and services offer, visitor's preference and perception and social economic impacts especially in Nigeria Metropolitan. This research worktherefore ishinged on providing this information.

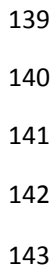
Akure Metropolis is not only the capital of Ondo-State, Nigeria but is one of the selected UNDP MDGs (Millennium Development Goal) Cities in the World this is in addition to the presence of two Millennium villages namely Ikaram and Ibaram in the state (20). The reason for selecting Akure as a millennium city cannot be far-fetched consider the immense potentials of the State in term of natural endowed resources such as petroleum(one of the oil producing state in Nigeria) ; uncultivated forest area and favorable topical climate; large deposit of bitumen; and vast expanse of coastland suitable for fishing, recreation and transportation, proposed UNESCO World Heritage site(Idanre Cultural heritage site less than 10km from Akure).The State has equally witnessed transformation in the last

few years with creation and establishment of government and privately owned recreation centers and other social amenities such as Mega Primary school, Mother and Child hospitals, town beautification(planting of trees/shrubs along the roads,construction of fountain),Neighborhood modern markets and Neighborhood recreation centers. This assertion gives credence to the state as the fastest growing tourist destination in Nigeria. Development of these recreational facilitiesand social amenities and improvement in services offered to the visitors will go a long way in increase patronage which will eventually transform to employment creation, income generation, improve social economic wellbeing for the host community.It is in the light of this phenomenon that this research isundertaken to explore the recreational facilities and services in the state and assessed visitor's preference and perception as a developmental road map towards realizing UNDP MDGs number one objective of eradicating poverty and hunger in MDGs cities by year 2015(21). Research output will provide information on the state of available recreational centers and social amenities inAkureMetropolis; demographic characteristics of the visitors; work force being engaged; preference and perceptions of the participants. This will be of tremendous benefits to the visitors, government and private owners of entertainment and recreation centersand other tourist providers in the development of Park and Recreational Plan(P&RP) for the Millennium city of Akure.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Study area

Ondo State, Nigeria was created on 3 February 1976 from the former Western State. It originally included what is now Ekiti State, which was split off in 1996. The majority of the state's citizens live in urban centers. Ondo State contains the largest number of public schools in Nigeria – over 880 primary schools and 190 secondary schools. Akure is located approximately 700 kilometers South West of Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria and about 350 kilometers to Lagos the former capital of Nigeria. It is located within the tropical rain forest region of Nigeria where rainfall is high throughout the year. The 1991 national population census(22) put the population of Akure at 239,124 and its estimated population in 1996 will be 269,207.



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positioning themselves at strategic points in the recreation sites for a period and walking around the sites in any of the visiting period of two days per week (mostly at the weekend, Friday and Saturday).

2.4 Personal Communications

Personal communications were held with the visitors that were encountered at the sites. This was done basically in order to interact with the participants with a view to obtain first-hand information from them.

2.5 Survey questionnaire

The questionnaire for the survey portion of the study was developed in English, English being the official language in Nigeria. Although the questionnaires were designed for self-administration however the researches were available to guide the respondents who are unable to complete the questionnaire on their own in order to obtain full return and quality data.

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section captured the socio-demographic information of the respondents. The second section contains the non-demographic information.

2.6 Secondary data

Secondary data were obtained in term of the management of the site either it is government owned or individual, time of operation or visiting hours, staff strength and record of visits.

2.7 Sampling technique: Assuming:

A represents = Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden

B represents = Oyemekun Rocks Unity Village

C represents = Neighbourhood Recreation Park

D represents = Prof. Afolayan Wildlife Park

The total numbers of questionnaires administered in different recreation center were determined by taking 10% of the total number of visitors visiting in a week for recreation center A, B, and C while in recreation center D, 10% of the number of visitors that visit the recreation center in a month was taken as the sample size. This decision to take 10% of the number of visitors in a month was as a result of low and inconsistency in the number of visitors visiting the Wildlife Park in a week.

Table 1: Number of administered questionnaire

Name of Recreation Center	Sample size	Questionnaires administered
A	10% of 200 (visitors in a week)	20
B	10% of 200 (visitors in a week)	20
C	10% of 500 (visitors in a week)	50
D	10% of 300 (visitors in a month)	30

The questionnaires were administered on weekends base on Knudson's (1984) judgment that recreational activities are mostly done on weekends.

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188 3. RESULTS

189 3.1 Assessment of the recreation facilities and services

190 This result was obtained from site observation and secondary data collected.

191 Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden

192 Ondo State Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden is owned and managed by the State Ministry of
193 Agriculture. The garden has a collection of tree species interspaced with other shrubs. Sited very
194 close to the sitting arena was a nursery where young trees are raised for future propagation. The
195 garden provides recreation and relaxation facilities and services for its visitors and also offers food
196 and drinks (table 2).

197 **Table 2: Major facilities and services in the botanical garden**

Facilities	Services
Swings	Waiter and busboy services
Bars	Barbecue services
Restaurant	DSTV services
Suya spot	
DSTV facilities	
Parking Space	
Sound systems	

198 The recreation center discharges these aforementioned services to the visitors through a total
199 number of 10 staff and the center receives between 200 to 300 visitors in a week with the highest
200 number of visitor coming during weekend. The staff consists of workers in the junior and senior cadre
201 with average salary of ₦20, 000(\$118) per month. Entry to the botanical garden is free but visitors will
202 need to pay for foods and drinks purchased.

203 Neighborhood Recreational Park (NRP)

204 This recreation center is one of the transformations the town has experienced in the recent time. The
205 center is equipped with modern recreational facilities that serve the aspiration and satisfaction of the
206 participants (Table 3).

207 **Table 3: Major facilities and services being provided at NRP**

Facilities	Services
2 snooker boards	Waiter and busboy services
1 standard table tennis board	Barbecue services
A basketball court with its equipment	DSTV services
A D.J(Disk Jockey) house and stage	Disk Jockey services
Suya and Asun spot	Cooks
8 small bars comprising 4 chairs each and a small middle table	
Small and big halls for relaxation	
Restaurant	
DSTV facilities	
Projector for projecting live football matches	
Parking space	

208 The recreation center receives 500 visitors in a week and has 15 staff excluding the manager of the
209 center. The salary of the workers vary between ₦10,00 to ₦40,000(\$59-\$236) per month. Entry to the

recreation center is free but visitors pay for other services like playing of games, drinks and foods (table 4).

Table 4: The park charges for the use of recreation facilities

Recreation facilities	Amount charged for use
Table Tennis	₦50 for a complete round
Snookers	₦100(<\$1) for a game
Basketball	Formally ₦100 per person participating in a match but now free due to complaints from players.

Oyemekun Rocks and Unity Village

This is a privately owned recreational center in Akure metropolis, it is a natural outcrop (rocky formation) and it is regarded as one of the wonders of nature with inscription of geographical map of the world, human and animals. The rock has caves (grottos) with sitting arrangement for relaxation (Table 5).

Table 5: Recreational facilities and services offered at Oyemekun rock

Facilities	Services
Swings	Waiter and busboy services
Indoor games: Scrabble, Chess and WHOT Card	Barbecue services
Bars	DSTV services
Executive canopy for party	
Resting room	
DSTV facilities	
Asun/Pepper soup spot	
Fish pond	
Parking space	

Oyemekun rock receives over 200 visitors in a week and has a total number of 6 staffs excluding the manager of the place. Average salary of the workers excluding that of the Manager was put at ₦10,000(\$59) per month. While entry to the recreation center for relaxation is free, visitors paid for other services rendered. In addition to these, excursionists and tourists that came to experience nature and viewing were charged extra fees. The recreation center also serves as night club for night fun seekers.

Table 6: Facilities, services and charges in Oyemekun rocks

Facilities	Amount charge
Swings	₦20, ₦30, ₦50 depending on the swing
Excursionist	Student: ₦100, Adult: ₦500
Executive canopy with sound system	₦20,000
Executive canopy without sound system	₦10,000

Prof. Afolayan Wildlife Park

Prof. A. Afolayan Wildlife Park serves both in-situ and ex-situ conservation purposes. While some parts of the Park are designed as zoological garden (ex-situ) the other parts serve as undisturbed semi-wild area or sanctuary (in-situ). Species of animals on display in the zoo and the facilities provided are as listed (Table 7).

Table 7: List of animals and recreational facilities in the Wildlife Park

Animals (with scientific names)	Facilities and Services
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Crocodile (<i>Crocodylus niloticus</i>)	Swings
Giant grass cutter (<i>Thryonomys swinderianus</i>)	Indoor games
Red flanked duikers (<i>Cephalophus rufilatus</i>)	Picnic sites
Gazelle (<i>Gazelladorcas</i>)	Pens of Animals
Duck (<i>Anasspp</i>)	Parking space
Goose (<i>Anseranser domesticus</i>)	Museum of Natural History
Crown crane (<i>Grus balearica</i>)	Tour guiding/ Park Interpretation
Ostrich (<i>Struthiocamelus</i>)	
Red capped mangabey (<i>Cercocebus torquatus</i>)	
Baboon (<i>Papio Anubis</i>)	
Tantalus monkey (<i>Cercopithecus ethiops</i>)	
Patas monkey (<i>Erythrocebus patas</i>)	

The park receives over 300 visitors in a month and over 2000 visitors in a year. Visitors to the park are charged before entering the park, student and young children pay ₦100(<1\$) while adults pay ₦200(>\$1). After the payment, visitors can use all the facilities provided without having to pay any extra charges but the visitors need to pay for drinks and food. The park has (3) three staffs on shift (morning, afternoon and evening), two gardeners and two night guard.

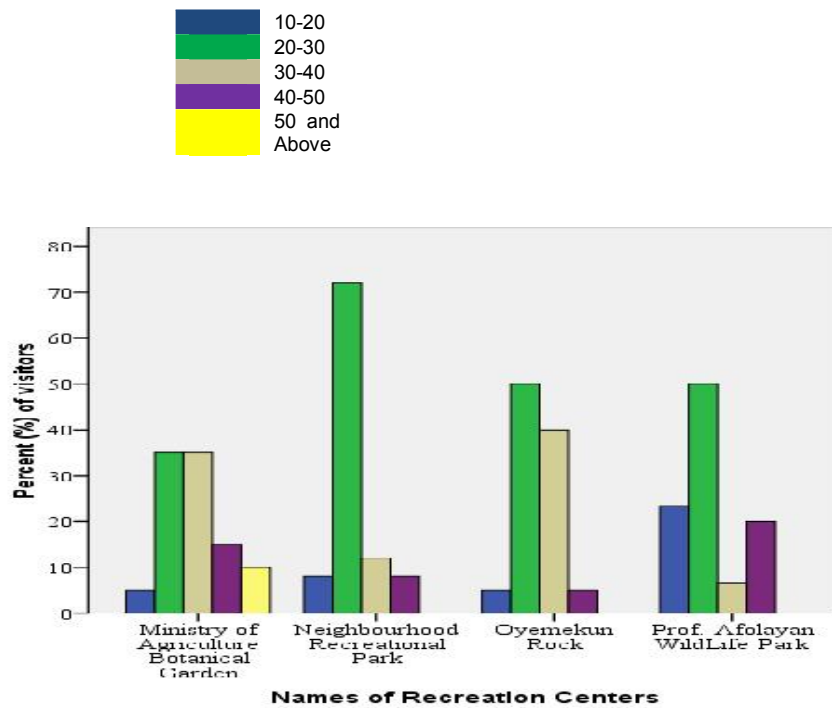
3.2 Comparison of visitors' profile

3.2.1 Age composition of visitors

Findings from this study revealed greater percentage of visitors to recreation centres in Akure metropolis are within the age range of 20 – 30 years. None of the recreation centres, excluding Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden receives visitors over 50 years of age and above. The percentage of visitors with age range of 20 – 30 and between 30 – 40 years are the same (35%) for Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden. Young children between the ages of 10 – 20 were recorded low (5%, 8% and 5%) in all the recreation centres except in Prof. Afolayan Wildlife Park where the percentage of visitors between 10 – 20 years was significantly high (23%) (figure 2).

261 Age

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263 **Figure 2: Age of the visitors**

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265 3.2.2 Gender classification of visitors

266 Male visitors to the recreation centers in Akure metropolis are higher (85%,88%,95%) than their
 267 female counterparts and the difference between the percentages of male to female is very significant
 268 in the entire recreation center except in Prof Afolayan Wildlife Park where the ratio of male (53.3%) to
 269 female (46.7%) is not significant . Oyemekun rock receives the highest percentage of male visitors
 270 (95%) and lowest percentage of female visitors (5%).

271 3.2.3 Classification by Marital Status

272 Greater percentage of visitors to Oyemekun rock (70%), Wildlife Park (66.7%) and Neighbourhood
 273 Recreation Park (80%) were single while most (55%) of the visitors to the Botanical Garden were
 274 married. NeighbourhoodCategory of people that are divorcee, widow, widowers fall intoothers (10%)

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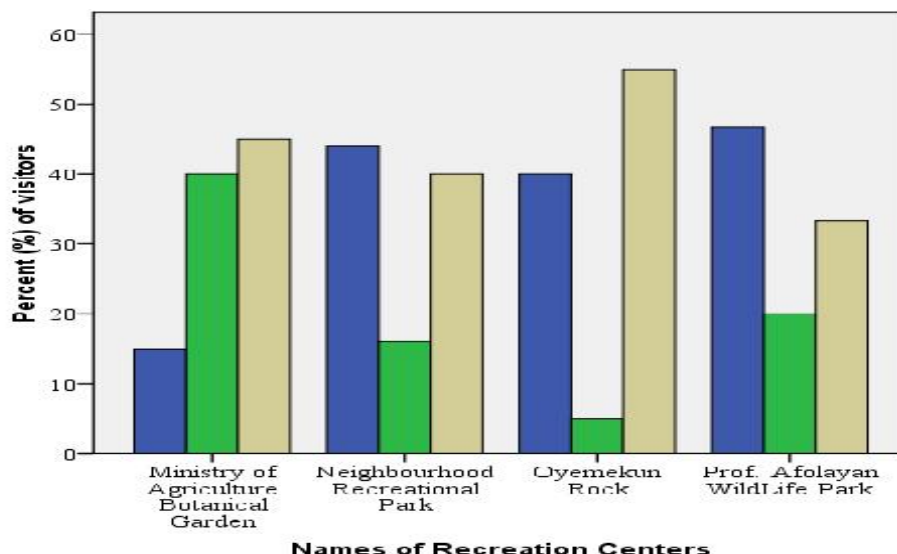
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3.2.4 Occupations of visitors

Private work owners recorded the highest percentage of patronage to both the Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden and Oyemekun rocks as they represented 45% and 55% respectively. This is unlike the result obtained in Neighbourhood recreational Park and Prof. Afolayan Wildlife Park where students represented 44% and 46.7% respectively. The lowest percentage of civil servants patronage



was obtained in Oyemekun rock with 5% (figure 3).

Occupation

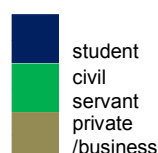


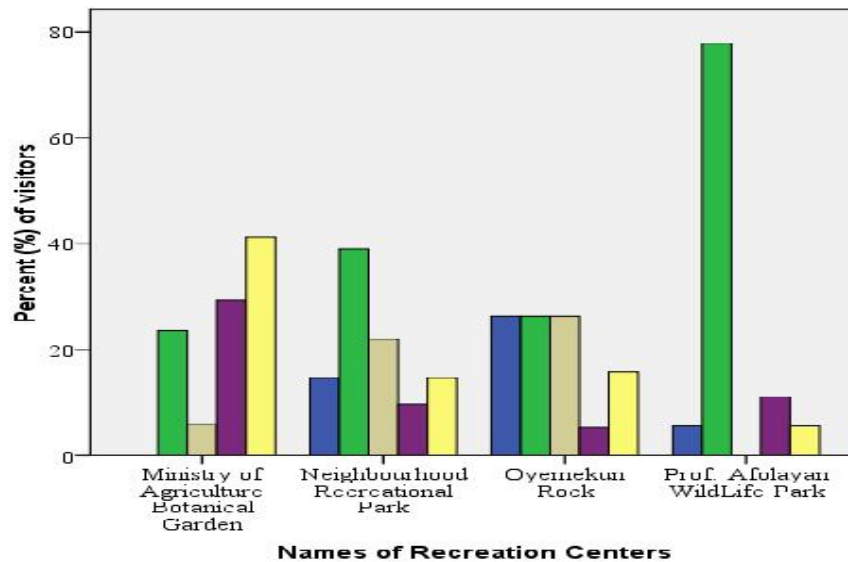
Figure 3: Level of occupation of the respondents

3.2.5 Visitors' Level of Education

Greater percentage of the visitors to all the recreation centers possessed tertiary education qualification with the Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden recorded the highest percentage (95%) of visitors in term of tertiary level of education. Prof. Afolayan Wildlife Park receives a higher number of visitors from primary school (16.7%) compared to other centres.

3.2.6 Visitors' Monthly Income

Greater percentage (41.2%) of the visitors to Ministry of Agriculture botanical garden earned ₦100,000 and above monthly compared to the visitors to botanical garden. Highest proportion (39%) of the visitors to Neighborhood Recreational Park earned between ₦5000 – ₦20000 monthly. Majority (77.8%) of visitors to Prof. Afolayan Wildlife Park earned between ₦5000 – ₦20000 (figure 4).



Monthly income (N)

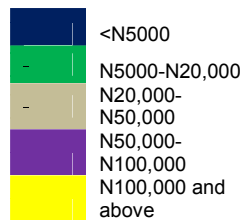


Figure 4: Income

3.4 Purpose of visit

Highest proportion of visitors to Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden went for relaxation unlike the patronage to Neighbourhood Recreational Park that was majorly for enjoyment. The result also revealed that relaxation is the main reason visitors to Oyemekun rocks patronise the centre while greater percentage of the visitors to Prof. Afolayan Wildlife Park are for sightseeing (figure 5).

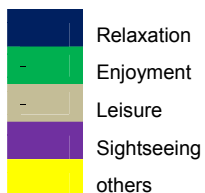
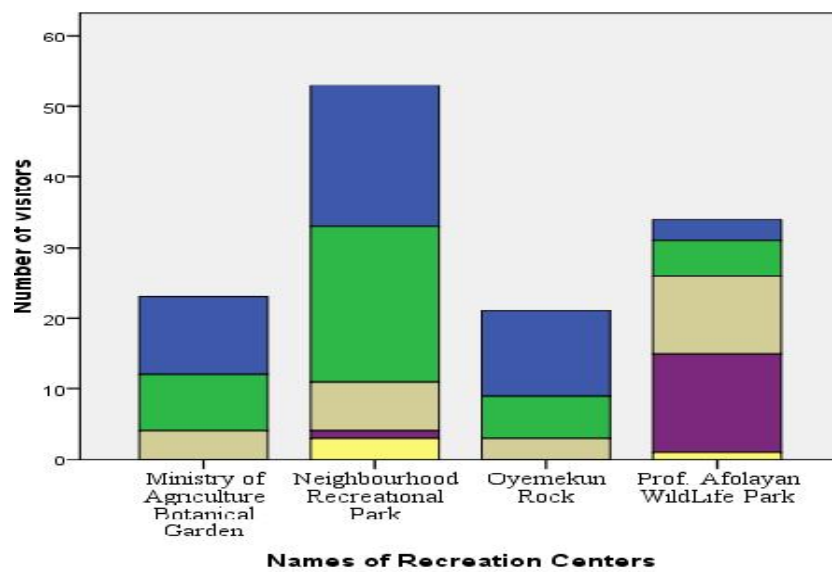
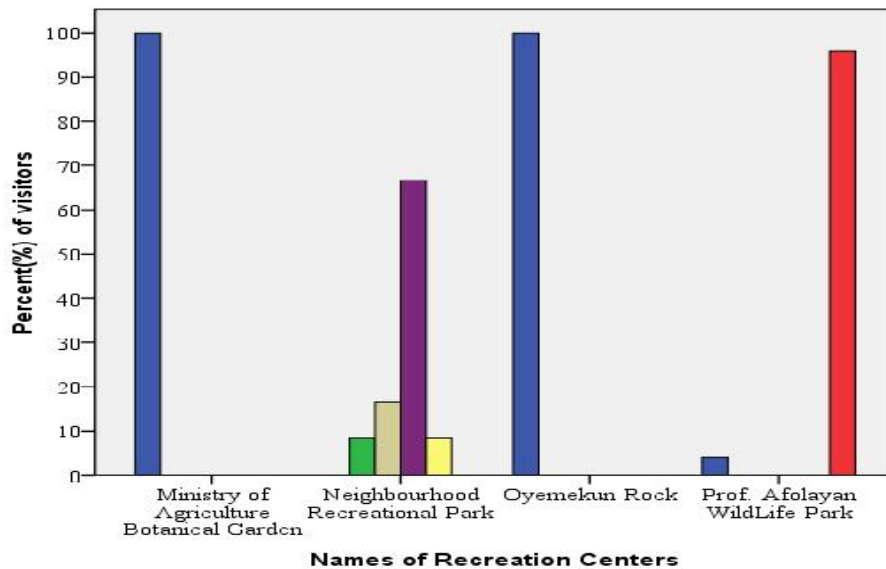


Figure 5: Purpose of visits

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350 3.4 Major attraction

351 The natural environment in both Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden and Oyemekun rock form
 352 the major attraction. Neighbourhood Recreational Park has the highest number of attractions which
 353 include the Basketball court, DSTV/Football watching facilities, Snookers and Table tennis. Wild
 354 animals that are being displayed in the zoological garden of Prof Afolayan Wildlife Park forms the
 355 major attraction (figure 6).



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Major attractions



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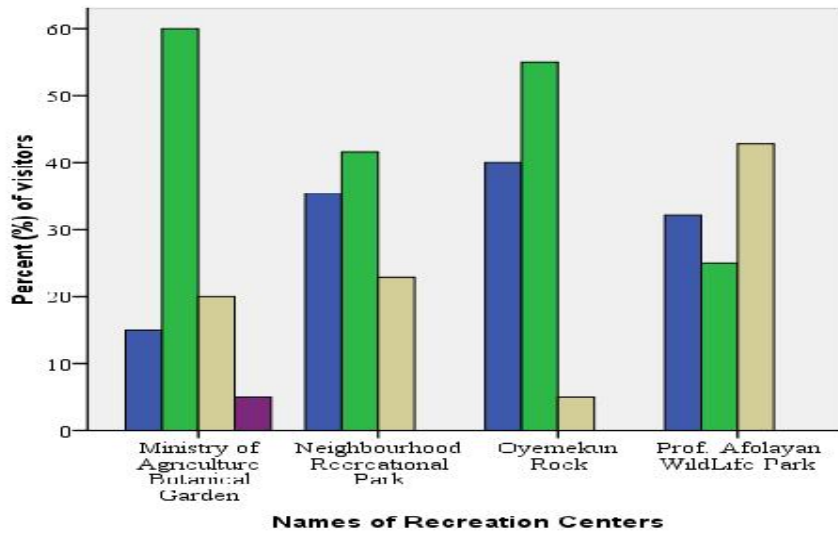
359 **Figure 6: Major attraction to the centres**

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361 3.5 Quality of service offered

362 The largest percentage (60%) of the visitors to the Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden rated the
 363 quality of service provided as good while 5% indicated this to be bad. Majority (41.7%) of visitors in
 364 Neighbourhood Recreational Park rated the quality of the service to be good while greater percentage
 365 (55%) of visitors in Oyemekun rock rated the service quality to the place to be good (figure 7).

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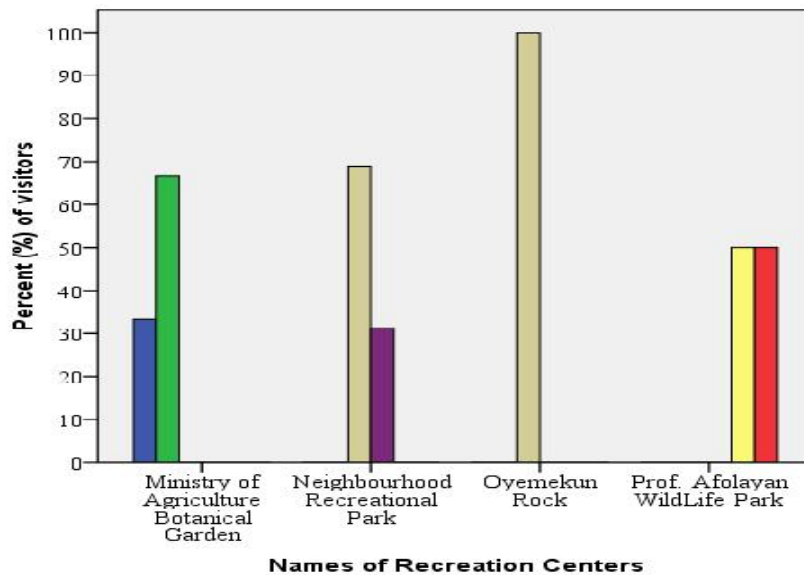
Quality of service



Figure 7: Quality of service being offered at the centres

3.6 Preference for the Recreation Centres

The result from the study reveals that security (66.67%) and proximity to the road (33.33%) are the two major reasons visitors preferred patronizing Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden. All the visitors to Oyemekun rocks prefer the recreation center simply because the place is close to their home of residence the same thing applicable to what was obtainable in Neighbourhood Recreational Center (68.75%). Visit for educational purpose and game viewing represents the same percentage (50%) for the preference to Prof. Afolayan Wildlife Park (figure 8).



Preference

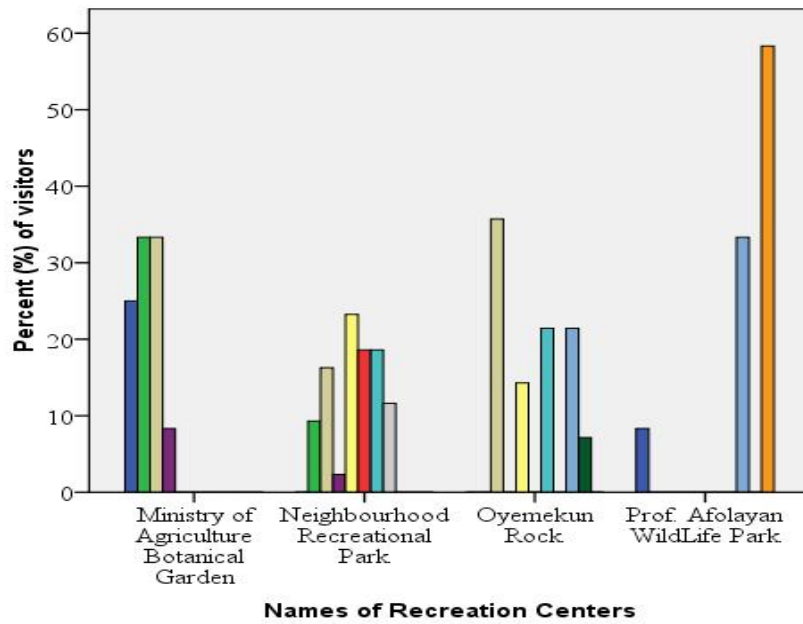


Figure 8: Preference of visitors to the recreation centers

3.7 Facilities/services enjoyed

The facilities most enjoyed at the Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden are the music and bar (33.3%). In Neighbourhood Recreational Park, DSTV facility (23.26%) is the most enjoyed facility unlike Oyemekun rock where the bar represents (35.71%). Animal watching / game viewing represent the greater percentage (58.3%) of the facility being enjoy at Prof. Afolayan's Park (figure 9).

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408 Facility enjoyed most



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411 **Figure 9: Facility enjoyed most**

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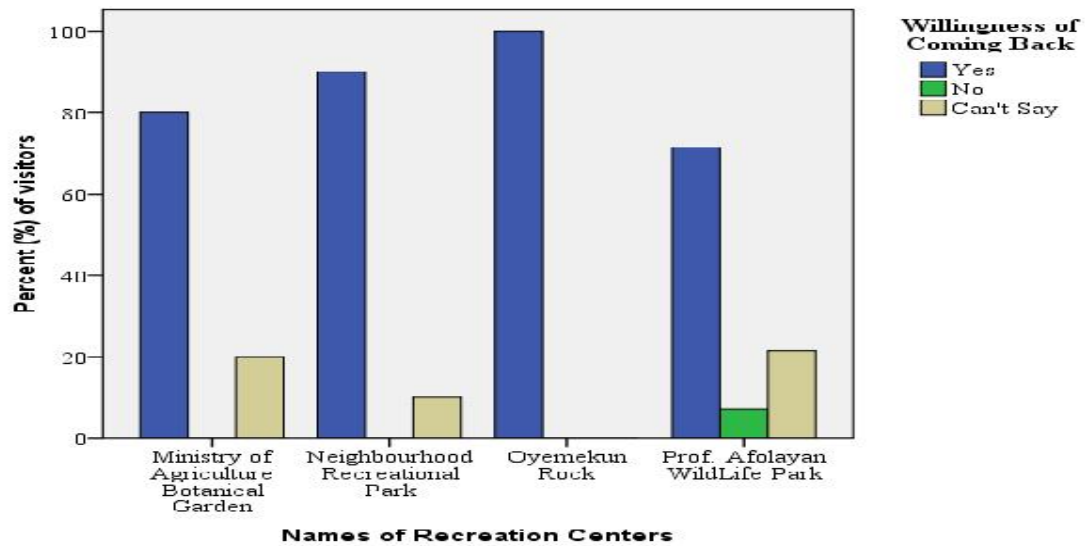
413 3.8 Willingness of coming back

414 The result from the study shows that greater percentages (80%, 90%, 100% and 71.4%) of the
 415 visitors are willing to pay back a visit to the all the recreation centres used for the study.

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Willingness to come back

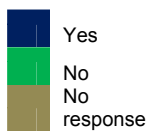


Figure 10: Willingness to come back

3.9 Visitor's rating of major facilities in individual recreation centre.

Major facilities at each of the recreation centres were rated as shown in table 8.

Table 8: Recreation Center Rating

Recreation Center	Facilities	Rating of the standard of the facilities		
		Good (%)	Fair (%)	Poor (%)

Botanical Garden	Bar	50	50	0
	Restaurant	50	44.44	5.56
	Swings	23.08	61.54	15.38
Neighbourhood Recreational Park	Bar	74	26	0
	Restaurant	60.42	35.42	4.17
	Basketball Court	88	10	2
	Table Tennis	75.51	24.49	0
	Snookers	73.91	19.57	6.52
Oyemekun Rocks	Bar	85	15	0
	Swings	83.33	16.67	0
	Indoor Games like Chess, Scrabble etc.	42.11	47.37	10.53
Wildlife Park	Swings	47.62	33.33	19.05
	Picnic Site	46.43%	39.29	14.29
	Animal Pen	44.44	48.15	7.41

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439 4. DISCUSSION

440 There are indications that Akure metropolis, the Ondo-State capitalis living to actualize its objective of
 441 providing employment, income and other social services for the host communities as capsulize in
 442 UNDP,MDGs objectives. It is perceived that harnessing the potentials of the recreational facilities and
 443 services in Akure Metropolisas identified in this write up will go along way in addressing one of the
 444 critical eight UNDP, MDG which is to eradicate poverty and hunger by 2015(21). Tourism
 445 development creates employment opportunities for the community, improve their income, reducing
 446 poverty and transforming their lives (27; 28;29 and 10). Information on the demographic
 447 characteristics of visitors, purpose of visits, preference and perception, income of the staff e.t.c are
 448 therefore necessary to achieve this aim.

449 4.1 Demographic characteristics of the visitors/visitor's profile

450 This research finding has established that greater percentage of the visitors to all the recreation sites
 451 in Akure metropolis were between the age range of 20-30 years and that none of the centres
 452 excluding Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden receives visitors over 50 years of age and
 453 above.This support the findings of (11), that the current data indicates that the predominant age
 454 groups who actively participate in outdoor recreation activities are those in the 25-54 bracket,
 455 although participation rates differ from one activity to another.This research study also indicated that
 456 patterns of discretionary spending also vary with age. Visitors in the age range of 20-30 years was
 457 observed to be low income earnershowever they constituted greater percentage of visitors to most of
 458 these siteswith the purpose of watching television, relaxation, enjoyment and game
 459 viewing.According to Anderson and Looms (30) greater population of participant in recreation
 460 activities in U.S.A are those in lower age group of between 20-30 years. The authors opined that
 461 those around the age of 40 had the least leisure time, likely because of workload and busy taking care
 462 of children.More males were found visiting the recreation sites than the female. The margin was so
 463 wide in all except in Prof. Afolayan Park where female came with their wards to observe animals and
 464 picnicking. This supports the findings of (31) that more males were seen in parks than females (62%
 465 vs 38%), and they outnumbered females in all park areas except playgrounds and the track, where
 466 the numbers were about equal.

4.2 Assessment of Recreational facilities and services

The identified recreational facilities in Akure metropolis can be categorized into two broad types, these are nature based resources and man-made resources or built resources (32). The nature based facilities include Prof. T.A. Afolayan Wildlife Sanctuary situated in Federal University of Technology, Akure, Alagbaka Botanical Garden at Alagbaka and Oyemekun Rock. The man made facilities include Neighborhood recreation sites in Ilu-nla. Others include Modern and Child Hospitals, ancient Deji's Palace and Mega School. These resources can also be categorized as outdoor and indoor facilities. According to (2) recreation can be classified based on individual's perspective. Prof. Afolayan Park although can be classified as a nature based site it equally offer other attractions for outdoor recreation, game viewing and relaxation. The major attractions being provided in all these recreation centers include natural environment, indoor and outdoor games, basketball courts, watching the television and bar. All these were indicated to be good and satisfying the purpose of visits of the participants for relaxation, enjoyment, leisure and sightseeing. The participants expressed their preference for security and proximity (for those visiting Alagbaka Botanical Garden), closer to their home of residence (Oyemekun Rock and in addition to availability of sporting facilities (gym) for those visiting Neighborhood Recreation Centre) and education and game viewing (for those visiting Prof. Afolayan Wildlife Park). Visitor's preference differs from Centre to the other and it could be deduced to be individualistic. According to (24) outdoor recreation brings joy and pleasure to many people, with the provision of appropriate recreational opportunities" critical to the satisfaction of an individual's need for cognitive and aesthetic stimulation. The operators of these centers need to improve on the facilities being provided while those being enjoyed most must be maintained others need to be improved on and additional facilities have to be provided to boost their patronage.

4.3 Visitors' perception of the recreation facilities

The recreation centres offer quite a good number of services to their visitors. The services being enjoyed most in each of the recreation centres were indicated to include Bar service (drinks) and Music (Ministry of Agriculture Botanical Garden), Watching of football on the television (Neighbourhood recreation Park), Bar service (drinks) (Oyemekun rock) and watching of animal or game viewing (Prof. Afolayan Wildlife Park).

(33) stated that "in order to see how tourism affects small local communities, one has to look into the residents' own perceptions of the tourism impacts". According to (34), there have been widespread public links uses of recreational activities to overall happiness, family unity, health, improved educational opportunities and deterrence of crime and substance abuse in America. This has been recognised as the positive contributions or impacts of recreation to quality of life of the participants. The fact that greater percentage of the participants (80%, 90%, 100% and 71.4%) indicated their willingness to come back is a good indication that their satisfaction and purpose of their visits have been achieved. (35) opined that Understanding the reason why tourists return to a destination were fundamental issues for destination managers since revisit could produce more sales revenue and minimise the costs. According to (16) recreation is a discretionary, If it doesn't seem worthwhile, the individual can choose to avoid the experience or to participate somewhere or somehow else. The recreation centres were perceived to be having positive impacts on the social lives of the host communities since the centres offer purposive opportunities for relaxation, enjoyment, watching television, education and game watching or sightseeing.

4.4 Recreational facilities and Employment creation

A total of forty staff was observed to be engaged at the four recreation centres visited in Akure Metropolis. Average salary of the staff at each of the centres vary this is because while some are privately owned others are under the control of the government. Average salary of the workers in all these recreation centres was put at N10,000 / month (\$59). Thus, none of the staff earned less than \$1 per day which is the number one target of UNDP MDG towards addressing Goal number 1 which

is to halve between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of the people whose income is less than \$1 a day (21). Prof. Afolayan Wildlife Park was established as research laboratory for the student in the department of Ecotourism and Wildlife Management and natural resources of the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA). Apart from providing education service for the students and the visitors, money generated from this Park account for greater percentage of Internal Generated Revenue for FUTA annually. Official records on the amount of money being generated at each centre were not disclosed for reasons considered as a way to evade tax and for security. All these are good indications of the economic impacts of recreation to provide job for the host communities and also improve their income (36).

5. CONCLUSION

Akure Metropolis is endowed with natural and man-made recreational resources that are of social and economic importance to the host communities. It is one of the UNDP MDGs Cities in Nigeria with necessary potential to realise if not all but one and the foremost goal of eradicating poverty and hunger by year 2015. This research output will serve as blueprint and developmental road towards realising this objective.

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