

APPRAISAL OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS BEHAVIOURAL PATTERNS IN THE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The unbalanced academic life of Nigerian Students tends to increase the vigour and tension in students' social life in Nigeria higher institutions, hence the menace of students' involvement in cultism and insanity which increases during examination periods. It has also been revealed that these phenomena are mostly induced by the decreased or nonchalant attitude of students towards recreation, probably due to, ignorance of the benefits derivable from such or the non availability or inadequacy of the necessary recreational facilities. The social life of students on the campus are gradually decreasing in friendliness probably because of lack of sporting activities and spaces to bring them together for necessary relaxation to enhance good relationship amongst them. This paper is therefore set to examine the effect of sports and recreation in improving the students' physiological, sociological and psychological status in the campuses of Nigeria Higher Institutions.

Keywords: Recreational Facilities, Students' behaviours, Tertiary Institution, Ekiti State.

Introduction

Recreation is a form of play or amusement, refreshment of body and mind and something that pleasantly occupies one's time after work is done. It can also be seen as an activity that involves play which allows for self expression and from which relaxation, pleasure and

satisfaction can be derived. According to Butler (1960), recreation is an activity which is voluntarily undertaken and practically motivated to leisure and satisfaction.

Although recreation should be generally conceived as the consumption of leisure and leisure facilities for the purpose of refreshing oneself, a distinction in line with Butter's view can be readily made on the one hand between active or outdoor recreation involving participants in sports and outdoor games, driving, fishing for pleasure, swimming and climbing; and on the other hand passive or indoor recreation in which the individual is essentially a spectator as in sight seeing watching and listening to electronic gadgets and relaxation with indoor game. Such distinction stems from an appreciation of the fact that for different individuals or the same person at different times. Recreation could vary from active competition through some form of amusement to quiet relaxation or somber meditation. The opinion conforms to Northern's (1979) assertion that the land for recreational purposes involves mostly outdoor activities on site. Consciously developed and equipped with facilities that permit both active and passive recreational involvement.

The main purpose of recreation is basically the relaxation and revitalization of people so that they may efficiently return to their routine activities, which are not recreational but economically gainful. It involves physical, mental and emotional activities. It can reward the participants in terms of intellectual, physical and social growth, better health, improved citizenship and other qualities of personal development. Several researches have been carried out to determine the positive benefits (both physical and psychological) of recreational open spaces on human beings. The role of the open spaces in providing a healthful environment was also enumerated in some Nigerian cities Lagos (Akinola Arikawe 1985) Ile-Ife (Falade 1988) and Ibadan (Obateru 1981). But the true appreciation of the contributions which recreation could make to the quality of life in the environment seems to be just, commanding only more than lip service it receives from public officials. Hence the need for more researches on the existing situations and the necessity for appropriate suggestions for improvement and sustenance.

Campus Environment and Recreational Needs

Structured education in Nigeria started as far back as 1948 with the establishment of University College Ibadan. Shortly after independence in 1960, four more Universities came into existence. These are the university of Lagos (now Moshood Abiola University) University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and the University of Nigeria Nsukka.

The number of higher institutions in Nigeria has continued to be on the increase since then and by 1990, there were 22 Federal and State Universities, 16 Federal and State Polytechnics, and Six Degree-awarding Colleges of Education. Today there are about 284 higher institutions in Nigeria: 107 universities, 78 Polytechnics and 99 Colleges of Education (Private Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges inclusive).

Coupled with continuous increase in the number of higher institutions in Nigeria is the ever increasing number of students in take to each institution. This necessitates a corresponding greater demand on the available recreational and sporting facilities. The result is that the available facilities have become grossly inadequate thereby requiring an expansion of the existing ones as well as the addition of new proposals. The rigours of academics could become too much for students with the attendant of a negative effect where there are no provision for leisure time for recreation, thus confirming the saying that “all works and no play make Jack a dull boy”. To balance these academic rigours, students have need of the facilities within the campus where they can recreate or participate in physical activities to enable them return to their studies with renewed vigour and vitality. Sports centres in the campuses are therefore at an advantaged position to ascertain the kind of balance required in the academic life of students.

To propagate sports among Nigerian students in various campuses, various sporting competitions were held bi-annually or annually under the auspices of the following bodies: Nigeria University Games Authority (NUGA), Nigeria Polytechnic Games Authority (NIPOGA) and National Colleges of Education Games (NACEGA). This has helped in

unifying students from various geo-political zones and ethnic groups in the country. This development has led to the provision, renovation and maintenance of recreational facilities of the hosting institutions. Since the programme is periodical and sectional, the effect may therefore not be continuously far-reaching and effective in all the campus.

Several authorities such as Federal Ministry of Sports and Youth Development, FIFA, Olympic etc regard sports as a social institution that faithfully teaches and reinforces esteemed societal values, thereby contributing to socializing men and women in the major cultural, social and behavioural patterns of their society. In this regard, sport contributes to the development, stability and future progress of individual and the society at large. So also are the development of physical fitness, mental alertness, self-control, self –discipline, and appropriate blend of competitive values within individuals through sports. The identified factors which influence recreational behaviour among urban residents include age, level of income, level of education, distance of users residence to recreational centre, sex and the number of available recreational facilities (Obateru 1981). However, other factors which influence recreational pursuit as highlighted by Falade and Bakare (1992) are the amount of available time to leisure and other factors relating to recreational areas such as accessibility, landscape quality, marketing and publicity.

Furthermore, the increasing demand for sports had been attributed to man's changing way of life by the diminishing requirements of physical efforts both in man's occupation and daily life as a direct result of scientific and technological process. Researchers have also revealed that the change from muscular work to sedentary work has led to over –weight (obesity) becoming largely psycho-nervous in origin, culminating in tension syndromes which exhibit more harm longer lasting effect than those associated with purely muscular fatigue. However, it has been observed that members of the institution community see no reason why they should earmark time for recreational: probably because of ignorance of benefits derivable from such, or because of lack of provision of such facilities. Therefore, this study strives to investigate the attitudes of the people to recreate in the campuses in Nigeria and proffer

appropriate recommendations towards encouraging or improving their attitude towards recreation.

Research Methodology

The 360 research questionnaires prepared for the study were distributed among the users of the higher institutions sport centres spread across Ekiti States (for the purpose of this research, College of Education, Polytechnics and Universities are classified as higher institutions. The higher institutions are: Colleges of Education, Ikere Ekiti (COE), Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti (EKSU), The Federal Polytechnic Ado Ekiti (FEDPO) and The Federal University Oye Ekiti (FUOYE). The rest are Crown Polytechnic Ado –Ekiti (CPA) and Afe Babalola University Ado –Ekiti (ABUAD). While the first two institutions are owned by the Ekiti State Government, both Federal Polytechnic Ado Ekiti and Federal University Oye Ekiti are owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria and the last two are owned by private individuals.

Incidentally, these institutions spread across the three sensational districts of the state which give the research a very wide coverage. 60 questionnaires were distributed in each school randomly among members of the higher institutions; which included students, academic and non-academic members of staff. Priority was given to students in the administration of the questionnaire because of their population and role as the major users of the centres. About 65% were distributed among the students, 20% and 15% for non-academic and academic members respectively.

However, 318 questionnaires (88%) 56 from COE, 49 from CPA 64 from FEDPO, 54 from ABUAD, 52 from EKSU and 43 from FUOYE were retrieved for the data analysis.

The following variables were investigated in the study (a) Status of the respondents (b) Purpose of participation in sports and recreation (c) Impact of recreation on academic life of people on campus (d) Impact of active participation in sports and recreation on cultism (e) Rating of the effects of sports on human relationship in the campus (f) Reasons for non-participation by respondents (g) Rating of facilities available in the campus.

Findings and Discussion

It is revealed in table 1 that a total of 318 respondents were interviewed for the research. Out of this, 213 (69%) were students, 43 (14%) were lecturers while 63 (19%) were administrative staff which is otherwise called non-academic staff. This indicates that despite the fact that the highest percentage (69%) of users are students, other categories of people such as academic and non-academic staff also make use of the institutions sport centres.

The study again revealed that recreation recorded the highest percentage of 59.5 as the major purpose of participating in sports. This is followed by the quest for physical fitness which recorded an average of 33% response. However, some respondents (77%) chose to participate in sporting activities simply because it has to do with their future careers or it is their course of study.

Still from the result in table 1, a total of 97 respondents (30.6%) strongly believed that sports had improved their learning ability and health. They further explained that they always return to classroom with renewed vigour and strength as a result, they are mentally alert for their lectures. One could link this response to the fact that if an idle hand is a workshop for the devil, then an idle body will also be a workshop for sickness and diseases. Also, an incredible number of respondents totaling 153(48.1%) agreed that sporting activities and recreation excellently promote a good level of friendliness and mutual interactions among students. This is a fact since students in a higher institution any where in the world are neither from the same family nor from the same socio-cultural background. Though few people about 21.3% still see sporting activities as unseriousness and wastage of time, the positive aspect of the result is encouraging.

Down the line in Table 1, the result further revealed that active sports have great tendency to influence participant's human relationship. People that cannot easily express their mind to others due to phobic disorder of audience and spectators, find such easy to do with sports bringing them into contact with people from different backgrounds (races, sex and religion).

Thus, people who were introverts and become extroverts to recorded 29.9%, while those from extroverts to a more stable extrovert's character recorded 70.1% response.

On whether active participation in sports and recreation could reduce students involvement in cult related activities, more than 2/3 of the total respondents (73.2%) believed and agreed that a sure way to reduce to the barest minimum the national syndrome is by getting all the students involved in sporting activities in all campuses of Nigeria higher institutions.

Despite the warm embracement of sports and recreation as a panacea to ever increasing secret cult activities in Nigeria campuses, some see it as an open invitation to sports men and women especially the stars among them. At this juncture, I believe that if sporting facilities are adequate in various campuses and are fully utilized by the students, they (students) will not have such time for such social vices.

The analysis also showed that people do not want to participate in sporting activities because of inadequate facilities and ignorance of benefits derivable from sport. While about 31.7% went for the former a commanding number of interviewees (138) about 43.40% agreed with the latter. Some also attributed their non-participation in sporting activities and recreation to lack of time as they are always busy with their studies and religious activities. Only a very few (7.2%) confirmed that laziness on their part was the sole cause.

On the issue of the sporting facilities in the six campuses visited, it is disheartening to note that almost all the campuses failed to have some basic sporting facilities. While as much as 191 interviewees (about 60%) claimed that they did not have adequate sport facilities, only 58 out of 318 interviewed (18.3%) confirmed that they had enough sport facilities. It was also revealed further that it was only in Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD) that sporting facilities were a bit adequate.

It is also revealed that most of the sport facilities are not well maintained; hence they are mostly in the state of disrepair. In EKSU, the two football pitches are not standard and are

only used for practicing rather than competition. It is very surprising that none of the sampled campuses had swimming pool whether standard or sub-standard. A sport that has gained a worldwide popularity and recognition While only (FEDPO had squash Racket hall, Hockey pitch and Hand ball court, the only sport facility available at CPA was a rectangular shape they called football pitch which lacks grasses and goal posts.

Generally, the sport facilities in the six campuses as revealed by table 2 are grossly inadequate. Even the very few ones on ground are in bad conditions. The study has thus evaluated the importance of sporting facilities in higher institutions in Ekiti State with regards to the various programmes, they serve. It also focused on the available sporting facilities, the conditions of the facilities recreational satisfaction of users and the appraisal of their influence on the behavioural pattern of users.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Based on the various facts that emerged from this study, the following recommendations are therefore made.

1. The study revealed that students mostly patronize the recreational facilities as expected. However, other members of the institution community should be encouraged to actively participate in the use of the centres, to entrench adequate control and maintenance of the existing facilities.
2. The facilities provided in the institutions understudy are grossly inadequate for social and intellectual satisfaction of the students. The authorities should therefore declare state of emergency in sport and beam their search light on the facilities they are lacking.
3. With the expected facilities made available by the schools' authorities, they (the authorities) should therefore constantly arrange inter-unit games within the institution and with other sister institutions. This would subdue the idleness in students, which causes bad association and the attendant.
4. It is evidently clear from the submission that the benefits derivable from regular participation in sports and recreation include vigor, feeling of well-being, weight reduction, and resistance to stress, obedience to rules, good relationship and ability to

cope with emergencies. These are necessary prowess required by students to sustain their academic and social life both during the lecture and examination periods on the campus and should be encouraged.

5. Authorities such as National Commission on Colleges of Education (N.C.C.E.) and National Universities Commission (NUC) should not be concerned only with the academic standards of higher institutions, they should set up a board each to plan, execute, supervise and monitor sporting and recreational activities and projects in the institutions. This will improve the students' social and psychological value and enhance their academic pursuit in life in particular and improve societal values in general.
6. Higher institutions in Ekiti State should be encouraged by their authorities to host National and zonal sporting competitions. This will go a long way in updating the already existing sporting facilities and putting in place new ones that will be required by such competitions.

The inventory, analysis and assessments carried out in the study have identified the wealth of sporting and recreational resources in higher institutions in Ekiti State. The lopsidedness in the use of the facilities by students and inadequacy of the facilities pose a challenge to the authorities and other members of the institution community. It could be concluded that sports are forms of diversion, in which the participants become completely immersed in activities that can provide relieve to tensions an emotions.

Hence, it would reduce cultism, subdue depression and promote a high level of discipline, excellence, dedication, determination, dependability and a better self- image expected in the society.

It is hoped that if the above recommendations are implemented, the higher institutions in Nigeria in general and Ekiti State in particular will be devoid of its untold tension and stress.

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**TABLE 1: RESPONSE OF USERS OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN THE
CAMPUSES STUDIED**

<i>ITEMS</i>	<i>RESPONSES IN PERCENTAGE</i>							
1 Personal data respondents	COE	CPA	FEDPO	ABUAD	EKSU	FUOYE	Total	%of total
a. Students	38	33	43	36	35	28	213	67.00
b. Academic	07	06	09	08	07	06	43	14.00
c. Non – academic staff	11	10	12	10	10	09	62	19.00
d. Total	56	49	64	54	52	43	318	100
2. Purpose of participation in sports								
a. recreation	30	31	36	32	35	25	189	59.50
b. Physical fitness	16	16	24	18	13	18	105	33.00
c. Future career	07	01	04	03	02	-	17	05.30
d. Course of Study	03	01	-	01	02	-	07	20.20
3. Opinion on impact of sports on students								
a. waste of time	11	07	05	02	05	02	32	10.00
b. improves learning ability and health	16	16	25	18	07	15	97	30.60
c. increases unseriousness	05	05	08	04	08	06	36	11.30
d. Increases friendliness	24	21	26	30	32	20	153	48.10

4. Impact of active participation in sports and recreation on cultism								
a. Increase cult activities	16	18	17	05	22	07	85	26.80
b. Reduces cult activities	40	31	47	49	30	36	233	73.20
5. Rating the effect of sports on human relationship of sportsmen and women								
a. Extro to Introvert	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
b..Intro to Extrovert	13	16	18	20	13	15	95	29.90
c. Extrovert to stable extrovert	43	33	46	34	39	28	223	70.10
d. Introvert to less stable Introvert	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6 Why some members do not participate in sports								
a. Lack of time	11	09	10	09	10	07	56	17.70

b. Inadequate sport facilities	20	15	21	17	15	13	101	31.70
c. Laziness	05	03	04	06	03	02	23	7.20
d. ignorance of benefits	20	22	29	22	24	21	138	43.40
7 Rating of sport facilities in the campuses								
a. Adequate	07	02	14	30	04	01	58	18.30
b. Averagely adequate	14	09	20	11	09	06	69	21.74
c. Inadequate	35	38	30	13	39	36	191	60.06

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2012

TABLE 2: SPORTING FACILITIES PROVIDED AT THE CAMPUS

S/N	ITEMS	NUMBER OF AVAILABLE FACILITIES					
		COE	CPA	FEDPO	ABUAD	EKSU	FUOYE
i.	Indoor sports hall	-	-	1	1	-	-
ii.	Football Pitch	1	1	5	1	2	1
iii.	Basketball court	1	-	2	1	-	-
iv.	Lawn Tennis court	1	-	1	1	-	-
v.	Volleyball court	1	-	2	1	-	1
vi.	Handball court	-	-	1	-	-	-
vii.	Hockey pitch court	-	-	1	-	-	-
viii.	Cricket pitch	-	-	-	-	-	-
ix.	Table Tennis hall	-	-	4	2	2	-
x.	Squash Racket hall	-	-	1	-	-	-
xi.	Swimming pool	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2012