

PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS TOWARDS TOURISM AND RECREATION ACTIVITIES IN KWARA STATE UNIVERSITY, MALETE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined perceptions and attitudes of students towards tourism and recreation activities in Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaire. A sample of 100 students were randomly selected from the 8 colleges purposively selected in the University. The number of respondents that were selected from the colleges depended on the population of each college. Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences, Humanities, Management and Social Sciences, Education, Engineering and Technology, Institute of Education, Information and Communication Technology, Pure and Applied Sciences and Institute of Distance and E-learning were all selected for the study. The researcher was able to retrieve 85 copies of questionnaire from the 100 copies administered. It was revealed that Kwara State University students were willing to engage in tourism and recreation activities. Many of the students were constrained to participate in stressing that their studies give opportunity for them to engage in tourism and recreation activities. It was concluded that the student's perceptions and attitudes towards tourism and recreation activities is relatively good. Therefore, it was recommended that, the school must create avenue for students to engage and involve more in tourism and recreation activities and this could be done by creating more sport centres and other recreational activities within the campus. The school should create more tourism centres in order to boost student's involvement in recreation and tourism activities in the school. The school management should ensure that they mandate the students to engage in activities that could help to fresh up their brains.

Keywords: Perception, Attitude, Students, Tourism and Recreation

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism and Recreation are activities that are voluntarily performed in order to gain some social and emotional behaviors in person or in groups during their free time (Kilbas, 2010). This term is a feeling that is formed for satisfaction and well-being (Kilbas, 2010). Tourism and Recreational activities, in which individuals participate so that they can get rid of stress, regain psychological and physical health and have fun (Kocyigit, 2014) play a crucial role in developing social relations (Degenhardt, 2015). However, the studies done indicate that "Peer" sub-dimensions are significant barriers to tourism and recreational activity participation among students (Mumcu, 2018).

There are numerous studies that emphasize positive correlation of student's social support with physiological and psychological health (Uygun, 2018) whereas there are almost no

studies on student's tourism and recreational participation and social support. Therefore, this study focused on the perceptions and attitudes of students towards tourism and recreation activities in Kwara State University, Malete, Nigeria.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In universities, tourism and recreation activities are not limited to lecturers only but also to students. However, not many students realize the advantages of getting involved in the tourism and recreational activities. They may prefer shopping or just sitting in their hostels and watching television rather than joining tourism and recreational activities. This is because, getting involved in tourism and recreational programs demand a lot of time, money and work. According to Bahl (2008), having white or fair skin is considered a sign of beauty to the Asian culture. Due to the fact, skin lightening and skin whitening products are fast selling in the Asian markets. Students are very concerned of their skin and they hate anything that can cause damage to their skin. Because of that, students sometimes decline the offer of joining outdoor sports.

The students' perception towards tourism and recreation is very important as this can give a lot of information about their preference of activities. Many students give a lot of excuses for not participating in tourism and recreational activities. In accordance to Korstanje (2009), students often give excuses due to personal constraints such as financial, social, psychological, physical, functional, situational and travel risks and they are also afraid of leaving their familiar surrounding (Qi, Gibson & Zhang, 2009).

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the perceptions and attitudes of Kwara State University students towards tourism and recreation activities?

1.4 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to examine the perception and attitude of Kwara State University students towards tourism and recreation activities.

1.5 THE STUDY AREA

Kwara State is one of the states in the middle belt of Nigeria. Being situated in the transitional zone; between the forest and the savannah region of Nigeria i.e. the North and the West coastal region, it therefore serves as a "melting point between the northern and southern culture". Her geology consists of pre-Cambrian basement complex with an elevation which ranges between 273m to 333m in the West and 200m to 364m in the East. The landscape of the region is relatively flat, this means it is located on a plain and is crested by two large rivers, the river Asa and Oyun which flows in North South direction divides the plain into two; Western and Eastern part. The climate is humid tropical type and is characterized by wet and dry seasons. The wet season begins towards the end of March and ends in October. A dry season in the town begins with the onset of tropical continental air mass commonly referred to as harmattan. This wind is usually predominant between the months of November and February. The temperature is uniformly high throughout the year. The mean monthly temperature of the town for the period of 1991 – 2000 varies between 25⁰C and 29.5⁰C with the month of March having about 30⁰C. Ilorin falls into the southern savannah zone. This zone is a transition between the high forest in the

southern part of the country and the far North with woodland properties. Her vegetation is characterized by scattered tall tree shrubs of between the height of ten and twelve feet. The population as estimated by the 2006 population census was put at 4,570,000 and the projected population using 3.2 annual growth rate is put at 5,565,000.

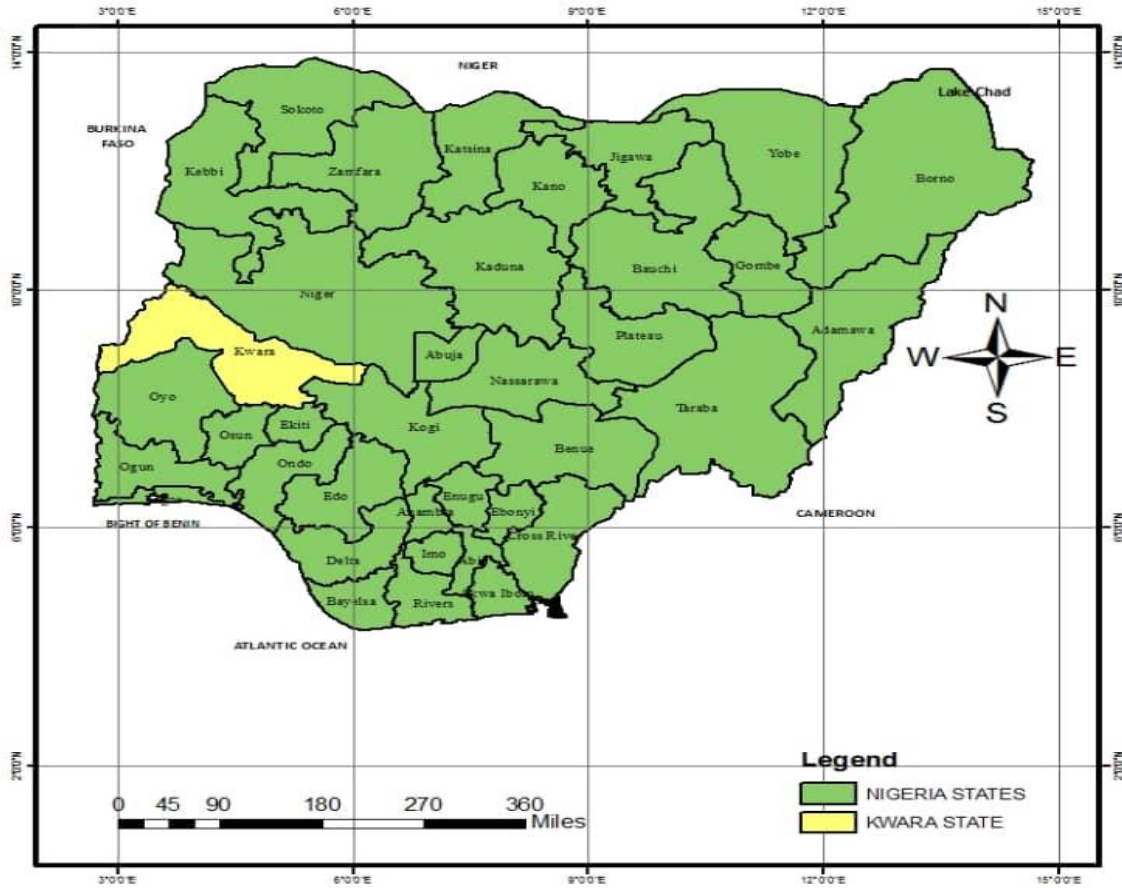


Figure1. Map of Nigeria showing Kwara State
 Source: Ministry of Urban and Regional Planning, Kwara State, 2019

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

Students are considered as a learning young people in a formal organization and they share a defined area and common resource or public goods within that area (Sharma, 2013). A large

part of the developing world possesses students who are stock with ideas to enhance both natural and cultural recreation and tourism, therefore making them an asset that are a strong basis for the development of the tourism and recreation industry (Khuong and Nguyen, 2015). Foreigners have visited many developing countries over the years to experience their wealth of biological diversity in its natural setting which are found in parks and reserves which are faced with the problems of over-crowding and congestion in most popular destinations, such as Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya and Serengeti National Park in Tanzania (Khuong and Nguyen, 2015). They were able to detect that many African countries have a conducive natural ecology and atmosphere that could foster unwinding and recreation and tourism activities.

These areas are surrounded by diverse tourism products that are in many ways more than that within parks (Khuong and Nguyen, 2015). In these and other areas where wildlife is highly mobile and migratory, the lands outside the parks may have just as much wildlife at certain times of the year as the protected areas (Khuong and Nguyen, 2015).

In most cases the students environment is usually less developed and has low tourism infrastructure, hence offer high-paying tourists a more exclusive, isolated wilderness experience than the increasingly development environments. In addition, activities such as walking, horseback riding, and night game drives (which are prohibited or restricted in the national parks) can be carried out on the students within the school premises.

Among these students also abounds knowledge relating to their co-existence with the activities in a manner that can further enhance the cultural and intangible types of recreation and tourism. Students are therefore important and core to the development of recreation and tourism since they ensure proper conservation where they are the stewards of their own local environment and are also placed to anticipate and regulate the impacts of recreation and tourism development. Students provide a structure for more effective planning, implementing and monitoring recreation and tourism initiatives and for determining the most appropriate scale of economic activity.

Since school recreation and tourism development rely heavily on the goodwill of students who often engage in them, their support is essential for its development, successful operation, and sustainability (Jurowski, 2014).

1.7 RESEARCH METHODS

Data for this research were collected using structured questionnaire. A total of 100 students were randomly selected from the 8 colleges purposively selected in Kwara State University. Meanwhile, the number of respondents selected from the colleges depends on the population of each college. Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences, Humanities, Management and Social Sciences, Education, Engineering and Technology, Institute of Education, Information and Communication Technology, Pure and Applied Sciences and Institute of Distance and E-learning were all selected for the study. However, the researcher was able to retrieve 85 copies of questionnaire from the 100 copies administered.

Table 1: List of the Colleges purposively selected for the study

S/N	COLLEGES	COPIES OF ALLOCATED QUESTIONNAIRE
1	Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences	10
2	Humanities, Management and Social Sciences	10
3	Education	15
4	Pure and Applied Sciences	10
5	Institute of Education	15
6	Engineering and Technology	10
7	Institute of Distance and E-learning	15
8	Information and Communication Technology	15
	TOTAL	100

Source: Researcher's Compilation, 2019

1.7 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2: Students have 'Fear of failure' to participate in tourism and recreation activities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agreed	6	7.1
Agreed	29	34.1
Undecided	4	4.7
Disagreed	20	23.5
Strongly Disagreed	26	30.6
Total	85	100

Source: Field work, 2019

It could be seen from table 2 that a total of 35 of the students made it known that they are always afraid of failure in academic activities, hence, that is why they do not see it as important to participate in tourism and recreation activities. However, 46 of the respondents disagreed with that view and made it known that their level of participation in tourism and recreational activities is not based on fear of failure in academic activities, hence they participated actively. This corroborates with Sindiga, (2011) who made it known that student participation in tourism and recreational activities creates a new environment for them to learn new things most especially entrepreneurship.

Table 3: Student's works/studies does not allow them to take part in tourism and recreational activities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agreed	9	10.6
Agreed	22	25.9
Undecided	7	8.2
Disagreed	33	38.8
Strongly Disagreed	14	16.5
Total	85	100

Source: Field work, 2019

In table 3, 47 of the students agreed that their studies allowed them to participate in tourism and recreation activities, while 31 of them made it known that their studies does not give them the avenue to participate in tourism and recreation activities. While just 7 were undecided. This indicated that, the studies of the students are not impediment hindering them from participating in tourism and recreation activities. This view is supported by Sharma, (2013) who was of the opinion that the school activities and curriculum also creates avenue for students to enjoy themselves and partake in activities that could bring leisure and relaxation.

Table 4: Students are willing to take part in tourism and recreational activities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agreed	39	45.9
Agreed	32	37.6
Undecided	9	10.6
Disagreed	5	5.9
Strongly Disagreed	0	0.0
Total	85	100

Source: Field work, 2019

In table 4, the students were of the opinions that they were willing to participate in tourism and recreation activities, 71 of the students supported this, while just 5 of them made it known that they are not willing. Looking critically at those that were not willing to participate in tourism and recreation activities, the reasons they supported this might be as a result of financial constraint, low level of association as well as physical inability amongst others. Nelson, (2014) affirmed that, due to the level of physical efforts students put into reading and academic activities, they should create enough time to unwind and have fun in order for their brain to relax and to regain strength for the academic activities.

Table 5: Students does not take part in tourism and recreational activities because they are afraid of injuries

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agreed	4	4.7
Agreed	18	21.2
Undecided	24	28.2
Disagreed	25	29.4
Strongly Disagreed	14	16.5
Total	85	100

Source: Field work, 2019

It could be seen in table 5 that 39 of the respondents claimed that it is not because of fear of getting injured that makes students not to participate in tourism and recreation activities, while 22 of the respondents were of the opinions that they are afraid of being injured. This indicated that although there are some tourism and recreation activities that do cause injuries such as the sporting aspect, but it could be noted that there are several tourism and recreational activities that does not bring about injuries. Hence, it could be said that being scared of getting injured is not one of the factors scaring students away from participating in tourism and recreation activities.

Table 6: Students feel that their religious duties will be neglected if they take part in tourism and recreational activities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agreed	5	5.9
Agreed	10	11.8
Undecided	14	16.5
Disagreed	45	52.9
Strongly Disagreed	11	12.9
Total	85	100

Source: Field work, 2019

The data in table 6 revealed that students do not feel that their religious activities would make them neglect if partake in tourism and recreation activities; this was supported by 56 of the students. While just 15 of the students were of the opinion that it would made them to neglect their religious activities. Sindiga, (2011) asserted that religious activities is an aspect of involvement in tourism, and he emphasized that people involving in religious activities are simply partaking in religious tourism.

Table 7: Students feel that they will be considered a lazy person if they engage in leisure, tourism and recreational activities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agreed	5	5.9
Agreed	10	11.8
Undecided	14	16.5
Disagreed	45	52.9
Strongly Disagreed	11	12.9
Total	85	100

Source: Field work, 2019

Table 7 revealed that 56 of the students believed that they do not see it as being lazy while involving in tourism and recreation activities or they don't see it that other students considered them lazy while engaging in that. Meanwhile, 15 of them affirmed that other students would see them as lazy. Looking at it critically, it could be emphasized that tourism and recreation activities is not most times lazy activities, because there are some of those activities that involve stressing the body while partaking in it. Korstanje (2009) opined that it is important that students partake in tourism and recreation activities while in school in order to fresh up their brains, stressing that all work without play makes Jack a dull boy. Therefore, for students to perfectly excel, it is important that the brain must have enough time to relax.

1.8 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The findings from the students of Kwara State University revealed that most of the students are willing to engage in tourism and recreation activities. Many of the students are not constrained to participate in these activities because of fear of failure in academics, stressing that their studies provides opportunities for them to engage in tourism and recreation activities. It was also revealed that the students were willing to actively participate in these activities in Kwara State University. Hence, it could be concluded that students perception and attitude in tourism and recreation activities is relatively good as many of them argued that they are happy to involve in these activities. But this could still be improved upon.

1.10 RECOMMENDATIONS

In improving upon the level of students' attitude and involvement in tourism and recreational activities, it is important that the school creates more avenues for students to engage and involve in tourism and recreation activities and this could be done in creating sport centres and other recreational activities within the campus. It is also important that the school creates more tourism centres in order to boost student's involvement in recreation and tourism activities while on campus. It is also important that the school ensures and mandates students to engage in

activities that could help to refreshing their brain even as they read and go about their academic activities as well.

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