

# User Satisfaction of Selected Public Outdoor Recreational Facilities in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State, Nigeria

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**Abstract-** Although recreation plays important role in the well being of an individual, user satisfaction is critical in determining people's inclination to take to recreation. This study looked at user satisfaction, expectations and patronage to selected recreational centers in Port Harcourt with a view to determining how user personality attributes underpin user participation and patronage as a basis for more informed policy making on recreation in Port Harcourt metropolis. Adopting the cross sectional survey design, data were sourced from both primary and secondary sources. The multiple classification analysis was used to examine the relationship between users' personality attributes and frequency of use of recreation centers. The findings indicated that there is no statistically significant relationship between users' personality attributes such as gender, education, age, income, and participation in recreational activities. The total explanation that all the independent variables provided for variation in user participation was 47% for the Alfred Diete Spiff centre and only 9% at the Pleasure Park. Since user satisfaction is mercurial in nature and differs from one individual to another, there is the need to prioritize the provision of facilities to meet varied needs of prospective recreation users. This will enhance patronage and promotes the sustainability of recreation centers in the study area.

**Index Terms-** Recreation; Well being, Pleasure Park; User satisfaction; perception; service Performance

## I. BACKGROUND

Recreation is an activity that involves exercises of physical or emotional nature and social interaction (Broadhurst, 2001). Bruce (1995), sees recreation as an essential part of human life that takes many different forms which are shaped naturally by individual interests but also by the surrounding social construction. According to Cooper, et.al. (2008) 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. Physical exercises associated with recreation lead to enjoyment, relaxation and better health. MetroParks, (nd) notes that taking part in recreational activities, especially outdoors, can greatly improve physical health. The study notes further that people who take part in physical activities such as walking, hiking, or skiing, schedule fewer office visits, maintain lower body fat

percentages, and have lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Physical inactivity has been identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality by the World Health Organization

It for this reason that Sports- a form of recreation has been incorporated as a tool for achieving the 17 Goals of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by the United Nations Office on Sport Development and Peace (UNOSDP). According this agency, the right to health serves as the basis for achieving healthy lives through physical activity.

More so, several scholars (Pouta & Sievanen, 2001; Oja, 2000, for example) have proved that there is a relationship between well-being and health status of people that engage in recreational activities for 30 minutes a day or twice or thrice a week). In spite of the benefits of recreation to the overall well being of an individual, most residents of Port Harcourt are reluctant in participating in recreation activities mainly due to the inability of available canter to meet user satisfaction. User satisfaction is a measure of how an organization's total product performs in relation to a set of user requirements. Satisfaction is the result of comparing customer expectations with the actual perception of product attributes. Satisfaction takes place when the expectations are met or exceeded (Crompton, 1995).

Visitors usually come with clear expectations as to the quality and types of services that a certain place provides. To what degree their expectations are met after the visit will determine their satisfaction level. When general performance during or after visiting the destination meets or exceeds the expectation, the visitor is considered to be satisfied. However, when perceived performance falls beneath the expectation, the visitor, in this case, may be dissatisfied (Sivalhloglu and Berkoz, 2012).

User satisfaction therefore forms an important condition informing people inclination to take to recreation. Government after government has invested huge sums of public funds in the development of some recreation centers in Port Harcourt especially the treasure park. To what extent do the facilities in these centers meet the satisfaction needs of users? The present study seeks to assess users' satisfaction and expectations regarding selected public outdoor recreational facilities in Port Harcourt and to highlight how user personality attributes such as gender, education; age and income explain the variation in usage.

## II. STUDY LOCATION

Port Harcourt metropolis lies along the Bonny River (an eastern distributary of the Niger River) 41 miles (66 km) upstream from the Gulf of Guinea. The area lies between a peninsula approximately 4.421N and 4.471N and 6.551E, 7.081E (Ogionwo, 1979). The area is bounded in the north by Ikwerre and Etche Local Government Area (LGAs), in the east, Oyibo and Eleme LGAs, in the west by Emohua LGA and in the south by Degema and Okirika LGAs of Rivers State (See Fig.1).

Its surface geology consists of fluvial sediments. This includes the recent sediments transported by Niger River distributaries and other rivers, such as Andoni, Bonny and New Calabar. These materials deposited as regolith overburden of 30m thickness are clays, peat, silts, sands and gravels. The study area locates in a tropical wet climate region with lengthy and heavy rainy seasons and very short dry seasons. Only the months of December and January truly qualifies as dry season months in the city. The harmattan, which climatically influences many cities in West Africa, is less pronounced in Port Harcourt. Port Harcourt's heaviest precipitation occurs during September with an average of 367 mm of rain. December on average is the driest month of the year; with an average rainfall of 20 mm.

The metropolis is home to most educational and public institutions found in the state.

Port Harcourt metropolis is an industrial nerve centres of the Nigeria oil and gas industries, hosting Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC), Chevron, Saipem and other oil servicing industries in the LGAs, (Mmom, 2003).

Port Harcourt's primary airport is Port Harcourt International Airport, located on the outskirts of the LGAs; the Nigeria Air Force (NAF) provides the only other airport and is used by commercial airlines Aero Contractors and Air Nigeria for domestic flights, and is located within the in LGA (Oteri, 2005).

The presence of infrastructure and good climate for business activities exercises centrifugal influence pulling people to the city, with attendant effect on the existing recreational facilities in the area.

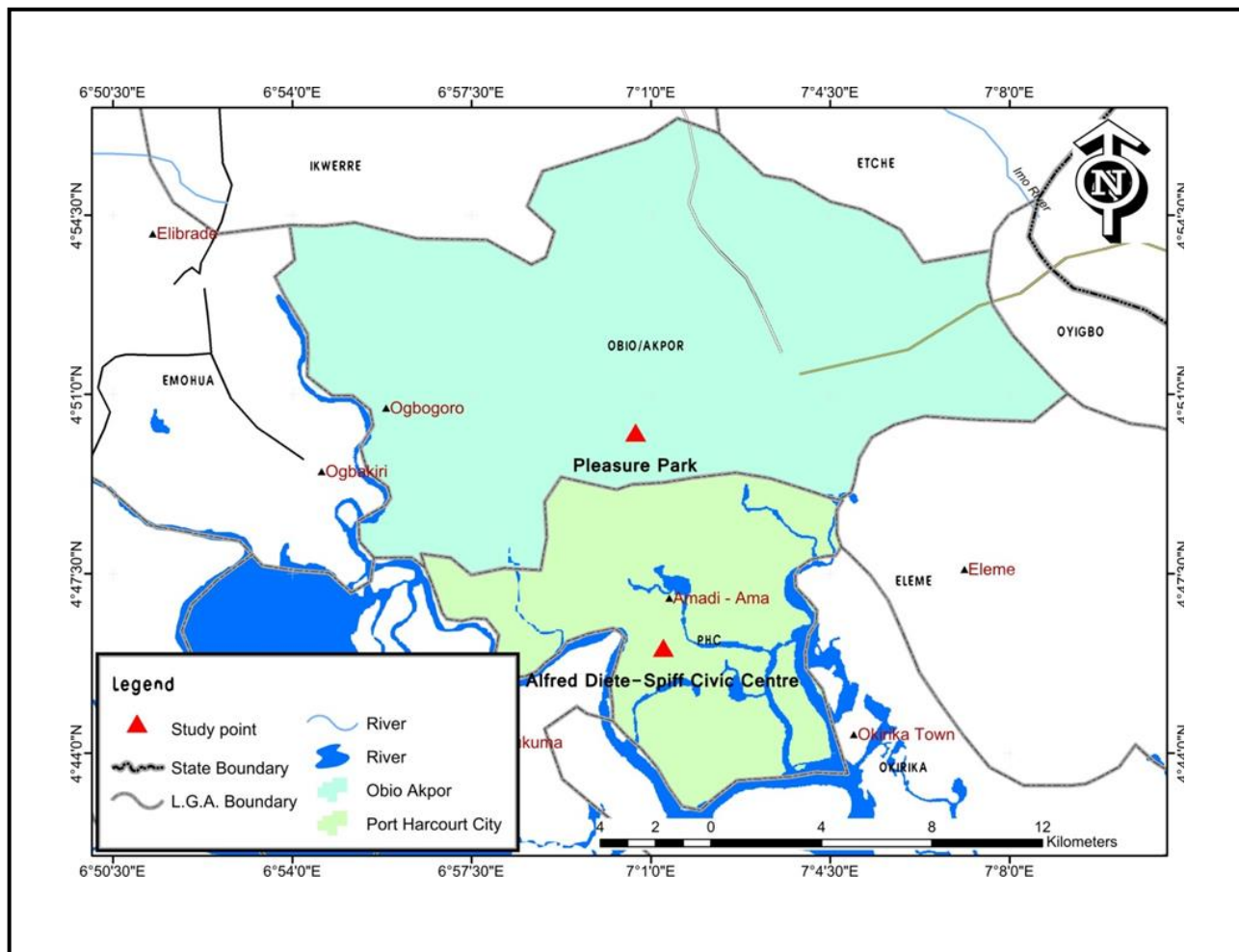


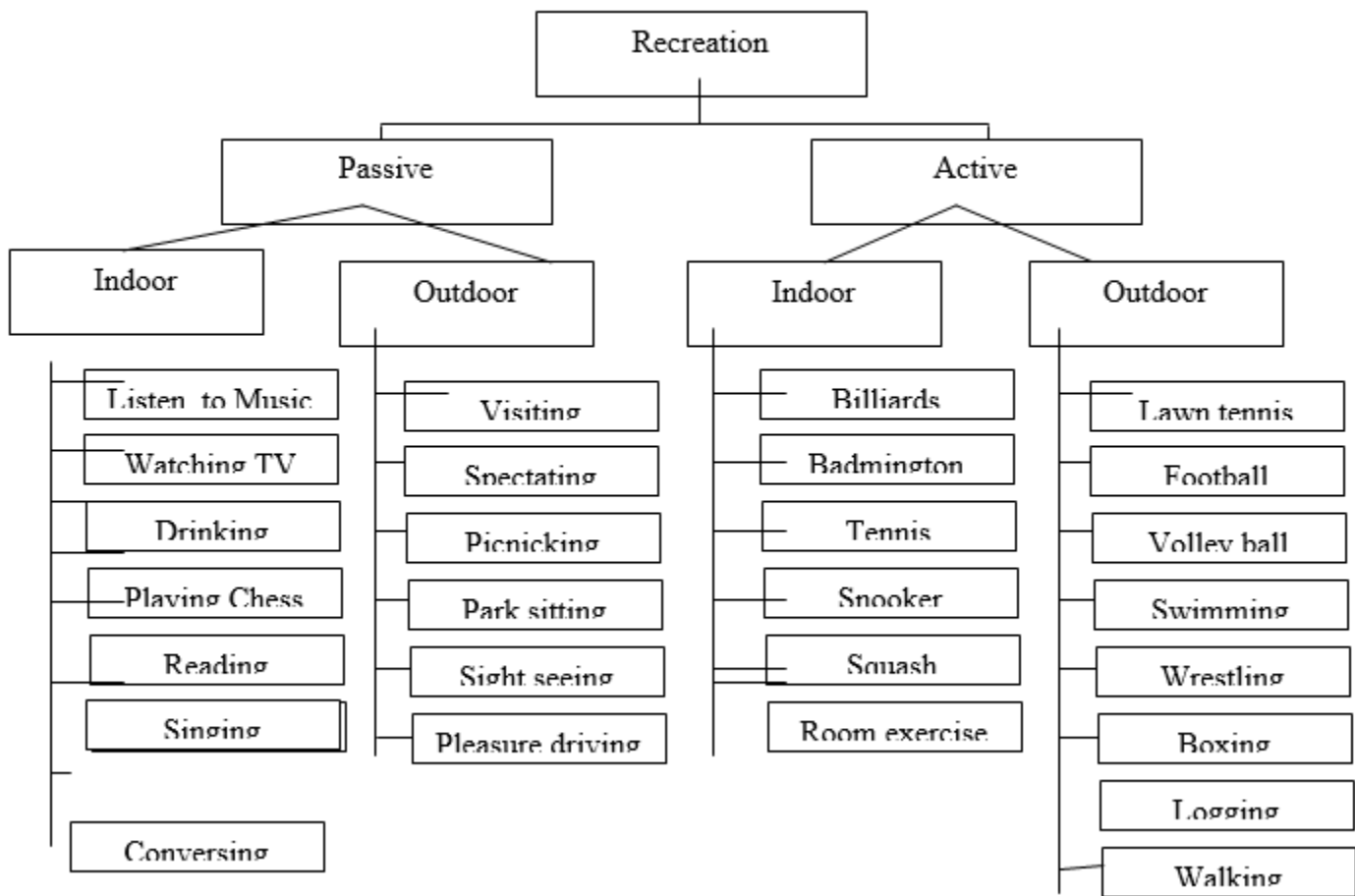
Figure 1: Study area showing Recreation centers Studied  
Source: URP GIS Lab (2019), Rivers State University

### III. CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL FRAME WORK/ LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 The Concept of Recreation

According to Roberts (1974) defined recreation as “any pursuit engaged upon during leisure time other than pursuits to which people are normally highly committed”. This involves outdoor and indoor recreation activities and can be classified as

passive and active recreation (fig 2). On the one hand, outdoor recreational activities are those activities that are undertaken outside the confines of buildings, while indoor recreation activities are those activities undertaken on the comfort of one’s home or more specifically activities that recreate the mind and soul. Also, active recreation is a physical activity that a person voluntarily undertakes in their leisure time for the purpose of mental or physical satisfaction; it involves energy tasking engagement, while passive recreation is marked by relative inactivity (Lawson and Baud- Bovy1977)



**Fig. 2: Classification of Recreational Activities**  
 Source: USAOIA, (2012)

Recreation is classified into two; passive and active. Passive recreation is also classified into two; indoor and outdoor. Indoor passive recreation include; listening to music, watching television, drinking, playing chess, and reading, singing and conversing, while outdoor passive recreation involve; visiting, picnicking, park sitting, sight-seeing, and pleasure driving. Active recreation also classified into indoor and outdoor. Indoor active recreation include; playing billiards, playing badminton, playing tennis, playing snooker, playing squash, room exercising, while outdoor active recreation include; playing lawn tennis, playing football, playing volley ball, swimming, wrestling, boxing, logging and walking.

**3.2 Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory**

This research draws strength from Mckinney, Yoon and Zahedi (2002) theory: Expectancy- Disconfirmation theory, which is one of the most commonly, adopted approaches in the study of satisfaction of consumers. This research adopted this theory because user satisfaction in this research depends on the functionality, Ancillary facilities which are the provision of a range of hospitalities and entertainment opportunities in and

around the recreational centre, Security of the centre and the Aesthetics of the recreational centre.

For McKinney, et.al. (2002), the expectancy-disconfirmation theory consists of two sub-processes having independent effects on user satisfaction: the formation of expectations and the disconfirmation of those expectations through performance comparisons. Expectancy disconfirmation theory holds that users first form expectations of products or services (destination attributes) performance prior to purchase or use. Subsequently, purchase and use contribute to user beliefs about the actual or perceived performance of the product or service. The user then compares the perceived performance to prior expectations.

User satisfaction is seen as the outcome of this comparison (McKinney, et. al. 2002). Moreover, a user’s expectations are: (a) confirmed when the product or service performance matches prior expectations, (b) negatively disconfirmed when product or service performance fails to match expectations, and (c) positively disconfirmed when perceived product or service performance exceeds expectations. Dissatisfaction comes about when a user’s expectations are negatively disconfirmed; that is the product performance is less than expected (McKinney, 2002).

### 3.3 Literature review

There exists plethora of works in the area of recreation and user satisfaction. This may be due to the importance of recreation to the wellbeing of an individual and society and the role that user satisfaction plays in the sustenance of recreation centers. For example, Juliet and Robert (2017) carried out a research to establish satisfaction among residents on recreational facilities in Kasarani neighborhood in Nairobi City. The study revealed that the residents were not satisfied with the status of recreational facilities provision because they were inadequate and lacked variety of services offered and their appropriateness for different users.

Oladeji and Adedapo (2014) also carried out study on Performance and Visitors' Satisfaction with Recreation Facilities in Akure Metropolis. The study observed that greater percentage of the participants (80%, 90%, 100% and 71.4%) expressed their willingness to revisit; this is an indication that satisfaction and purpose of their visits were achieved. Over 50% of the respondents in all the centres also indicated that the quality of services provided was good.

In a related study, Akinyemi and Oduntan (2015) looked at the recreational participation and conservation attitudes of tourists and residents in Lagos Mainland, Nigeria. The Results obtained from the various respondents revealed that 90.8% of the visitors were of the opinion that their expectations were met based on their reasons for visiting the tourist centres and 77.5% visitors/tourists agree that tourism provided job (75%) opportunity for the people and revenue to the government.

Zuwei (2014) assessed the level of participation in outdoor recreation in Yenagoa Town, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The research showed that a number of factors played important roles in limiting the level of participation including ignorance of the benefits of recreation; income level of the respondents and distance from the facilities. It has been observed that behavioural preferences of would-be users affects the level of patronage to recreation centers.

To this end, Fatih and Ali (2009) sought to understand outdoor recreational behaviours and preferences of the residents in Istanbul. The findings of the study are based on a survey which was conducted among 1,400 residents in 32 districts of Istanbul in 2006 and 2007. The study revealed that, about one third of the residents participated in recreational activities in their spare time in Istanbul. Having a picnic, walking, and playing soccer and basketball were the most important outdoor recreational activities were playing tennis, hunting, skating, water skiing, and climbing were the least important activities among the residents. To our knowledge, there has been no research that sought to assess user satisfaction and user expectation of recreation centers in the study area. This was considered a gap that the present study seeks to fill.

### IV. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study adopted mixed method research approach (Cresswell, 2014) since both qualitative and quantitative data were required to assess the extent of satisfaction obtained by users of the selected public recreational facilities in the study area. The cross sectional survey research design was used as there was no manipulation of the subjects of study, and the study was carried out at one point in time. The target population comprises users of the two recreational centres of interest, age 18 years and above. Since the number of persons falling into these age categories using the centres is unknown, probability sampling could not be applied. The study therefore adopted a non-probability sampling technique- quota sampling (Kish, 1965). This sampling technique entails choosing specified sub-groups of the target population, using specified criteria, age and gender. In this study, specified quotas of respondents was assigned to males and females falling into the age categories 18-30 years, 31-40 years, 41- 50 years and 51 years and above. Sampling details are given in Table 1.

**Table 1:Sampling Details**

S/No	Recreational facilities	Recreational Location	No of users over a 7 day period	Users Age Categories	No of Respondents	
					M	F
1	Port Harcourt Pleasure Park	Obio/Akpor	20	18 – 30 years	10	10
			20	31 – 40 years	10	10
			20	41 -50	10	10
			20	51years and above	10	10
2	Alfred Diete-Spiff Civic Centre Port Harcourt	Port Harcourt	20	18 – 30 years	10	10
			20	31 – 40 years	10	10
			20	41 years & above	10	10
			20	51 years and above	10	10
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>160</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>

Source: Field work, (2020)

A total of 160 copies of questionnaires were administered at the two selected public recreational facilities (Alfred Diete-Spiff and Pleasure Park) out of which, 153 copies were properly

completed and returned in analysable form. This represents 95.7% return rate.

Data were analysed using percentages. To determine the how personality variable predict user satisfaction of recreational



centers, the Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA), a multiple regression technique was used.

Mathematically, MCA is given by:

$$Y_{ij...n} = \bar{Y} + a_i + b_j + \dots + e_{ij...n}$$

..... Equation (1)

Where

$Y_{ij...n}$  = The score (on the dependent variable) of individual n who falls in category i of predictor A, category j of predictor B, etc.

$\bar{Y}$  = Grand mean on the dependent variable.

$a_i$  = the "effect" of membership in the  $i^{th}$  category of predictor a.

$b_j$  = the "effect" of membership in the  $j^{th}$  category of predictor B.

$e_{ij...n}$  = error term for this individual.

Data presentation was done using descriptive statistics such as tables, charts.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1. Personal Characteristics of Respondents

#### Sex of Respondents

The analysis showed that more males participated in recreation activities in the two centers under study. (Fig 3) . Males accounted for 59.7% in Alfred Diete-spiff and 46.1% for Pleasure Park, respectively. Whereas females accounted for 40.3% in Pleasure Park and 53.9% in Alfred Diete-Spiff respectively. The number of users of recreation centers also varies among the different age brackets. Most users of recreation in the study area are within the age bracket of 18-39years (54.5%) for Alfred Diete Spiff recreation center. The corresponding figure for the treasure park is 56.6%. For other age brackets 31-40 years it is 27.3% for Alfred Diete Spiff and 30.3% for Treasure park (table 2).

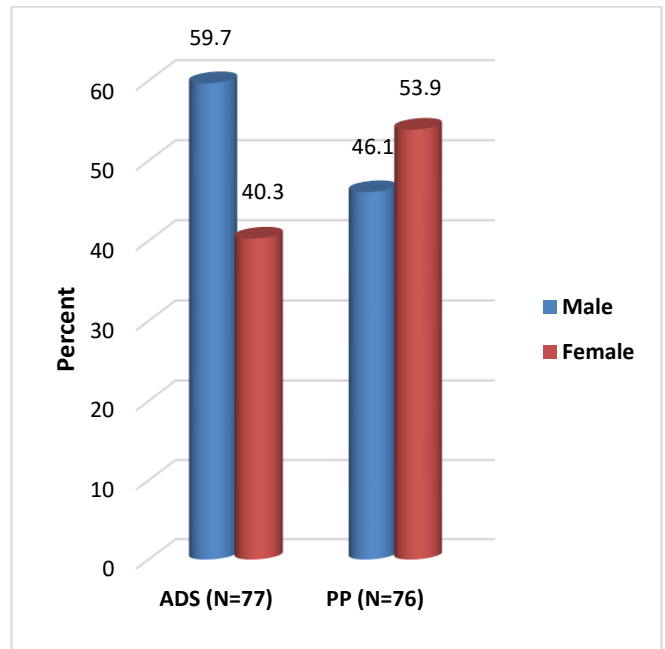


Figure 3: Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Gender  
 Source: Author's Field Survey, (2020)

Table 2: Age of Respondents

Age Respondents	Alfred Diete-Spiff		Pleasure Park		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
18-30	42	23.7	43	56.6	85	55.5
31-40	21	54.5	23	30.3	44	28.8
41-50	8	10.4	9	11.8	17	11.1
51 and above	6	7.8	1	1.3	7	4.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author's Field Survey, (2020)

In terms of marital status, the study revealed a simple majority of 57.1% and 51.3% for singles across the study area while the married accounted for 35.1% and 27.6%, Divorced 5.2% and 18.4% as well as widow/widower 2.6% across the study area

The modal educational attainment as revealed in table 3 showed a predominant record for tertiary education in Alfred Diete-Spiff (51.9%) while those who recreate at the Pleasure Park had mainly secondary education completed (50%). However, secondary education completed (31.2%) followed by tertiary in Alfred Diete-Spiff Centre while tertiary (39.5%) followed the tertiary in Pleasure Park. Those who didn't have any educational qualification at Alfred Diete-Spiff Centre accounted for 2.6%. There were variation in the occupational characteristics of respondents at both the Alfred Diete-Spiff recreation center and the Pleasure park as showed in table 4. Most respondents were private sector workers with highest respondents of (50.3%), closely followed by Civil/ Public servants with (33.9%) respondents, and followed by Artisan (11.8%).

**Table 3: Educational attainment of Respondents**

Educational Status of Respondents	Alfred Diete-Spiff		Pleasure Park		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No formal education	2	2.6	0	0	2	1.3
primary education completed	11	14.3	8	10.5	19	12.4
Secondary education completed	24	31.2	38	50.0	62	40.5
Tertiary education completed	40	51.9	30	39.5	70	45.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author’s Field Survey, (2020)

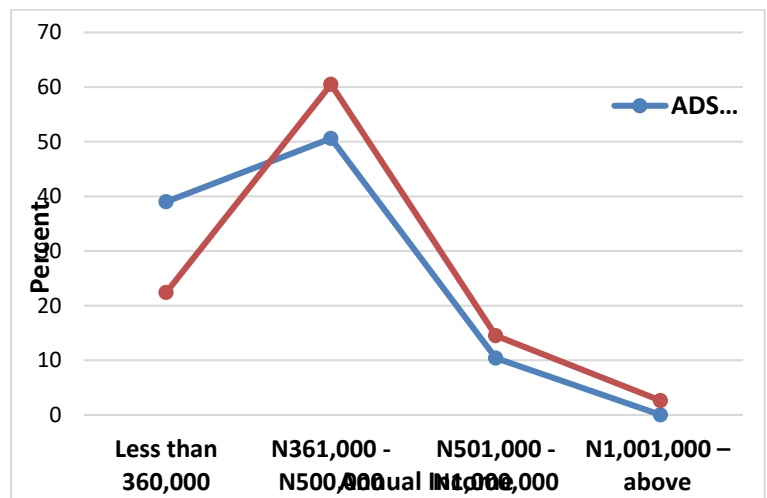
**Table 4: Occupational Status of Respondents**

Occupational Status of Respondents	Alfred Diete-Spiff		Pleasure Park		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	N	%
Civil / public servants	33	42.9	19	25.0	52	33.9
Private sector/self employed	36	46.8	41	53.9	77	50.3
Artisan	6	7.8	12	15.8	18	11.8
Not Ascertained	2	2.6	4	5.3	6	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>99.9</b>

Source: Author’s Field Survey, (2020)

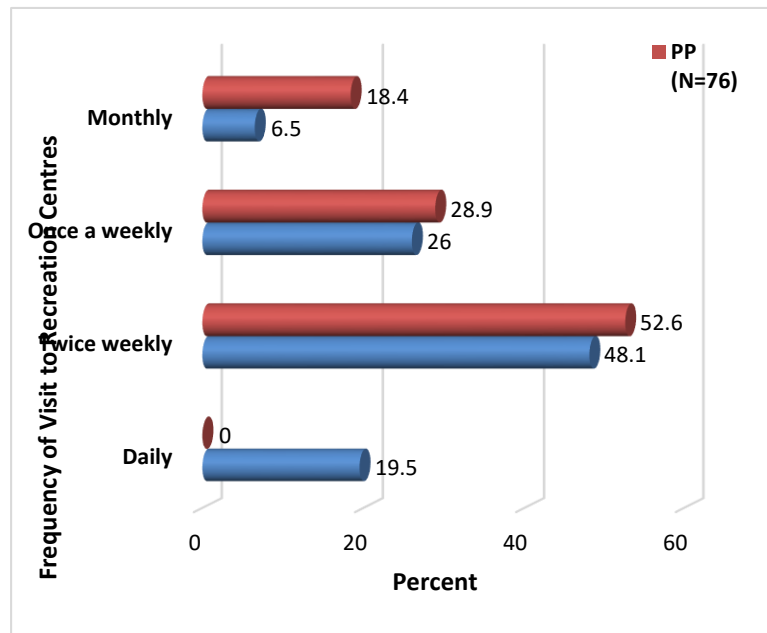
The income of respondents to a large extent affects the choice and frequency of usage of recreational facilities as shown in figure 4. The study revealed that most respondents were within the income category of N361, 000.00-N500, 000.00 per annum.

In terms of frequency of visits to the different recreational facilities, the findings it was observed that respondents who visited the facilities twice a week were predominant (48.1%) and (52.6%) for Alfred Diete Spiff and Pleasure Park, respectively. Those who recreated once a week accounted for the next modal frequency of visit to parks. (Figure 5)



**Figure 4: Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Annual Income Category**

Source: Author’s Field Survey, (2020)



**Figure 5: Frequency of Visit to Recreational Facilities**

Source: Author’s Field Survey, (2020)

**5.2 Recreational Preferences of Respondents visiting Recreational places with folks**

The recreational preferences of users of recreation centers were examined. The result as presented table 5 shows that the modal response for those visiting recreational places with folks or otherwise showed that those who went or visited alone were the least while those with family was the highest being 50.3% , followed by those who visited with friends. Available data further shows users preferred going to Pleasure Park with thier families (73.7%) more than doing so with family members at Alfred Diete Spiff center (27.3%)

**Table 5 Recreational Preferences**

Recreational Preference	Alfred Diete-Spiff		Pleasure Park		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Alone	14	18.2	0	0	14	9.2
With Friends	42	54.5	20	26.3	62	40.5
With family	21	27.3	56	73.7	77	50.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author’s Field Survey, (2020)

**5.3. Recreational Choice of Respondents**

Recreational choice is a predetermining factor for any visit to recreational centre as shown in table 6. Differences in choice of recreational facilities showed that in Alfred Diete Spiff center, those that recreates by swimming accounted for 27.3%, playing of Table tennis and Lawn tennis (15.2%), watching cinemas (0.0%) as there were no cinema in the centre, Gymnasium (11.7), Football (40.2%), other unmentioned facilities (5.2%). While in Pleasure Park, those that recreates by swimming accounted for 13.7%, playing of Table tennis and Lawn tennis (10.5%), watching cinemas (8.5%), Gymnasium (12.5%), Football (22.9%), other unmentioned facilities liketrain and boat riding, jungle climbing are some recessive points of attractions in Pleasure Park which accounted for 16.9%.

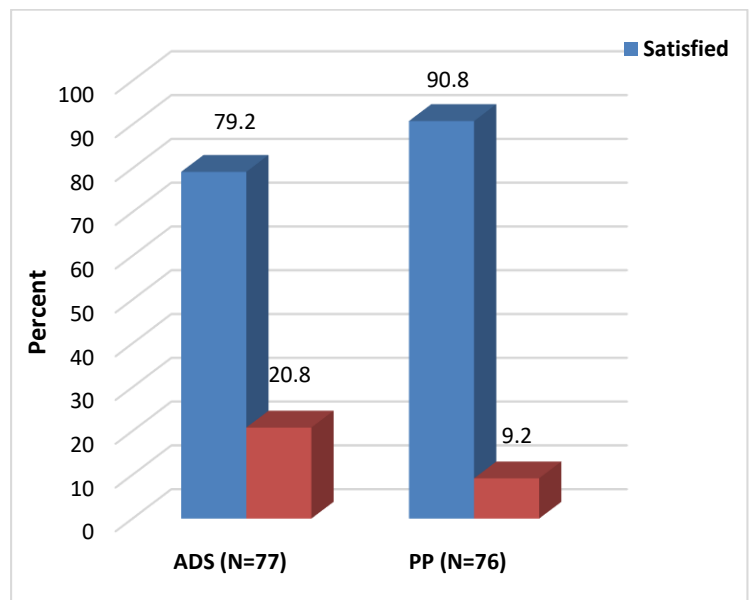
**Table 6 Recreational Choice of Respondents**

Recreational Choice	Alfred Diete-Spiff		Pleasure Park		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Swimming	21	27.3	23	3.3	21	13.7
Playing Table Tennis/lawn tennis	12	15.6	4	5.3	16	10.5
Watching Cinemas	0	0.0	13	17.1	13	8.5
Using Gymnasium	9	11.7	10	13.2	19	12.4
Playing Football	31	40.2	4	5.3	35	16.9
Others	4	5.2	22	27.0	26	22.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author’s Field Survey, (2020)

**5.4 User Satisfaction with Recreational facilities**

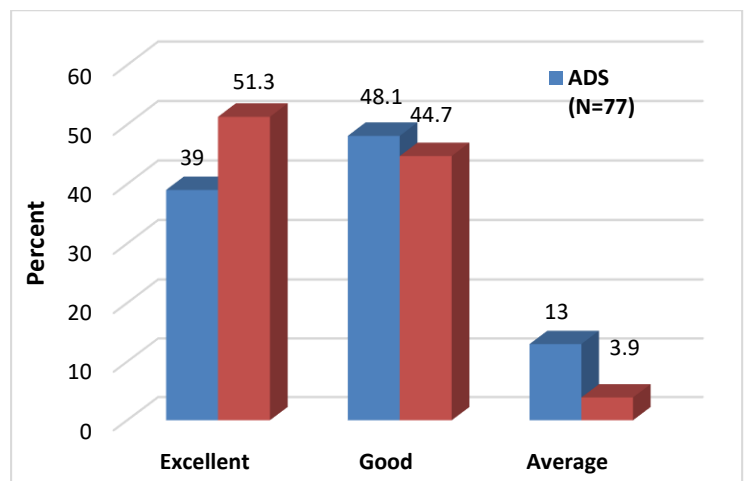
The measure of users’ satisfaction differs from one individual to another as shown in Figure 6. The study shows that most users of the two centers were satisfied (79.2% and 90.8%) with their recreation experience in terms of available facilities



**Figure 6: Users Satisfaction with Recreational Facilities**  
Source: Author’s Field Survey, (2020)

**5.5 Rating of Security Condition in the Facility**

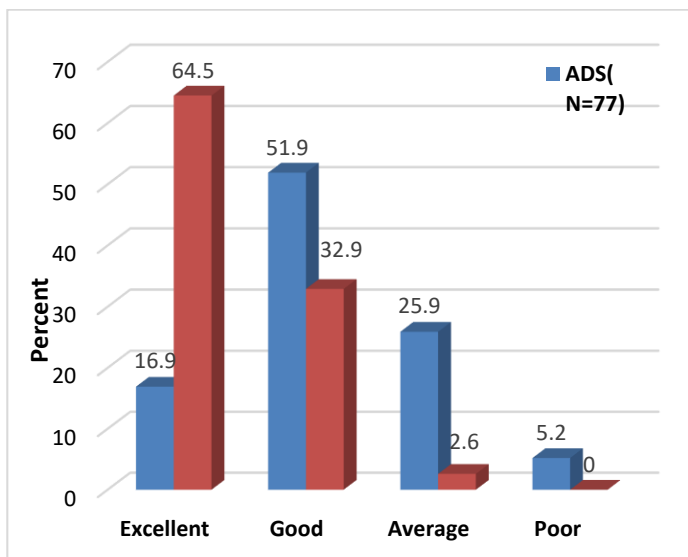
Safety and security at the recreational centres have effect on the choice of patronage of the centre. Figure 7 below showed that most respondents rated the security arrangement in Pleasure Park “Excellent” (51.3%) while at Alfred Diete-Spiff centre, the modal rating was “Good” (48.1%). In terms of ancillary facilities in the recreational Centres, the nature and condition of facilities in the different recreational centres to a certain extent determines the power of choice of the individual, this variation is shown in Figure 8. The study reveals that in Alfred Diete Spiff facilities were rated “Good “represented 51.9% while facilities in Pleasure Park were rated “Excellent” represented 64.5%.



**Figure 7: Respondents’ Rating of Security in the Recreational Centres**

Source: Author’s Field Survey, (2020)





**Figure 8: Respondents' Rating of Ancillary Facilities in the Recreational Centres**

Source: Author's Field Survey, (2020)

**5.6 Determinants of user patronage of recreational centers in Port Harcourt**

Since user involvement in any form of recreation is determined by a myriad of factors acting individual and jointly, the study sought to determine how gender, education, age and income explain the variation in usage of recreation centers in the study area. To examine if there is any statistically significant relationship between users personality attributes (independent variables) and their patronage (dependent variable) to recreation centers, a Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) was carried out. From our result, as shown in table 7, it is evident that there exists moderate interaction between our dependent variable (frequency to center) and the independent variables (user personality attributes) such as sex, age, educational attainment and income. The total explanation that all the independent variables provided for variation in user participation is 47% for the Alfred Diete Spiff centre and only 9% at the Pleasure Park. Meaning that users personal attribute has little influence on their inclination to participate in recreation in the two centers examined.

**Table 7: Predicting Frequency of Visit to Recreational Facilities (Participation) Using MCA**

Predictor	Alfred Diete Spiff Centre		Pleasure Park	
	Eta	Beta	Eta	Beta
Sex of Respondents	0.438625	0.134613	0.795244E-01	0.105509
Age of Respondents	0.699087	0.779615	0.197860	0.116829
Educational Attainment	0.359577	0.283645	0.184917	0.508450E-01
Income of Respondents	0.503679	0.275888	0.255146	0.230564

	Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> ) = 47%	Variance Explained (R <sup>2</sup> ) = 9%
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Source: Author's Field Survey, (2020)

**VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This study looked at user satisfaction, expectations and patronage to selected recreational centers in Port Harcourt with a view to determining how user personality attributes underpin user participation and patronage as a basis for more informed policy making on recreation in Port Harcourt metropolis. Sustaining users' interest is paramount and critical to the continuous existence of any facility including those of recreation. According to Greenwell and Pastore, (2002) Customers' perception of the quality of service performance, the extent to which service performance exceeds expectations or a combination of the two, may influence satisfaction with a service encounter and is often used as a measure of product or service performance. Satisfied customers tend to be loyal, while dissatisfied customers are more likely not to use the product or services again (McDougal & Levesque, 2000). Customer satisfaction is also associated with the economic profitability of organizations by their ability to increase revenue and reduce costs (McDougal & Levesque, 2000).

The recreational activities fulfil psychological needs for a community that promotes socio cultural aspects and strengthen the individual health. They also meet the therapeutic needs of mind. Thus customer satisfaction is an important factor that contributes to the success of organizations (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Gerson, 1999).

Though user satisfaction differs from one individual to another, the study revealed that greater percentage (79.2% and 90.8% respectively) of users of recreation centers at both Alfred Diete-spiff and Pleasure Park were satisfied with services even as visitor's preferences differ from one Centre to the other. Though there exists a linear relationship between users personality attributes: gender, education, age and income and their frequency to recreation to recreation centers, the explanations provided by all the independent variables to variation in the dependent variable were minimal. There is therefore the need to prioritize the provision of facilities to meet varied needs of prospective. This is the only way increase patronage and promotes their sustainability.

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