



Perceived Effects of Political Climate on the Recreational Habit of Nigerian Students

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perceived effects of political climate on the recreational habit of Nigerian students; participants in the study were sampled from three Federal Universities located in three geopolitical zones in the country (North Central, South West and South-South). Six hundred (600) participants were sampled, five - hundred and twenty (520) copies of the questionnaire were used for data analysis, statistical tool of correlation coefficient and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used. The results of the study show that political climate has a significant influence on the recreational habit of Nigerian students. Political violence has a significant effect on Nigerian student's choice and preference for outdoor recreation, there is a significant difference in the attitude of Nigerian students from the three geopolitical zones to outdoor recreation. The study concludes that a positive peaceful political climate will encourage the inculcation of good recreational habit.

INTRODUCTION

The sociological, psychological and physiological values of recreation have been documented by researchers (Fasan 2007, Otinwa 2007, Kraus 2001), these values of recreation are desirable to all, the willingness to participate may exist but there could be constraints. These constraints could be grouped as follows: economic, social, cultural, religion, environmental psychological and educational constraints. Habit formation is based on experience, information, culture, level and type of educational exposure. Fasan, (2007) noted that recreational tastes, interest and needs change with age, income profession, family background ethnic, culture, prevailing environmental and political issues influence choice, pattern, venue duration and type of recreational activities.

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The Nigerian political scene has been turbulent for quite some time now; there have been reported cases of kidnappings, bomb blast, political assassinations, riots and cultism. The Nigerian state is a true child of its colonial and imperialist progenitor and a victim of its forbears. The Nigerian colonial state was created maintained and sustained by violence (Aborishade 2003). Irinoye, (2003) noted that Nigerian politics has become associated with bitter contest for political relevance and survival amongst the elite who deploy bitterness into pursuing political ambition at the expense of the collective interest of the society.

Allegations of state sponsored violence and intolerance abound in states like Imo, Enugu, Oyo, Benue, Bayelsa, Plateau, Gombe, Jigawa and Ogun which has brazenly entrenched a culture of impunity by intimidating, harassing and torturing real and perceived enemies using the police and thugs. Some are said to be involved in state sponsored murders assassinations, kidnappings and frame up charges to scare opponents and critics (Chikodi, 2010)

In Maiduguri, the orgy of death and destruction continued through serial bomb blasts, prior to these were other bombing incidents, the October twin bomb blasts in Abuja shattered the innocence of and unchallenged seemingly, invincibility of the center of unity (Tajudeen, 2011). In Jos, a city that used to be very attractive to Nigerians and non – Nigerians alike has now become palpably unsafe even for the natives. The source of the crisis in the once peaceful city is said to be traceable to the friction between the indigenous tribes and the Hausa Fulani settlers over the ownership of Jos. These conflicts have been cited as the remote cause of all the riots since 1994, the city has witnessed violent crisis of differing dimension in 1994, 2001, 2004, 2008 and the most recent of the major crisis being January 17 & March 7, 2010 (Tajudeen, 2011). An air of insecurity envelops the nation as residents lament that they live under the vice grip of armed robbers, paid killers, kidnappers and ethno – religious extremities. In the past few weeks armed robbers had stormed many towns in the South West and robbed many commercial banks with no regard for life and property. Life has become worthless in both South Eastern and South Southern parts of Nigeria where murderers, armed robbers and kidnappers rule like imperial kings (Chikodi, 2010).

Though kidnapping started in the oil rich Niger Delta area where it was used as a tool to address the wanton neglect of their communities by successive administrations, it has since grown to become the new multimillion naira business now thriving outside the region. For the South East kidnapping is now a tool for settling personal and political scores (Chikodi, 2010). Although normal life is gradually returning to Aba after the resurgence of violent crimes that rocked the city in the past few weeks, there is still widespread fear that the security situation in the city poses potential danger. The general insecurity in the city brought social and economic activities to a standstill as Factory Road, became the main operation site for the hoodlums because it is the main business district in Aba (Chikodi, 2010)

Amnesty International Report (2010) said that the police continued to commit with impunity a wide range of human rights violations, including unlawful killings, torture and other ill treatment were targeted, for failing to pay bribes several people were tortured to death in police detentions. Amnesty, (2010) as quoted by Tell Magazine report continued that hundreds of people died at the hands of the police, many were unlawfully killed before or during arrest in the street or at road blocks or subsequently in police detention. A large proportion of these unlawful killings may have constituted extrajudicial executions. Many other people disappeared after arrests. The families of such victims rarely receive redress and are often left with no answers.

Consequently, the Nigerian economy has virtually collapsed, extreme poverty inflation, unemployment collapse of industrial and agricultural production and institutionalized corruption have combined to make Nigerians amongst the most miserable and disenchanted people in the world (Aborishade, 2003). The Nigerian youth is a vibrant group of young men and women with untapped potentials in recreational ideas pursuits and endeavours, imbibing a positive progressive and values oriented recreation culture begins in the universities. The learning experience and social cultural cross fertilization of ideas in the university contribute positively towards entrenching a vibrant recreation culture.

Recreation and sports are important character builders molding the character of the Nigerian youth for positive role play in the society, recreation and sports teach tolerance perseverance, humility, honesty, courage and comradeship (Ikulayo, 2007). Ikulayo, (2007) also sees recreation and sports as instruments of change if the virtues inculcated in sports and recreation is transferred to events and activities within the society. The seemingly negative political climates in some parts of the Nigerian state notwithstanding the Nigerian university students do have leisure activities. This research investigated the possible effects if any of the political climate on the recreational habit of Nigerian students in three Federal Government Universities located in three geopolitical areas of the country. These universities are University of Lagos (South West), University of Jos (North Central) and University of Benin (South South).

The hypotheses tested in the study were:

- i. That political climate will have no significant influence on recreational habit of Nigerian students
- ii. That perceived political violence will have no relationship with Nigerian students attitude towards outdoor recreation
- iii. That there will be no significant difference in the attitude of Nigerian students from the three geopolitical zones to outdoor recreation

Key Terms

Political climate: Condition of peace or violence orchestrated by changes in the country's political life.

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Recreational Habit: Inculcating a culture of participating in indoor or outdoor recreation.

METHODOLOGY

This research study was carried out in three major Federal Government owned and funded universities located in three different geopolitical zones of the country, the universities are: The University of Lagos (South West Zone), the University of Benin (South, South Zone), the University of Jos (North Central Zone). These universities were selected to ensure a national spread and to ensure an authentic representation of the Nigerian political environment and its perceived effects on the recreational habit of Nigerian students. The population of the study was students in the three Nigerian Universities, six – hundred participants from the three universities were selected as samples, and two – hundred participants per university were sampled. The instrument used to collect data was a questionnaire, the questionnaire requested responses from participants on how they spent their leisure hours, how often they visit public parks, the role of the university management in encouraging students recreational pursuits outside the campuses, feelings about their personal safety on campus and outside campus (within the cities) whether there are alternative recreational pursuits within university campuses feelings about security on campus and violence in the cities. Copies of the questionnaire were administered on the participants through research assistants, the copies of the questionnaire administered in Jos were sent to the e – mail of the research assistant in University of Jos who personally administered and sent the results through the electronic mailing system.

The copies of the questionnaire retrieved from the participants and used for the statistical analysis of data were as follows:

University of Lagos – 186 copies University of Benin – 178 copies.

University of Jos - 156 copies Total - 520 copies.

The statistical tool used to test the stated hypotheses were standard deviation, correlation coefficient and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

RESULTS

Table 1 above shows the distribution of preference for indoor and outdoor recreational activities by Nigerian students in the three geopolitical areas. The highest preference for outdoor recreation was from Lagos South West. The lowest outdoor recreation pursuit is from Jos in the North Central region of Nigeria.

Table 1: Distribution of Preference for Outdoor and Indoor Recreation Activities by the Students.

Universities	No.	%	Total
Lagos (South West)	186		
Outdoor	118	63.5	100
Indoor	68	36.5	
Benin (South South)	178		
Outdoor	98	55.06	100
Indoor	80	44.94	
Jos (North Central)	156		
Outdoor	33	21.1	100
Indoor	123	78.9	
Total	520		

Table 2 above shows a high correlation between political climate and preference for outdoor recreation $r = 0.89$. Table 3 shows that there is a positive correlation between political climate and preference for outdoor recreational activity. Table 4 shows that there is a negative relationship between political climate and preference for outdoor recreation.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient of Political Climate and Preference for Outdoor Recreation amongst University of Lagos Students.

	Ex	Ey	Ex ²	Ey ²	Exy	
Political Climate (x)	506		20104		26706	
Outdoor Recreation (y)		521		27597		0.89

Table 3: Correlation Coefficient of Political Climate and Preference for Outdoor recreational Pursuits in University of Benin (South, South Zone) .

	Ex	Ey	Ex ²	Ey ²	Exy	
Political Climate (x)	501.95		251196.42		2607.06	
Outdoor Recreation (y)		511.9		262041.61		0.856

$r = 0.856$

Table 4: Relationship between political climate and outdoor recreational preference of university of Jos students.

	N	X	SD	R Cal
Political Climate (x)	156	18.21	61.38	
Outdoor Recreation (y)	156	5.470	32.97	-0.67

$P < 0.05$

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Table 5 shows that the differences in the recreational habit of Nigerian students are significant. This is evident in the significant difference existing in their preference for outdoor recreational pursuits.

Table 5: ANOVA table on the Outdoor Recreational Preference of Nigerian Students from three Geopolitical Zones.

Source	Degree of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean of Squares	F Cal	F Tab
Between Groups	3	1241.35	313.78	6.85	2.62
Within Groups	436	26326.6	60.38		
Total	439	27567.95			

Significant at 0.05 F Values > F Tab (6.85 > 2.62).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study as presented in table 1 – 5 are discussed below:

Table 1 shows the preference of the participants to indoor and outdoor recreational pursuits, participants from Lagos in the South West had the highest percentage of 63.5% followed by Benin in the South, South zone of Nigeria with Jos having the least of 21.1%. This result reflects the trend of political violence across the zones, Lagos in the South West had relatively lower incidences of political violence, Jos had the most frequent and most violent, Jos has witnessed violent crisis of differing dimensions since 1994, 2001, 2004, 2008 and the most recent of the major crisis being January 17 and March 7, 2010 (Tajudeen, 2011).

Table 2 shows the correlation coefficient of incidences of political violence and preference for outdoor recreation amongst university of Lagos students. The table shows a high correlation ($r = 0.89$) between political climate and preference for outdoor recreation. This shows that the participants' choice of participating in outdoor recreational activities has a positive relationship with the relative safety or absence of indices of political violence. Yusuf (2003) submits that political violence traumatizes the citizenry psyche peace loving citizens are forced by circumstances to witness dastardly acts, the psychological effects of these happenings on the moral and mental well – being of these innocent witnesses to terror is better imagined. Yusuf, (2003) concludes that it would be saying the obvious to state that political violence breeds and nurture insecurity. There is the all-pervading fear and a sense of inadequacy pervading the political and environmental landscape.

Table 3 presents the correlation co – efficient of political climate and preference for outdoor recreational pursuits in Benin South, South Nigeria. The table shows high correlation between outdoor recreation and political climate $r = 0.856$, the absence of political violence and existence of relative

communal peace provides fertile conducive environment for Nigerian youths to participate in outdoor recreation.

Table 4 shows a negative relationship $r = -0.67$ between political climate and the pursuit of outdoor recreational activities in Jos North Central Nigeria. This result confirms the effect of the damage done to the recreational lifestyle of the Nigerian youth in the crisis ridden areas of the country. Anifowoshe, (2003) notes that political violence cannot build a better society because disruption and disorder gives birth to repression not justice, disruption and disorder affects the freedom of every citizen. Hence, no society can experience progress and development in any form where mob rule is the order of the day.

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) in table 5 posts a significant difference in the preference for outdoor recreational activity amongst the sampled participants in the study. The result shows that there exists a significant difference in the recreational habit of Nigerian students from the three geopolitical zones sampled in the study. The political climate in the southwest as exemplified by Lagos is relatively devoid of violence, there seemed to be a relative political and communal peace. It can be said that there was conducive atmosphere for cultivating good recreational habit. In Benin south/south Nigeria, there are occasional cases of political killings kidnappings and violent political riots, incidences of violence in these forms may not encourage the youths to cultivate positive recreational habit. In Jos North Central Nigeria, there had been several incidence of political violence since 1994, Jos city before this violent eruption was noted for outdoor recreation sites -clement weather and high concentration of foreign tourists. The result of these study shows that outdoor recreation has taken a dive for the worse, political violence breeds insecurity, insecurity of life and property curtails the freedom of the youth lack of freedom of movement destroys tourism and outdoor recreation. The first casualties of political violence is humanity itself sacred lives are taken with impunity. Properties are unreasonably destroyed; there exists the all-pervading fear and a sense of inadequacy enveloping the political landscape (Yusuf, 2003).

CONCLUSION

The results of the study have shown that political climate has a significant influence on the recreational habit of Nigerian students; political violence has a significant effect on Nigerian students' choice and preference for outdoor recreation. There is a significant difference in the attitude of Nigerian students' from the different geopolitical zones to outdoor recreation. The study therefore concludes that a positive peaceful political climate will encourage the inculcation of good recreational habit in Nigerian students. There will be greater development in outdoor recreation and improvement in tourism with its positive economic gains. The study recommends that in the

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interest of the Nigerian youth, attempts should be made to enshrine peace and reduce the negative effect of political violence

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