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MANAGEMENT VARIABLES AS DETERMINANTS OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assessed management variables as determinants of recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar. Three null hypotheses guided the study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The study's population was drawn from the Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, which included one thousand five hundred and twenty (1,520) individuals. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select 244 respondents for the sample. The instrument used for data collection in the study was a structured questionnaire titled "Management Variables as Determinant of Recreational Facilities Development Questionnaire" (MVRFDQ) which was presented for face validation by experts in Test and Measurement and Tourism departments. Data were collected by physically administering copies of the instrument to the respondents. The data collected were statistically analyzed using one way analysis of variance and Pearson product moment correlation analysis at the .05 level of significance. The findings obtained from data analysis and hypothesis testing revealed that there was a significant influence of leadership style on recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar. Also, communication methods and policy implementation had a positive correlation with recreational facilities development. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended among others that the management of the University of Calabar should be sensitized on the need to adopt more democratic approaches towards recreational facilities development within the campus.

Keywords: Recreational Facilities, Leadership Styles, Communication Methods, Policy Implementation

Introduction

Recreation plays a vital role in enhancing individuals' physical health and mental wellbeing by offering avenues for relaxation, stress reduction, and physical activity. The benefits of recreation are well-documented, including improved physiological and cognitive functioning, relaxation, stress and anxiety reduction, and boosted self-image and confidence. Recreational activities also contribute to a reduced risk of obesity and chronic disease, a stronger immune system, and increased life expectancy (Dawudu & Sholanke, 2023; Mustapha, Mohammad & Mohammed, 2022).

Moreover, recreation increases physiological and cognitive functioning, counterbalances the effects of stress, and provides opportunities for social interactions, leading to improved quality of life and functional ability (Delhey & Dragolov, 2016; Elliott, Gale, Parsons & Kuh, 2014). The psychological benefits of recreation include relief from stress, emotional relaxation, creative thinking, mental relaxation, and a sense of freedom, among others (Sönmez, 2023). Recreation also offers numerous social benefits, such as improved human relationships, positive relationships, friendship, empathy, understanding others' thoughts, sharing ideas, crime reduction, social bond promotion, senior support, youth development, education enhancement, and negative behavior deterrence (Yan, 2013).

However, Dawudu and Sholanke, (2023) noted that the culture of consciously engaging in recreational activities is very low in Nigeria. Limited recreational opportunities within the University of Calabar have led to growing concerns about student, administrative and academic staff wellness and satisfaction, signaling a pressing need for enhanced management practices in the development of campus facilities. Despite recognizing the importance of recreation, only a few facilities, notably the Senior Club, are operational. Unfortunately, access to the Senior Club is restricted to member staff only, posing a significant barrier to utilization for certain individuals. This exclusionary practice undermines the potential benefits of recreation and social interaction within the university community.

Hence, the overarching problem lies in the inadequate provision and inequitable access to functional recreational facilities within the University of Calabar community. This issue not only deprives individuals of opportunities for physical and mental well-being but also hampers social cohesion and inclusivity within the institution. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive examination of management variables, including leadership styles, financial management practices, and policy formulation, to facilitate the development and equitable access to recreational facilities for all members of the

university community. Given these considerations, this study seeks to examine the extent to which management variables act as determinants of recreational facilities development within the University of Calabar community.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate management variables as determinants of recreational facilities development in university of Calabar community. Specifically, this study sought to;

1. Explore how leadership style influences development of recreational facilities in the University of Calabar
2. Assess how communication method relates with the development of recreational facilities in the University of Calabar.
3. Evaluate how policies implementation relates to recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide this study;

1. Leadership style does not significantly influence recreational facility development in University of Calabar.
2. There is no significant relationship between communication method and recreational facilities development University of Calabar.
3. There is no significant relationship between policies implementation and recreational facility development in University of Calabar

Literature review

Leadership styles and recreational facility development

Effective leadership is crucial in developing and managing recreational facilities in academic institutions, significantly impacting campus life and well-being (Johnson & Miller, 2015). Leadership styles, such as autocratic, participative, and laissez-faire, influence the success of these facilities. Autocratic leadership, characterized by centralized decision-making, can expedite decisions but may overlook stakeholder needs and preferences (Chemers, 2018). This highlights the importance of balancing leadership styles to ensure recreational facilities meet the community's needs, enhancing overall campus experience.

A 2016 study by Smith and Peterson found that neglecting students' and staff's needs leads to underutilized facilities. In contrast, participative leadership, which engages stakeholders, increases satisfaction and ownership (Bass & Riggio, 2016). This approach aligns with transformational leadership, inspiring higher performance. Participative leaders ensure facilities meet diverse needs, leading to higher utilization and well-being. Goleman (2018) supports this view, emphasizing collaboration. Avolio et al. (2019) describe laissez-faire leadership as hands-off, granting autonomy but risking inconsistencies. An integrated approach balances autocratic decisiveness, participative inclusiveness, and laissez-faire innovation, aligning with strategic objectives and meeting campus needs (Avolio et al., 2019). Williams and Davis (2017) emphasize balancing ideas with reality, and a multifaceted leadership model adapts styles to context.

Communication method and the development of recreational facilities

According to Davis and Lee (2024), recreational facilities in tertiary institutions are crucial for students' well-being and academic performance. These facilities provide spaces for physical activities, relaxation, and social interactions, enhancing the campus life experience. The evolution of communication technologies has transformed the planning, implementation, and utilization of these facilities. Effective communication is key in the initial stages, and the University of Calabar leverages digital, verbal, and written channels for robust stakeholder engagement. Online surveys, emails, and social media platforms gather insights into students' and faculty's needs, ensuring facilities align with community demands, as highlighted by Smith and Thomas (2021).

Effective stakeholder engagement and communication are crucial in university planning, particularly for recreational facilities (Davis & Lee, 2024). Modern communication technologies enhance project management, facilitating coordination among diverse teams and streamlining information exchange (Johnson, 2022). Platforms like Slack and Microsoft Teams optimize resource use, minimize delays, and ensure adherence to budgets and design specifications. Once facilities are operational, digital platforms collect user feedback, enabling continuous improvement and informed decision-making (Williams & Carter, 2023). Promotional strategies, such as digital signage, social media, and email newsletters, increase engagement and utilization (Davis & Lee, 2024). Effective communication ensures facilities meet evolving user needs, remain relevant, and maintain high satisfaction levels among the university community (Akorede, 2024; Sani, Akorede & Alabidun, 2024).

The effectiveness of communication methods, such as digital signage, social media updates, and email newsletters, also warrants quantitative analysis to determine the most effective strategies for increasing engagement (Davis & Lee, 2024).

Effective communication is crucial, influencing campus culture, perception, and trust (Johnson, 2022). It enhances the student experience, fosters a vibrant campus culture, and ensures optimal facility utilization. With a diverse student body and numerous amenities, consistent communication is pivotal at the University of Calabar, building trust and transparency between the administration and campus community.

Establishing communication channels is crucial to inform the University of Calabar community about available recreational facilities, including sports complexes, gymnasiums, swimming pools, and outdoor spaces. Regular updates via email, social media, bulletin boards, and posters can keep students, faculty, and staff informed about operating hours, events, and maintenance schedules. Additionally, a dedicated campus app or website can provide easy access to facility information, virtual tours, and booking procedures, enhancing convenience and encouraging participation (Davis & Lee, 2024). Effective communication can increase engagement and promote a vibrant campus culture, ultimately contributing to the well-being and academic success of students (Johnson, 2022).

Policy implementation and recreational facilities development

Universities rely on effective policy implementation and recreational facilities to shape the student experience (Cohen & Peachey, 2015). Policies ensure institutional efficiency, academic standards, and ethical conduct, while recreational facilities support physical and mental well-being. Successful policy implementation requires understanding institutional culture and engaging stakeholders (Kezar & Eckel, 2022). Adaptive policies address academic integrity, financial aid, and inclusivity, demanding continuous review and adjustment. Integrating policies promoting physical health with recreational facilities enhances student life. Comprehensive wellness programs, inclusive facilities, and student feedback mechanisms foster an environment responsive to student needs (Ekanem, 2016). Effective governance ensures recreational services meet evolving student preferences, aligning with institutional policies and values. The University of Calabar prioritizes diverse recreational opportunities, aligning with research that highlights the importance of recreation for mental health and academic performance (Vankim et al., 2015). Policies govern funding for facilities, ensuring access to physical activity and leisure. Student Affairs encourages recreational clubs, fostering belonging and leadership development (Renn, 2018). Involvement in extracurricular activities correlates with academic achievement and retention (Pike et al., 2020). Policies prioritize safety, inclusivity, and sustainability, ensuring a safe environment and environmentally responsible practices (Jones, 2021; UNICAL, 2023). Research gaps include long-term policy impacts, comparative analyses, and sustainability of recreational practices, offering opportunities for further study to enhance policy implementation and facility development.

Methods

The survey research design was used for the study. According to Isangedighi (2012), survey research design is a research approach that attempts to systematically collect data of which the researcher has no control over the variables. Such data could be collected through the use of written or oral data collection instruments. The study's population was drawn from the Faculty of Vocational and Science Education in the University of Calabar, Cross River State. It included one thousand five hundred and twenty (1,520) individuals across Three (3) departments, encompassing students, administrative staff, and academic staff (Lecturers). This data is based on information provided by the Faculty Officer of Vocational and Science Education University of Calabar Cross River state (Faculty Office, 2024).

The stratified random sampling technique was used to select 244 respondents that were randomly selected as shown in table 1. In each department used for the study, the researcher obtained the names of students and both academic and non-teaching staff from the Faculty Officer, arranged them alphabetically and every fifth name representing twenty percent of each category of respondent was selected for the study. Those selected made up the sample used for the study. This represents twenty percent of the population.

Table 1: Sample Distribution by Departments

S/N	Name of Departments	Students	Staff	Sample
1	Human Kinetics and Health Education	324	22	69
2	Science Education	408	25	87
3	Vocational Education	416	24	88
	Total	**1148**	**71**	**244**

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The instrument used for data collection in the study was a structured questionnaire titled “Management Variables as Determinant of Recreational Facilities Development Questionnaire” (MVRFDQ). The instrument was designed using four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). It contained twenty items measuring variables of the study. Items 1-5 measured Communication methods, 6-10 measured Policy implementation and 11-

20 measured recreational facilities development. To ensure that the items selected for inclusion in the questionnaire were capable of obtaining relevant responses from the respondents, the researchers presented the questionnaire to a Lecturer in Tourism and two others in Test and Measurement for face and content validity. Through this process, some items were reframed; the scale was adjusted while a few others were removed to ensure that the questionnaire was capable of obtaining relevant data from respondents. Copies of questionnaire were administered and retrieved the direct delivery method. The researchers visited all three departments within the Faculty of Vocational and Science Education selected for the study, obtaining permission from each department's Head before engaging students, administrative, and academic staff for data collection.

Results

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis stated that there was no significant influence of leadership style on recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar. The independent variable in this hypothesis is leadership style while the dependent variable was recreational facilities development. One-way analysis of variance statistical tool was used for data analysis. The result of this analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: One-way analysis of variance of the influence of leadership style on recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar, Cross River State

Leadership style	N	$\bar{X}$	SD		
Autocratic	82	22.69	3.31		
Democratic	144	27.74	3.71		
Laissez-faire	18	20.53	3.22		
Source of variance	SS	Df	MS	F	P.value
Between group	191.255	2	95.628	43.714*	.000
Within group	804.212	241	1.658		
Total	995.467	243			

*Significant at .05 level, df= 2, 241.

The result of analysis of data presented in Table 2 revealed that the calculated F-value of 43.714 is higher than the p.value of .000 at 0.05 level of significance with 2 and 241 degree of freedom. This implied that the null hypothesis was rejected. As a result, there is a significant influence of leadership style on recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar.

Since leadership style has a significant influence on recreational facilities development, a post hoc analysis was employed using Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD analysis to determine where the significant difference among the various leadership styles was highest in terms of mean difference. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD) analysis of the influence of leadership style on recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar

Leadership style	(J)	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Autocratic	Democratic	1.24041*	.18036	.000
	Laissez-faire	-.02401	.19187	.900
Democratic	Autocratic	-1.24041*	.18036	.000
	Laissez-faire	-1.26442(*)	.12925	.000
Laissez-faire	Autocratic	.02401	.19187	.900
	Democratic	1.26442*	.12925	.000

*Mean difference is significant at .05 level.

Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) was used to further identify where significant difference among the various leadership styles was highest in relation to recreational facilities development was highest in terms of mean difference. The result shows that the mean difference between autocratic and democratic leadership style was 1.24041. The mean difference

between autocratic and laissez-faire leadership style was -.02401. The mean difference between democratic and laissez-faire leadership style was 1.26442. From the result presented in Table 3, the mean difference is highest between democratic and laissez-faire leadership style (1.26442) while the least mean difference is between autocratic and laissez-faire leadership style groups (.02401).

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis of the study states that communication method does not significantly relate with recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar. The independent variable in this hypothesis is communication method while the dependent variable is recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar. Pearson product moment correlation statistical tool was used for data analysis. The result of this analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between communication method and recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar, Cross River State (N = 244)

Variables	Σx Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	Σxy	Cal.r	P.value
Communication method	3592	4158			
			5784	0.435*	0.000
Recreational facilities development	5922	6639			

*Significant at 0.05; df = 242

The result of analysis of data presented in Table 4 showed that the calculated r-value of 0.435 is higher than the p.value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance with 242 degree of freedom. This implied that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between communication method and recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar, Cross River State.

Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis of the study stated that there is no significant relationship between policy implementation and recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar. The independent variable in this hypothesis is policy implementation while the dependent variable is recreational facilities development. Pearson product moment correlation statistical tool was employed for data analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between policy implementation and recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar, Cross River State (N = 244)

Variables	Σx Σy	Σx^2 Σy^2	Σxy	Cal.r	P.value
Policy implementation	3289	3874			
			5592	0.373*	0.000
Recreational facilities development	5922	6639			

*Significant at 0.05; df = 242

The result of analysis of data presented in Table 5 showed that the calculated r-value of 0.435 is higher than the p.value of 0.000 at 0.05 level of significance with 242 degree of freedom. This implied that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between policy implementation and recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar, Cross River State.

Discussion of findings

Leadership Style and Recreational Facilities Development

The study established a significant influence of leadership style on recreational facilities development at the University of Calabar. This finding suggests that the leadership approach adopted by university administrators can either enhance or hinder the development of such facilities. Democratic leadership was associated with better outcomes in recreational facilities development compared to autocratic and laissez-faire styles. This aligns with Johnson and Miller (2015), who emphasized the role of participative leadership in fostering inclusive decision-making processes that lead to campus development.

Additionally, the study resonates with Williams and Davis (2017), who argued that universities should blend leadership styles to balance authority with inclusivity, ensuring that stakeholders students, academic staff, and administrators contribute to decision-making regarding recreational facilities. The results further support the multifaceted leadership model of Avolio et al. (2019), which recommends situational adaptation of leadership styles to maximize institutional development. Therefore, fostering an adaptive leadership model, integrating both democratic and structured leadership, may be an effective strategy for improving recreational facilities development.

Communication Method and Recreational Facilities Development

The study also found a significant relationship between communication methods and the development of recreational facilities. Effective communication facilitates better planning, implementation, and maintenance of recreational facilities by ensuring that stakeholders remain informed and engaged in the process. A two-way communication approach that integrates feedback mechanisms leads to more inclusive and sustainable development.

This finding is consistent with Davis and Lee (2024), who argue that institutions that implement structured communication strategies are more likely to achieve their developmental goals. Additionally, Williams and Carter (2023) highlighted the importance of digital communication tools in gathering real-time feedback, allowing management to respond to the evolving needs of students and staff. The research underscores the need for universities to establish multiple communication channels including emails, online surveys, social media, and suggestion boxes to ensure effective information dissemination and feedback collection. Improved communication not only enhances facility utilization but also builds trust between administrators and the university community.

Policy Implementation and Recreational Facilities Development

The findings further revealed a significant relationship between policy implementation and recreational facilities development. This suggests that well-defined policies, when effectively executed, contribute positively to the expansion and maintenance of recreational facilities. However, the study identified a gap in policy-driven initiatives aimed at recreational facilities development at the University of Calabar. This aligns with Ekanem (2016**)**, who observed that higher education institutions often lack specific policies dedicated to recreational infrastructure. Similarly, Pike et al. (2020) found that universities that actively implement policies supporting recreation experience higher student engagement, improved mental health, and greater academic success.

The lack of effective policy implementation at the University of Calabar may hinder the expansion of recreational facilities, thereby limiting student engagement in extracurricular activities. Research highlights that universities with well-structured recreational policies experience improved student retention rates and academic performance (Johnson, 2022). This study reinforces the need for policies that prioritize recreational development, emphasizing its role in student well-being, campus life enrichment, and the overall university experience. Policymakers should integrate recreational development goals into broader institutional strategies to ensure consistent and sustainable improvements.

Conclusion

The essence of this study was to investigate and present findings on management variables as determinant of recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar, Cross River State. The findings obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypotheses in the study showed that there was a significant influence of leadership style on recreational facilities development. The finding also revealed that there was a significant relationship between communication method, policy implementation and recreational facilities development in the University of Calabar.

Recommendations

Based on the findings obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypotheses in the study, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. Adoption of a Participatory Leadership Approach: The university's management should embrace a more participatory leadership model that fosters inclusivity and collective decision-making regarding recreational facilities development. A democratic leadership approach should be encouraged at all levels of administration, allowing students, academic staff, and administrative personnel to actively contribute ideas and recommendations. Leadership workshops and training programs should be conducted to sensitize university management on the impact of leadership styles on infrastructural development.
2. Strengthening Communication Channels for Facility Development: Effective communication mechanisms should be implemented to ensure transparency and engagement in decision-making processes related to recreational facilities. The university should establish a structured feedback system, digital platforms (e.g., university websites, student portals, and mobile applications), and periodic town hall meetings to collect and address concerns about

recreational facilities. Additionally, a dedicated recreational facilities committee should be set up to oversee communication and feedback between students and the management.

3. Policy Formulation and Implementation for Recreational Development: The university administration should develop and enforce policies specifically aimed at recreational infrastructure development. This includes integrating recreational facilities into the university's strategic development plan, allocating designated funding for recreational projects, and ensuring compliance with national and international standards for university recreation. Existing policies should be reviewed to ensure that they provide clear guidelines on facility maintenance, upgrades, and expansion.

4. Collaboration and External Funding Opportunities: To address financial constraints, the university should seek collaborations with corporate organizations, sports federations, and government agencies to support the development and maintenance of recreational facilities. Partnerships with sports tourism agencies, international donor organizations, and alumni networks can provide funding for facility upgrades, sports equipment procurement, and professional facility management.

5. Regular Monitoring and Evaluation of Recreational Facilities: A system should be established for periodic evaluation and maintenance of recreational facilities to ensure they remain functional and meet the needs of the university community. The appointment of a dedicated Recreational Facilities Development Committee (RFDC), composed of representatives from the student body, faculty, and administrative staff, would ensure continuous assessment and timely intervention in facility improvements.

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