

# Usage Patterns of Recreational Facilities Among Staff Members in Selected Southwestern Nigerian Universities

ABDULRASAQ. K. AYINLA<sup>1</sup>, OLANIYI PEACE OLOYE<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Department Of Architecture, Faculty Of Environmental Sciences, Ladoke Akintola University Of Technology (Lautech), Ogbomosho, Nigeria

*Abstract—Recreational facilities play a vital role in enhancing staff well-being, fostering relaxation, and improving productivity in workplace settings, including academic institutions. This study examines the usage patterns of staff club recreational facilities in selected Southwestern Nigerian universities, focusing on frequency of visits, preferred facilities, and factors influencing usage. Using a quantitative approach, structured questionnaires were administered to 240 staff club user's at Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), University of Ibadan (UI), and University of Lagos (UNILAG). Findings indicate that 93.7% of staff members utilize these facilities weekly, with swimming pools (26.6%), tennis courts (25.7%), and restaurants (21.5%) being the most frequented. Most users (71.7%) spend between 1–2 hours per visit, while accessibility (4.75 mean score), facility condition (4.58 mean score), and staff behavior (4.65 mean score) significantly influence usage patterns. These findings conclude that strategic improvements in facility maintenance, accessibility, and infrastructure are essential to enhancing staff engagement and satisfaction. The study underscores the importance of better upkeep, greater accessibility, and a wider range of recreational activities to improve user experience. Key recommendations include expanding facility options, strengthening maintenance efforts, enhancing accessibility, increasing awareness of recreational benefits, and improving social spaces. Implementing these measures will foster a healthier, more engaged workforce.*

*Indexed Terms- Recreational Facilities, Staff Clubs, Workplace Well-Being, Facility Usage, University Staff Satisfaction.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Workplace recreation has been identified as a crucial element in enhancing employees' physical and mental well-being. In academic institutions, staff clubs serve as essential facilities that provide employees with opportunities for relaxation, social interaction, and engagement in physical activities. These clubs play a significant role in reducing work-related stress, improving job satisfaction, and fostering a sense of community among university staff members.

This study focuses on selected public universities in Southwestern Nigeria—Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), University of Ibadan (UI), and University of Lagos (UNILAG)—to assess staff club usage patterns, preferred facilities, and overall satisfaction levels. The findings provide insights into how universities can enhance recreational spaces for better engagement and staff well-being.

The importance of recreational facilities in workplaces cannot be overstated. Study has shown that regular engagement in leisure activities enhances cognitive function, boosts productivity, and improves overall job performance. In the context of Nigerian universities, where work demands are often high, staff clubs offer a much-needed avenue for employees to unwind and maintain a healthy work-life balance. However, understanding how these facilities are used and the factors influencing their usage is crucial for optimizing their effectiveness.

Despite the recognized benefits of staff recreational facilities, there is limited study on their usage patterns among university employees in Nigeria. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring how often staff members utilize these facilities, which amenities are most preferred, and the duration of time spent at these

clubs. By analyzing these aspects, the study seeks to provide valuable insights that can guide the design, improvement, and management of staff club recreational facilities in Nigerian universities.

Workplace recreation has been identified as a crucial element in enhancing employees' physical and mental well-being. In academic institutions, staff clubs serve as essential facilities that provide employees with opportunities for relaxation, social interaction, and engagement in physical activities. These clubs play a significant role in reducing work-related stress, improving job satisfaction, and fostering a sense of community among university staff members. According to Cay and Oguz (2016), recreation is vital for overall well-being as it allows employees to rejuvenate, enhance creativity, and increase productivity.

The importance of recreational facilities in workplaces cannot be overstated. Study has shown that regular engagement in leisure activities enhances cognitive function, boosts productivity, and improves overall job performance (Gupta, 2019). Staff members in Nigerian universities often face high work demands, making recreational facilities a crucial outlet for relaxation and stress management. Mokaya and Gitari (2012) argue that incorporating structured leisure time in workplace environments contributes to employee satisfaction and efficiency. Moreover, Chinedu and Ifeoma (2021) emphasize that engaging in leisure activities helps in mitigating anxiety, depression, and workplace burnout.

Despite the recognized benefits of staff recreational facilities, there is limited research on their usage patterns among university employees in Nigeria. Many previous studies have focused on student recreational activities, neglecting the importance of staff club facilities (Omotayo, 2017; Okechukwu et al., 2019). Understanding the frequency of use, preferred amenities, and the time spent at these facilities will help in designing, maintaining, and optimizing recreational spaces to meet the needs of university staff.

Furthermore, the availability and accessibility of recreational facilities influence staff participation. According to Claretian University (2021), staff clubs

aim to promote work-life balance, enhance social interactions, and encourage physical well-being. However, factors such as accessibility, quality of facilities, affordability, and scheduling constraints may affect participation levels (Agbabiaka et al., 2020). This study aims to bridge the research gap by exploring the usage patterns of staff club recreational facilities in selected South-Western Nigerian public universities. The insights gained will provide a framework for improving existing facilities and guiding future investments in university staff recreation.

By analyzing usage trends, preferences, and challenges, this study will offer recommendations to improve the design, accessibility, and effectiveness of staff club recreational facilities in Nigerian universities. Through better planning and implementation, institutions can foster a healthier and more engaged workforce, enhancing academic and administrative productivity.

## II. STUDY AREA

The study was conducted in selected public universities in South-Western Nigeria, specifically focusing on those with purpose-built staff clubs that offer recreational facilities. The selected universities include Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) in Osun State, the University of Ibadan (UI) in Oyo State, and Lagos State University (LASU) in Lagos State. These institutions were chosen based on the availability of well-established staff clubs with a range of recreational amenities.

Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) is renowned for its expansive campus and structured staff club, which provides various recreational activities such as swimming, tennis, and social gatherings. The University of Ibadan (UI), Nigeria's premier university, also has a long-standing staff club that offers multiple leisure and fitness facilities for its employees. Lagos State University (LASU), located in Nigeria's commercial hub, provides a dynamic recreational environment that caters to the diverse needs of its academic and administrative staff.

These universities represent a broad spectrum of institutional structures, from federal to state-owned

institutions, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of staff club usage patterns. The study area was selected to capture insights from different university environments, ensuring that findings reflect a wide range of experiences and facility utilizations. The research focuses on the accessibility, frequency of use, preferred facilities, and overall satisfaction of staff members with the available recreational amenities. By examining these aspects, the study aims to provide actionable recommendations for improving staff recreational facilities in Nigerian universities.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Concept of Recreation and Staff Clubs

Recreation is defined as voluntary activities engaged in during leisure time for personal enjoyment, relaxation, and social interaction (Hall and Page, 2014). Recreational activities contribute to both mental and physical well-being by reducing stress and promoting overall health (Cay, 2015). Within workplace settings, staff clubs provide structured recreational opportunities that enhance employee satisfaction and productivity (Gupta, 2019).

#### Types of Recreational Activities

Recreational activities can be categorized into active and passive forms. Active recreation includes physical sports such as swimming, tennis, and football, while passive recreation involves less physically intensive activities such as reading, social gatherings, and board games (Fang et al., 2017). Studies indicate that university staff members participate in both types of recreation, with a strong preference for swimming and tennis in Nigerian university staff clubs (Author's Field Survey, 2024).

#### Benefits of Recreational Facilities

Recreational facilities play a crucial role in improving employees' well-being and productivity. Regular physical activity reduces stress, prevents lifestyle-related diseases, and fosters a sense of community among employees (Gupta, 2019). According to Claretian University (2021), staff clubs aim to enhance work-life balance and social interaction through organized recreational programs. Additionally, structured recreational activities have been linked to improved workplace engagement and lower absenteeism rates (Morris, 2018).

#### Factors Influencing Usage of Recreational Facilities

Studies have identified key factors affecting the usage of recreational facilities in staff clubs. Accessibility, facility condition, membership fees, and staff behavior significantly influence participation levels (Agbabiaka et al., 2020). The study findings indicate that accessibility is the most critical factor, with an average mean score of 4.75 across surveyed universities (Author's Field Survey, 2024). Other factors such as membership fees and opening hours were also found to impact facility usage, particularly in universities where staff members work longer shifts.

#### Challenges in Utilizing Recreational Facilities

Despite the benefits of staff clubs, several challenges hinder their effective utilization. Poor facility maintenance, lack of diverse recreational activities, and restrictive opening hours limit participation (Okechukwu et al., 2019). In South-Western Nigerian universities, staff members report dissatisfaction with equipment conditions and accessibility (Author's Field Survey, 2024).

#### The Role of Staff Clubs in Higher Institutions

Staff clubs in higher institutions serve multiple functions beyond recreation. They provide platforms for social engagement, networking, and professional collaboration (Morris, 2018). Studies suggest that well-managed staff clubs contribute to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover rates among university employees (Chinedu and Ifeoma, 2021). Additionally, staff clubs often serve as venues for hosting cultural events, team-building exercises, and academic discussions, further enriching the professional lives of university employees.

#### Recommendations for Improvement

To optimize staff club utilization, universities should focus on facility maintenance, expanding activity options, and improving accessibility (Claretian University, 2021). Implementing policies that encourage regular participation can further enhance the benefits of recreational facilities (Gupta, 2019). Encouraging stakeholder involvement, including university administration and staff representatives, will ensure that recreational facilities meet the evolving needs of users.

## Conclusion

The role of staff clubs in universities extends beyond leisure; they serve as platforms for improving employee well-being, fostering social connections, and enhancing productivity. Despite challenges such as poor maintenance and accessibility constraints, these facilities remain vital in supporting a healthy work environment. By implementing strategic improvements in facility design, management, and program diversity, universities can optimize staff club utilization and ensure sustained benefits for employees. Future studies should explore innovative recreational solutions that align with evolving workplace needs and technological advancements.

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research approach was adopted, involving structured questionnaire distribution to staff club users across the three selected universities. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula, resulting in 240 respondents. The data collected focused on Frequency of staff club visits, most utilized recreational facilities, Duration of visits, Factors influencing facility usage, Overall satisfaction with facility conditions.

Descriptive statistical tools, including bar charts and percentage distributions, were used to analyze the data. Findings were compared across the three universities to identify common trends and unique patterns.

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the usage patterns of recreational facilities in staff clubs of selected South-Western Nigerian public universities. The methodology includes research design, population sample, data collection techniques, and analysis methods.

### Data Collection Methods

Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to staff members. The questionnaire was designed to capture frequency of facility usage, types of recreational activities preferred, and factors influencing participation. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to facilitate quantitative analysis. In addition to primary data, secondary data were obtained

from existing literature, institutional reports, and previous research on recreational facilities in higher institutions.

### Data Analysis

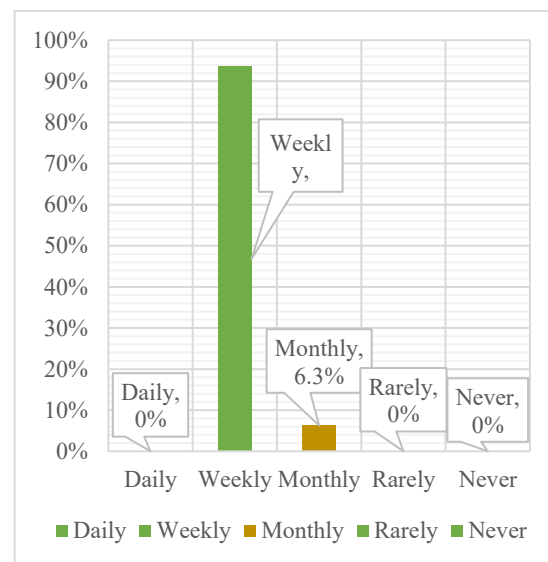
The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, percentages, and mean scores were used to summarize the data.

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Frequency of Recreational Facility Usage

This finding suggests that staff members recognize the importance of recreation in maintaining work-life balance and stress management. The data as show in figure 1.0 reveals that a significant majority of respondents (93.7%) visit the staff club weekly, indicating a high level of engagement with recreational facilities. Only 6.3% reported using the facilities monthly, while there were no respondents who visited daily or rarely.

Figure 1.0 Frequency of Usage of the Recreational facilities at the staff club



Source: Author's Field Survey, 2024

### 3.2 Most Used Recreational Facilities

The data as show in table 1.0 revealed that swimming pools (26.6%) and tennis courts (25.7%) are the most frequently used facilities. These findings suggest that staff members prefer activities that combine leisure

with fitness benefits. The popularity of restaurants (21.5%) highlights the importance of social engagement in the work environment. Gymnasiums (10.5%) and meeting rooms (8.4%) also see regular usage, indicating that fitness and work-related discussions often take place within staff club settings.

Table 1: Respondents' Most Used Facilities at the University Staff Club

Facility	OA U	UI	UNIL AG	Total (Freque ncy)	Tot al (%)
Swimmi ng Pool	14	18	31	63	26.6 %
Gymnas ium	6	7	12	25	10.5 %
Restaur ant	10	14	27	51	21.5 %
Tennis Courts	12	16	33	61	25.7 %
Football Field	1	2	2	5	2.1 %
Basketb all Court	0	1	1	2	0.8 %
Meeting Rooms	3	5	12	20	8.4 %
Lounge/ Bar	2	3	5	10	4.2 %
Total	48	64	125	237	100 %

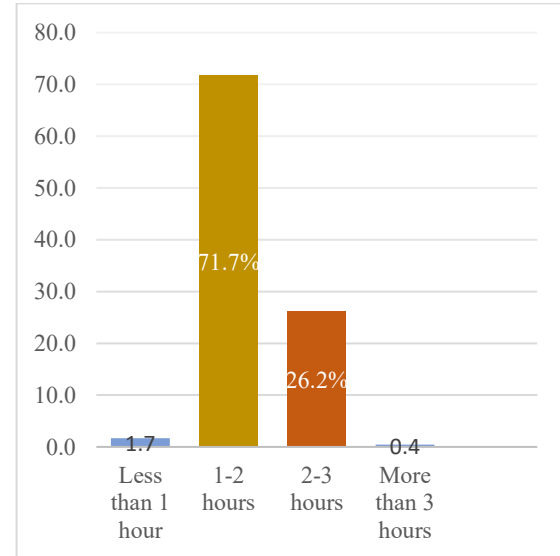
Source: Author's Field Survey, 2024

### 3.3 Duration of Visits

The majority of staff members (71.7%) spend between 1 to 2 hours per visit, indicating that recreational activities are scheduled within moderate time frames. As show in figure 2.0 only 11.3% of respondents reported spending 2-3 hours, while no respondents stayed beyond 3 hours. This pattern suggests that most staff members use these facilities efficiently,

integrating recreation within their daily schedules rather than indulging in prolonged leisure activities.

Figure 2 Frequency of time typically spend at the staff club per visit



Source: Author's Field Survey, 2024

### Conflict of interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study highlights the strong engagement of university staff members in recreational activities, with swimming and tennis emerging as the most popular options. However, challenges such as facility maintenance, accessibility, and cost need to be addressed to maximize usage and effectiveness. By addressing key areas such as facility maintenance, accessibility, and program diversity, universities can further enhance staff engagement in recreational activities. Improving underutilized facilities, such as football fields and basketball courts, through targeted promotions or enhanced equipment availability, may help boost participation. Universities should focus on

enhancing facility management, adjusting operational hours, and considering subsidy programs to encourage broader participation. Future research should look into the impact of structured recreational programs on productivity and well-being in academic institutions.

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