

Promoting Sustainable Tourism: Assessing Student and Non-Student Youth Involvement in Outdoor Recreation Activities in Morogoro, Tanzania

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Abstract:

The tourism sector, especially recreational activities, continues to be a major sector contributing to the country's foreign currency and national income. This study aimed at assessing the participation of both students and non-student youth in outdoor recreational activities so as to add knowledge by assessing students and non-student youth's awareness on the benefits of outdoor recreational activities, attitudes towards participating in outdoor recreational activities, and levels of satisfaction from participating in outdoor recreational activities among them. The study used a cross-sectional design, and purposive sampling was employed to include a total of 120 respondents. Data were collected using questionnaires comprised of both close and open-ended questions and data were analyzed using SPSS computer software together with independent T-test to compare means of variables but descriptive data were analyzed and presented in frequencies and percentages. The results shows that 55.7% of respondents were aware on the benefits of outdoor recreational activities that help in healthy and physical gains, Majority of respondents about 44% responded that attitude in participating in outdoor recreational activities is due to have fun with friends and family. Also results found that there were no significant different between male and female satisfaction in participating in outdoor recreation activities at ($t_{88} = 1.329, P = 0.187$). Finally, this study recommends that the promotion of outdoor recreation activities should be done by responsible actors and policymakers through raising awareness of the benefits of participating in various recreation activities.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Outdoor recreational activities, Student and Non-student youth,

Introduction:

The evolution of recreation in general began after pre-historic advanced societies, where there was specialization of functions (Dérioz et al., 2019). Around that time, people discovered how to domesticate plants and animals, which led them to abandon their prehistoric way of life of hunting and collecting food in favor of grazing and crop-planting and the ruling classes developed in society along with soldiers, craftsmen, peasants, and slaves (Cornelius et al., 2019). As a result of the classes' unequal task distribution, lower-class workers harvested crops while the upper class amassed riches, power, and leisure time. Therefore, people

who belonged to the upper class were the only ones who had a chance to participate in leisure and recreational activities (Young et al., 2016). According to Jenkins and Pigram (2006), outdoor recreational activities are activities that are carried out outside one's home. Thus, one has to get out of his or her home to participate in outdoor recreational activities, including skydiving, scuba diving, wildlife viewing, hiking and biking, bird watching, and game viewing. Outdoor recreational activities are extremely important, especially for university students, for mental and physical refreshment (ÇAKIR, 2020, p. 560).

Bluwstein (2017) reported that Tanzania is rich in varieties of recreational sites and facilities that enhance people's participation in different outdoor recreational activities, while the participation of youth is still low. A study by Kozak and Dođantan (2016) shows that recreational activities are crucially important as they have psychological and social benefits, which is extremely advantageous for keeping individuals healthy and establishing positive social relations with fewer concerns about youth participation in outdoor recreational activities, specifically non-students' youth. A study by Rosenberger et al. (2009) reports that outdoor recreation participation provides educational, developmental, and quality of life benefits to its participants, including improving self-perception towards outdoor recreation activities, building supportive peer networks, and improving self-efficacy and physical fitness.

In fact, many studies conducted to explore participation of students in outdoor tourism including the study by (Kozak and Dođantan, 2016) with the less concerns of assessing how non student youth participating in outdoor tourism activities and for the fact that Tanzania put much emphasize in promoting Tourism activities and this supported by existing President of United republic of Tanzania through Royal Tour tourism initiative, This study intended to assess the participation of both students and non-students' in outdoor recreational activities so as to explore the benefits of participating in outdoor recreational activities among targeted youth and adding knowledge based on Tourism promotion in Tanzania.

Literature review:

Promoting sustainable tourism requires a comprehensive understanding of youth engagement in outdoor recreation activities, particularly in regions like Morogoro, Tanzania. Historically, the evolution of recreational activities has been intertwined with societal dynamics and access to resources (D erioz et al., 2019). As societies transitioned from hunter-gatherer lifestyles to agrarian economies, social stratification emerged, limiting access to leisure pursuits primarily to the ruling class (Cornelius et al., 2019). This historical context underscores the importance of assessing contemporary patterns of youth involvement in outdoor recreation to ensure equitable access and sustainable development. Studies emphasize the psychological and social benefits of recreational engagement, including

improved mental and physical well-being and the establishment of positive social networks (Kozak & Dođantan, 2016). However, there remains a gap in understanding the participation patterns of non-student youth in outdoor tourism activities, despite Tanzania's rich recreational resources (Bluwstein, 2017).

In light of Tanzania's emphasis on tourism promotion, exemplified by initiatives such as the Royal Tour tourism initiative supported by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, there is a pressing need to assess and enhance youth involvement in outdoor recreational pursuits (Rosenberger et al., 2009). This study seeks to address this gap by examining the participation of both students and non-students in outdoor recreational activities in Morogoro, Tanzania. By elucidating the benefits of such engagement among Tanzania's youth population, this research contributes to the discourse on sustainable tourism development in the region. Understanding the factors influencing youth participation in outdoor recreation activities is essential for devising strategies to enhance Tanzania's tourism sector.

Research methodology:45xxcc

This study was carried out in Morogoro Municipality. Morogoro Municipality covers the area of about 260 square kilometres and is located between longitudes 37°34'52"E and 37°45'25"E and between latitudes 6°38'56"S and 6°55'8"S in Morogoro Region. The selection of the study area was based on the fact that the area is near Mt. Uluguru, Udzugwa, and Mikumi national parks, where outdoor tourism activities are highly conducted (Ernest et al., 2017). The cross-sectional design was used during the study, and this design is applicable when time for data collection is very limited (Maier et al., 2023). The total number of respondents involved in this study was about 120, of whom 60 were youth students from Sokoine University of Agriculture, Mzumbe University and Jordan University and the other 60 were non-student youth from Morogoro municipality. The non-probability sampling technique, which is purposively sampling, was adopted in this study. The selection of youth students from Morogoro Universities was done purposefully, as well as non-students selected purposefully from Morogoro municipal. Purposively sampling was used because "it is an applicable approach when the sample elements are to fulfill a certain criterion or possess certain characteristics under study" by Amir and

Niaz (2020). Primary data was obtained directly from respondents, and this was done by distributing the constructed questionnaires to respondents. The questionnaires comprised both closed and open-ended questions. Data was analyzed using SPSS computer software and independent samples T-test to compare means of variables, and descriptive data were analyzed and presented in frequency and percentages in the tables.

Results and discussion:

Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Gender of respondents,

The study results in Table 1 below show that the gender of the respondents who participated in providing views was unevenly distributed within Morogoro Municipality, whereby about 58.4% (n = 70) were females and males were only about 41.6% (n = 50). The result implies that females were the active participants in providing their support to the researcher as compared to males, and these results resemble the study by Macky and Boxall (2008) on the involvement of males and females in survey studies, which shows that the majority of females were ready to respond to questions compared to men in survey studies.

Age of respondents,

The study covered respondents with the age of 18 years and above. As Table 1 below shows that youth aged 18-23 and 24-29 were about 54.1% and 34.7% respectively these results implies that youth are the main characters in recreational activities for the fact that they are not occupied by family responsibilities compare to adult ones and also the study found out that youths are main participants in outdoor recreational activities. These results supported by a study of Otravenko et al., (2012) which found that, participation in outdoor recreational activities is highest among the people aged 15-24 years.

Education level of respondents,

From Table 1 below, findings show that respondents from different levels of education participated during data collection. Respondents with primary education were 0.8% (n = 1), secondary education was 19.9% (n = 24), college education was 20.9% (n = 25), and university level was 60% (n = 55). These statistics reveal that most residents within Morogoro Municipality are educated; hence their knowledge about outdoor recreation is at least high. As supported by Telema et al.(2005), educational level is the key determinant of individual behavior and decision-making.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents (n = 120)

Variable	Parameter	Freq.	%
Status	Students	60	50.0
	Non-students	60	50.0
Gender	Male	50	41.6
	Female	70	58.4
Age	18-23	64	54.1
	24-29	42	34.7
	30-35	9	7.1
	36+	5	4.1
Educational level	Primary level	1	0.8
	Secondary level	24	19.9
	College	25	20.9
	University	60	50
	None of the above	10	8.3

Source, researcher data 2023

Respondents' awareness on benefits of outdoor recreational activities

Table 2 below presents the results of respondents' awareness about the benefits of participating in outdoor recreational activities. Respondents were asked if they are aware of outdoor recreational activities and their benefits. About 24.4% (n = 28) of the respondents said that outdoor recreational activities are leisure activities in which a person is engaged for social benefits like having new friends; 55.7% (n = 68) of the respondents said outdoor recreational activities are there for making people healthy and physically fit; and 8.3% (n = 10) said people participate in outdoor recreational activities

for educational gain. These results imply that the majority of youth in Morogoro Municipality, including both students and non-students, are aware of outdoor recreational activities; therefore, they are more likely to engage in outdoor recreational activities for improving their health and psychological wellbeing. These results resemble the study by Kozak and Doğantan (2016), which found that outdoor recreational activities have psychological and social contributions in addition to individual recreation and are crucially important, especially for university students, in the development of a healthy personality and creating positive social relations.

Table 2: Awareness on the benefits of outdoor recreational activities

Variable	Freq.	%
Social benefit	28	24.4
Health and physical benefit	68	55.7
Educational benefit	17	14.3
No idea	7	5.6
Total	120	100.0

Source, researcher data 2023

Respondents' attitudes towards participating in outdoor recreational activities,

Table 3 below presents the results of respondents' attitudes toward participating in outdoor recreational activities. Respondents were asked about their common beliefs about outdoor recreational activities, as indicated in Table 3. Whereas about 44% (n = 53) of the respondents believe that outdoor recreation activities are activities in which someone is engaging for the sake of having fun with friends or family, from which there could be either an exchange of ideas or escaping from the mundane state, 20.9% (n = 25) of the respondents said outdoor recreational activities are for the purpose of relaxation, whereby anyone can use his or her free time to do activities that make him or her relax. 16.7% (n = 20) of the respondents believed that outdoor recreational

activities entail doing physical exercises to maintain their health. 2.6% (n=3) believe that outdoor recreational activities are for conflict resolution, 6.6% (n=8) believe that they are for learning purpose, 8.3% (n=10) believe that they are for exposure purpose and 0.9 % (n=1) believe that outdoor recreational activities are just wastage of time, These results revealed that most youth in Morogoro Municipality seem to have a positive attitude towards outdoor recreational activities, as the majority pointed out that they participate in recreation activities for the purpose of having fun with friends, relaxation, physical fitness, and managing health problems. These results are supported by a study by Harper (2011), in which recreation is expressed as a means to provide opportunities for individuals to have fun with friends or family and interact with others

Table 3: Variables measure respondents’ attitudes towards participating in outdoor recreational activities

Variables	Freq.	%
For having fun with friends or family	53	44
For relaxation	25	20.9
Physical exercise	20	16.7
Wastage of time	1	0.9
Conflicts resolution	3	2.6
Exposure purpose	10	8.3
Learning purpose	8	6.6
Total	120	100.0

Source, researcher data 2023

Outdoor recreational activities participated by respondents,

The results in table 4 below show that most of youth in Morogoro Municipality during outdoor recreation activities are swimming about 50% (n=60) and playing football about 33.5% (n=40) than other recreational activities including hiking, cycling, netball, basketball, nature trekking, camping, travelling, canoeing, night club and jogging these implies that youth in Morogoro

Municipality participate a lot in various recreation activities and that outdoor recreation is currently growing very fast and this is the same to the study by Larson et al., (2011), who found that outdoor recreation has become a major aspect of people’s quality of life in the last decades since the number of people living in cities is growing which causes an increasing demand for these functions and brings associated pressure particularly on nearby outdoor recreation areas.

Table 4: Outdoor recreational activities participated by respondents

Activity	Freq.	%
Travelling	1	0.8
Jogging	2	1.7
Hiking	4	3.3
Listening music and dancing	2	1.7
Physical exercises	1	0.8
Swimming	60	50
Football	40	33.5
Netball	1	0.8
Biking	1	0.8
Basketball	2	1.7
Evening walks	1	0.8
Dancing	2	1.7
Nature trail trekking	1	0.8
Singing	1	0.8
Cycling	1	0.8
Total	120	100

Source, researcher data 2023

Level of satisfaction from participating in outdoor recreational activities,

The independent samples T-test method was used in the analysis to compare the means of the various variables and determine whether the respondents' status, gender, age, and educational attainment significantly affected their level of satisfaction from engaging in outdoor recreational activities. According to Table 5 below, there is no discernible

difference in the degree of satisfaction that students and non-students have from engaging in outdoor leisure activities. ($t_{88} = -1.459, P = 0.148$), which is consistent with the research. The gender results showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the pleasure of men and women with outdoor recreation activities ($t_{88} = 1.329, P = 0.187$). Additionally, Table 5's data below show that there isn't any substantial.

Table 5: Level of satisfaction from participating in outdoor recreational activities

Variable	Parameter	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Status	Students	60	4.40	1.214	-1.459	88	0.148
	Non-students	60	4.71	0.757			
Gender	Male	50	4.72	0.759	1.329	88	0.187
	Female	70	4.43	1.171			
Age	Below 30 years old	106	4.50	1.078	-1.326	88	0.188
	30 years and above	14	4.92	0.289			
Educationlevel	Below collegeeducation	25	4.72	0.614	0.950	88	0.345
	College educationand above	95	4.49	1.134			

NB:=Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$*

Conclusions:

The study concludes that the Morogoro Municipality's residents (students and non-students) are somehow aware of and have positive attitudes towards participating in outdoor recreational activities, where the majority participate in outdoor recreational activities for the sake of enjoying company with friends or family, relaxation, physical fitness, enjoyment, gaining knowledge, and learning. The participation of both students and non-students seemed to be moderate

because of the shortage of and lack of diverse outdoor recreational facilities. However, according to their responses, non-students seemed to have less time to participate in outdoor recreational activities as compared to students. This is because most of the time they are busy with jobs

and family responsibilities and they do not get enough free time to participate in outdoor recreational activities of their interests.

Recommendations:

To improve the participation of people in outdoor recreational activities, this study recommends diversification of outdoor recreational facilities so that, to give the residents of Morogoro Municipality a wide spectrum from which they can choose outdoor recreational activities of their interests, as well as improvement of the existing outdoor recreational facilities so that they can bring great appeal to people and satisfy their needs.

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