

Impacts Of Outdoor Recreation, On Health & Wellness Of The People

Romana Ambreen¹, Dr. Waqar Ahmad², Dr. Yousaf Ali³, Dr. Muhammad Israr⁴, Abdul Manan⁵

1. *Department of Geography and Regional Planning university of Balochistan Quetta*
2. *Department of Political science and IR, Qurtaba University of Science and Technology, Peshawar*
3. *Department of Governance, Politics and Public Policy (GP&PP) Abasyn University Peshawar*
4. *International Relations, University of Peshawar, Pakistan*
5. *College of Forestry, Sichuan Agricultural University, Chengdu, Sichuan, 611130, China*

Corresponding author Email: uali2001@gmail.com

Abstract

Recreational activities are carried out for fun, but they have very healthy impacts on society. The main objective of the study was to check the peoples' understanding of recreational benefits. Thus, this specific study focuses on the health benefits and wellness of outdoor recreation based on the perception of the citizen of Quetta. To achieve such a target, 400 questionnaires were filled at outdoor recreational places. Different gender and age groups of people with different education levels were considered. Based on the results the study reveals that outdoor recreation has positive impacts on the physical as well as mental health of people. It was also observed that people are ready to pay more to the local government to increase outdoor recreation places and to provide more facilities to families as well as to youth. They fully understand the benefits of outdoor recreation.

Keywords: Recreation, Mental health, Gender, Physical health.

Introduction

Outdoor recreational activities give people the chance to interact directly with others, connect with nature, and most significantly, connect with themselves. The prevalence of diseases, mortality rates, and perceptions of mental and general health are all positively impacted by leisure time spent in green spaces. (Takano et al., 2002; Maas et al., 2006; Van et al., 2010, Mitchell et al., 2008; Maas et al., 2009; Beil & Hanes, 2013). Additionally, nature and green areas are cheap resources for increasing physical activity, which in turn lowers stress-related disorders and lifestyle-related illnesses like burnout syndrome, obesity, and cardiovascular diseases. (Barton, 2009; Stigsdotter & Grahn, 2011).

According to additional research, engaging in moderately intense recreational activities, like walking, can successfully lower psychological anxiety and elevate mood (Fox, 1999; Roe & Aspinall, 2011; Scully et al., 1998). Additionally, participation in personally fulfilling leisure activities may have a good effect on people's well-being and effective ageing. (Dupuis, 2008; Kelly, 1993). The idea of well-being or optimal health, according to Alberta Centre for Well-Being (1989), "involves a delicate balance of physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social health," and then lists a wide range of characteristics, from exercise, diet, and stress management to relationships, education, and meditation. It can improve not

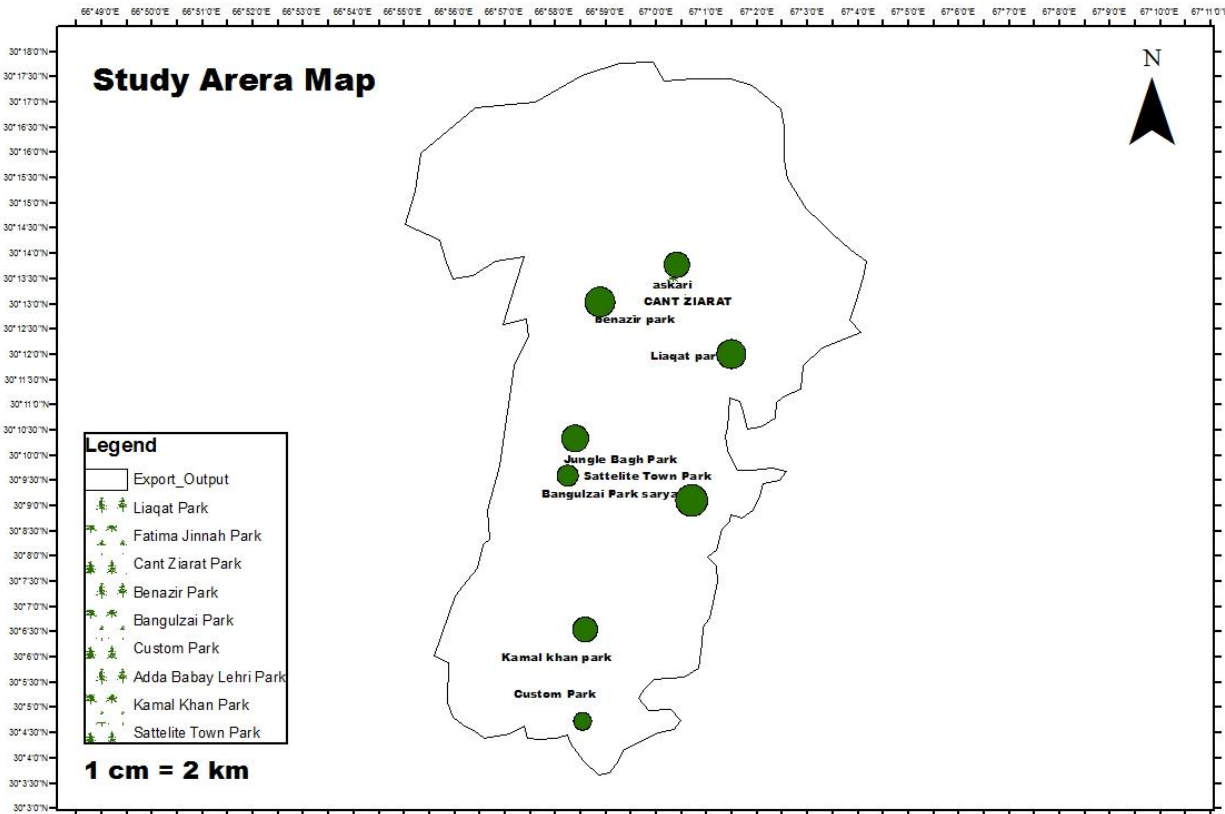
only one's physical but also one's emotional well-being. The growth and preservation of social capital and cohesion, which have an impact on both teenage and adult mental health, are facilitated by outdoor activities. (House et al., 1988).

Quetta is the capital city of Balochistan, where outdoor recreation is increasing day by day. Due to tribal constraints, it is not possible, for women to come out and participate in outdoor recreational activities. But, with time perception of the society is changing and people do understand its benefit. Because of this study, we can systematically explain the potential of

landscape as a resource for physical, mental, and social well-being. A heuristic framework is offered that can be utilised to guide systematic and focused research methods in future studies as well as practical public health interventions. (Abraham, et al., 2010)

Introduction of the Study Area

The study was conducted at different recreational places in Quetta City. Quetta is a valley surrounded by mountains, so it has many outdoor natural places as well for recreation. Like hiking opportunities also. Families mostly prefer public parks to visit so mostly the data is collected from such areas as shown in figure.1



Study area map showing public parks.Fig.1.

Data and Methods.

This study is mainly conducted at the recreational spots of Quetta to collect people's perceptions

about the benefits of outdoor recreation. Primary as well as secondary data were used in conducting this research. Primary data was collected through random sampling using a questionnaire as a tool during the summer period of May to August year

2022 from different outdoor recreation spots. During summertime there is a rush at public recreational places because of pleasant weather.

The sample size was calculated through Solvin's method. According to 2017 census the population of Quetta was 1,010,280. So, the sample size was calculated.

400 was the sample size.

Testing of the questionnaire was done at the public park of Quetta city; results were very encouraging so 400 respondents were included in the studies.

Results and discussion

Gender & Marital Status

Respondents included both males and females, almost 312 males participated in the survey while a good number of females, 88 also participated as shown in figure 2. Married women were more enthusiastic than the male which is why 50 married women participated in the survey and provide their perception while only 199 married males participated. 38 unmarried females and 113 unmarried males were also part of the survey.

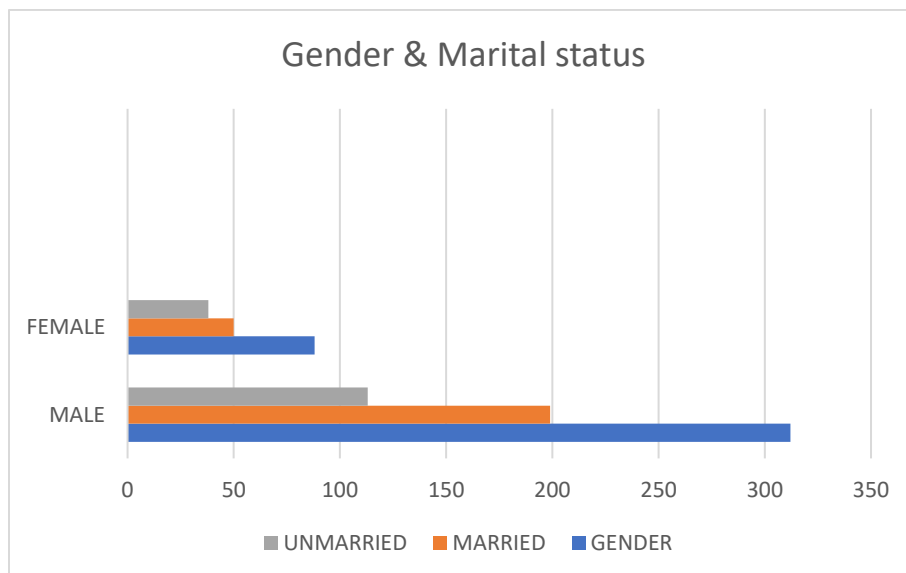


Fig. 2. Gender & Marital status

Age group

Different age groups were consulted from 15 years up to 41 years and more as shown in figure

3. Youth from 20 to 25 years of age participated more actively than other age groups. 41 years and above were least interested in the survey.

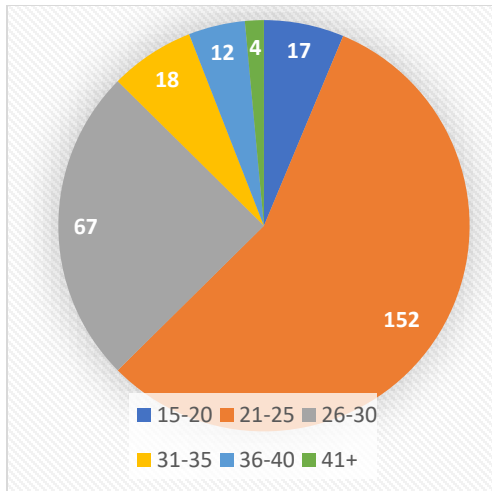


Fig. 3. Age group

Positive effects of outdoor recreation.

One of the very interesting questions was about the mental conditions of the people involved in outdoor recreation as shown in fig.4. In percentages. Most of the respondents agreed that people who frequently participate in outdoor recreational activities become positive thinkers, have strong bonding with their family members and also live in harmony with other tribes too.78.8% strongly agreed that people involve in

outdoor recreation live in peace with others while the remaining 21.2% disagreed. The same answer 64.5% were of the view that such people have strong family bonding and 64.3% said that such activities keep the youth away from negative activities. **Hartig et. al,1996** also claims that, when contemplating a pleasing scene, unpleasant emotions and thoughts that were previously brought on by negative stress exposure are changed to positive ones, good emotions like interest, joy, and tranquilly.

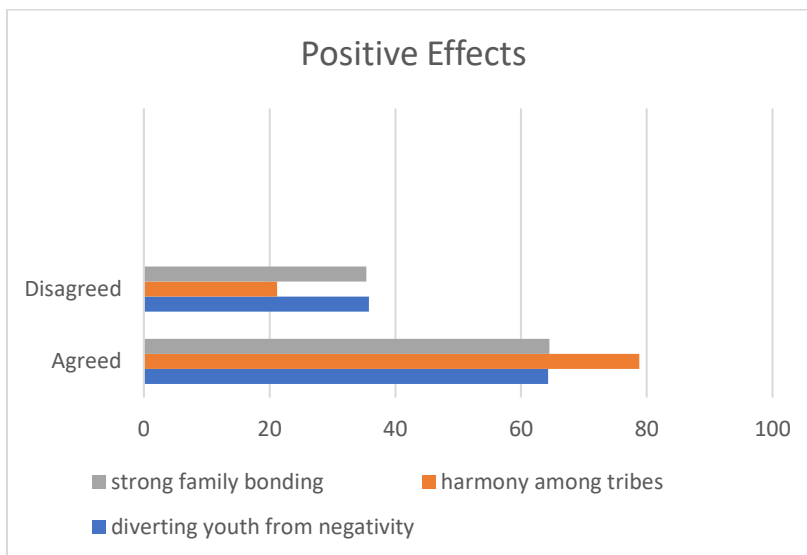


Fig.4. Positive effects of recreation on the visitors to the park

Ready to pay more

The majority of the respondents were ready to pay more to the local government. 63.8% wanted to have more recreational facilities and were

ready to pay more in the form of taxes. Figure 5. shows that majority were in the favour of the regular provision of such facilities.



Fig.6. Payment to the local government.

Economic Prosperity & Profits

The respondents were of the view that such activities will not only increase the profits of the area but will bring prosperity too. As people prefer to live in areas having parks and other

recreational facilities too. Land values of such areas rise which also creates more job opportunities. It's obvious in figure7. That more than 70% of respondents agreed green areas bring profits and prosperity to the area.



Fig.7. Economic prosperity & Profit

Reduce Physical & Mental health risk

It was a pleasure that a handsome number of people were aware that recreational activities have very positive effects on their bodies and mind. Even they also have information about different diseases, which can be reduced due to regular walking or jogging. They were very concerned about their mental health too. More than 160% strongly agreed that outdoor recreation increased their way of positive thinking. While

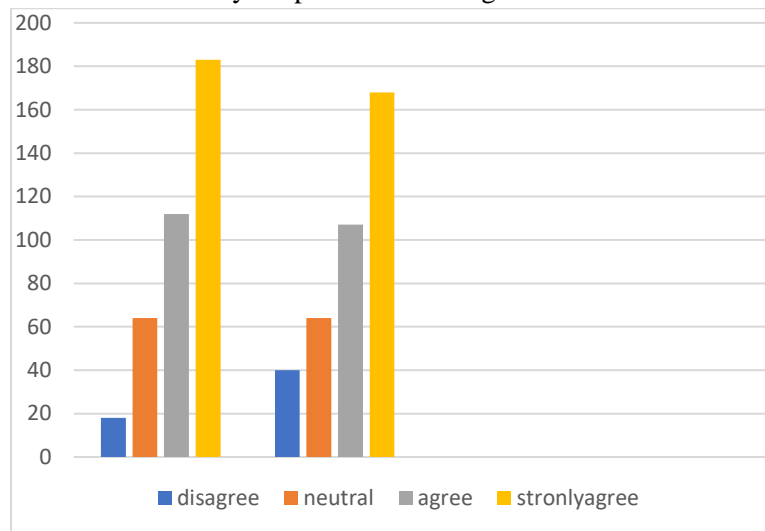


Fig.8.Physical & Mental health.

Conclusion

The survey is carried out at different parks and outdoor recreational points of Quetta city. 400 questionnaires were filled from different ages, gender, and tribes with various educational backgrounds. Respondents' perception was very clear, they knew the positive effects of outdoor fun activities.

Both men and women participated in the survey, women were more enthusiastic. They were of the view that after a whole day of housework and taking care of the children it is their fun time. After a walk in the open fresh air, chatting and meeting different people help them in reducing their stress. Restorative settings give people a chance to step back from their everyday routine (Herzog et al., 1997). Men were more concerned

more than 180% strongly agreed that such activities always benefit physical health. There is mounting proof that being close to nature is good for you. According to one study, living in a green environment was linked to health indicators including stress levels and physical activity levels; the association between green space and health indicators was considerably stronger for persons with lower levels of education (de Vries et al. 2003).

about their physical health, they said such activities keep us safe from different diseases like high blood pressure, cardiovascular and many more. They also said that being in the natural environment for some hours releases their everyday stress. The fact that a natural setting is more healing than an urban one has been reinforced by other studies. (Hartig et al., 2003)

Youths 21-25 years of age both men and women participated most in the survey. More women married women participated than married men. They all were ready to pay more taxes to the local government for the provision of recreational facilities for their children and youth.

In a question about land value, more than 60% replied that the improvement of recreational facilities will not only increase the value of land

but will also increase economic opportunities. Most of the respondents wanted easily accessible green areas, where they can enjoy anytime with their loved ones. Much of the research under consideration emphasised the importance of landscape in enhancing everyone's health in daily life, arguing that everyone should have access to such landscapes at home, at work, and in their free time. The Ottawa-desire Charter to promote welcoming surroundings for everyone amply supports this demand (WHO 1986).

To make spaces for physical activities that promote health as user-friendly as feasible, authors have emphasised the significance of providing fundamental constructional conditions. (Giles-Corti and Donovan 2002; Wendel-Vos et al. 2004).

Engagement in outdoor recreational activities has a positive effect on all age groups. They help keep people healthy mentally and physically. Such kind of research can be useful for planners and policymakers. By creating trail networks in Quetta, and restoring potential recreation locations, governments can support outdoor recreation. Such activities' fees could be used to fund others that have better health advantages, making such activities more alluring. Mixed-use zoning and walkable areas, which are Smart Growth concepts, may encourage more physical activity. In the present-day environment, recreational policies need to be formulated and implemented.

References

1. Abraham, A., Sommerhalder, K., Abel, T. (2010) ; Landscape and well-being: a scoping study on the health-promoting impact of outdoor environments, *International Journal Public Health*, 55:59–69 DOI 10.1007/s00038-009-0069-z
2. Alberta Centre for Well-Being. (1989). Wellness Defined. <http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/>.
3. Barton, H. Land use planning and health and well-being. *Land Use Policy* 2009, 26, S115–S123.
4. Beil, K.; Hanes, D. (2013) The influence of urban natural and built environments on physiological and psychological measures of stress—A pilot study. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, 10, 1250–1267
5. De Vries, S., R. Verheij, H. Groenewegen, and P. Spreeuwenberg.(2003). Natural Environments—Healthy Environments? An Exploratory Analysis of the Relationship between Green Space and Health. *Environment and Planning* 35(10): 1717–31.
6. Dupuis, S. (2008). Leisure and aging well. *World Leisure Journal*, 50, 91–107.
doi:10.1080/04419057.2008.9674538
7. Fox, K. R. (1999). The influence of physical activity on mental well-being. *Public Health Nutrition*, 2(3a), 411–418.
doi:10.1017/S1368980099000567
8. Giles-Corti B, Donovan RJ (2002) The relative influence of individual, social and physical environment determinants of physical activity. *Soc Sci Med* 54:1793–1812
9. Hartig T, Book A, Garvill J, Olsson T, Garling T (1996) Environmental influences on psychological restoration. *Scand J Psychol* 37:378–393
10. Hartig T, Evans GW, Jamner LD, Davis DS, Garling T (2003) Tracking restoration in natural and urban field

- settings. *J Environ Psychol* 23:109–123.
11. Herzog TR, Black AM, Fountaine KA, Knotts DJ (1997) Reflection and attentional recovery as distinctive benefits of restorative environments. *J Environ Psychol* 17:165–170
 12. House, J.S.; Landis, K.R.; Umberson, D.(1988) Social relationships and health. *Science*, 241, 540–545. [CrossRef]
 13. Kelly, J. R. (1993). *Activity and aging: Staying involved in later life*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage
 14. Maas, J.; Verheij, R.A.; Groenewegen, P.P.; de Vries, S.; Spreeuwenberg, P. (2006) Green space, urbanity, and health: How strong is the relation? *J. Epidemiol. Community Health* 60, 587–592.
 15. Maas, J.; Verheij, R.A.; de Vries, S.; Spreeuwenberg, P.; Schellevis, F.G.; Groenewegen, P.P. (2009) Morbidity is related to a green living environment. *J. Epidemiol. Community Health*, 63, 967–973
 16. Mitchell, R.; Popham, F (2008). Effect of exposure to natural environment on health inequalities: An observational population study. *Lancet*, 372, 1655–1660
 17. Roe, J., & Aspinall, P. (2011). The restorative benefits of walking in urban and rural settings in adults with good and poor mental health. *Health & Place*, 17(1), 103–113. doi:10.1016/J. Healthplace.2010.09.003
 18. Scully, D., Kremer, J., Meade, M. M., Graham, R., & Dudgeon, K. (1998). Physical exercise and psychological well-being: A critical review. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 32(2), 111–120. doi:10.1136/bjism.32.2.111
 19. Stigsdotter, U.K.; Grahn, P. (2011) Stressed individuals' preferences for activities and environmental characteristics in green spaces. *Urban For. Urban Greening*, 10, 295–304.
 20. Takano, T.; Nakamura, K.; Watanabe, M. (2002) Urban residential environments and senior citizens' longevity in megacity areas: The importance of walkable green spaces. *J. Epidemiol. Community Health*, 56, 913–918.
 21. Van den Berg, A.E.; Maas, J.; Verheij, R.A. Groenewegen, P.P. (2010) Green space as a buffer between stressful life events and health. *Soc. Sci. Med.*, 70, 1203–1210.
 22. Wendel-Vos G.C.W., Schuit A.J., De Niet R., Boshuizen H.C., Saris WHM, Kromhout, D. (2004) Factors of the physical environment associated with walking and bicycling. *Med Sci Sports Exerc* 36:725–730
 23. WHO (1986) *Ottawa-charter for health promotion*. First International Conference on Health Promotion. Ottawa, Canada.