
**SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF OUTDOOR
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN DEKINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AREA OF KOGI STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the socio-economic implication of outdoor recreational activities in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. The objectives were to: identify and map out the available outdoor recreational facilities, assess the socio-economic effects of outdoor recreational activities, investigate the factors responsible for the effective performance of outdoor recreational activities, evaluate the negative effects of outdoor recreational activities and examine strategies for mitigating the negative effects of outdoor recreation in the study area. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, with a sample of 379 respondents selected through stratified random sampling techniques. Structured questionnaire were used for data collection and the results were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and correlation analysis. Findings revealed that hotels and guest houses are the most available recreational facilities(31.1%), followed by gardens and parks with a score of (26.9%), sports fields and playgrounds recorded(25.6%). Outdoor recreational activities were shown to have significant socio-economic contributions, including employment creation(72.0%) and business growth(65.2%). However, inadequate government funding(41.7%) and infrastructural deficiencies(29.6%) were identified as major constraints to effective performance. Mitigation strategies such as effective waste management(36.9%) and security enhancement(31.4%) were prioritized by respondents. Hypothesis testing using Pearson's correlation analysis established a significant positive relationship between outdoor recreational activities and socio-economic development in the study Area ($r=0.622$, $p<0.05$). The study concludes that outdoor recreational activities are important drivers of socio-

economic development and their sustainability depends greatly on adequate funding. It recommends that government and private stakeholders invest in facility maintenance and strengthen public-private partnerships.

KEYWORDS: Socio-Economic, Implications, Outdoor, Recreation, Activities.

INTRODUCTION

The growth and development of recreational activities can be beneficial to the residents of host communities. Recreation is considered to be an activity voluntarily undertaken, primarily for pleasure and satisfaction, during leisure time either because of its immediate satisfaction or because the patronizer perceives some personal or social values to be achieved by it (Atalay, et al., 2024). Outdoor recreation activities provide important recreational ecosystem services such as stress, relief, socialization and nature appreciation through physical interaction with the natural world (Mai, et al., 2023).

Globally, nature-based outdoor recreation is the most general recreational land use in protected areas and in more than 94 percent of parks and reserves. This inspires an estimated 8 billion visits per year to these areas as outdoor recreation is assumed to be compatible with conservation (Atalay, et al., 2024). For example, a study by Gupta et al., (2023) found that nature-based recreation generates substantial income multipliers: each additional tourist visiting protected areas contributes between US \$169 and US \$2,400 to local annual incomes, largely through indirect spillovers such as food supply, transport and hospitality services (Gupta et al., 2023). This multiplier effect is particularly pronounced in low- and middle-income countries where communities around protected areas rely heavily on tourism-driven markets. For example, World Bank (2024) assessments show that in Uganda, every dollar spent by tourists generated more than two dollars in local incomes, while similar investments in Madagascar's marine parks produced community benefits that far outweighed the initial costs (World Bank, 2024).

The socio-economic significance of outdoor recreation is also reflected in global market projections. The nature-based tourism market, valued at USD 519.6 billion in 2025, is projected to reach nearly USD 889.4 billion by 2033, with wildlife tourism accounting for 38% of this growth (MarketMind Partners, 2023). Ecotourism, closely tied to outdoor recreation, was valued at USD 216.5 billion in 2023 and is expected to surpass USD 598 billion by 2030, driven by increasing consumer demand for sustainable travel experiences (Fortune Business Ideas, 2023).

Recreation and outdoor leisure in Nigeria are rooted in the country's vast natural and cultural heritage, including rivers, forests, game reserves, beaches, mountains and urban parks. These resources provide opportunities for relaxation, sightseeing and nature-based tourism, thereby improving social well-being and contributing significantly to the nation's economy. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2024), Nigeria's travel and tourism sector contributed about ₦12.3 trillion (US\$8.2 billion) to the national economy in 2023 and supported approximately 1.9 million jobs. Similarly, the Nigerian Tourism Development Authority (NTDA, 2024) reported that the country recorded 1.2 million international visitors and about 3 million domestic trips in 2023, representing a 20% increase compared to 2022. In Lagos State alone, tourism was estimated to have contributed about ₦4.1 trillion to the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), accounting for nearly 10% of its total output (Vanguard Newspaper, 2024). Hence, outdoor recreation generates employment and enhances livelihoods in surrounding communities. It also creates many environmental challenges as unregulated human activities usually lead to soil erosion, vegetation loss, wildlife disturbance, water and air pollution in recreational areas.

Habitat degradation and excessive visitor traffic reduces the abundance and alter the distribution of certain species, particularly reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates in Nigeria's protected areas (Nneji, Akani, & Luiselli, 2019). In contrast, some birds and small mammals appear to adapt to mild human presence through increased access to food and reduced fear responses (Akindele, 2021).

This forms the basis for this study which analysed the socio-economic implications of outdoor recreational activities in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria focusing on the following objectives:

1. To identify and map out outdoor recreational facilities in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State
2. To examine the socio-economic effects of these outdoor recreational activities in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State
3. Examine the factors responsible for effective performance of outdoor recreational activities in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State
4. To suggest strategies to mitigate the negative effects of outdoor recreational activities in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

Dekina LGA is one of the 21 LGAs that make up Kogi state. It is located in Kogi East senatorial district which is comprised of 9 LGAs namely: Ankpa, Bassa, Dekina, Ibaji, Idah, Igalamela-Odolu, Ofu, Olamaboro and Omala. The study area is located between Latitude: 7° 41' 22.81" N of the equator and Longitude: 7° 02' 37.68" E of the Greenwich meridian. Another source indicates a latitude of 7° 41' 24.59" N and a longitude of 7° 01' 12.00" E (Fig 1). Dekina LGA is approximately 34.1km from Lokoja the state capital. The landmass of Dekina LGA covers about 2,337.5km² (Ocholi, 2007). To the North-East, Dekina is flanked by Omala, Bassa to the North-west, Ankpa to the east and Ofu Local Government Area to the south. The area is inhabited predominantly by Igala and the Ebira speaking people with other Nigerian immigrants like Igbos, Yorubas, Ebiras and the Hausas. Dekina LGA is located within the Tropical area, thus the climate is governed by the processes that control the Tropical climate. However, it can be described as Tropical wet and dry (Aw) climate using the Koppen's classification system (Ogunkolu *et al.*, 2019).

The wet season spreads over a minimum of seven months and it extends from late April to October of same year with the dry season spanning from November to March of the following year. Rainfall is highly seasonal and the area enjoys double maxima rainfall with July and September being the rainiest months as the mean annual rainfall ranges between 250mm - 1600mm (Ogunkolu *et al.*, 2019). Dekina is underlain by sedimentary rocks of the upper Cretaceous age which is mainly made up of shale, sandstone, sand and clays. The whole region consists of deeply weathered regolith which accounts for the great depth of the water table (aquifer) which approaches 204 - 300m (Ogunkolu *et al.*, 2019). About five (5) classes of soils are recognised in the area based on their morphology and the degree of their profile development. The mineral properties of the underlying rocks of the slope of the terrain have been of primary importance in distinguishing the classes. According to Akeje (2024), these classes are: Ferruginous tropical soils, Lithosol, Hydromorphic soil, Ferralitic Soil and Young soil derived from recently deposited materials.

The population for this study are the residents of Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State with a total population of 260,312 (NPC, 2006) and projected to be 426,291 in 2025 using 2.63% annual growth rate. The majority of the population are rural dwellers and are engaged in peasant farming and other agricultural activities. There are other socio-economic activities such as weaving, barbing, petty trading, banking contributing to the development of the area. The cassava farming is also another major socio-economic activity in the area, as

cassava farmers buy large expanse of land, plant various species of cassava, harvest them and sell in due season. Trading is a major viable socio-economic activity of the people. They buy food items such as palm oil, beans, yam, rice and millet, clothing materials among others are sold in the market.

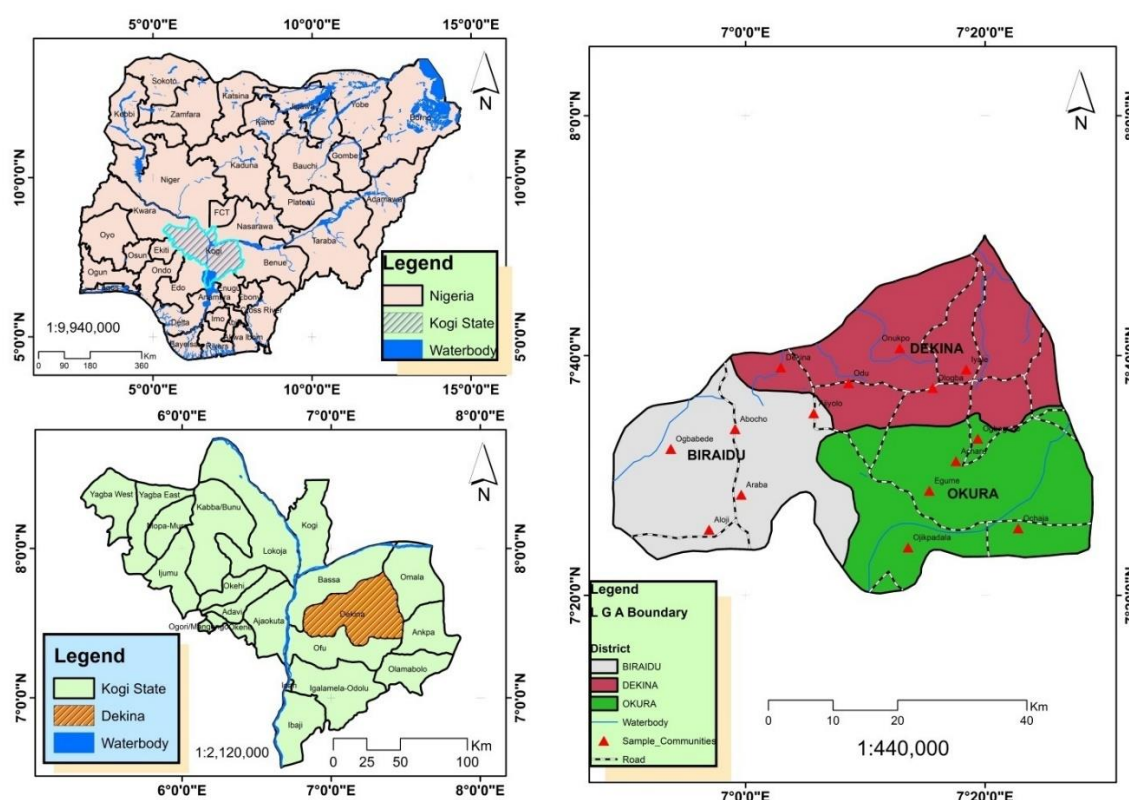


Figure 1.1: Nigeria showing Kogi State and Dekina LGA.

The research designs adopted for this study were descriptive survey approach and experimental approach. The descriptive design permitted the investigation of the current status of the phenomena from a population in their natural setting who supplied the required information and to whom the information was generalizable. While the experimental approach dealt with practical measurements carried out in the study area. This design was therefore appropriate because the condition of the respondents was described by themselves as they existed in their natural setting and the information was collected directly from the stakeholders in outdoor recreational activities in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. Data were generated for this study from both primary and secondary sources. On primary data, questionnaires were targeted at the stakeholders in outdoor recreational activities and residents, using simple random sampling method to select them in the study area. Also, in depth interviews were conducted with the use of an interview

guide. Secondary data were obtained from sources such as internet materials, journals, textbooks and both published and unpublished works.

A total of four hundred (400) questionnaires were administered for the purpose of this study as the sample size for this research was derived using Taro Yamane's formula (1968) based on the population of 426,291 in Dekina Local Government Area. Simple random sampling technique was used to randomly select the respondents and participants by the researcher. The data that were generated with questionnaires and during interview session were subjected to both descriptive and inferential analyses. The Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 26) was employed for coding, organization and computation of statistical outputs. The quantitative data derived from the closed-ended questionnaire items were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and mean scores. Inferential statistics were applied to test the research hypotheses and to establish the relationships and differences across the study variables. Qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews were transcribed, organized and analyzed thematically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Categories of recreational activities existing in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State.

Variable	Category	Frequency (N = 379)	Percentage (%)
Available Outdoor Facilities	Gardens and parks	102	26.9
	Sports fields/playgrounds	97	25.6
	Hotels and guest houses	118	31.1
	Others	62	16.4
Frequency of Visits	Very often	88	23.2
	Occasionally	142	37.5
	Rarely	101	26.6
	Never	48	12.7
District Mostly Accessed	Okura	129	34.0
	Biraidu	86	22.7
	Dekina	104	27.4
	None	60	15.8
Accessibility of Centres	Very accessible	97	25.6
	Fairly accessible	136	35.9
	Poorly accessible	92	24.3
	Not accessible	54	14.2
Management of Centres	Government agencies	5	1.3
	Private individuals	350	92.4

	Community groups	24	6.3
Natural Resources for Recreation	Rivers/streams	103	27.2
	Forest reserves	81	21.4
	Hills/landscapes	112	29.6
	None	83	21.9
Distance to Nearest Facility	Less than 1 km	74	19.5
	1–3 km	126	33.2
	4–6 km	101	26.6
	Above 6 km	78	20.6
Condition of Facilities	Very good	68	17.9
	Good	121	31.9
	Fair	114	30.1
	Poor	76	20.1
Groups that Patronize	Children/teenagers	97	25.6
	Adults	111	29.3
	Families	122	32.2
	Tourists/visitors	49	12.9
Sufficiency of Facilities	Yes, more than enough	41	10.8
	Yes, but not sufficient	138	36.4
	Very few available	146	38.5
	None	54	14.3

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 shows outdoor recreational facilities in Dekina Local Government Area. The table finding shows that hotels and guest houses (31.1%) are the most available outdoor recreational facilities, followed by gardens and parks (26.9%), sports fields and playgrounds (25.6%), while 16.4% identified other facilities such as open spaces and cultural grounds. This diversity shows that residents have multiple avenues for recreation, but not evenly distributed. In terms of utilization, the majority (37.5%) do so occasionally. District mapping shows that Okura (34.0%) and Dekina town (27.4%) are better served with facilities compared to Biraidu (22.7%), while 15.8% reported no access in their locality. Accessibility remains a major challenge. Although 35.9% of respondents said centres are fairly accessible. This shows geographical disparities across communities. Management is primarily shared between private individuals (92.4%), community groups (6.3%), with government agencies (1.3%) playing supplementary roles.

Natural resources also contribute greatly to recreation as hills and landscapes (29.6%) are majorly used. Distance further influences participation as 33.2% of the respondents live within 1–3 km of a facility, a combined 47.2% travel 4 km or more, showing inadequate spatial distribution. The condition of facilities is mixed as 31.9% of the respondents rated them good, 30.1% of the respondents rated them fair and 20.1% of the respondents rated

many interviewees emphasized the football fields and school playgrounds as the most important facilities because they provide space for both youth sporting activities and community events. One chief Imam of Ojuwo Onugbabi stated:

“The football fields are very important because our young people use them every day and they also host local tournaments that bring the community together. Also, people do come for prayers both Muslims and Christians even idol worshipers, sometimes people do judging to the hill top”. (IDI 1/Imam of Ojuwo Onugbabi/Male/65 years)

Also, respondents generally felt that the facilities are inadequate and poorly maintained. For example, a female teacher observed:

“Most of the facilities are either not enough for the population or not maintained. The playgrounds are overused and there is no proper management.” (IDI 2/Youth Leader/Male/34 years)

On the other hand, Biraidu and Dekina districts has sparse recreational facilities which may be attributed to the fact that there are fewer population in those areas and due to the rural nature of those areas.

Table 2: Socio-Economic Effects of Outdoor Recreational Activities in Dekina LGA.

Variable	Category	Frequency (N = 379)	Percentage (%)
Employment Opportunities	Strongly agree	134	35.4
	Agree	142	37.5
	Disagree	67	17.7
	Strongly disagree	36	9.5
Business Growth Contribution	Very high	121	31.9
	Moderate	143	37.7
	Low	74	19.5
	No contribution	41	10.8
Revenue Generation for LGA	Strongly agree	128	33.8
	Agree	139	36.7
	Disagree	66	17.4
	Strongly disagree	46	12.1
Social Interaction	Greatly improved	146	38.5
	Moderately improved	128	33.8
	Slightly improved	72	19.0
	No effect	33	8.7
Community Development	High extent	117	30.9
	Moderate extent	139	36.7
	Low extent	84	22.2

	No extent	39	10.3
Youth Idleness/Crime Reduction	Strongly agree	152	40.1
	Agree	121	31.9
	Disagree	64	16.9
	Strongly disagree	42	11.1
Cultural Promotion	Very positively	107	28.2
	Positively	138	36.4
	Negatively	74	19.5
	No effect	60	15.8
Tourism & Hospitality	Yes, very much	112	29.6
	Yes, moderately	141	37.2
	Yes, slightly	79	20.8
	Not at all	47	12.4
Standard of Living	Highly improved	104	27.4
	Moderately improved	143	37.7
	Slightly improved	82	21.6
	Not improved	50	13.2
Socio-Economic Driver	Strongly agree	137	36.1
	Agree	140	36.9
	Disagree	61	16.1
	Strongly disagree	41	10.8

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 shows the analysis of responses demonstrating that outdoor recreational activities play important socio-economic role in Dekina Local Government Area. Employment creation was majorly acknowledged, with 72.9% agreeing, indicating that nearly three-quarters of respondents view recreation as a source of direct and indirect jobs. Similarly, business growth is positively impacted, as 31.9% rated the contribution as very high and 37.7% as moderate, showing that recreational centres stimulate local enterprises such as food vendors, artisans and hospitality services.

On revenue generation, 70.5% of the respondents confirmed that recreational activities contribute greatly to the local government's internally generated revenue. This shows their potential as a supplementary revenue stream if effectively harnessed. Socially, recreational activities enhance interaction, with 38.5% reporting greatly improved interactions and another 33.8% moderately improved, showing that recreation serves as a platform for unity and communal bonding. Community development also benefits, as 30.9% affirmed a high extent of influence and 36.7% a moderate extent. This implies that recreational activities stimulate infrastructural growth, cultural festivals and youth engagement programs. The role of recreation in reducing youth idleness and crime is particularly strong, as 72% of the

respondents agreed. This reflects recreation's preventive function against social vices by providing healthy alternatives for young people.

In terms of cultural promotion, most respondents rated the influence positively (64.6%), though a minority (19.5%) perceived negative effects, possibly from erosion of traditional practices due to modernization. On tourism and hospitality, 29.6% stated very much improvement and 37.2% moderate improvement, showing recreation's growing importance in attracting visitors. Standard of living improvements were also evident, with 27.4% reporting high improvement and 37.7% moderate improvement. This shows that recreation indirectly enhances income, health and community well-being. Finally, 73% respondents considered outdoor recreational activities as an important driver of socio-economic development in Dekina, affirming their central role in sustainable growth.

Table 3: Factors Influencing Effective Performance of Outdoor Recreational Activities in Dekina LGA.

Variable	Category	Frequency (N = 379)	Percentage (%)
Government Funding Adequacy	Very adequate	47	12.4
	Adequate	92	24.3
	Inadequate	149	39.3
	Not available	91	24.0
Role of Private Investment	Very high	88	23.2
	High	126	33.2
	Low	111	29.3
	None	54	14.3
Effect of Location on Patronage	Strongly agree	142	37.5
	Agree	134	35.4
	Disagree	65	17.2
	Strongly disagree	38	10.0
Importance of Security	Very important	187	49.3
	Important	124	32.7
	Slightly important	45	11.9
	Not important	23	6.1
Extent of Infrastructure Support	High extent	112	29.6
	Moderate extent	138	36.4
	Low extent	84	22.2
	No extent	45	11.9
Community Participation	Greatly influences	127	33.5
	Moderately influences	136	35.9
	Slightly influences	71	18.7
	No influence	45	11.9
Effect of Cultural/Traditional	Strongly agree	103	27.2

Beliefs	Agree	124	32.7
	Disagree	94	24.8
	Strongly disagree	58	15.3
Effect of Publicity/Awareness	Very significant	129	34.0
	Significant	141	37.2
	Slightly significant	69	18.2
	Not significant	40	10.6
Impact of Government Policy/Regulation	High extent	121	31.9
	Moderate extent	137	36.1
	Low extent	79	20.8
	No extent	42	11.1
Role of Trained Personnel	Very important	144	38.0
	Important	126	33.2
	Slightly important	69	18.2
	Not important	40	10.6

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 highlights several factors that shape the effective performance of outdoor recreational activities in Dekina Local Government Area. Government funding emerged as a major determinant. While 36.7% of respondents rated funding as adequate or very adequate, a larger proportion (63.3%) viewed it as inadequate or not available, pointing to underfunding as a constraint. Private investment plays a major role, with 23.2% rating its contribution as very high and 33.2% as high. Nonetheless, 29.3% rated it low and 14.3% indicated none, suggesting limited private sector participation in recreational development. The location of recreational centres is another major factor. A majority (72.9%) agreed that location affects patronage, implying that distance and accessibility influence community participation. Similarly, security is deemed crucial as 82.0% considered it important, agreeing with the notion that recreational activities thrive only in safe environments. Infrastructure also supports recreation. Nearly two-thirds (66.0%) acknowledged a high or moderate extent of infrastructural support, but 34.1% still rated it low or absent, highlighting challenges with road networks, electricity and water supply. Community participation was viewed positively, with 69.4% agreeing that it greatly or moderately influences recreational activities, showing that collective ownership enhances sustainability.

Table 4: Strategies for Mitigating Negative Effects of Outdoor Recreational Activities in Dekina LGA.

Variable	Category	Frequency (N = 379)	Percentage (%)
Necessity of Waste Management	Highly necessary	176	46.4
	Moderately necessary	118	31.1

	Slightly necessary	57	15.0
	Not necessary	28	7.4
Improved Security Measures	Strongly agree	149	39.3
	Agree	144	38.0
	Disagree	53	14.0
	Strongly disagree	33	8.7
Effectiveness of Community Sensitization	Very effective	128	33.8
	Effective	137	36.1
	Slightly effective	72	19.0
	Not effective	42	11.1
Government Regulation & Enforcement	High extent	117	30.9
	Moderate extent	141	37.2
	Low extent	75	19.8
	No extent	46	12.1
Monitoring & Evaluation	Strongly agree	134	35.4
	Agree	138	36.4
	Disagree	64	16.9
	Strongly disagree	43	11.3
Importance of Environmental Education	Very important	152	40.1
	Important	127	33.5
	Slightly important	61	16.1
	Not important	39	10.3
Measures to Reduce Conflicts	Strong community involvement	112	29.6
	Adequate security presence	121	31.9
	Rules/regulations enforcement	104	27.4
	Others	42	11.1
Public-Private Partnerships	Strongly agree	124	32.7
	Agree	137	36.1
	Disagree	71	18.7
	Strongly disagree	47	12.4
Effect of Regular Maintenance	High extent	121	31.9
	Moderate extent	143	37.7
	Low extent	72	19.0
	No extent	43	11.3
Priority Strategy	Security enhancement	109	28.8
	Environmental management	102	26.9
	Community sensitization	91	24.0
	Government policy enforcement	77	20.3

Source: Field Work, 2025

Table 4 reveal the ways to mitigating the negative effects of outdoor recreational activities in Dekina Local Government Area. Findings show that waste management emerged as a major

concern, with 46.4% of the respondents rating it as highly necessary and 31.1% as moderately necessary, showing that environmental sanitation is fundamental in sustaining recreational centres. Similarly, security enhancement is recognized as important, as 77.3% of the respondents agreed that improved security measures can reduce negative impacts such as vandalism, theft and violence. Community sensitization was also considered a major strategy, with 69.9% of respondents describing it as very effective or effective. In the same way, government regulation and enforcement was identified as important by 68.1% of respondents, indicating that policy and strict enforcement of standards could greatly improve recreational outcomes.

Regular monitoring and evaluation was also supported, with 71.8% of the respondents agreeing that it would reduce negative impacts. Additionally, environmental education was considered essential, as 73.6% rated it as important, underlining its role in instilling environmental responsibility among recreational users. On conflict management, respondents prioritized adequate security presence (31.9%), followed by strong community involvement (29.6%) and rules and regulations enforcement (27.4%), showing a preference for preventive strategies over reactive measures. Public-private partnerships were also endorsed, with 68.8% agreeing they are effective, suggesting that joint efforts could enhance funding, management and sustainability.

In terms of facility upkeep, 69.6% of the respondents believed regular maintenance reduces environmental degradation, highlighting that neglect of infrastructure leads to faster deterioration and misuse. Finally, when asked to prioritize mitigation strategies, respondents favored security enhancement (28.8%) and environmental management (26.9%), followed by community sensitization (24.0%) and government policy enforcement (20.3%). Therefore, the study shows that effective mitigation of the negative effects of outdoor recreation in Dekina LGA depends on strengthening security, improving environmental management, engaging communities, enforcing government policies and encouraging partnerships.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between outdoor recreational activities and socio-economic development of Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State.

Table 5: Correlation between Outdoor Recreational Activities and Socio-Economic Development.

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Outdoor Recreational Activities	379			
Socio-Economic Development	379	0.622	0.000	Significant

Source: Field Work, 2025

The result in Table 5 shows that the correlation coefficient (r) = 0.622, with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. This implies that though there is a relationship between outdoor recreational activities and socio-economic development in Dekina LGA, but the relationship is only positively moderate. This means that outdoor recreational activities moderately contribute to socio-economic development in Dekina Local Government Area.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Objective one assessed the availability and accessibility of outdoor recreational facilities. Findings show the study revealed that recreational facilities such as sports fields and gardens are moderately available in Dekina LGA, but accessibility remains a challenge due to poor infrastructure, unfavorable locations and limited transport links. Similar studies affirm that accessibility and design flaws often hinder utilization of recreational centres. Popoola, Ajibola and Adewale (2017) found that in Ibadan, the availability of open spaces were less significant than the accessibility, safety and maintenance of those spaces. Objective two examined socio-economic outcomes of recreational activities. Findings shows that recreational activities in Dekina LGA were found to generate employment, boost local revenue, enhances youth empowerment and strengthen social cohesion, thereby contributing greatly to socio-economic development. This agrees with another Nigerian experiences where recreation and tourism stimulate local economies. Sadiq and Uthman (2024) demonstrated that sports tourism in Kwara State enhanced economic growth, social interaction and ecological health. However, alongside these benefits, the study identified several negative socio-economic effects associated with outdoor recreational activities.

Objective three identified institutional and social factors influencing recreational outcomes. The findings shows that the enablers identified were community involvement, infrastructural support, security, publicity, government policy and trained personnel. Conversely, inadequate funding and weak private sector investment emerged as major constraints. Research in Awka South LGA revealed that government policy, funding constraints and community attitudes

significantly shaped the development of recreational facilities (Okafor & Obi, 2021). Objective four recommended strategies to mitigate negative impacts of recreational activities. Findings shows that the suggested strategies included waste management, improved security, community sensitization, strong regulatory frameworks, routine maintenance and partnerships between government and private sector. This agrees with findings by Popoola et al. (2017), who found that proper waste management and facility maintenance were important in determining recreational use in Ibadan.

From the hypothesis test on the relationship between recreational activities and socio-economic development, the findings shows that the correlation analysis indicated a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.622$, $p < 0.05$), showing that outdoor recreational activities significantly contribute to socio-economic development in Dekina LGA. This finding corresponds with similar studies across Nigeria. Sadiq and Uthman (2024) found that sports tourism had a significant positive effect on economic and social indicators in Kwara State.

CONCLUSION

This study established that outdoor recreational activities are leisure activities and essential drivers of socio-economic growth in Dekina LGA. Irrespective of the availability of some recreational facilities, poor accessibility and infrastructural limitations restrict their full utilization. Recreational activities contribute positively to local revenue, employment, social cohesion and cultural preservation, thereby enhancing community development. Institutional and social support systems such as government funding, private sector participation, effective regulation, security and community involvement are important to the success of recreational centres. The hypothesis test confirmed that outdoor recreation and socio-economic development are strongly interlinked. Hence, improving recreational activities is an indispensable strategy for sustainable socio-economic growth in Dekina and similar communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. The state government should increase budgetary allocation for recreational facilities and enforce policies that ensure their proper management.
2. Public and private partnerships should be encouraged to provide infrastructure, security and innovative recreational services that meet international standards.

3. Security agencies and community vigilante groups should be actively engaged in ensuring the safety of recreational users.
4. Environmental management through strict waste management practices and environmental education should be introduced to reduce degradation and promote eco-friendly recreation.

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