

**INFLUENCE OF LOCATION AND STRUCTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE ON
PATRONAGE OF FITNESS CENTRES AMONG RESIDENTS OF LAGOS
ISLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of location and structural infrastructure on patronage of fitness centres by residents of Lagos Island Local Government in Lagos state. A survey research method was adopted for this study. Two (2) research questions were raised and hypotheses formulated for the study. A self-developed questionnaire titled Influence of Location and Infrastructure Questionnaire (ILIQ) was used as research instrument for the study. Two hundred respondents were purposive sampled from the residents of Lagos Island Local Government in Lagos State. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage for demographic variables of respondents, while inferential statistics of Chi-square was used to test each of the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that location and level of structural infrastructure of the fitness centres significantly influenced the usage of fitness centres by the residents of Lagos Island Local Government. This study recommended that the location of fitness centres should be accessible to people and well spacious to accommodate various physical activities,

structural infrastructure should be put in place in order for fitness centres to look attractive.

Keywords: Fitness Centres, Location, Structural Infrastructure, Patronage, Residents

Introduction

Fitness centres, most commonly referred to as gyms, is an enclosed building or an open space that is built or reserved for the purpose of exercise. These buildings or open spaces, according to Shaina (2011), are furnished with lots of gym equipment and facilities. Fitness centres are meant to provide assistance with the aim of achieving a healthy lifestyle. At fitness centres, group classes are offered alongside other fitness programmes classes which allow the support of clients by expert fitness instructors. Some fitness centres offer home services. At Fitness centres, personal trainers are available. Personal instructor are certified professionals who create custom workout programmes for clients, work with clients during each visit, and also offer helpful tips about maximizing the benefits of each exercise and varying equipment (Lovelock, 2009). These trainers help steer towards achieving physical fitness goals (Moxham and Wiseman, 2012). Membership to a fitness centre offers a wide variety of amenities and equipment from saunas to weight rooms. Reaching your fitness goals is made easier by the convenience to choose from a plethora of gym equipment. Types of equipment include resistance machines such as leg press, leg curl, chest press, shoulder press and lat pull down and so on. Aerobic sessions are also conducted by the instructors at least two to three times weekly (Brady and Cronin, 2012).

It is evident that business organizations always deploy the patronage-enhancing motives and strategies among the consumers to increase promotion of their goods and services. Organizations, with the competitive environment, are now faced with challenging tasks of customer attention and retention. In present era, there is an emergence of synthesized retail management strategies which can be adopted to meet the expectation of customers. This has led to organizations charting out diversified marketing strategies which include but not limited to location, mode of operation, layout planning, promotional mix, pricing, logistics and operation (Verma and Madan,

2011). A study by Jim and Kim (2003) revealed outstandingly, among various strategies that retail location management, trade area analysis, size selection, layout planning and location ambiance are the most scientifically adopted by organizations for the psychological consumer management. Baker (2002) outlined that travel cost and proximity are factors that mostly affect patronage.

Generally, the fitness industry is very challenging and thrilling which have paved ways for investors to become financially independent. To ensure huge success in the fitness industry, efforts must be geared towards customers' satisfaction by putting in place all essentials. The awaking consciousness in customers had sharpened their knowledge horizon, thereby armed them to the extent that customers are readily prepared to challenge bad service rendered. This heightened knowledge had exposed the fitness industry to embrace factors that are capable of enhancing customer patronage and for achieving specific and desirable ends. These factors include but not limited to services, products, and facilities offered to the members of the society. Therefore, effective customer service through the availability of quality facilities cannot be ignored in the realm of achieving effective customer patronage in fitness centres. Facilities consist of, but not limited to security, parking space, stable power, constant water supply and road networks. Facilities are considered essential and critical to hotel business success.

Past studies have indicated the importance of facilities as a sub set of critical success factors in the management of service-oriented organisations and their findings tend towards diverse and different focus (Mosoma, 2014; Okibo and Ogwe, 2013; Jakpar and Johari, 2012; Lacap, 2014; Kumar and Malik 2013; Choi and Chu, 2001). The health and fitness centres may be a stand-alone facility, or be part of a larger development. This may impact upon the extent of site facilities needed. A well-designed facility should take into account the impact of site, shape and contours on the building's location and orientation, clearly defined, welcoming and attractive entrance, site accessibility, including proximity to roads and links to public transport. A traffic analysis may be required to ascertain impact on the site and surrounding infrastructure. Vehicular circulation and parking provision for cars, bicycles, motorcycles and staff parking. Adequate provision for accessibility in respect of both parking and building access, consider site

gradients, and avoid stepped or ramped approaches. In view of the aforementioned, this study investigated the influence of location and structural infrastructure on patronage of fitness centres by residents of Lagos Island.

Statement of the Problem

The researchers noticed that residents of Lagos Island Local Government do not take part in recreational activities due to several factors which might have been an hindrance and also a form of discouragement. The number of fitness centres available in Lagos Island Local Government may not be sufficient to accommodate people. Many studies have examined factors causing and affecting customer's patronage and repeat patronage of various organizations and business sectors but few researches has been conducted in the field of fitness centres. To bridge the gap in knowledge, this study is a timely intervention. Hence, this study investigated the influence of location and structural facilities on patronage of fitness centres among residents of Lagos Island Local Government area of Lagos State.

Research Hypotheses

These stated hypotheses were tested in this study:

Ho1: Location of fitness centres has no significant influence on patronage of fitness centres by residents of Lagos Island Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Ho₂: Structural infrastructure has no significant influence on patronage of fitness centres by residents of Lagos Island Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The researchers used self-developed and validated questionnaire titled "Influence of Location and Infrastructure Questionnaire (ILIQ)" to gather data. The population comprised male and female residents of Lagos Island Local Government Area of Lagos State. The sample for the study was 200 respondents. The purposive sampling technique was adopted in the selection of respondents for the study. This form of non-probability sampling as adopted for use in this study as selection of

respondents was basically dependent on the researchers' judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their surveys. The self-structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection indicating the variables under study, location and structure. The content and face validity of the instrument was ascertained, while the test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument at 0.78 which was highly reliable. The instrument was administered personally by the researchers to the sampled respondents with the support of trained research assistants. The questionnaires were retrieved from the respondents after completion. The data generated were coded and subjected to analysis using the inferential statistics of Chi-square (χ^2) at 0.05 level of significance. While simple percentage and frequency count was used to explain the demographic information.

Results

Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

| Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Male | 124 | 62% |
| Female | 76 | 38% |
| Total | 200 | 100% |

From table 1, it was observed that 124 (62%) of the respondents were male and 76 (38%) were female.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|------------|-------------|
| 16-20 years | 34 | 17% |
| 21-25 years | 77 | 38.50% |
| 26-30 years | 66 | 33% |
| Above 30 years | 23 | 11.50% |
| Total | 200 | 100% |

Table 2 indicated that 34 (17%) of the respondents were within 16-20 years, 77 (38.50%) of the respondents were within 21-25 years, 66 (33%) of the respondents were within 26-30 years and 23 (11.50%) of the respondents were above 30 years of age.

Hypotheses Testing

This section dealt with the testing and analysis of formulated hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Location will not significantly influence patronage of fitness centres by residents of Lagos Island Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Table 3: Chi-square Analysis on Influence of Location on Patronage of Fitness Centres

| Variable | N | df | L.S. | χ^2_{cal} | $\chi^2_{Critical}$ | Remarks |
|----------|-----|----|------|----------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Location | 200 | 18 | 0.05 | 107.654 | 28.869 | Significant |

From table 3, the calculated Chi-square value of 107.654 was greater than the critical value of 28.869. This implies that the null hypothesis which stated that location will not significantly influence patronage of fitness centres by residents of Lagos Island Local Government Area of Lagos State is hereby rejected. Hence, location of fitness centres significantly influenced the patronage by residents of Lagos Island Local Government.

Hypothesis 2

Structural infrastructure will not significantly influence patronage of fitness centres by residents of Lagos Island Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Table 4: Chi-square Analysis on Influence of Structural Infrastructure on Patronage of Fitness Centres

| Variable | N | df | L.S. | χ^2_{cal} | χ^2_{tab} | Remarks |
|---------------------------|-----|----|------|----------------|----------------|----------|
| Structural infrastructure | 200 | 18 | 0.05 | 142.743 | 28.869 | Rejected |

From table 4, the value of χ^2_{cal} of 142.743 is greater than $\chi^2_{Critical}$ of 28.869. This means that the hypothesis which stated that structural infrastructure will not significantly influence patronage of fitness centres by residents of Lagos Island Local Government Area of Lagos State is hereby rejected. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is hereby adopted. Hence, structural infrastructure significantly influenced patronage of fitness centres by residents of Lagos Island Local government.

Discussion of Findings

Result of hypothesis one revealed that location significantly influenced patronage of fitness centres by residents of Lagos Island Local Government Area of Lagos State. Understanding the business environment within which the business has to operate is very important. This is because the service environment must appeal to the customers' senses, and be inviting for the customers to transact business within the environment (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2011). Jere, Babatunde and Albertina (2014) in their study identified that the location of a business is one of the important influencers of repeat patronage. In expatiating on the influence of location, they asserted that for consumers, location of and access to the business organization/firm are important factors in the choice decision.

Result of hypothesis two revealed that structural infrastructure significantly influenced patronage of fitness centres by residents of Lagos Island Local Government Area of Lagos State. This finding supports the work of Pujals and Vieira (2002) who found out that poor club infrastructure may cause pessimism in participants leading to lack of motivation. Ajibola and Aladesokun (2015) study also buttressed this assertion that the availability of gym equipment was also a contributory factor of patronage and utilization of recreational and fitness centres. This is because the structural infrastructure available at the fitness centres determined to a large extent the type of services offered. Edet

(2010) opined that physical fitness and sports enthusiast generally exhibit high satisfaction and enjoyment due to the presence of adequate facilities.

Conclusion

Based on findings of this study, the following conclusion were made:

1. Location of fitness centres significantly influenced the usage of fitness centres by the residents of Lagos Island Local Government,
2. Structural infrastructure available at fitness centres significantly influence the patronage and usage of fitness centres by the residents of Lagos Island Local Government

Recommendations

This study recommended the following:

1. The location of fitness centres should be accessible to people and well spacious to accommodate various physical activities.
2. Structural infrastructure should be put in place. Fitness centres should look attractive.

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