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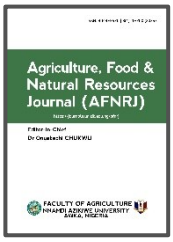

Original Article

Visitors' perception of physical environment and its effect on revisit intention: A case study of Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The environment that parks are situated in has become a major factor that visitors look out for before choosing a particular park for leisure activity. This study assessed the relationship between visitors' perception about the physical environment and their revisit intention towards Pleasure Park, Rivers State, Nigeria. Data was collected through the use of a structured questionnaire from two hundred and six (206) visitors using a non-probability sampling method (convenience sampling technique). Analysis was carried out using descriptive and inferential (correlation) statistics. The result showed that visitors had a positive perception about the physical environment of Pleasure Park. This was reflected in their revisit intention, where a significant positive relationship existed between all the variables used to measure the physical environment and their revisit intention: ambience ($r = 0.48$, $p = 0.00$), special layout ($r = 0.60$, $p = 0.00$), signs and symbols ($r = 0.45$, $p = 0.00$), facility aesthetics ($r = 0.51$, $p = 0.00$), and cleanliness aesthetics ($r = 0.47$, $p = 0.00$). This study concludes that the attributes of the physical environment are a predicting factor for visitors' revisit intention at the park. Hence, it is important that the management of the park should focus on maintaining the layout and aesthetics of the park in order to encourage more repeat visitations by visitors.

KEYWORDS: *Behavioural intention, Destination experience, Leisure tourism, Recreational parks, Travel*

INTRODUCTION

Tourists' ability to return and visit a particular tourism destination is regarded as tourist post consumption behavior and is associated with visitors repeating a specific action or revisiting a destination (Nguyen, 2020). Revisit intention further relates to the judgment made by a visitor with regards to the possibility to return and visit the destination in future (Stylos *et al.,* 2017) and in turn, referring the destination to others. It is further explained as the repurchase intention and action that shows the customer's willingness to provide positive information about the service provider (Teng & Kuo, 2011). This can be determined by the destination performance, such as the promotion effort and news that spread about the new attractions in the destination (Dincer & Özdemir Güzel, 2018). The revisit intention can be seen as the extension of satisfaction rather than an initiator from decision making process to revisit (Stylos *et al.,* 2017). It is also connected to the customer's decision to build an everlasting relationship with the service provider. Extant literature such as Abbasi *et al.* (2021) posit that customer's satisfaction is the influencing factor for customer's revisit. Therefore, the tourism industry regards

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revisit intention as a key aspect that leads to business growth and survival (Jiang *et al.,* 2023).

The physical environment is one of the aspects that have the most impact on the psychological condition and behavior of visitors. The environment that parks are situated has become a major factor that visitors look out for before choosing a particular park for leisure activity. GÜZEL, & Dinçer (2018) defined the physical environment as a service environment consciously tailored to influencing the preferences and purchasing decisions of people positively. Also, Handayani *et al.,* (2022) described the physical environment as a man-made atmosphere in which a particular product or service is provided in order to meet customer's expectations (Simpeh *et al.,* 2011). It encompasses elements such as aesthetics, design, layout, and decoration (Lee & Jeong, 2012). Visitors often consider these elements before choosing a particular park and having the intention to revisit it. Although these can change overtime, it is important to understand how the emotional state and behavior of visitors affect their perception of environmental elements (Ryu *et al.,* 2012).

Different scholars have examined the physical environment of recreational parks from various dimensions. For instance, Anjarsari *et al.,* (2018) investigated the relationship between customers' satisfaction and the quality of the physical environment. Similarly, Wulansari & Haryati (2021) examined the relationship between buying Intention and the physical environment. Furthermore, Mulyono *et al.,* (2021) investigated the relationship between the quality of the physical environment and revisit intention. They all concluded that there was a significant relationship between these variables. According to Hanington & Martin (2012) visitors that are highly satisfied with destination environment and facilities would have positive revisit intention. Recently, Zhan *et al*. (2024), studying urban parks, found that park attractiveness (an attribute of the physical environment) positively shapes visitors' revisit intentions, both directly and indirectly through visitor satisfaction. Similarly, Yang *et al*. (2025) reported that physical services cape positively influences tourists' intention to stay in rural tourism settings, with perceived service quality mediating this relationship. Despite all these researches, there is paucity of data on this subject matter in Nigeria. Therefore, this study aimed at determining the relationship between visitors' revisit intention and the physical environment of Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. Hence, it is hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between physical environment and visitors' revisit intention in Port Harcourt Pleasure Park, Rivers State, Nigeria.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Study area

The study was conducted at Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Pleasure Park is a public recreational park strategically located on 4°50′16.85″ N and 7°00′38.49″ E along major Aba Road, and flanked between the Army Barracks and Air force base junction in Port Harcourt. The park is situated roughly 15 meters above sea level and dominated by coastal plain sand and sedimentary alluvial formations of the Niger Delta. It has an annual rainfall of between 2,000mm to 2,500mm with a temperature of around 27°C to 28°C and a high relative humidity of about 85%. The park provides recreational, entertainment and relaxation opportunities for a naturally peaceful environment. The park offers place for people to visit for hiking, picnicking, sporting activities or just relaxation (Chukundah, 2022).

Data Collection

Data was collected through the use of a structured questionnaire from two hundred and forty-six (246) visitors using a non-probability sampling method (convenience sampling technique), however, only 206 was retrieved. Data was collected between September 2023 and January 2024. Sample size was determined using Cochran formula at 0.05 level of significance. The questionnaire was divided into three Sections: A, B, and C. Section A contain the respondent's socio-demographic data like age, gender, etc., Section B contains questions on the dimensions of the independent variable (physical environment) and section C contains questions on the measures of the dependent variable (visitor's revisit intention). Six attributes of the physical environment were measured using 4 items scale each on ambience (Zeng *et al.,* 2024), special layout (Jiang *et al.,* 2023), signs and symbols (Huiling, 2024), facility aesthetics (Jiang *et al.,* 2023), seat comfort (Tan *et al.,* 2013), and cleanliness (Vos *et al.,* 2019). Visitors revisit intention was measured using 3-items scale adapted from Luo and Hsieh (2013). Section B & C were measured using a 4-point Likert scale, where Strongly Agree (SA) is given the value 4, Agree (A) is given the value 3, Disagree (D) is given the value 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) is given the value 1.

Data analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and inferential (Pearson Product moment correlation) statistics using SPSS software version 27. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to examine the relationship between the dependent variable (visitors' revisit intention, generated as the mean score of the 3-item revisit intention scale) and each of the five independent variables measuring visitors' perception of the physical environment (ambience, special layout, signs and symbols, facility aesthetics, and cleanliness aesthetics, each generated as the mean score of its respective item scale), with the level of significance set at 0.05. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) for each item and sub-heading were interpreted against the scale midpoint of 2.5 (calculated as (4+3+2+1)/4 for the 4-point Likert scale used), where a mean score of 2.5 and above indicates agreement with a statement and a mean score below 2.5 indicates disagreement. Results were presented using tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of the 246 copies of questionnaire administered, 206 (83.7%) were retrieved while 40 (16.3%) of the copies of questionnaire were not retrieved. The visitors to Port Harcourt Pleasure Park were mostly young and active economically. The age group of 26-35 years (37.9%), then 18-25 years (26.2%), is the highest, which means that young adults are the key user group of the park. This trend concurs with the findings of Sari *et al.,* (2023), who indicated that most of its respondents were within the ages of 20-25 years (33.3%), indicating that most of the leisure and tourism destinations are mostly consumed by young adults. With regard to occupation, the vast majority of respondents in this study were employed (48.1%) or self-employed (33.5%) representing the population that is financially active. Although Sari *et al.,* (2023), found students (44.1%) and private employees (32.4%) to be the predominant groups, both studies continuously indicate that economically active people are the main market segment of recreational destinations. As Sari *et al.,* also, stated that the majority of respondents had mid-range monthly incomes, the occupational structure that is presented here also implies that there is sufficient purchasing power to engage in leisure and establish potential revisit behaviour.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents at Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	85	41.3
Female	121	58.7
Age		
18-25	54	26.2
26-35	78	37.9
36-45	52	25.2
46 and above	22	10.7
Marital Status		
Single	50	24.3
Married	125	60.7
Divorced	14	6.8
Widowed	17	8.2
Occupation		
Self Employed	69	33.5
Employed	99	48.1
Unemployed	38	18.4

Source: Field work, 2023

Visitors' Perception about the Physical Environment of Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt

Visitors' perception towards the physical environment of Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt was measured using six variables: ambience, special layout, signs and symbols, facility aesthetics, seat comfort and cleanliness and aesthetics. The result showed that visitors agreed to all the questions assessed under the six sub-headings with a grand mean of 3.33, 3.27, 3.09, 3.09, 3.07 and 2.99 for signs and symbols, cleanliness and aesthetics, seat comfort, facility aesthetics, ambience and special layout respectively. This showed that visitors agreed to all the questions assessed under the six sub-headings with a grand mean ranging towards 2.99 to 3.33, all of which are above the scale midpoint of 2.5, indicating agreement with all six sub-headings assessed. This implies that visitors appreciated the physical environment of Pleasure Park. A detailed breakdown of the level of agreement with the various statements assessed under each sub-heading is presented in table 2.

First, visitors agreed to the following statements under the sub-heading: "Signs and symbols": "directional signs are visually appealing and large enough to be seen with a mean value of 3.81 followed by there are sufficient directional signs (mean value = 3.79), the directional guidelines in this park are easy to follow and understand (3.33), while directional signs give guidelines of how to move in the park had the lowest mean value of 2.39, which falls below the scale midpoint of 2.5, indicating that visitors disagreed with this statement. The high mean values for the visibility and adequacy of directional signs indicate that visitors are able to see and locate signage within the park. However, the low mean value obtained for signs giving guidelines on how to move within the park suggests that, despite being visible, the existing directional signs are not perceived as effective in guiding visitors' movement and navigation, which may hinder visitors from having an easy and complete tour experience within the park. This observation supports the result of Artuğer (2020), who reported that the signs and symbols play an important role in customer satisfaction and loyalty in service-related contexts.

Also, respondents agreed to all the statement assessed under cleanliness aesthetics as follows: overall, park facilities are clean, the park maintains clean walkways, corridors and exits, park restaurant maintains clean food service areas and Attractive workers make me feel good with a mean value of 3.31, 3.28, 3.26 and 3.22 respectively. The large means scores obtained here indicate that visitors are sensitive to the hygiene and environmental order. Not only does cleanliness indicate the quality of service; it improves the perceived safety and comfort especially in areas of recreation in the society. This conclusion concurs with Ma & Ma (2022) who indicated that cleanliness had a significant impact on satisfaction and intentions to travel in the future because it results in better perceptions of safety.

In the same vein, visitors agreed to the following statements under facility aesthetics: The interior décor of this park is attractive (mean value = 3.21), the furniture (e.g. dining table, chair) is of high quality (mean value = 3.16), the paintings/pictures in this park are attractive (mean value = 3.00) and the use of colour in the décor scheme adds excitement to this park's environment (mean value = 2.98). This finding aligns with previous tourism and hospitality studies that aesthetically pleasing environments increases emotional attachment, which in turn boosts revisit intentions and

destination loyalty (Stylos *et al.,* 2017; Zhang *et al.,* 2018). Furthermore, visitors were in agreement to the following statements under seat comfort: The seats were comfortable and conducive for relaxation, the seats (e.g., chairs, sofas) in the public areas of this park were comfortable and provided adequate support, the variety of seating options (e.g., armchairs, dining chairs) catered to different preferences and needs and the seating arrangements in common areas were ergonomic and encouraged a relaxed atmosphere with the mean values 3.26, 3.21, 3.01 and 2.88, respectively.

Table 2: Visitors' Perception about the Physical Environment of Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt

Variables	MEAN	SD
Ambience	3.07	
The atmosphere in this park is pleasant	3.14	0.8721
The lighting in the park created a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere.	2.98	0.8902
The Lighting in this park creates a comfortable atmosphere for me	2.92	0.7822
The music and sounds in the park enhanced the overall ambiance.	3.23	0.8343
Special layout	2.99	
Seating arrangement in this park gives me enough space.	2.99	0.8965
Overall layout makes it easy to get to where I want to go	2.78	0.8595
There are sufficient chairs and tables in the park	3.17	0.8345
Seats and dining tables are comfortable	3. 00	0.7990
Signs and symbols	3.33	
There are Sufficient directional signs (e.g. entrance, exit, toilets)	3.79	0.8753
Directional signs give guidelines of how to move in the park	2.39	0.8211
Directional signs are visually appealing and large enough to be seen.	3.81	0.8714
The directional guidelines in this park are easy to follow and understand.	3.33	0.782
Facility Aesthetics	3.09	
The interior décor of this park is attractive	3.21	0.8438
The furniture's (e.g dining table, chair) is of high quality	3.16	0.8592
The use of colour in the décor scheme adds excitement to this park's environment	2.98	0.8344
The paintings/pictures in this park are attractive	3.00	0.8111
Seat Comfort	3.09	
The seats (e.g., chairs, sofas) in the public areas of this park were comfortable and provided adequate support.	3.21	0.8438
The seats were comfortable and conducive to relaxation.	3.26	0.8592
The seating arrangements in common areas were ergonomic and encouraged a relaxed atmosphere.	2.88	0.8344
The variety of seating options (e.g., armchairs, dining chairs) catered to different preferences and needs.	3.01	0.7892
Cleanliness	3.27	
Overall, park facilities are clean.	3.31	0.7438
Park Restaurant maintains clean food service areas.	3.26	0.8592
The park maintains clean walkways, corridors and exits.	3.28	0.7344
Attractive workers make me feel good.	3.22	0.8802

Source: *Field work, 2023*

With respect to ambience, visitors agreed that "the music and sounds in the park enhanced the overall ambience, the atmosphere in this park is pleasant, the lighting in the park created a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere and the lighting in this park creates a comfortable atmosphere for me with a mean value of 3.23, 3.14, 2.98 and 2.92, respectively. This implied that visitors perceived the light, the music and the sound in the park as nice and conducive for comfort. This means that the emotional impacts of visitors are bound to increase with the betterment of the atmospheric conditions and motivate recurrent visitation. The observation is in line with previous research that presumes ambience as an essential service escape factor in shaping behavioural intentions (Ryu *et al.,* 2012).

Lastly, respondents agreed to the following questions under the special layout with sufficient chairs and tables in the park having the highest mean value of 3.17 followed by seats and dining tables are comfortable, seating arrangement in this park gives me enough space and overall layout make it easy to get to where I want to go with a mean value of 3.00, 2.99 and 2.78 respectively. This implies that visitors appreciate the useful and convenient layout of Pleasure Park. This denotes that spatial organization is not just an operating issue but a strategic one which has direct impact on the intention of the visitors to revisit the place. This outcome is consistent with empirical findings of Ogbuji *et al*. (2016) who established that spatial layout and functionality are strong predictors of patronage and revisit behaviour in leisure and recreation settings. Overall, the findings suggest that a good physical environment is very important in influencing the formation of post consumption behavioural intentions within the recreational environments.

Revisit intention to Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt

As shown on Table 3, the visitors agreed with all the items measuring revisit intention; with means above the scale midpoint of 2.5. Specifically, the visitors agreed that they intend to return their visit to the park again (3.46). They further agreed that they would consider visiting the park again even after a long time (3.30). The visitors further agreed that they mostly travel to the same destination (3.01). The grand mean of 3.26 demonstrates high revisit intention to the park.

Table 3: Revisit intention to Pleasure Park, Port Harcourt

Variables	Mean	SD
I intend to return my visit to this park again	3.46	0.51
I would consider this destination as a place to visit, even after a long time	3.30	0.76
I mostly travel to the same destination	3.01	0.85
Grand mean	**3.26**	

Source: *Field work, 2023*

Result of the test of hypothesis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to assess the relationship between visitors' perception about the physical environment and their revisit intention towards Pleasure Park. The results in Table 4 indicate that all physical environment dimensions, including the ambience ($r = 0.477$), special layout ($r = 0.595$), signs and symbols ($r = 0.448$), the aesthetic of the facilities ($r = 0.509$), and aesthetic of cleanliness ($r = 0.467$) have strong positive relations with revisit intention (where r values was between 0.49 and 1.0 and $p < 0.05$) at Port Harcourt Pleasure Park. This implies that the better the quality of the environment is, the more visitors will prefer to revisit the place. The results are consistent with Handayani *et al.* (2022), who concluded that the quality of the physical environment positively and significantly influences the revisit intention (sig < 0.05). They reasoned that the physical environment is a non-verbal communication depicting image and quality of services which drives repeat customers. In the same measure, Han and Ryu (2009) established that the physical environment has a positive effect on revisit intention. This finding also aligns with Zhan *et al*. (2024), who found that park attractiveness significantly shapes visitors' revisit intentions to urban parks, underscoring the continued relevance of the physical environment to revisit behaviour in recreational park settings. All in all, Table 2 confirms that an environment that is well designed, neat and beautiful plays a very great role in improving the intention of visitors to revisit.

The meaningful correlation between the aesthetics of the cleanliness and revisit intention justifies the results of Sharif *et al*. (2023), who found out that hygiene can positively and significantly exert its influence on the revisit intentions of tourists ($p = 0.026$). Both reports attest to the fact that hygiene is a serious factor of loyalty especially in the post-pandemics age when people have been more health conscious. The current results supplement the thesis that perceived safety and trust are promoted by sanitation and environmental order, which leads to the reinforcement of the behavioral intentions. On the same note, Sharif *et al*. (2023) also discovered that motivator destination image has a significant impact on the revisit intention ($p = 0.01$). Facility aesthetics and ambience are used in this research as the image forming variables and they have strong-moderate associations with revisit intention. This implies that visual impression and weather influences positive destination ratings that translate to recurrent visitation.

Table 4: Test of relationship between Visitors' Perception about the Physical Environment and their revisit intention

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Strength of Relationship	Decision Rule
H1	Ambience	Revisit Intention	0.477	0.000	Moderate positive	Reject Ho
H2	Special Layout	Revisit Intention	0.595	0.000	Strong positive	Reject Ho
H3	Signs and Symbols	Revisit Intention	0.448	0.000	Moderate positive	Reject Ho
H4	Facility Aesthetics	Revisit Intention	0.509	0.000	Strong positive	Reject Ho
H5	Cleanliness Aesthetics	Revisit Intention	0.467	0.000	Moderate positive	Reject Ho

Source: Field work, 2023

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study assessed the relationship between visitors' perception about the physical environment and their revisit intention towards Pleasure Park, located in Rivers State, Nigeria. The result showed that visitors appreciated the following attributes (the signs and symbols, cleanliness aesthetics, facility aesthetics and seat comfort) about the physical environment of Pleasure Park. This also reflected in their revisit intention towards the park. The correlation analysis revealed that all the five variables used to measure visitors' perception towards the physical environment of Pleasure Park had a positive and statistically significant relationship with visitors' revisit intention. Hence, the more the positive perception of visitors' increases, so does their likelihood of revisiting the park increases.

In all, the findings suggest that visitors' revisit intention is closely related with their perception of the physical environment of the park. Therefore, to encourage more repeat visitations by visitors, it is important to increase the use of signs and symbols for effective communication and to make navigation easy during their tour within the park. Also, the park managers should incorporate more interior décor such as paintings, pictures or sculptures into the facility aesthetics to create a more engaging and memorable experience for visitors. Lastly, park managers need to maintain a high level of cleanliness that would enhance the overall ambience and special layout of the facility.

Despite the crucial contribution of this study, a crucial aspect of the physical environment was ignored, which is the natural environment. The assessment of the relationship between this, and

revisit intention can be explored in future studies.

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Authors' Contributions

OOA was involved in data collection, analysis and interpretation. JOO & JTA were involved in literature searches and manuscript development

Ethical Statement

Not applicable

AI Declaration Statement

The authors declare that no Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools were used in the generation, analysis, interpretation, or writing of this manuscript.

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