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Recreational facilities and local tourism

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Abstract :

Recreational facilities contribute to the development of local tourism through the role they play in the city. They help empower individuals, encourage participation, and increase interest in investing free time within these facilities in ways that align with individuals' needs, desires, and orientations. These facilities also meet the demands of modern times, instill love among community members, provide ongoing support, and promote concern for national interests. Furthermore, they increase opportunities for travel and mobility, foster a culture of leisure and entertainment, and raise awareness of the cultural heritage of local communities as a whole.

In addition, recreational facilities help in forming friendships and human relationships with others, adapting to and coping with different social environments, and maintaining balanced mental health. They promote respect for public order and traditions, enable the productive use of leisure time to prevent social deviance, instill a spirit of cooperation, and enhance social relationships among individuals.

Recreational facilities have the potential to play a distinguished role in developing the tourism sector. They strive to improve the image of tourism and preserve the beauty of the city, while also considering the interconnection between tourism and the priorities of sustainable development. Developing a practical strategy that aims to balance economic efficiency and environmental considerations is essential.

Keywords: Recreational facilities; local tourism; city development; leisure time; cultural heritage; social relationships; psychological well-being; sustainable development; economic efficiency; environmental improvement.

Introduction:

Recreational facilities designed for citizens are key to social development in any community, reflecting both urban and cultural significance. They spread culture and civilization by helping people connect, strengthening bonds, and closing cultural gaps. These spaces significantly enhance social, psychological, cultural, and physical well-being for individuals and society as a whole, making them essential for making the best use of free time and fostering positive relationships.

These facilities cater to improving mental and physical health. Recreation, a practice as old as human societies, varies depending on each community's resources. As societies evolve, so do recreational spaces and methods, becoming a core function in modern communities.

Researchers in fields like education, sociology, and geography have studied leisure time, recognizing its critical role in city life. These spaces act as a city's breathing space, helping to clear and calm its atmosphere. A city without recreational areas is hard to imagine.

Like other nations, Algeria has put in place systems to establish recreational facilities in cities, creating clean spaces to promote healthy leisure time, encourage social connections, and reduce isolation and self-withdrawal.

Section One: Recreational Facilities

Subsection One: Factors Driving Interest in Modern Recreation

The rise of modern technology and equipment has transformed recreational facilities. City life today is noisy and chaotic, with challenges like overcrowding, housing shortages, and transportation issues. Urban sprawl, population growth, factories, and high population density push people to escape work stress, seeking peace and calm through engaging and exciting recreational activities. Tourism promotion allows individuals to enjoy leisure time with minimal cost and effort.

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Subsection Two: Importance and Features of Recreation

Recreation is a human activity that balances work and rest, contributing to happiness. It includes the right to leisure, like sports and other activities. Experts in biology, psychology, and sociology agree that recreational and sports activities are vital for biological, social, psychological, educational, economic, and political reasons.

Recreation happens during free time, when people are free from work or other duties. It brings joy and satisfaction through self-expression and creativity, while respecting others' feelings. It's a voluntary activity, chosen based on personal desires, motivations, abilities, and maturity. It also supports psychological balance by meeting participants' needs, fostering mental well-being.⁽²⁾

Subsection 2.1: Social Importance

Recreation builds social relationships and values, reducing isolation and fostering harmony and unity. It promotes sportsmanship, cooperation, joy, good citizenship, leadership, and social adaptability. Recreational activities encourage respect for laws, punctuality, and serving others, while strengthening friendships through group participation, valuing teamwork, and developing leadership skills.⁽³⁾

Subsection 2.2: Psychological Importance

Psychological theories stress the importance of letting young people express themselves, especially through play, which supports behavioral growth. Recreational activities meet psychological needs like safety, belonging, and self-fulfillment, leading to high levels of satisfaction. They fulfill desires tied to play and hobbies, promote happiness, improve emotional health, restore mental balance, and boost achievement and self-worth.⁽⁴⁾

Subsection 2.3: Economic Importance

Productivity depends on workers' efficiency, persistence, and mental readiness, all of which are enhanced by quality leisure time. Supporting workers' recreation and well-being can boost overall societal productivity, improving both quantity and quality.

Subsection 2.4: Educational Importance

Though recreational activities are often spontaneous, experts agree they offer educational benefits, like learning new skills, strengthening memory, and gaining knowledge and values.⁽⁵⁾

Subsection 2.5: Biological Importance

Biologists studying the human body highlight the importance of movement for maintaining daily performance. Despite physical, psychological, or social challenges, physiologists encourage activity, especially for adults and the elderly, to ensure fitness and health. Regular recreational activities improve body composition, physical fitness, circulation, bone health, and mental well-being, reducing depression.⁽⁶⁾

Subsection Three: Recreational Facilities as Social Institutions

Recreation, as a social system, relies on human resources (leaders, pioneers, beneficiaries, and supporters), equipment that aids activities, and organizational structures like associations and federations. It also includes programs, activities, and social elements like values, ethics, traditions, and skills. As a social institution, its success depends on the factors that drive the system as a whole.⁽⁷⁾

Subsection Four: Recreation and Leisure Time

Dumazedier divides recreational activities into three types: relaxing activities like reading or watching TV, physically active ones, and those done during free time, not work hours. Recreation builds personality and is enjoyable, as long as it respects others' enjoyment. It aligns with a society's culture, traditions, and values, and is voluntary, though guided by educational direction.⁽⁸⁾

Subsection Five: Recreational Spaces

Subsection 5.1: Public Gardens

Public gardens are organized, often enclosed spaces with planted vegetation, transforming natural landscapes for public benefit. Engineering plays a key role in their design. Defined as urban green spaces, they feature protective vegetation, public amenities, and management by specific groups.⁽⁹⁾

These gardens, often fenced, include flowers and trees that reflect the community's identity. They serve as shared spaces for social and environmental interaction, where individuals and groups engage, influencing one another.⁽¹⁰⁾

This mutual influence, or social interaction, shapes social life through the exchange of ideas, emotions, and meanings, reshaping the environment through daily behaviors.⁽¹¹⁾

Subsection 5.1.1: Structure of Public Gardens

Public gardens have four key components:

- Promenade Pathways: Wide paths lined with trees and benches.
- Water Network: Basins connected by water channels.
- Picturesque Trails: Paths highlighting unique views, like bridges or caves.
- Meeting Spaces: Areas with restaurants, music kiosks, or game zones for social gatherings.
- Gardens may include some or all of these features, depending on their design.

Subsection 5.1.2: Public Gardens and Playgrounds

These spaces offer activities for all ages, like games and cafes, used during regular days or holidays. Equipped with services, they include green belts to curb pollution and urban sprawl, often located on city edges. Zoological and ornamental gardens house animals in suitable environments or feature well-maintained plants around public buildings.⁽¹²⁾

Subsection 5.2: Parks

Parks are vast areas, sometimes thousands of hectares, with forests, pastures, rivers, valleys, and wildlife. They provide spaces for relaxation and recreation, attracting city residents for their scenic beauty and plants, which bring joy. Parks are now a societal necessity, located inside or outside cities, visited during holidays.

Subsection 5.3: Forests

Forests are wooded areas with natural mountains and wildlife, serving as recreational and resource spaces. Managed well, they are renewable resources.

Though historically damaged by burning or clearing, reforestation has grown since 1980. Forests maintain environmental balance by producing oxygen and absorbing carbon dioxide.⁽¹³⁾

Agricultural lands, from large fields for crops like wheat to smaller plots for vegetables and fruits, also form green belts around or within cities, supporting urban agriculture and food security for the poor.⁽¹⁴⁾

Subsection Six: The Role of Green Spaces

Green spaces are crucial for cities, offering well-being and recreation while acting as the city's lungs. Their key roles include:⁽¹⁵⁾

Subsection 6.1: Environmental and Climatic Role

Green spaces reduce pollution by purifying air through photosynthesis, absorbing carbon dioxide, and releasing oxygen. They lower dust, smoke, and gas levels, with trees managing water to regulate humidity, especially in dry areas. They also cool summer temperatures and shield against storms and winds.

Subsection 6.2: Psychological Role

Green spaces and trees provide psychological comfort through their colors and beauty, benefiting residents' mental health, especially in crowded urban areas with limited greenery.

Subsection 6.3: Acoustic Role

Green spaces reduce city noise by absorbing or scattering sound waves through tree leaves, lessening the impact of factory or traffic noise. Studies show leafy branches absorb 25% and reflect 75% of sounds.

Subsection 6.4: Health Role

Green spaces purify air chemically, filtering germs and car emissions, and remove 60–80% of dust, acting as natural air filters.

Subsection 6.5: Ecological Role

Green spaces protect resources like water, soil, plants, and animals, preventing soil erosion and degradation. Vegetation shields soil from weather, resists sand movement, and preserves fertile land.

Subsection 6.6: Planning Role

Green spaces are vital in urban planning, used architecturally to design and organize external spaces at the household or city level.⁽¹⁶⁾

Section Two: Local Tourism

Subsection One: Tourism

The Arabic term “siyaha” (tourism) comes from “saha,” meaning to travel for worship or exploration, rooted in “sayh” (flowing water).⁽¹⁷⁾

The term “tourisme” stems from the Latin “torno,” first used to describe travel or movement.⁽¹⁸⁾

In the Quran, “siyaha” in Surah **At-Tawbah (9:112)** refers to fasting, symbolizing detachment from habits, while in **At-Tawbah (9:2)**, it implies travel for contemplation or wandering.⁽¹⁹⁾

In Arabic, tourism means traveling for leisure, exploration, or discovery.⁽²⁰⁾

The Larousse dictionary defines it as travel for enjoyment.⁽²¹⁾

Jolden (1939) described it as temporary residence outside one’s country, not for economic gain.⁽²²⁾

Subsection Two: Local Tourism

Local tourism involves domestic travel within a country, where residents travel at least 80 kilometers from home for tourism, staying 24 hours to a year before returning. Trips of 24 hours or more are tourism; shorter ones are recreational. It also promotes citizenship and tourism awareness.⁽²³⁾

Algeria’s historical cities, like Constantine, the city of suspended bridges, support year-round tourism. Constantine’s historical, natural, and cultural assets make it a prime tourism destination, ripe for investments to elevate its national and global status.

Subsection Three: Domestic Tourism⁽²⁴⁾

Factors for developing domestic tourism include:

Economic Activity: Tourism boosts income in regions with strong services, depending on self-sufficiency.

Pricing: Costs of travel, services, and income levels affect tourism demand.

Demand Variability: External, unpredictable factors influence tourism demand.⁽²⁵⁾

Subsection Four: Promoting Domestic Tourism

Domestic tourism:

- Diversifies national income sources.
- Balances income distribution.
- Improves tourism facility operations.
- Encourages new services.
- Raises awareness and patriotism.
- Develops infrastructure in remote areas.
- Attracts investments.
- Reduces income leakage through domestic tourism.
- Enhances social and economic well-being.
- Boosts inbound tourism.⁽²⁶⁾

To promote it, focus on enhancing tourism landmarks, introducing alternatives like nature tourism, offering affordable packages, improving services, advancing research, using technology for communication, prioritizing facilities like parks and museums, ensuring quality services, and building trust among stakeholders.⁽²⁷⁾

Conclusion:

Recreational facilities, like public gardens and parks, are cornerstones of social and psychological growth. They enhance well-being, strengthen social ties, reduce isolation, and foster interaction. These spaces have social, psychological, economic, educational, and biological benefits, promoting values, mental balance, productivity, skills, and health.

Green spaces improve urban environments by cleaning air, reducing noise, regulating climate, and enhancing life quality. Local tourism drives economic and social progress, diversifying income, improving infrastructure, and raising cultural awareness, with potential for sustainable investments.

To amplify these benefits, develop and maintain well-equipped recreational facilities for all ages, promote affordable domestic tourism, enhance service quality, and improve infrastructure in remote areas. Awareness programs should encourage positive leisure use, emphasizing green spaces. Digital platforms can streamline tourism information and activities, while supporting tourism and recreational investments ensures sustainability and appeal, driving comprehensive development.

Footnotes:

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