

Football Viewing Centres in an African Megacity: Viewers' Characteristics and Operational Dynamics

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FOOTBALL VIEWING CENTRES IN AN AFRICAN MEGACITY: VIEWERS' CHARACTERISTICS AND OPERATIONAL DYNAMICS

Abstract

This study examines viewers' characteristics and operational dynamics of football viewing centres (FVCs) in Agege, Lagos Megacity, Nigeria. It anchors on the "theory of happiness" and the microeconomic vitality of FVCs using a mixed-methods approach. The results of the descriptive and inferential statistics revealed that most viewers can afford subscriptions for digital TV in their homes, yet patronize the FVCs. Factors attributed to patronage are happiness, excitement, and other social opportunities, with some perspectives of leisure and microeconomic vitality benefits. Finally, the study suggests a new policy direction to mitigate the negative effects of unplanned areas resulting in the proliferation of FVCs.

Keywords: Football Viewing Centres (FVCs), Happiness, Leisure, Megacity, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Leisure remains an essential component of human life. Seddon (2011: 3) defined leisure (or free time) as “a period of recreational time spent on non-compulsory activities when individuals can choose to spend their time doing the things they enjoy.” Leisure involves activities such as reading books/magazines, playing games with others, playing solitary games, watching TV or DVDs, browsing the internet, interacting with pets/animals, participating in sports, spectating sports, engaging in exercise/aerobic classes, cycling, listening to music/radio, going for a walk, amongst others (Baker et al., 2016).

Football viewing centres (FVCs) are “probably places where people go for relaxation” (Igundunasse & Ojiji, 2015: 7). They have been increasing in numbers in Nigerian cities (Onyebueke, 2015). The increase had been linked to a growing TV and online mediated fanbase of European football clubs (Igundunasse & Ojiji, 2015).

In Nigeria, the game of football is a sport of great significance. It has been identified as a ‘unifying force’ that brings both old and young together without bias for age, ethnic group, or social class. The successes of Nigerian football, particularly at international competitions, where the Nigerian national team has amassed celebrated victories, have further bolstered the game’s popularity and significance (Adeyemi & Kola, 2017). Despite recorded successes, enthusiasm for Nigerian football has since nose-dived for a variety of reasons. For instance, the arrival of internet technology coupled with increasing cable television has given Nigerian youth greater access to foreign football (Onwumechili & Oloruntola, 2014; Igundunasse & Ojiji, 2015). This apathy has worsened because of persistent issues of poor management, corruption, poor facilities, improper funding, and insecurity (Akindes, 2011; Adeyemi & Kola, 2017), thus making the emergence and success of FVCs inevitable.

Besides, the encroachment of development on public open spaces and gating of institutional open spaces have forced football fans to seek alternative means of congregating with people of the same recreational interests. Consequently, the town halls, which hosted concerts and stage performances in the past, are now scarcely available. The emergence of the FVCs phenomenon appears to be the last resort for people who have struggled to engage with their passion elsewhere (Omosho & Omosho, 2018). According to Omosho (2012: 169), the deprivation in providing social and public spaces for recreational facilities amongst other essential facilities can be traced to ‘poverty and failure to maintain the existing ones.’

Several studies have been conducted globally regarding football fandoms and the management of FVCs. Kerr and Emery (2011) studied how foreign consumers support their chosen team with particular reference to Liverpool FC. Using seven indicators comprising media coverage, style of play, presence of a particular player(s), team success, history of success, participation in highest, and stadium, they evaluated supporter’s identification. Findings revealed that satellite supporters derive psychological benefits from their support of foreign-based teams. Another study by Akindes (2011) focused on how transnational television broadcasting (TTB) shaped football fans’ viewership experience in sub-Saharan Africa, and if indeed this new method has either positive or negative impacts on fans’ viewing experience. He found out that TTB has led to a situation where fans paid greater attention to European football leagues to the detriment of local leagues though European

football viewing created business opportunities for bars, venue owners and those who deal in team merchandise. Igwe et al.'s (2021) study explored the impacts of European football leagues on Nigerian society. Findings revealed the positive effects include the creation of a culture of identity, religion, and sense of belonging culminating from the fans' faithfulness, devotion and allegiance whereas the negative impacts include the betting culture and online gambling that characterized the society, particularly among the youths.

Ahmed et al. (2012) also examined the socio-economic impacts of FVCs on poverty alleviation in Ilorin, and the results revealed that FVCs have significant impacts on poverty alleviation, although their study established that income from FVCs business is inadequate to support the households of the FVCs operators. Kombol and Kombol (2015) studied the social significance of satellite television centres in Makurdi with a focus on their uses and abuses. Findings showed that satellite television centres are leveraged to advance interest in sporting events. In contrast, they become abused when criminals used the centres as hideouts. Igundunasse and Ojiji (2015) focused on understanding football-based identity influenced by everyday interactions among Nigerian undergraduates. They found that a more robust social identity with a football club and other supporters explains the intimacy level someone is willing to have with another person perceived to belong to another group. Another study by Onwumechili and Oloruntola (2014) assessed Nigerian football fans' attitude toward European football and identification with it, and findings showed that Nigerian fans have a positive attitude towards foreign football and expressed significant identification with the European football team and football players.

While some studies have attempted to explore various dimensions of football fandom and FVCs management at different times in different climes, our study will contribute to the literature by comprehensively examining viewers' characteristics and operational dynamics of the FVCs. Therefore, this study explores viewers' characteristics and operational dynamics of FVCs in Agege in Lagos Megacity, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to: examine viewers' socio-economic characteristics; ascertain viewers' perceptions of FVCs' attraction and patronage; and study the operational dynamics of FVCs. In addition to this study's primary aim and objectives, this study would attempt to establish if a relationship exists between income and reasons for FVC patronage.

This study as a contribution to urban studies would unveil an attribute of cities in developing countries regarding perspectives on football fandom and FVCs management. The characteristics of the viewers who patronize the FVCs, as this study investigates, would help inform urban policies towards meeting viewers' leisure needs in cities of developing countries. The results from this study can serve as a guide for urban planners and policymakers to adequately provide for this emerging land use in development plans. Further, the understanding of the operational dynamics as examined by this study would assist the government and municipalities on how best to integrate the FVCs into the economy by leveraging its employment creation potential towards addressing the urban problems of unemployment, poverty and inequality experienced in developing countries, particularly Nigeria.

1.1 The concept of football viewing centres and the theory of happiness

The gathering of people with similar interests to watch engrossing programmes together is by no means new in Nigeria or globally (Akindes, 2011; Dixon, 2014; Igundunasse & Ojiji, 2015). However, it has assumed a new dimension with team sports leagues, particularly in North America and Europe. European football has developed massive fanatical fanbases who follow clubs, even from viewers outside the European continent in countries such as Nigeria. This development, coupled with the lack of economic capacity of most fans to install and subscribe to live streaming channels, particularly in Nigeria, has given birth to the concept of football viewing centres (FVCs) in towns and cities. This concept has become institutionalized with some forms of operational structure and standards, depending on the locations and the societal class of fans patronising a given viewing centre. FVCs stimulate activities that promote economic empowerment, social engagement, and the prosperity of local communities (Akindes, 2011). It creates a feeling of happiness and helps foster friendships, and provides accessibility to international football (Ahmed et al., 2012; Kombol & Kombol, 2015; Igwe et al., 2021).

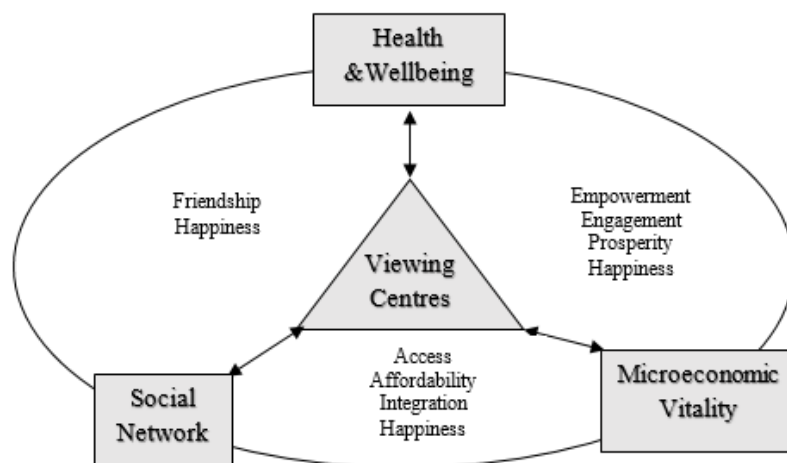


Figure 1. Conceptualization of football viewing centres with integral activities and benefits

Interestingly, the viewing centres themselves promote the three core conceptual factors, as shown in Figure 1. Based on these activities and the benefits shown in Figure 1, we conceptualize FVCs from the resultant and integral activities and benefits they generate, including contributing to microeconomic vitality, social networks, and health and well-being. Happiness in the cycle of these activities and benefits occurs through multiple feedback loops at the three levels linked to the viewing centres.

Expanding on the above explanation, most of the factors in Figure 1 can be directly or indirectly influenced by people’s desires, thoughts, and beliefs. Here, happiness is primarily defined in terms of the desires, thoughts, and beliefs of an individual or group of people (Davis, 1981; Haybron, 2003). Social, economic, and cultural sensitivity is believed to be vital in the conceptualisation of happiness, as such most measures consider one or more of these factors. By and large, these factors directly or indirectly in parts or whole determine

between the pleasures and displeasures. According to Rossi (2018), happiness plays a vital role in explaining and predicting behaviour. Relating to FVCs and the viewers, the theory of happiness explains or predicts the behaviours of the viewers, which the socio-economic characteristics are reflected in the Health & Wellbeing, Social Network, and Microeconomic Vitality as shown in Figure 1. The happiness of the viewer is, therefore, a key driver in the sustenance of the operations of the FVCs.

Therefore, the 'theory of happiness' is central to the concept of FVCs as it relates to both the outcomes and impacts generated. Indeed, the levels of interactions generated by FVCs are influenced by football fans' desires, beliefs, and thoughts. Therefore, happiness is an interception of an element of all the factors involved in the interaction. Happiness relating to football and FVCs is multi-layered revealing the relevance of applying the theory of happiness to explain this phenomenon. For instance, some forces promote happiness, relief, and hope and at the same time counter pessimism, fear, and disappointment, and vice versa. The events leading to happiness can be influenced by other relational events (Parducci, 1984); this explains the interconnectedness of microeconomic vitality, social networks, and health and well-being outcomes as shown in Figure 1.

It is noteworthy to state that the locations of the FVCs are mainly informal with little consideration for proximity to one another. Social networking and other associated activities cum benefits among the viewers is a possible determinant of patronage of FVCs with seeming proximity within the neighbourhood.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Study area

The study area selected for this work was influenced by several factors that strategically align with the research objectives. Lagos is approximately situated at Longitude $2^{\circ} 42'$ and $3^{\circ} 42' E$ and Latitude $6^{\circ} 23'$ and $6^{\circ} 42' N$. Although Lagos, one of the 36 States, occupies the smallest land area within Nigeria's territory, its strategic role in its spatial, economic, and political system cannot be overstated. Located in southwestern Nigeria, Lagos is one of Africa's megacities and the economic capital of Nigeria, with a projected population of around 33 million by 2050 (Hoornweg & Pope, 2017). Megacities, especially in developing countries, often face significant social, environmental, and economic challenges typical of large, ever-expanding urban centres similar to Lagos (Abiola, 2012). The recent emergence of pervasive unplanned spaces utilized as FVCs has been observed in many areas of Lagos with an unprecedented increase in the Agege area. This trend is expected to worsen with the increasing population due to the loose land-use planning practice and operator's economic prospecting. Hence, the choice of Agege in Lagos for this study is justified.

Agege is one of the 16 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Lagos. The 2006 population census was put at 461,743 (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2010). Three neighbourhoods in Agege were purposively selected for this study comprising Oko-Oba, Orile, and Sango. The choice for selecting these three communities in the Agege Local Government Area (LGA) in the Lagos megacity was based on the nature and proliferation of these FVCs and the fact they have the highest number of FVCs in Agege. Besides, the local knowledge of the authors

having lived there for over 30 years was part of the considerations that influenced the choice of study locations. Furthermore, there is a paucity of related studies on FVCs that combine both FVC viewers' characteristics and operational dynamics in Agege. Hence, the study sought to fill the identified gap.

2.2 Research design and data collection methods

A mixed-methods research design was adopted due to the nature of this study. This approach is specially designed to collect, analyze, and mix quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study. In other words, a mixed-methods research design is found appropriate for this study due to the nature of data required and the type of research instruments (questionnaire and interview) used. However, both primary and secondary data sources were employed for this study. The primary data collection methods were achieved through questionnaire survey, field observation, and interviews. The questionnaire was structured using close-ended and open-ended questions administered to the viewers of the selected FVCs and complemented with direct field observation, while the use of an interview guide carefully structured as open-ended questions was administered to the FVCs managers. Additionally, we consulted secondary data sources such as journal articles, books, dissertations, and government publications to build up the literature section.

A quantitative method through questionnaire survey was used to obtain perception data on the socio-economic and trip characteristics of viewers, the reasons for patronizing the FVCs, alternative leisure locations and attraction to FVCs. The questionnaire survey data forms the basis of the quantitative analysis using descriptive statistics that entails the use of frequency, percentage score and dichotomous/binary digit value. The quantification through frequency and percentage score was used to analyze all the earlier identified variables descriptively and the dichotomous/binary digit value was used to transform the qualitative data into quantitative data and was further utilized to analyze the postulated hypothesis. The qualitative method through the structured interview guide was used to obtain data from the operators on the operational attributes of the FVCs, the operational challenges of the FVC, and opportunities and measures to mitigate the observed operational challenges of the FVC. The interview sections conducted on the operators aggregately reported verbatim the position of the operators on the above-highlighted information subjectively.

2.3 Survey instruments, ethical consideration, sampling procedure, and sample size

The design of the questionnaire and the interview guide administered fall into two categories, namely A and B, respectively. Regarding the questionnaire design administered to viewers, Section-A inquires about the socio-economic characteristics of the viewers while Section-B elicits information on the viewers' perception of the FVC's attraction and patronage. On the other hand, the Section-A of the interview guide probes issues relating to the operational dynamics of the FVCs whereas Section-B elicits information on the operational challenges of FVCs in the study area. Additionally, it took ten (10) minutes for the questionnaire and thirty (30) minutes for the interview to be completed.

Nevertheless, a brief on the research aims and ethics (decision to participate and withdraw from the survey) was provided on the first page, and the confidentiality of respondents' identities and responses was equally guaranteed not to be disclosed under any circumstance aside from this research purpose. For easy understanding and completion of the research instruments, the questionnaire and interview guide were designed and conducted using the English Language. However, researchers and research assistants utilised a local dialect where necessary for ease of communication with the respondents.

A non-probability sampling (snowball and convenience sampling techniques) was adopted for this study. The snowball sampling technique was used to select 10 FVC managers out of the population of 100 FVCs equivalents to 10% of 30, 30 and 40 FVCs in Oko-Oba, Orile and Sango respectively that were interviewed. The 10% sample frame was based on the assertion of Neuman (1997) that when a population of study under consideration is less than 1000, a 10% sample frame and a smaller sample size are found appropriate. Meanwhile, due to the peculiar situation of poor record-keeping regarding data on viewers of the FVCs, the viewers' population and information are unavailable. Thus, picking a sample frame from the unknown population objectively is not possible. Hence, the choice for convenience sampling technique is to pick the sample size of the viewers of the FVCs in the study area. The convenience sampling technique was used to administer 100 copies of the questionnaire to the viewers, out of which 74 copies were fully completed across the selected FVCs and used for analysis. This study does not discriminate or give special consideration to a gender type or age group; rather, an equal chance of participation was given to all categories irrespective of gender, ethnicity, and age group found at the FVCs in the study area. It is noteworthy that the questionnaires' administration and interview were conducted on match days before, at halftime, and after matches to secure the full attention of the viewers and managers of the FVCs. In other words, this study was conducted during the weekends (Saturday and Sunday). The justification for picking Saturday and Sunday was that more matches were fixed for these days than weekdays.

2.4 Data analysis and presentation

In this study, descriptive and inferential analyses of the data collected were conducted. The descriptive analysis involves the use of a frequency distribution table, percentage score and the use of a five-point Likert's scale with different forms of gradation values consisting of Strongly Disagree (SD=1), Disagree (D=2), Undecided (U=3), Agree (A=4), Strongly Agree (SA=5). Meanwhile, the thematic analysis, a qualitative data analysis method that looks at the pattern of meaning in a data set from a set of interviews or focus group discussion and group them according to similarities or theme was used to present and analyze the qualitative data from the interview conducted on the selected FVCs managers. The inferential analysis, which entails using Chi-square tests (Pearson Chi-Square Test and Fisher's Exact Test) was used to test the postulated hypotheses. The Chi-square test was used to investigate whether or not the viewers' reason for patronizing FVC is significantly influenced by their income level. The data used for test hypotheses were calibrated from qualitative to quantitative state using

dichotomous binary digit variables of 0 and 1. However, the analysis was facilitated by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences IBM Statistics 25 version.

2.5 Hypothesis Testing

In this study, our focus is on the viewers and operators of the FVC. Studies have established varying positions about what influenced the viewers' reasons for patronizing FVC. Onwumechili and Oloruntola (2014) posit that previous studies ignored investigations that focused on the differences in demographic correlations with the effects of transnational communications. With particular reference to income and education, they opined that both income and education may determine access to transnational communications, and these variables may affect fans' attitudes and identity with European football. However, this study would be interested in establishing if income – one of the socioeconomic variables influences viewers' reason for patronizing FVC. Given this background, a hypothesis was formulated and subjected to inferential statistics. The hypothesis is stated as follows:

Ho: Viewers' reason for patronizing FVC is not significantly influenced by their income level

3. Results

3.1 Analysis of viewers

3.1.1 Socio-economic and demographic profile of viewers

For this study, a total of 74 viewers were sampled to profile their socio-economic and demographic attributes. Results from Table 1 indicated that viewers were predominantly male (97.3%), suggesting that more males patronize the FVCs than females. This finding corroborated the studies (Omotosho, 2012; Onwumechili & Oloruntola, 2014; Onyebueke, 2015) reflecting the male dominance at viewing centres. The age distribution revealed that the majority of viewers were youths aged below 35 years. This is consistent with Onyebueke's (2015) findings, who posited that the dominant age of fans of European leagues at viewing centres is between 19 and 30 years. Additionally, a more significant proportion (79.7%) of the respondents were gainfully employed. Regarding monthly income, about 65% of the viewers earned below ₦50,000 (\$158.73), and 14.9% did not disclose their income (Table 1).

Table 1. Socioeconomic and demographic profile of viewers

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	72	97.3
	Female	2	2.7
	<i>Total</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Age	Below 20 years	2	2.7
	20 -25 years	11	14.9
	26 - 30 years	20	27.0
	31 - 35 years	14	18.9
	36 - 40 years	18	24.3
	Above 40 years	8	10.8
	No response	1	1.4
<i>Total</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>100.0</i>	

Occupation	Civil Servant	7	9.5
	Private Employee	15	20.3
	Artisan	20	27.0
	Business	16	21.6
	Unemployed	3	4.1
	Student	12	16.2
	Football player	1	1.4
	<i>Total</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Income	Below ₦18,500	13	17.6
	₦18,500 - ₦25,000	16	21.6
	₦26,000 - ₦50,000	19	25.7
	Above ₦50,000	15	20.3
	No response	11	14.9
	<i>Total</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>100.0</i>

3.1.2 Access to digital satellite TV and subscription

Table 2 reveals that 60.8% of viewers have access to digital satellite TV in their homes, whereas 39.2% did not have access. Furthermore, 59.4% of viewers subscribed to digital satellite TV monthly, 1.4% subscribed quarterly, and the remaining 39.2% had no reason to subscribe to digital satellite TV. The latter were those who did not own digital satellite TV. Inquiries on recent subscriptions before the survey, data revealed that 18.9% of respondents had subscribed three weeks ago, 14.9% confirmed one month ago, 9.5% stated two months ago, and 8.1% affirmed three weeks ago (Table 2).

Table 2. Digital satellite TV access, subscription frequency and date of the last subscription

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Access to digital satellite TV	Yes	45	60.8
	No	29	39.2
	<i>Total</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Frequency of subscription	Monthly	44	59.4
	Quarterly	1	1.4
	Not applicable	29	39.2
	<i>Total</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Date of the last subscription	No response	32	43.2
	1 month	11	14.9
	2 months	7	9.5
	2 weeks	6	8.1
	3 months	1	1.4
	3 weeks	14	18.9
	5 months	1	1.4
	It's been long	1	1.4
	Over 6 months	1	1.4
	<i>Total</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>100.0</i>

3.1.3 Reasons for patronizing FVC

Various reasons have been adduced to explain viewers' FVCs patronage. A majority (94.6%) of viewers attributed it to the happiness and excitement experienced at the FVC. A large proportion (81.1%) stated proximity to homes was the reason. The results corroborate the findings of Onyebueke (2015) that revealed a majority of spectators patronize viewing centres in their local communities. In comparison, an almost equal proportion (about 80%) claimed FVCs offer relaxation and the opportunity to meet people, respectively. About 70%

stated that guaranteed power supply was the reason they patronize FVC. However, significant disagreement was recorded regarding the lack of access to digital satellite TV (50.0%), meaning that lack of access to satellite TV could not prevent viewers from patronizing FVC (Table 3). Kombol and Kombol's (2015) study reported that viewers could not afford the price of subscription fees and a steady power supply to enable them to view matches. As such, they patronized satellite TV viewing centres. Their study again revealed recreational purposes as the most crucial beneficial use of viewing centres. Kombol and Kombol's submission agrees with the findings of this study that a more significant proportion of viewers identified reasons such as happiness and excitement enjoyed (94.6%), relaxation (79.8%), and meeting people (79.7%) as the primary reasons for patronizing viewing centres.

Table 3. Reasons for patronizing FVC

Reason	SA*	A*	U*	D*	SD*	Total
Proximity to home	58.1	23.0	4.1	6.8	6.8	100
Excitement	74.3	20.3	4.1	0	1.4	100
Guaranteed power supply	37.8	32.4	4.1	13.5	12.2	100
Meeting people	48.6	31.1	4.1	9.5	6.8	100
Lack of access to digital TV	32.4	12.2	5.4	18.9	31.1	100
Relaxation	50.1	29.7	14.9	4.1	1.4	100

Note: *(SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; U – Undecided; D – Disagree; SD – Strongly Disagree)

3.1.4 Trip characteristics of viewers

The study captures the characteristics of viewers' trips to the FVCs. Results presented in Table 4 showed that 86.5% walked to the FVCs whereas others used other travel modes. The results suggest the nearness of the FVCs to viewers' homes. The field survey observed that the use of other modes besides walking has limitations because the majority of the FVCs are without parking spaces, which generally discourages viewers from driving or riding their vehicles to FVCs even if they owned one. Thus, the lack of parking spaces was not a hindrance to patronage since about 87% of the patrons walk to the FVC. An additional benefit of this is that walking is a physical activity that contributes to individuals' health and well-being. Besides, walking is also a more environmentally-friendly form of transport since it does not emit greenhouse gases (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2020) that contribute to global warming. Results also indicated that a majority (82.5%) of the viewers walked between 1 to 10 minutes to FVCs from their homes. Those who journeyed to FVCs by other modes, besides walking, travelled for between 1 to 5 minutes (4.1%), 26 to 30 minutes (4.1%), and an equal proportion (1.4%) recorded travel times of 6 to 10 minutes and 21 to 25 minutes, respectively (Table 4). It is instructive to note that high commercial activities characterize the study areas in Agege. The residential (housing) developments are being converted to mixed-use developments. Consequently, we observed that the traffic situation along the major roads within the study areas remains problematic because the streets serve as alternative routes during peak periods. This may have contributed to the longer travel times recorded by viewers who visited the FVCs using their vehicles.

Table 4. Trip characteristics of viewers

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Travel mode	Walk	64	86.5
	Bicycle	3	4.1
	Motorcycle	1	1.4
	Car	2	2.7
	Bus	2	2.7

	No response	2	2.7
	<i>Total</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Travel time by walking	Less than 1 minute	2	2.7
	1-5 minutes	44	59.5
	6-10 minutes	15	20.3
	11-15 minutes	2	2.7
	No response	11	14.9
	<i>Total</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Travel time by other modes	1-5 minutes	3	4.1
	6-10 minutes	1	1.4
	11-15 minutes	0	0
	16-20 minutes	0	0
	21-25 minutes	1	1.4
	26 -30 minutes	2	2.7
	No response	67	90.5
	<i>Total</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>100.0</i>

3.1.5 Alternative leisure locations outside FVC

This study probed the viewers' views on alternative leisure activities. As shown in Figure 2, results revealed that 34% of the respondents would rather be with their families, and 6% would prefer to be with their friends. Also, a marginal but equal proportion (1%) spent their free time in school, church, in a stadium, travelling, playing football and paying a visit to siblings, respectively. It can be inferred from the result that almost half of the viewers do not engage in leisure activities outside visiting FVCs; hence they possess limited leisure opportunities.

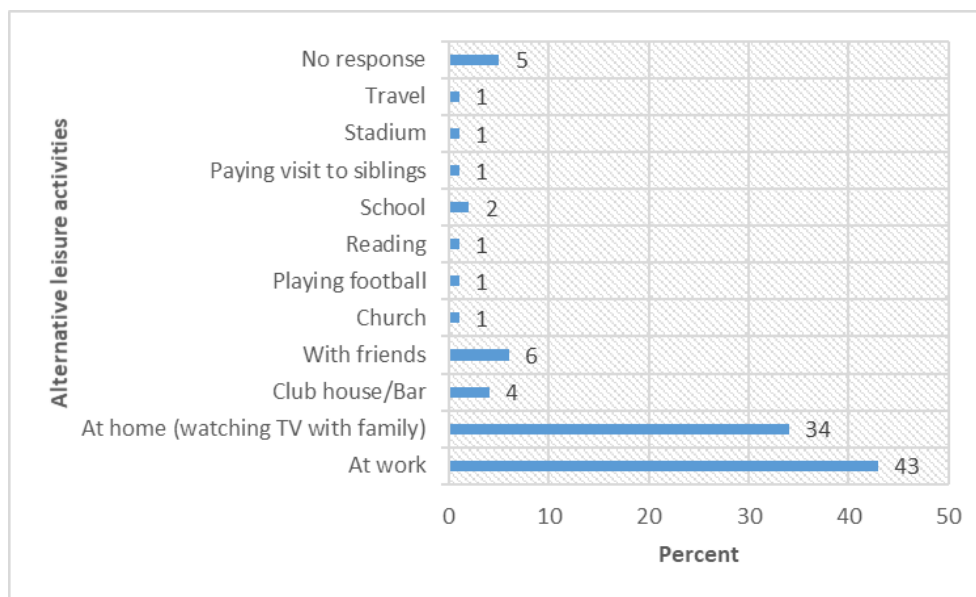


Figure 2: Alternative leisure locations outside FVC

3.1.6 Attraction to FVC

This study investigated what attracts viewers to attend FVCs. Results indicated that the feeling of happiness and excitement was the main factor (38.8%). Other considerable determinants of attraction were meeting people (12.9%), having arguments (11.8%), and being enlightened about football (7.1%). An equal proportion (5.9%) stated that a conducive

environment and a secure environment of the FVC, respectively. Additionally, a marginal proportion (1.2%) were attracted by their passion for football, multi-view options – being able to watch more than one match simultaneously, promptness (keeping to time), occasional access without fee payment, freedom, and fighting, respectively. These results corroborate Onyebueke’s (2015) findings highlighting excitement, discussion, argument, and learning from other viewers as determinants of attraction to FVCs.

3.2 Analysis of Operational Dynamics of Football Viewing Centres

3.2.1 Football viewing centres’ attributes

In this section, data collected from the 10 FVC operators are analysed and presented. Results from Table 5 revealed that all the FVCs were established on a rented allotment, thus indicating they were not planned for *ab initio*. In other words, space utilization depended on the necessity to meet the needs of emerging FVCs. It is thus essential to make provision for uses such as viewing centres in the future design of residential schemes to cater for this emerging land use. FVC operators paid between ₦2,500 (\$7.94) and ₦6,000 (\$19.05) as a monthly rental fee for the rented space. While one of the operators did not disclose the amount paid, another used a space belonging to his family and hence was not required to pay. The mean value of the rental price was ₦4,119 (\$13.08) a month. The rental price is reviewed from time to time without reasonable justification for the incremental increases in cost. According to one of the operators (FVC9), the “increment in rental fee may be attributed to perceived profitability based on crowd turnout at the FVC.”

Table 5. Football viewing centres (Rental price)

FVC	Tenure Status	Rental price (₦)/month	Rental price (\$)/month
1	Lease	*	*
2	Lease	6,000	19.05
3	Lease	*	*
4	Family land	**	**
5	Lease	5,000	15.87
6	Lease	2,500	7.94
7	Lease	3,333	10.58
8	Lease	5,000	15.87
9	Lease	4,000	12.70
10	Lease	3,000	9.5

Note: *Not disclosed **Neither purchase nor leased

Results from the analysis also showed that FVCs have been in existence for over a decade. However, from researchers’ experience as Nigerian citizens, it is noteworthy that FVC were not common in the early 2000. However, few individuals, beer parlours, clubhouses and relaxation centres could afford digital satellite TV at that time. Corroborating this stance, Kombol and Kombol (2015) noted that when satellite television was introduced in the early 1990s, which then was an elitist phenomenon. As the years went by, viewing centres facilitated satellite TV penetration, a phenomenon aided by the introduction of compact satellite dishes that replaced the home dishes (Figures 3a & 3b) that usually occupy larger space after installation. The capacity of the FVC ranged from 50 to 230 (Figure 3c).



(a) Mounted compact dishes and power-generating set owned by a football viewing centre



(b) Match day fixture on display at a football viewing centre.



(c) A football viewing centre during a weekend fixture

Figure 3: FVCs Facilities

The study captured what motivated the establishment of FVCs' which included income (40%), passion for football (30%), unemployment (10%), and an alternative source of income (10%). Overall, it can be deduced that FVC operators were motivated by the need to ensure sustainable livelihoods. The results presented were substantiated by the remarks of some respondents:

FVC6 – ‘Since job opportunities are limited, and despite being a graduate and it is hard to survive, so I decided to access a loan to establish FVC to survive.’

FVC8 – ‘For me it is a business, and that is what I do to survive.’

Furthermore, FVCs operators (90%) opined that the objectives of setting up the centres were met. In support of these results,

FVC7 remarked ‘I thank God I do not rely on people to make ends meet anymore.’

And according to FVC8 –

‘...I earn more income, at times, at the end of the month than those engaged in paid employment.’

However, this result contradicts Kombol and Kombol (2015) who indicated that entertainment and sporting interests were the most significant factors than revenue generation. Similarly, a study by Ahmed et al. (2012) found that income realized from the FVCs business could only complement the primary income of the FVCs operators but not enough to support their households. This deviation is expected based on the higher penetration of satellite technology and accessibility to the viewing centres since these studies were conducted.

3.2.2 FVC challenges and measures deployed by operators

FVCs operators identified various challenges confronting their operations, and the results are presented in this section. Unreliable electricity supply and cost of running power generation equipment were each cited by 22% of respondents as major complaints. 19.5% complained that bad weather affected digital satellite TV signals, and 9.8% claimed late-night fixtures were an issue. Other challenges included scuffles among viewers (7.3%), police raids (4.9%) and low viewers’ patronage (7.3%). Ahmed et al. (2012) confirmed the problem of poor signals as induced by bad weather. This is a significant problem with only the inconsistent electricity supply and cost of running power-generating equipment posing more significant threats. Additionally, scuffles among viewers, as confirmed by three FVC operators, are consistent with the findings of Ahmed et al. (2012). FVC operators commented on this issue:

In the response of one of the FVCs operators (FVC9), fights occur among viewers “times without number.”

In addition, operator FVC5 stated “[When] Police come around to watch football (matches),...viewers [are] not allowed to bring injurious objects to viewing centres.”

To tackle the challenges identified, the FVC operators have deployed strategies for finding solutions. These strategies include visiting electricity service providers to lodge complaints and procuring power-generating equipment as an alternative power source, both accounting for 21.4% each. Further, they have made calls to digital TV service providers and acquired large satellite dishes to tackle bad weather impacts on signals. Additionally, FVC operators pacify viewers’ complaints of poor signals and the lack of alternative power sources; the

employment of unbiased people to collect fees from viewers; pleading with neighbours over disturbances from viewers, and limiting operations to daytime to curtail robbery incidences at night.

3.2.3 FVCs operation, business entry and its sustainability

In the analysis of FVCs operators' perception regarding business entry and its sustainability, over half of FVCs operators believed that relaxation centres with additional services like food, drinks, and free football viewing opportunities, posed the greatest threat to FVCs operations. Other identified threats included free viewing centres provided by the politicians for political gains; betting centres; hotels; police harassment; and vandalism of furniture by hoodlums.

FVC7 identified the key threats his business encountered:

“Beer parlour (relaxation centre) and hotel, especially a hotel sited close to me, ‘HOTEL DI MONEMO’ at Ladipo Street. It is a major challenge.”

Sixty per cent (60%) of the FVC operators would support more operators venturing into the FVC business, whereas 20% thought otherwise. Among those who supported an entry into the FVCs business, a few expressed reservations as they were scared of competition from prospective operators.

FVC3 replied, “Yes, I am in support of new entrants into the business but it depends on proximity to mine.”

FVC10 stated, “Yes, but not in my area. I do not want the competition. The people (viewers) visiting my centre are less than anticipated.”

And for the FVC operators who objected to the entry of new operators,

FVC7 stated, “I do not support more entry into FVC business, we (FVC operators) are enough to cater for the viewers.”

While FVC9 said, “No, not in my area, new FVC operators would impact my income negatively.”

Besides, 70% of the FVCs operators opined that FVCs operations were here to stay, while 30% did not share this sentiment. Of the more significant proportion who were confident about FVCs sustainability:

FVC6 stated, “Yes, FVCs have come to stay at least for us to continue to survive.”

Another operator (FVC5) remarked,

“There are people (viewers) who have a subscription (to satellite TV) but could not stay back to watch matches at their homes. These sets of people would guarantee FVCs sustainability”

3.2.4 FVCs patronage and the fee charged with determinants

An attempt to assess the number of viewers patronizing the FVCs during weekdays and weekends was made. Results indicated that during weekdays, the number of viewers ranged from 25 to 120 per match. The mean value of viewers during the weekdays was $67.86 \approx 68$. On the other hand, the number of viewers during the weekend ranged from 50 to 200 per match, while the mean value of viewers for the same period was $109.29 \approx 109$. The Chi-square test result ($\chi^2 = 14.778$, $p = 0.254$, $\alpha = 0.05$) revealed no statistical difference in the number of viewers during weekdays and weekends.

FVC operators charge viewers ₦100 (\$0.32), although some operators charge as low as ₦80 (\$0.25). In addition, FVC operators confirmed fees charged were determined by the Association of the FVCs operators (40%). 20% of the FVC operators claimed digital TV subscription fees, star match, and reduced fees to attract viewers accounted for 10% each. It can be deduced from the results that fees charged per view were influenced by other factors despite an agreed fee by the FVCs operators.

3.3 Hypothesis Testing

H₀: Viewers' reason for patronizing FVC is not significantly influenced by their income level

Further investigation was conducted to establish whether or not the respondents' socio-economic status (income level) significantly influenced their reasons for patronizing FVC in the study area. Due to the nature of the generated data, the study drew on Pearson Chi-Square and Fisher's Exact Test to determine which reasons for patronizing FVC were majorly influenced by the respondents' income level (Table 6).

Table 6 shows similar results for both the Pearson Chi-Square Test and Fisher's Exact Test. The results revealed that only two (2) out of the six (6) examined reasons were significantly influenced by income level. An analysis of the findings showed that the proportion of respondents who earn below ₦18,500 (\$58.73) per month (31.1%) visit FVCs more than other respondents with different levels of income. At the same time, it also revealed that income level significantly influenced the majority (over 80%) of respondents in making the proximity of FVC to home a significant determinant for patronizing FVC. This result was statistically significant based on the Pearson Chi-Square ($p=0.04$) and Fisher's Exact ($p=0.03$) test results.

Table 6: The Chi-Square and Fisher's Exact Test

Summary of the Chi-Square and Fisher's Exact Test of the influence of respondents' income level on the reason for patronizing FVC										
Reasons for patronizing FVC		Income Level					Pearson Chi-Square		Fisher's Exact	
Variable Measures		Below ₦18,500	₦18,500- ₦ 25,000	₦25,001- ₦ 50,000	Above ₦50,000	Total	Value	Sig.	Value	Sig.
Proximity to home	SA/A	31.1	14.7	21.7	13.5	81.0	17.21	0.04	15.48	0.03
	D/SD	1.4	6.7	4.1	6.8	19.0				
Excitement	SA/A	32.5	16.1	25.7	20.3	94.6	8.62	0.14	7.60	0.18
	D/SD	0	5.4	0	0	5.4				
Guaranteed power supply	SA/A	24.3	13.3	16.3	16.3	70.2	7.19	0.64	7.31	0.62
	D/SD	8.1	8.1	9.5	4.1	29.8				
Meeting people	SA/A	24.3	16.2	25.7	13.5	79.7	11.99	0.21	11.14	0.20
	D/SD	8.2	5.4	0	6.8	20.4				
Lack of access to digital TV	SA/A	23.0	5.3	9.5	6.8	44.6	20.50	0.01	19.74	0.01
	D/SD	9.5	16.2	16.2	13.5	55.4				
Relaxation	SA/A	29.8	6.7	23.0	20.3	79.8	11.76	0.18	11.44	0.12
	D/SD	2.7	14.8	2.7	0	20.2				

Note: SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; D – Disagree; SD – Strongly Disagree

Similarly, the proportion of respondents who earn less than ₦18,500 (\$58.73) per month was observed to lack access to digital TV compared with their other counterparts. In contrast, the majority (55.4%), regardless of their income level per month, believed the lack of digital TV was not a reason to patronize FVC. However, the results of both the Pearson Chi-Square ($p=0.01$) and Fisher's Exact ($p=0.01$) test revealed that the respondents' income status significantly influenced the lack of access to digital TV as a reason for patronizing FVC. Hence, the respondents' lack of access to digital TV was undoubtedly affected by their level of income.

The other four (4) reasons given for patronizing FVC, including happiness and excitement, guaranteed power supply, meeting people, and relaxation, had significance levels greater than the 0.05 alpha level for both Pearson Chi-Square and Fisher's Exact Tests results, indicating that respondents' level of income did not influence these four factors as reasons for patronizing FVC.

4. Discussion

The theory of happiness has provided a lens for explaining and addressing the key hypothesis of this study through a conceptualisation of FVCs based on activities and benefits, which are reflected through impacts on microeconomics, health and well-being, and social networks. This research's attention has been drawn to the various elements contributing to the expansion and sustenance of FVCs, which include: the structure and composition of the viewers and the operators and operations. Currently, there is no legal, regulatory policy and framework guiding the establishment and operation of FVCs, which could help foster the happiness derived by viewers. What is evident at the moment is that the self-regulatory approach that appears acceptable to the viewers and the operators and does not hinder the

happiness and benefits they both derive. This view is supported by the increasing number, acceptability and patronage of FVCs.

The FVCs have become a vibrant medium for social networking, fostering microeconomic vitality, as well as health and well-being, which brings happiness to both viewers and operators of FVCs, which justifies the need to introduce some elements of planning and standards to FVCs. This would guarantee uninterrupted happiness and safety for the viewers, operators and the broader public. This assertion was validated by the empirical findings that the FVCs can be enhanced by addressing their challenges, such as congestion, complaints from neighbours, and police raids. The position that FVCs occupy as contributors to the health and well-being, social networking and microeconomic vitality of the local communities is justified by its viability, patronage and acceptability as manifested locally in Agege, Lagos megacity. In addition, over 94% of the viewers who responded to the questionnaires claimed they felt excitement attending the FVCs, pointing to the high level of happiness in the cycle of the activities and benefits at all levels. In other words, excitement derived and meeting people as a form of social networking (with over 79%) could be improved on or maintained at these minimum levels, especially as people's ways of living are entering a new normal during the COVID-pandemic.

The theory of happiness would consider the internal and external factors that influence the happiness of viewers. This, in particular, is during the era of a new normal, considering external factors such as social distancing and the use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) that impact on FVCs and viewers. Since the FVCs are not planned *ab initio*, factoring these new realities into the operations of the FVCs may impact the levels of happiness. As happiness levels are impacted either positively or negatively, this will, directly and indirectly, influence the three conceptual factors – microeconomic vitality, social network, health and well-being – in Agege, Lagos megacity.

The focus of urban researchers should shift from the regimented traditional recreation facilities alone to consider planning and optimizing the potential of FVCs to boost the related activities and benefits associated with it. As noted, the FVCs have multiple benefits. Thus, we draw from the theory of happiness to examine its significance to the overall well-being of society. This research used multiple methods to capture the sense of happiness of the viewers and promote the advancement of knowledge in exploring the theory of happiness and FVCs in Agege, Lagos megacity.

In general, FVCs influence the happiness, engagement and empowerment, and integration of the urban populace in the Agege, Lagos megacity; thus, they are significant contributors to the health and well-being, social networking, and microeconomic vitality of the city. This remarkable contribution makes FVCs a critical resource in a society with a huge poverty index. It presents urban planners, managers and policymakers with a challenge to develop a framework to enhance their operational performance and ensure safety and continuous increase in the levels of happiness they generate.

5. Conclusion

This research examined FVCs in an African megacity with a focus on viewers' characteristics and operational dynamics. The analysis of viewers' characteristics showed that more males patronize the FVCs, most of whom were below 35 years old. Despite access to digital TV by about 61% of the viewers, a majority still patronize the FVCs, citing happiness and excitement as primary reason. In other words, FVCs are central to the happiness of the viewers. The FVCs proximity to homes also influences viewers' trip characteristics, with about 87% walking to the FVCs. Further, viewers' opinions on alternative leisure activities indicated they have limited leisure opportunities outside FVCs. The research also reflects the operational dynamics of FVCs. Findings reveal that most FVCs operators rented the space used for FVC, with the mean rental price at ₦4,119 (\$13.08) monthly. Operators, from the results, became involved primarily because of the income generation potential of the FVCs. Poor electricity supply and the cost of running power-generating equipment were considered the main challenges confronting the operators. The threats to the sustainability of FVCs include relaxation centres offering additional services such as food, and drinks as well as free viewing opportunities; free viewing centres established by politicians for political gains, betting centres, hotels, police harassment and vandalism by hoodlums.

The test of the hypothesis also revealed that the income status of viewers significantly influenced factors such as lack of access to digital TV and proximity of FVC to home as a reason for patronizing FVC. However, the viewers' income did not influence by a factor of happiness and excitement, guaranteed power supply, meeting people, and relaxation.

Given the study findings, the following recommendations are put forward.

- i. There is a need for the integration of FVCs as a formal part of recreational facilities operating in urban centres that must be catered to in the development plans devised by planners and policymakers.
- ii. To ensure a pragmatic approach in the planning of FVCs, it is necessary to consider the factors of social networking, health and well-being, and microeconomic vitality that is crucial to achieving happiness.
- iii. There is an urgent need to put in place a regulatory policy and framework that would guide the establishment and operation of FVCs aimed at fostering the happiness derived by viewers.
- iv. The government should also see to providing enabling environment in which FVCs can thrive. Therefore, improvements in electricity supply and security architecture are advocated. This is essential considering the key roles FVCs play in contributing to the viewer's well-being as well as FVCs operators who are gainfully engaged, and to a great extent, employ others.

This study has undoubtedly contributed to the literature on football fandom and FVC management despite the obvious limitations, which are traceable to some underlying factors. First, is the number of viewers selected for questionnaire administration, which may warrant querying the application of more rigorous inferential statistics. Second, is the use of the non-probability sampling technique in the sample size selection. The authors were compelled to adopt the convenience sampling technique to select the sample size because there are no existing records of the viewers that would allow for a probability sampling technique. Third is the selection of three neighbourhoods as study locations in Agege LGA that makes inference and generalisation from these study findings to the whole Lagos megacity require some level of caution. Future research should consider the selection of larger samples, and extend the study to other LGAs making up Lagos megacity to deal with these methodological issues.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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