A paradigm shift in the provision of recreation in the North West Province of South Africa

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Abstract

Recreation professionals in the 21st century are faced with one of the most challenging tasks, to be innovative in the provision of recreation services to communities. The modern day requires recreation professionals to anticipate and effect changes rather than to wait and react to change as a result of the demand for recreation services from the communities. The purpose of this study was to investigate the possibility of utilising new ways of delivering recreation services to communities by local governments in the North West Province in South Africa. A mixed-methods research design using a questionnaire and focus groups was used on 20 targeted personnel who are responsible for managing recreation at local government level in the Province. Frequencies and phi coefficients were calculated for the quantitative data, while for qualitative data patterns were established thematically. The results show that 75% of the local governments are located in rural settings whilst 25% are found in urban areas with limited resources. Most respondents (70%) indicated that they do not provide programmes for human services that go beyond traditional recreation activities. A large proportion (65%) of local governments indicated that they do not use staff resources to coach citizens until they can provide their own leadership. About 35% of local governments indicated that they do not justify budgets in terms of social need and programme results. The results indicate that local governments do not adapt to new ways of responding to community needs with regard to recreation. The study recommends that if a new approach to recreation is accepted (emerging paradigm) not only can communities help to implement programmes that should satisfy their needs, but service providers will be able to afford and incorporate emerging activities. Local governments should be at the forefront in designing and implementing effective recreation programmes in consultation with communities, and also liaising with the relevant departments in provincial government.

Keywords: Recreation services, recreation facilities, municipalities, recreation policies, paradigm shift

Introduction

Local government recreation services are on the threshold of exciting, yet daunting times when it comes to the way services are provided and business is conducted (Davidson, 2007; Edginton, Dieser, Lankford & Kowalski: 2018). According to Edginton *et al.* (2018), the leisure market is constantly evolving, with people seeking new ways of experiencing leisure. Today government resources are scarce and it is expected that government do more with less, yet communities want existing levels of service maintained (Meeras, 2010). Supporting what the community wants, determining what fits the vision of the city and the department, and looking at what is manageable with existing resources and is sustainable in the long-term are critical elements that need to be considered and examined (Davidson, 2007; Edginton *et. al.*, 2018).

Because of shrinking financial resources, public demand for maintaining or increasing service levels, and a drive to ensure the provision of services efficiently and effectively, there is a need to explore a way of operating differently (Davidson, 2007; Edginton *et. al.*, 2018). Determining how community recreation services can be delivered by the local governments in North West Province is critical. The two main models for recreation service delivery include resource-based recreation and community-based recreation (Meyer, 2001). Resource-based recreation mainly focuses on the provision, maintenance and development of facilities that are necessary for recreation activities.

Community-based recreation involves specially trained people who are used to deliver recreation services to local communities by means of carefully planned development and the implementation of holistic and varied recreation programmes (Meyer, 2001). In general, resource-based recreation is inadequate to satisfy the ever changing needs of communities, and therefore the trend is towards community-based recreation. The 21st century challenges recreation service providers to develop recreation programmes that accurately meet individual needs, tastes, values and behaviour of local communities (Edginton *et al.*, 2018). According to Hidlebaugh's view as quoted by Roger (2000), the role of the recreation professionals has been primarily to create and distribute recreation services at community level (Kozechian, Heidary, Saiah & Heidary, 2012).

Roger (2000), Godbey (2009) and Meeras (2010) indicated that although there are many significant successes in the recreation field, major challenges remain. They found that problems in recreation exist regardless of location, size or the levels responsible for recreation. This is further supported by Edginton *et. al.* (2018) who acknowledge that other factors such age, children, economic status, education, ethnicity, family, gender, health and physical status, life partners, location, political systems, and religion manifest themselves as constraints and/or barriers to participation, limiting access to programmes as well as information. Grey, as quoted by Edginton, Hudson, Dieser and Edginton *(*2004) developed a model for the changing role sought by public leisure service organisations. Table 1 indicates the differences between the traditional and emerging paradigm.

Table 1: A Comparison of the Traditional and Emerging Paradigm

Traditional Paradigm	Emerging/Upcoming paradigm
*Provides equal services to all the citizens	*Provides services based on social and economic need
*Provides programmes consisting of a series of activities selected from a restricted list of recreation pursuits	*Provides programmes of human service that may go far beyond traditional recreation activities
*Acts as a direct services provider	* Acts as a community organiser and catalyst in matching community resources to citizen need
*Offers programmes in department facilities	* Offers programmes anywhere in the community.
*Provides staff leadership in activities	*Uses staff resources to coach citizens until they can provide their own leadership
*Funds basic services from tax sources	*Funds service from a variety of sources, including fee-for service, contract arrangements, barter, agency partnerships and cooperation with the private sector, as well as tax resources.
*Plans by updating the past	*Plans by anticipating a preferred future. Plans with potential clients, community informants, other agencies, political representatives
*Plans programmes with the staff	* Evaluates services in terms of human consequences *Organises services around client groups in response to needs felt by participants and careful community-wide needs analysis figures, and corporations as well as staff
*Encourages participation by publicity. *Evaluates results primarily in terms of attendance	*Develops a marketing approach to operations
*Motivates the staff to work for the people	*Motivates the staff to work with the people
*Justifies budgets in terms of historical precedent	*Justifies budgets in terms of social needs and programme results
*Requires financial accountability	*Requires financial and programme accountability
* Achieves the ultimate goals of a fine recreation programme.	*Achieves the ultimate goal of human development and Community organisation

Source: Edginton *et al*., 2004

Traditional paradigm

The information on the left side of Table 1 presents the traditional approach. The emphasis is on providing programmes that consist of activities and on acting as a direct service provider. The direct approach involves a department's commitment to provide leadership, facilities and equipment for participants (Meyer, 1995). According to Meyer (1995), the facility-oriented concept views recreation service professionals to be primarily concerned with the following activities: surveillance of the grounds or operation of a recreation centre, community centre or playground; developing a master plan for the facility; control of equipment; assuring leadership; a community that complies with rules; meeting safety standards and proper use of facilities; coordination and maintenance activities of facilities; planning and execution of a

programme of activity; face-to-face leadership roles; and packaged programmes, planned and implemented while individuals are encouraged to accept.

Although this approach includes advantages like the fact that described behavioural outcomes can be measured, there is efficient utilisation of resources and a degree of accountability, this approach can lead to a situation where people become distrustful of agencies and lack confidence in their ability to provide direction and meaning in life (Meyer, 1995). In short, individual recreation needs are not met by this approach.

The emerging paradigm

In interpreting the emerging paradigm, Humphrey (1986) and Bannon (2017) mention that leisure professionals must be architects of change rather than being reactors to change. Bannon (1990) and Meeras (2010) also support the notion that professionals must know how to asses and identify new trends. Lieberman, Arndt and Daggett (2007) indicated a lack of leadership as an issue in the field of recreation whereby recreation professionals need to continue providing the leadership opportunities that communities deserve. The challenge for leisure professionals is that they must anticipate and direct changes rather than wait and be forced to react to change (Bannon, 2017; Gregory, Hardiman, Yarmolinskaya and Rinne, 2013; Walsh & Wicks, 2014). Godbey (1989) advises leisure professionals to be proactive rather than reactive and suggests that the place for action is at the local level. Recreation professionals are creative enough to develop a fresh, innovative approach to professionalism and should completely reject the traditional, legislative concept (Roger, 2000). From the emerging paradigm, it is clear that leisure professionals should demonstrate the ability to lead and involve communities in their total human development through participation in planned recreation programmes.

The following are key skills for the recreation professional, as suggested by Roger (2000):

(i)They conduct, encourage, and use recreation-related research. They take the time to read research. They cooperate with formal research projects. They consistently carry out evaluative research on the implementation of their own programmes.

(ii)They take advantage of continuing educational opportunities. They enrol for course work in colleges and universities even after completing formal studies. They attend conferences and workshops, and they read professional books and journals.

(iii)*They take pride in their chosen career and encourage others in the career to develop a spirit of dedication and respect for the work that they do.* They join and actively support local, provincial, and national professionals, and they contribute to the continual development and improvement of the field.

(iv)They are interested in carrying out a task well for the sake of personal and agency pride in providing quality service. Professionals know what they are doing and they are good at it. They are willing to admit mistakes and correct them and to improve performance and effort. They are as technically sound and as behaviourally knowledgeable as possible.

(v)Professional judgement distinguishes the behaviour of the professional. A professional has the ability and the attitude to handle unfamiliar challenges and problems. The emerging paradigm emphasises programmes that meet social and economic needs rather than programmes that are generated from a list of leisure activities (Edginton *et al.,* 2004; Godbey *et al.*, 1989).

Based on the aboveskills, it is clear that recreation provision requires professionals with such attributes to develop vibrant programmes within communities. The status and possible need regarding a paradigm shift towards the provision of recreation services by local governments in the North West Province has not been researched. The purpose of this study was to investigate the status and possibility of delivering recreation services in new ways (new paradigm) to the communities in the North West Province.

Methodology and design

Research design

A mixed-methods design utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches was used to collect data from 20 local governments within North West Province, South Africa. A mixed methods design is that in which a researcher combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g. use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the purposes of deepening understanding and corroborating research findings (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). De Vos (2005) refers to a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods used in a single study as effective in providing valuable information. Research using this method usually involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced about a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Participants

The target participants were recruited from the four districts, i.e. Dr Kenneth Kaunda, Dr Ruth Mompati, Dr Modiri Molema, and Bojanala districts, which consist of 20 local governments based on the geopolitical demarcation of the North West Province, South Africa. The participants in these areas were personnel responsible for managing recreation programmes at local government levels in the province. Given the nature of this study (quantitative and qualitative methods), the participants comprised two groups. Group one consisted of 20 personnel from local governments who completed the questionnaire. Group two was identified during collection of quantitative data to form focus groups that consisted of five people.

Measuring instruments

Data were collected using a questionnaire adapted from Scholtz and Meyer (1990) and focus group discussion session. The questionnaire requested participants to provide information on perceived benefits and barriers of leisure service delivery. Data collection was based on a five-point Likert scale, reflecting the level of participants' agreement or otherwise with the questionnaire items. For data analysis, numeric codes in the form of frequencies as well as phi coefficients to examine differences in the participants' responses were used.

Each focus group session which consisted of five people, took place at a central location, convenient for subjects to be transported to and from the North-West University. An interview guide was developed using themes or theories identified during quantitative data collection. The format included open-ended questions with appropriate probes. Questions were designed to examine the perceived challenges of recreation service delivery in the various local governments. Questions based on individual experience were aimed at exploring the recreation managers' knowledge and skills in promoting the usage of recreation facilities in their areas of jurisdiction.

Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness of the data collection process, all responses were tape recorded. In addition, notes were taken and compared with the recordings after being transcribed. Trained moderators and observers were present during each of the focus group meetings for accurate and consistent documentation of data. The researcher was present but not directly involved in the aforementioned processes, to ensure conformability and obviate researcher bias, motivation or interest. An audit trail was conducted after data collection in which notes taken by moderators and observers were compared for accuracy and subsequently verified by the participants.

The questionnaire and focus group interview guide were pre-tested on pilot groups of five and three personnel, respectively, who were responsible for recreation service delivery in the local governments, but were not part of the actual study. Additionally, three academic recreation specialists who had proven practical experience in the industry also validated the instruments.

Ethical considerations

To ensure appropriate ethical procedures, the recreation managers were assured that their responses would be confidential and used for research purposes only. Before data collection, the recreation managers were informed about the aims and procedures of the study, and subsequently signed an informed consent form. In order to ensure that the participant's responses were anonymous and confidential, they were given pseudonyms, which were alphabetically listed and subsequently used in the results and discussion sections (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003; Rubin & Babbie, 2005; Babbie, 2009). North-West University, Potchefstroom granted ethical clearance (Ethic no: NWU-00023-11-S1) for the study.

Data analysis

Two forms of analyses based on the design of the study were followed: Firstly, frequencies, percentages and phi-coefficients were used to analyse the quantitative data. The phi coefficients (phi=01 (Small); phi=0.3 (Medium); phi=0.5 (large)) were calculated to determine the practical significant differences in the measured variables. Secondly, qualitative data were first analysed by thoroughly reading through the transcripts and listening to the audio recordings, while extracting any general themes and patterns that emerge. The data were systematically coded, sorted and organised into appropriate themes and categories. Comparisons were drawn between local governments (i.e., Dr Kenneth Kaunda, Dr Ruth Mompati, Dr Modiri Molema, and Bojanala districts). Finally, the researcher (moderator and observer) discussed the results and consensus on the outcome of the final analysis was reached.

Results, analysis and discussion

The results deal with important aspects of recreation services as well as the management thereof. Grey (in Edginton *et al.,* 2004) developed methods and strategies for the changing role sought by public leisure service organisations. These methods and strategies provide the understanding between the traditional and the emerging paradigms. For the purpose of the results regarding provision of recreation services, the methods and strategies have been divided into programmes, human resources, finance and policy aspects so that the respondents from local governments could provide appropriate and focussed information about the provision of recreation services.

As indicated in Table 2, a total of 70% of local governments do not provide programmes for human services beyond traditional recreation activities such as fun walks, bird watching and reading. Additionally, 10% indicated they provide it slightly and 15% moderately. In rural areas 66.7% indicated no such provision and 20% only a moderate provision. In urban areas 80% indicated no such provision and 20% a slight provision.

It is clear that a large majority of municipalities in total and specifically in rural and urban areas have not progressed from the provision of traditional recreation activities. This is consistent with the position regarding the offering of programmes anywhere in communities. Municipalities appear to be stuck in a traditional mode regarding recreation programmes regardless of their failure to meet current needs and demands of their communities. In this regard, it is critical to bear in mind current trends regarding local recreation opportunities as highlighted by Meeras (2010), "Over the years it was also seen that there is a growing demand for recreation and recreational facilities close to home. When there is decline in incomes then people like to spend their time near home but would like to have some opportunities for different activities and just to spend their free time." This finding strongly supports the need for municipalities to move away from the traditional approach towards the emerging paradigm, especially as programmes constitute the essence of recreation provision.

In relation to offering programmes anywhere in the community, 60% indicated that they do not provide such programmes, 20% indicated they provide them slightly and 15% moderately. In rural areas 60% indicated that they did not offer programmes anywhere in the community and 20% indicated slight provision. In urban areas 60% indicated no such provision of programmes, whereas 20% indicated slight provision and 20% moderate provision.

The data in this variable also indicates a negative picture regarding the sites of recreation provision at local level. Sixty percent in total and also across rural and urban areas do not provide recreation programmes anywhere in communities. This is evidence of the lack of understanding of what recreation service is about and how it can be offered to address common but critical socio-economic and health and wellness related benefits. It is the view of the researchers that officials in Local Governments responsible for the provision and management of recreation services most probably do not know the importance of or how to conduct community consultations and thus do not know the fundamental needs of the communities they are supposed to serve. About 75% indicated that they do not develop a marketing approach to operations, whereas 10% indicated that they do so slightly and 15% moderately. In rural areas 80% indicated no such development and 13.3% moderate development. In urban areas 60% indicated no such development, 20% slight development and 20% moderate development of a marketing approach in their operations.

The issue of marketing recreation services is non-existent in three quarters of the sample. This is not surprising as these municipalities do not have vibrant and effective programmes in place, hence they have nothing to market. This situation is rather unfortunate, because at local level marketing costs little, since it can be effectively done by word-of-mouth and social media. Apart from keeping locals informed, these modes could also keep locals interested and proactively involved in their own programmes. By promoting community involvement, the local municipalities could generate community pride, ownership, a sense of belonging and interest in protecting community assets.

In relation to running recreation awareness programmes such as festivals, fairs, community celebrations, parades, leisure-education programmes, cultural events and community empowerment 80% indicated no such awareness, 10% indicated slight awareness and 10% indicated moderate awareness. In rural areas 73.3% indicated no awareness, 13.3% slight

awareness and 13.3% moderate awareness. In urban areas 100% indicated no such awareness. In this variable also, 80% of the sample do not provide any awareness initiatives regarding recreation programmes. For communities to understand the value and benefits of participating in recreation programmes, awareness campaigns and initiatives could play a vital role. It can be expected that where community members are aware of the benefits of participation in recreation activities that there is the potential for a greater number of them to be actively involved in them. Perhaps this does not take place because there either are no recreation professionals employed at local level, or those employed are not trained adequately, especially regarding the emerging paradigm and its potential to address modern day needs of individuals and communities.

A total of 90% indicated that they do need more training in the field of programming. In rural areas 86.7% and in urban areas 100% indicated a large need. About 90% indicated that they need more training in recreation management, with 86.7% from rural areas and 100% in urban areas indicating a large need. A large proportion indicated a dire need for training in recreation programming, as well as in recreation management. This finding is crucial as it supports the results of the previous four variables. If there are no trained officials in recreation programming and/or recreation management, it is no surprise that there is a lack of programmes, awareness, marketing and a management approach towards recreation that meets current community needs. What is vital to consider also is that recreation programmes form the lifeblood of leisure provision and management by municipalities. They serve to meet multiple social ends, particularly in forging community identity and social cohesion (Edginton & Jalloh, 2014).

Though no practically significant (phi=0.1) relationship was found between the area and the provision of recreation programmes, these factors nevertheless remain critical to recreation service delivery. Kozechian *et al.* (2012) stated that recreation programmes provide benefits of participation thereby communities develop enjoyment and less stress. This is supported by the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (2010) in Canada who found that participation in recreation activities has numerous benefits such as improving personal health, which is a key determinant of health status. Therefore, providing vibrant recreation programmes as described in the emerging paradigm is important for North West communities also.

Table 2: Methods and strategies for programme services

METHODS AND STRATEGIES	TOTAL (N=20)					RURAL (N=15)					URBAN (N=5)					
Collective statements regarding the provision of recreation services in their community:	None %	Slightly %	Moderate %	Large %	Missing data %	None %	Slightly %	Moderate %	Large %	Missing data %	None %	Slightly %	Moderate %	Large %	Missing data %	PHI Coefficient*
We provide programmes for human service that may go far beyond traditional recreation activities	70	10	15	0	5	66.7	6.7	20	0	6.7	80	20	0	0	0	0.298

We offer programmes anywhere in the community	60	20	15	0	5	60	20	13.3	0	6.7	60	20	20	0	0	0.069
We develop a marketing approach to operations	75	10	15	0	0	80	6.7	13.3	0	0	60	20	20	0	0	0.221
We run recreation awareness programmes	80	10	10	0	0	73.3	13.3	13.3	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0.289
We need more training in the field of programming	0	5	5	90	0	0	6.7	6.7	86.7	0	0	0	0	100	0	0.192
We need more training in recreation management	0	5	5	90	0	0	6.7	6.7	86.7	0	0	0	0	100	0	0.192

*phi coefficient=0.1 (small); phi coefficient=0.3 (medium); phi coefficient=0.5 (large)

Table 3, shows that 65% of the local governments do not use staff resources to coach citizens until they can provide their own leadership, whereas 20% indicated they do so slightly and 15% moderately. In rural areas 66.7% indicated that they do not use staff resources whilst 20% indicated that they do so slightly. In urban areas also 60% indicated that they do not use staff resources to empower citizens whilst 20% indicated that they do so slightly and 20% moderately.

In this variable, the majority of the sample both in rural and urban areas do not use staff resources to coach citizens until they can provide their own leadership. It is apparent that municipalities do not understand their role of being a key service delivery arm of government. The findings in this variable support those in Table two in that there is a lack of management in the delivery of recreation services at local government level. The emerging paradigm emphasises the need to continue providing leadership in the provision of recreation services. The lack of leadership as indicated by (Lieberman, Arndt and Daggett, 2007) has become an issue in the field of recreation and this should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

About 55% in total indicated that they do not evaluate services in terms of human consequences, 20% do so slightly and 20% moderately. In rural areas 66.7% indicated that they do not do so, whilst in urban areas 40% indicated that they do evaluate services in terms of human consequences slightly.

The data in this variable also gives a negative picture of evaluating services in terms of human consequences for recreation provision at local level. The lack of understanding of total human development by recreation officials, challenges municipalities to move away from the mindset

of the traditional approach to make an important shift towards adapting to the emerging paradigm. This statement is supported by Edginton *et al.* (2018) in emphasizing human resources empowerment to develop recreation programmes that accurately meet individual needs, tastes, values and behaviour of local communities. There is a significant relationship (phi=0.539) between the area and the need to evaluate services in terms of human consequences.

Thirty-five percent indicated that they do not motivate staff to work with the people, whereas 20% indicated slight motivation and 35% moderate motivation. In rural areas 40% indicated that they do not do so, and 40% indicated that they do so moderately. In urban areas 20% indicated that they do not motivate staff to work with the people and 40% indicated that they do so largely.

The data from this variable paints a negative picture in that municipalities are supposed to work with people as demonstrated by the emerging paradigm. The emerging paradigm requires that municipalities should firstly create a conducive environment for employees or staff to reach their potential. Once this is met, the employees or staff will also be motivated to involve communities in the development of recreation programmes. This is supported by Meyer's (2001) explanation of community based recreation model where communities are the ultimate beneficiary. The data provides a significant relationship (phi=0.586) between the area and the need to motivate staff to work with the people. Local Governments must begin to adopt the principles of the emerging paradigm as it is not just about recreation provision, but a key learning from several disciplines that nothing works in communities if it is done for them, rather than with them. Thus it leaves no alternative but for them to motivate their staff to plan and work with the community in respect of leisure provision and community development.

Fifty-five percent indicated that they do not achieve the ultimate goal of human development and community organization whilst 30% do so slightly. In rural areas 66.7% also indicated that they do not achieve the ultimate goal. Of those in urban areas, 40% do so slightly and 40% moderately. It is clear from the sample that municipalities do not understand the value of the emerging paradigm in relation to prioritising leisure professionals as important stakeholders' to guide and involve communities in developing and uplifting their lives through recreation. This sentiment is also supported by Roger's model (2000) where he stated the importance of continuous educational opportunities and career development in the field of recreation. Human resources are critical assets in the 21st century to deliver recreation services (Edginton *et al.*, 2018). The data shows a significant relationship (phi=0.474) between the area and the ultimate goal of human development and community organization.

About 75% indicated that they do not make use of volunteers for service delivery whilst 15% indicated that they do so slightly and 10% moderately. In rural areas 66.7% and in urban areas 80% indicated that they also do not use volunteers. The strategy of utilising volunteers is non-existent in three quarters of the sample. This is not surprising as these municipalities do not have recreation programmes in place. In the absence of human resources at municipal level, volunteers can be used to run recreation programmes. This situation is also unfortunate, because at local level many people are unemployed and are available to volunteer in order to participate in recreation in their own areas. In addition, volunteers bring along several innovative ideas based on their own experiences and intimate knowledge of their communities. There is thus no acceptable justification for the non-use of volunteers at Local Governments, especially where human and financial resources are scarce.

Seventy-five percent do not expose their staff to specific in-service training programmes whilst 10% do so slightly and 15% moderately. In rural areas 73.3% indicated that they do not expose their staff to specific in-service programmes whilst in urban areas 80% indicated that they do

not do so. The data in this variable also gives a negative picture as far as the exposure of staff to specific in-service training programs at local level. This is also evidence of the lack of understanding of what role human resources can play in the field of recreation services. It is also closely related to the foregoing finding that staff is not motivated to work with locals, they do not understand their roles and responsibilities regarding recreation services, and they are not aware of the emerging paradigm in recreation services provision. In-service training for employees or staff is critical, more so since it is evident that in these municipalities, it will give employees and staff the opportunity to learn and to be up to date with the current practises in recreation services. This statement is also supported by Roger's (2000) model for recreation professionals.

Though no practically significant (phi=0.1) relationship was found between the area and whether there is provision of human resources for recreation services, these factors remain critical to recreation service delivery. It is inconceivable that for the professional delivery of leisure services, strategic planning is not required or undertaken. A visible relationship (phi=0.3) was found between methods and strategies regarding human resources for recreation services by local governments. Furthermore, a significant relationship (phi=0.5) was also found between area and methods and strategies regarding human resources for recreation services by local governments as indicated by Grey (in Edginton *et al.*, 2004) where local governments do not use strategies for recreation services. Edginton, Hudson and Lankford (2008) indicate that the behavioural aspect of leadership in human resources entails fostering a positive work environment, developing a participative management style, ensuring employee involvement in shaping organisational goals and directions, and creating a shared vision through the use of teamwork. This assertion supports Roger's model (2000) wherein leisure professionals must meet specific skill requirements to plan recreation services. Trained leisure professionals or human resources are an integral part of the recreation and leisure industry and this is important in this field for the 21st century.

Table 3: Methods and strategies for human resources

METHODS AND STRATEGIES	TOTAL (N=20)					RURAL (N=15)					URBAN (N=5)					
Collective statements regarding the provision of recreation services in their community:	None %	Slightly %	Moderate %	Large %	Missing data %	None %	Slightly %	Moderate %	Large %	Missing data %	None %	Slightly %	Moderate %	Large %	Missing data %	PHI Coefficient*
We use staff resources to coach citizens until they can provide their own leadership	65	20	15	0	0	66.7	20	13.3	0	0	60	20	20	0	0	0.083
We evaluate services in terms of human consequences	55	20	20	5	0	66.7	13.3	20	0	0	20	40	20	20	0	0.539

We motivate staff to work with the people	35	20	35	10	0	40	20	40	0	0	20	20	20	40	0	0.586
We achieve the ultimate goal of human development and community organisation	55	30	15	0	0	66.7	26.7	6.7	0	0	20	40	40	0	0	0.474
We make use of volunteers for service delivery	70	15	10	5	0	66.7	20	6.7	6.7	0	80	0	20	0	0	0.324
We expose our staff to specific in-service training programs	75	10	15	0	0	73.3	13.3	13.3	0	0	80	0	20	0	0	0.200

*phi coefficient=0.1 (small); phi coefficient=0.3 (medium); phi coefficient=0.5 (large)

Table 4 indicates that 30% of local governments do not fund services from a variety of sources, 40% indicated they do so slightly and 25% moderately. In rural areas 26.7% indicated they do not do so, 40% indicated that they do so slightly and 33.3% moderately. In urban areas 40% indicated they do not fund services from a variety of sources whilst 40% indicated that they do so slightly and 20% largely.

In this sample, the data indicates a negative picture in relation to funding services from a variety of sources. If municipalities were serious about the delivery of recreation, the funding to augment their shortage of financial resources can be derived from a variety of sources. Communities pay levies and rates for basic services and as a result part of such funding can be utilised to address recreation services. There is a significant relationship (phi=0.494) between the area and its ability to fund services from a variety of sources.

About 35% of local governments indicated that they do not justify budgets in terms of social need and programme results, whereas 20% indicated they do so slightly and 30% moderately. In rural areas 40% indicated they do not do so whilst 26.7% indicated that they do so slightly and 33.3% moderately. In urban areas 20% indicated that they do not justify budgets in terms of social need whilst 20% indicated that they do so moderately and 60% do so on a large scale.

Although in this variable, the participants indicated a negative picture towards justifying budgets in terms of social need and programme results, in urban areas it is pleasing to note the justification whilst these municipalities do not actually solicit adequate funding as indicated in the first variable. There is a significant relationship (phi=0.741) between the area and justifying budgets according to social needs and programme results.

Twenty percent of local governments indicated that they do not require financial and programme accountability, whereas 30% indicated they do slightly and 30% largely. In rural areas 20% indicated that they do not do so whilst 40% indicated slightly. In urban areas 20%

indicated that they do not require financial and programme accountability whilst 60% indicated that they do so to a large extent.

Again in this variable, the participants indicated a negative picture. However, in urban areas, the indication is that municipalities are taking the responsibility of requiring financial and programme accountability whilst they do not have sufficient finances and programmes for recreation provision. Important to note is the statement by Edginton and Jalloh (2014) wherein "People all over the world are demanding increased oversight and accountability of government, nongovernmental organizations and commercial enterprises". In terms of the Municipal Finance Management Act (Act 56 of 2003) Municipalities are legally required to account for public funds. Thus it is not justifiable that local governments do not meet this legal requirement when it concerns recreation services amongst others. It amounts to gross non-compliance to this Act and is indicative of a lack of financial management as well as leadership at local government level, especially in rural areas, and to a slightly lesser extent in urban areas. There is a significant relationship (phi=0.447) between the area and requiring financial and programme accountability.

Eighty-five percent indicated that they do not have sufficient funds for recreation service delivery, whilst 15% indicated that they do so on a slight scale. In rural areas 93.3% indicated that they do not have funds. In urban areas 60% indicated that they do not have enough funds whilst 40% indicated that they do have funds to a slight extent.

A large proportion indicated insufficient funding towards recreation service delivery. This finding is also crucial as it supports the results of the previous two tables. If there are insufficient funds to deliver recreation services, communities will not benefit from the emerging paradigm as mentioned in the literature and as a result the socio economic status of residents is not likely to change or improve in the near future. There is a significant relationship (phi=0.404) between the area and having enough funds for recreation service delivery.

A Significant relationship (phi=0.5) was found between the area and methods and strategies regarding the provision of finances for recreation services by local governments as indicated by Grey (in Edginton *et al.*, 2004) that local governments do not apply a strategic approach to recreation services.

Table 4: Methods and strategies for finances

METHODS AND STRATEGIES	TOTAL (N=20)					RURAL (N=15)					URBAN (N=5)					
Collective statements regarding the provision of recreation services in their community:	None %	Slightly %	Moderate %	Large %	Missing data %	None %	Slightly %	Moderate %	Large %	Missing data %	None %	Slightly %	Moderate %	Large %	Missing data %	PHI Coefficient*
We fund services from a variety of sources,(e.g fee-for-services, contract arrangement, agency partnership, and cooperation with	30	40	25	5	0	26.7	40	33.3	0	0	40	40	0	20	0	0.494

the private sector, as well as tax resources)															
We justify budgets in terms of social need and programme results	35	20	30	15	0	40	26.7	33.3	0	0	20	0	20	60	0	0.741
We require financial and programme accountability	20	30	20	30	0	20	40	20	20	0	20	0	20	60	0	0.447
We have enough funds for recreation service delivery	85	15	0	0	0	93.3	6.7	0	0	0	60	40	0	0	0	0.404

*phi coefficient=0.1 (small); phi coefficient=0.3 (medium); phi coefficient=0.5 (large)

The following statements provide the views of specialists under hypothetical names:

A. Recreation Specialist 1. B Recreation Specialist 2.

A: The basic problem is that government has people who are not managers of recreation. They do not understand what recreation is, and what are the benefits of recreation. This stems from the earlier problem that government has not identified what is meant by recreation service and what is recreation service delivery.

B: Funding is dependent on budgets based on policy directives. The core issue is lack of guidelines in terms of there being an allocation made for sport and recreation per local government, per province and national level. Government should come up with a funding model for recreation which should be part of policy.

Table 5 reflects that, 25% of the respondents do not provide services based on social and economic need, 40% indicated that they do so slightly and 30% do so on a moderate scale. In rural areas 26.7% indicated that they do not do so, whilst 46.7% indicated that they do so slightly and 26.7% moderately. In urban areas 20% indicated that they do not do so whilst 20% indicated that they do so slightly and 40% moderately.

In this variable, there is contradiction with regard to policy development for services based on social and economic need. In the previous three tables discussed it was clear that municipalities lack capacity to deliver recreation and have little funding to address provision of recreation services. However, in this variable the indication is that they do pay attention to their communities' social and economic needs. There is a significant relationship (phi=0.445) between the area and the provision of services based on social and economic need.

About 35% indicated that they do not act as a community organiser and catalyst in matching community resources and citizen's needs, 40% indicated that they do this slightly and 15% on a moderate scale. In rural areas 26.6% indicated that they do not act as a community organiser and catalyst whilst 46.7% indicated that they do so slightly and 26.7% moderately. In urban areas 20% also indicated that they do not do so whilst 40% indicated that they do so slightly and 40% to a large extent.

In this variable, there is a fairly negative proportion of the sample indicating that they do not act as a community organiser and catalyst in matching community wide resources and citizen needs. It is clear from the results that municipalities are still trapped in the old, traditional way of doing their business, unlike moving towards the emerging paradigm which offers practices in the field of recreation that are relevant to the 21st Century. There is a significant relationship (phi=0.609) between the area and municipalities acting as a community organiser and catalyst in matching community wide resources and citizen needs.

About 40% indicated that they do not organise services around careful community wide needs analysis whilst 30% indicated that they do so slightly and 15% moderately. In rural areas 40% indicated they do not do this, 33.3% do so slightly and 20% moderately. In urban areas 40% indicated they do not do this whilst 20% do so slightly and 40 largely.

The results support the need to assist municipalities in realising the importance of community involvement and participation so that their need and demands can be met. It is critical that municipalities abide by their Municipal System Act and Integrated development plan (IDP) to consult and hold public hearings with communities in order to consider inputs of their needs. There is a significant relationship (phi=0.606) between the area and municipalities in organising services around careful community wide needs analysis.

Almost one third (30%) indicated that they do not plan by anticipating a preferred future, 50% do so slightly and 15% moderately. In rural areas 33.3% indicated that they do not do so and 53% do so slightly and 13.3% moderately. In urban areas 20% indicated that they do not do so, 40% do so slightly and 20% on a moderate and large scale.

The data in this variable also provides a negative picture towards planning by anticipating a preferred future. It is apparent that municipalities do not set a vision for themselves. The situation in these municipalities requires a paradigm shift towards providing recreation services that will meet community needs, as also required by the integrated development plan. There is a significant relationship (phi=0.416) between the area and municipalities planning by anticipating a preferred future. It is rather unfortunate that 65% of local governments indicated that they do not make use of research to guide service delivery, 20% indicated they do this slightly and 10% moderately. In rural areas, 73.3% indicated they do not do this whereas 20% do so slightly. In urban areas 40% indicated they do not do this, whilst 20% do so slightly and 20% moderately and 20% on a large scale respectively.

From the variable the sample indicated a dire need for using research for service delivery. If municipalities lack leadership and training in programming and recreation management as indicated in the previous tables, surely the lack of skills to use research is evident as this requires in-depth knowledge. Research is part of the management function and the lack of skills will hamper recreation service delivery and this is supported by Roger's (2000) model for the recreation professional. Further, Meeras (2010) identifies an important requirement for leisure planners in view of current trends "There needs to be more research and evaluation directed at programme planning and outcomes in order to reach specific programme goals." There is a significant relationship (phi=0.464) between the area and municipalities to use research for service delivery.

The need to monitor and evaluate the implementation of recreation policy is important to ensure proper planning with regard to recreation provision. In terms of the National White Paper on Sport and Recreation (2012). Municipalities are custodians of recreation services, thereby this function needs to be complied with in order for communities to receive an essential service such as recreation.

Furthermore, the National Sport and Recreation Plan (2013) also indicates the role and responsibilities to be played by local government in the total development of communities and residents. These two policy documents need to be explored and applied by municipalities in order to respond to their current situation regarding recreation services. A significant relationship (phi=0.5) was observed between the area and methods and strategies regarding the provision of policies for finances by local governments. This is supported by Grey, quoted in Edginton et al. (2004) where local governments do not use strategies for recreation services.

Table 5: Methods and strategies for policies

METHODS AND STRATEGIES	TOTAL (N=20)					RURAL (N=15)					URBAN (N=5)					PHI Coefficient*
Collective statements regarding the provision of recreation services in their community:		Slightly %		None %		Slightly %	Moderate %		Missing data %			Slightly %	Moderate %	Large %		
We provide services based on social and economic need	25	40	30	5	0	26.7	46.7	26.7	0	0	20	20	40	20	0	0.445
We act as a community organiser and catalyst in matching community-wide resources and citizen needs	35	40	15	10	0	40	40	20	0	0	20	40	0	40	0	0.609
We organise services around careful community wide needs analysis	40	30	15	10	5	40	33.3	20	0	6.7	40	20	0	40	0	0.606
We plan by anticipating a preferred future,(e.g, plan with potential clients, community informants, other agencies as well as staff)	30	50	15	5	0	33.3	53.3	13.3	0	0	20	40	20	20	0	0.416

We make use of research for service delivery	65	20	10	5	0	73.3	20	6.7	0	0	40	20	20	20	0	0.464

*phi coefficient=0.1 (small); phi coefficient=0.3 (medium); phi coefficient=0.5 (large)

When a follow-up was conducted on a focus group, the respondents indicated various challenges. The participants in the focus group generally indicated that policies, facilities, programmes, human resources and funding are lacking in local government. The following are supporting statements that were made:

A: "We have all these policies for recreation, however the problems is that recreation is not prioritised as an important service.

B:" Recreation should be included in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP")

C: "It is critical to develop Legislation and policies for recreation to form part of services in local government.

D: "The Provincial Department and the municipality need to partner and coordinate recreation so that recreation can be fully implemented for the benefit of the community"

E: "Municipalities prioritise sport over recreation"

The absence of policies as a responsibility seems to be a historical trend as noted in the literature (Scholtz, 1985). Policies for facilities, programmes, human resources and funding are critical to enhance recreation service delivery. It must also be emphasised that when a follow-up was conducted on a focus group in relation to receiving support from local government, the respondents made the following statements:

A: "Local government is not taking recreation seriously. It is the mindset. When you speak recreation, when you speak to our authorities, you speak play, it is about play. People think recreation is about play. They only realize when equipment is stolen or a swimming pool is vandalized and they ask why? Our people do not understand recreation. It is because of history. It is just a luxury. Recreation is associated with white communities. Until there is a workshop for communities about recreation, they will not change. Even the educated in local government do not understand recreation."

B: "Currently in municipalities' basic needs are more important. Municipalities will rather prioritise income generating activities so that they can maintain those programmes that generate an income. Recreation is regarded as not a core function."

C: Local authorities and municipalities are under huge pressure to deliver various services. They have to financially be sustainable and priority is not given to recreation.

The above statements support the results for provision of recreation programmes, establishment of policies for recreation services, provision of finances for recreation services and provision of human resources for recreation services in that there is very little support for the delivery of recreation services given by local governments. This is a serious concern, especially as Meeras (2010) points out that "People's expectations of leisure are rising rapidly. Attitudes to and perceptions of leisure and its relationship to work are shifting; customers are

becoming more discerning and knowledgeable and, therefore, demand value for money. In terms of community leisure, therefore, residents expect to be provided with good facilities and a quality of service that would be expected from the private sector."

Conclusions and recommendations

The results clearly emphasise the vicious cycle that local governments in the North West Province are entrapped in with regard to the provision and management of recreation services to their communities. Firstly, they indicate that they have a very poor understanding of their roles and responsibilities regarding recreation services. They do not have adequate resources, nor are their officials trained in recreation management. This implies that training needs to take centre stage in order to deliver quality recreation services. This state of affairs exacerbates their situation further as demand for recreation services increases. It is apparent also that local governments do not adapt to new and innovative ways of delivering recreation services to their communities. This is because recreation clearly is not seen as an important or essential service. Given the level of violence and crime in many of these communities' recreation should be seen as a vital service that could alleviate these negative tensions.

The current staff at municipal level clearly does not have the capacity to do this. A key consideration, according to Edginton and Jalloh (2014), is that "Without question, greater attention is being paid to promoting higher quality of life, community liveability and the wellbeing of individuals. Our challenge is not only one of being a change maker, but finding ways to accelerate the change within our profession and communities". It is also apparent that communities in rural areas who are perhaps in greatest need of recreation services receive the least and poorest quality of support from their local governments.

Secondly, policies are not developed and used to ensure that recreation is provided to communities. There is no National Recreation Policy, and even in cases where provinces have policies they are not implemented and in most cases out-dated. The results illustrate that in these communities funding is lacking to plan for the overall provision of recreation. In the light of this, it is recommended that if the emerging paradigm in recreation is adopted, not only can communities help to implement programmes that should satisfy their needs, but service providers will be able to afford and incorporate emerging activities also. Local governments should be at the forefront of designing and implementing effective recreation programmes in consultation with communities while also liaising with the provincial government. In the current situation the involvement of volunteers cannot be overemphasized in that they need to be included in assisting municipalities to deliver recreation.

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