

Efficiency of Recreational Services in Najaf Region, A Field Study

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Abstract. *Recreational land use in cities represents a vital service for society, whose importance has grown with urban expansion and the increasing challenges of pollution, noise, traffic congestion, and rising urbanization, which have resulted in population growth. These factors drive planners to prioritize recreational areas to address the growing need for improving quality of life by fulfilling spiritual and psychological needs.*

Furthermore, recreational areas form an economic sector that supports infrastructure development, reduces unemployment, and offers educational and social benefits. This study focuses on evaluating the functions and efficiency of recreational services in the Najaf region.

The core research problem is: "Assessing the current state of recreational services within the tourism framework of the Najaf region through the application of planning standards to determine the efficiency and functional performance of these services." The study's recommendations play a significant role in raising awareness among decision-makers in the Najaf Investment Authority and related service departments about the importance of prioritizing recreational and tourism services.

Key words: *Services, Tourism Framework, Planning Standards, Decision-Makers, Quality of Life.*

Introduction

Recreational services are defined as activities and events practiced in urban communities in most countries worldwide. The concept of these activities is evaluated based on the availability of recreational services for residents, which contributes to achieving a high level of societal well-being and mental and psychological health.

The recreational services sector has recently developed due to urban expansion, improved economic conditions, and the role of media in showcasing various types, forms, and patterns of recreational areas. The methodology of this sector depends on selecting strategic locations for recreational activities to ensure accessibility within cities. It also considers the identity of recreational phenomena, their architectural characteristics, types of tourism attractions, and the nature of local communities.

In the Najaf region, investment has played a significant role in expanding recreational services, including public and water parks, green spaces with economic services, and other facilities. The region possesses natural and cultural resources and housing potential that enable it to offer recreational services within a tourism framework. Key attractions include cultural sites, public

libraries, Bahr Al-Najaf, the Euphrates River, Al-Shira'a Entertainment Complex, and others that provide well-being to a broad segment of residents while offering significant economic benefits.

Additionally, the region features recreational forums for males and females, encompassing sports, arts, and cultural activities. These spaces vary in type and form based on their location and the residents' economic level.

First: Research Problem

The main research problem is: *"Evaluating the current state of recreational services within the tourism framework of the Najaf region through the application of planning standards to assess the efficiency and functional performance of these services."* The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do recreational services in the Najaf region exhibit high efficiency?
2. Is there social and economic satisfaction with the functionality of this sector in the Najaf region?
3. What challenges hinder the development of the recreational services sector in the Najaf region, and how can their impact be mitigated?

Second: Research Hypothesis

The research hypothesis posits a weakness in the efficiency of recreational services in the Najaf region despite the community's interaction with these services. The sub-hypotheses are as follows:

1. Regional planning has not played its role in developing these services.
2. Najaf has diverse recreational sectors, but their infrastructure does not match the region's significance.
3. The community may lack an active role in supporting recreational areas.

Third: Research Objectives

The study aims to analyze the efficiency and functional performance of recreational services in Najaf and determine the role of regional planning in advancing these services. The specific objectives are:

1. To identify the types of recreational centers in the Najaf region.
2. To diagnose the challenges that hinder the development of recreational services in the region.
3. To explore the role of regional tourism planning and its steps in enhancing and economically investing in recreational areas.

Fourth: Research Significance

This research offers an analytical study of the efficiency of recreational services in the Najaf region in terms of quality, functional performance, diversity, and social satisfaction. It aims to draw the attention of decision-makers in the Najaf Investment Authority and related service departments to the importance of recreational and tourism services. These services represent the cultural face and economic foundation of the local community by creating new job opportunities.

The research also provides decision-makers with a field study containing diverse data that can serve as a basis for developing a future plan to enhance this sector.

Fifth: Research Scope

The Najaf region is located in the southwestern part of the Republic of Iraq, between latitudes ("29°50'00") and ("32°21'00") north and longitudes ("42°50'00") and ("44°44'00") east. It is bordered to the north by the provinces of Babylon and Karbala, to the east by the provinces of Diwaniyah and Muthanna, to the west by Karbala, and to the south by the international border with Saudi Arabia. The total area of the Najaf region is 28,824 km², which constitutes 6.6% of Iraq's total area of 435,052 km². Approximately 5% of the region lies within the sedimentary plain, while the rest of the area is part of the western plateau.

The Najaf region's location establishes strong connections with the provinces of the Middle Euphrates, as it is situated along the shortest route between the fertile, productive plain and the resource-rich desert plateau.

Najaf is classified as one of the sacred shrine regions in Iraq and the world, characterized by its Islamic identity in both social and urban aspects. The region's religious significance has made it a center of administrative, demographic, and service-related importance. Socially, the region maintains diverse population connections with residents of both the province and the country.

Traditionally, the urban structure of Najaf is marked by the integration and homogeneity of its elements, with the holy shrine historically dominating its skyline. The urban fabric is defined by a network of roads and the repetition of structural units (houses, markets, schools, caravanserais) in an interconnected and compact form. Buildings are not independent but blend into a unified and diverse urban fabric. This system reflects a high degree of privacy within residential units.

The Najaf region is positioned on the edge of the western desert, which extends to the Iraqi border with Saudi Arabia. To the north and northwest, it overlooks the provinces of Karbala and Babylon, while to the west, it borders the Anbar province. The region rises approximately 60 meters above sea level. Access to Najaf is facilitated through several routes, including the Najaf-Karbala road and the Najaf-Hillah road from the north and northeast, and the Najaf-Abu Sakhir road from the south. (*Al-Jassani, 2014, p. 213; Al-Basri & Al-Maliki, 2018, p. 42*)

Sixth: Research Structure

The research is divided into two main sections:

1. **The First Section:** Al-Najaf District and Recreational Services.
2. **The Second Section:** Analysis of the Questionnaire Data.

The First Section: Al-Najaf District and Recreational Services

Al-Najaf District is one of the administrative districts within the Najaf region in the Middle Euphrates area, located south of Baghdad. Its administrative center is the city of Najaf. The district accounts for more than 85% of the Najaf region's total area and has a population of 852,524 as per 2019 estimates. Administratively, the district includes the subdistricts of Al-Meshkhab and Al-Haydariya. The total area of the district is 27,273 km², which is divided into three administrative units: The district center, Al-Haydariya subdistrict, Al-Meshkhab subdistrict. This division is detailed in Table (1).

Table (1): Population and Area of Al-Najaf District and Its Administrative Units

District	Administrative Unit	Population (persons)	Area (km ²)
Al-Najaf	Al-Najaf District Center	795,700	1,448
	Al-Haydariya	56,347	962
	Al-Meshkhab	477	24,863
Total		852,524	27,273

Source:(1) Najaf Statistics Directorate (unpublished data). (2) Researcher, based on the Ministry of Planning, Central Bureau of Statistics, *Annual Statistical Group, 2017*, p. 16.

Recreational Services in the Center of Al-Najaf District

The center of Al-Najaf District offers a variety of recreational services that contribute to providing entertainment and improving quality of life. Recreational services account for 6.4% of the urban area of the district. The recreational services available in the district include the following:

➤ Parks

Parks are important recreational areas where residents spend their leisure time, either on regular days or holidays. These parks are widespread in the center of the district and across the region. They are categorized into investment parks, managed by the private sector, and public parks operated by the Al-Najaf Municipality. There are 19 parks, covering an area of 632,608 square meters. (Sulemi, 2012, p. 7; Al-Najaf Municipality unpublished data)

➤ **Public Gardens**

Public gardens are designated spaces within residential areas that provide recreational services to their residents. These gardens are essential for the city and are frequently visited by families during holidays. In the center of the district, public gardens cover an area of 1,887,068 square meters, although they are not evenly distributed across all neighborhoods. There are 285 public gardens in total. (Planning Standards for Recreational Areas, 2015, p. 3; Al-Najaf Municipality unpublished data)

➤ **Sports Clubs**

Sports clubs are important for community development as they provide recreational, social, and physical activities for young people, helping them to improve their general culture, social well-being, and physical fitness. There are a limited number of sports clubs in the study area, such as Al-Tadamon Club, which offers various sports like football, basketball, volleyball, and strength training. Another club, Al-Najaf Club, located near the Hussein neighborhood, also provides various sports services for young people. (Al-Zahmi, 2018, p. 20; Al-Najaf Municipality unpublished data)

➤ **Youth Centers (Forums)**

A youth forum is an institution designed to make productive use of young people's leisure time by organizing various activities and encouraging them to contribute to comprehensive development programs. These forums are popular among youth of all ages for social, scientific, cultural, and sports activities. In the center of Al-Najaf, there are ten youth forums, divided between those for males and females, offering activities in fields such as science, sports, competitions, and cultural seminars. (Al-Zahmi, 2018, p. 20; Al-Najaf Municipality unpublished data)

➤ **Sports Courts**

Sports courts are paved, vehicle-free spaces surrounded by buildings, designed to accommodate social, cultural, and recreational activities. These spaces are typically equipped with seating and shelters. In the center of Al-Najaf, there are 103 football fields spread over an area of 603,693 square meters. Some of these fields are rented from the government for several years. (Al-Zahmi, 2018, p. 20; Al-Najaf Municipality unpublished data)

➤ **Museums (Khan Al-Shilan)**

Khan Al-Shilan is a significant historical and cultural landmark in the region, located in the old city of Al-Najaf. It contains artifacts from the history of Iraq and Al-Najaf, and its unique architectural design and location provide an important cultural experience. The Khan spans 1,500 square meters and is more than two hundred years old, featuring several arches and Islamic-style decorations. (Al-Zahmi, 2018, p. 23)

➤ **Public Libraries**

Public libraries are essential cultural and recreational services. In Al-Najaf, there are various libraries, both private and public, including literary and cultural associations. Libraries cover an area of 72,531 square meters, accounting for 0.09% of the urban space. Notable libraries include Al-Haydariya Library, Al-Alameen Library, Al-Hussainiya Shoushtari Library, Al-Hakim Library, and the Al-Ataba Al-Ilawiya Library in the holy shrine. (Sulemi, 2012, p. 8; Al-Najaf Municipality unpublished data)

➤ **Cafes**

Cafes are spaces where people gather to relax and spend leisure time. They offer drinks such as coffee, tea, and juices. Cafes have long been a part of urban life and remain among the earliest forms of recreational spaces. In the study area, cafes are distributed unevenly throughout the district, particularly in areas such as the Green Belt Street and the Old City. These cafes are monitored by local authorities. (Sulemi, 2012, p. 8; Al-Najaf Municipality unpublished data)

➤ **Sports Stadiums**

Al-Najaf has two major sports stadiums: Al-Najaf Olympic Stadium and Al-Najaf International Stadium. The former, located in the Hussein district, has a capacity of over 15,000 spectators and

includes several training halls. The latter, which opened in 2018, has a capacity of 30,000 spectators and includes two smaller training fields. (Sulemi, 2012, p. 8; Al-Najaf Municipality unpublished data)

➤ **Al-Najaf Sea**

Al-Najaf Sea is a shallow, salty water body located south of Iraq near the city of Al-Najaf. It is part of the Euphrates River system and plays an important role in agriculture and water resources. However, it faces several environmental challenges, including pollution and water shortages caused by low rainfall and unsustainable agricultural practices. (Al-Zahmi, 2018, p. 23)

➤ **Al-Kufa Canal**

Al-Kufa Canal is a freshwater stream that extends from the Euphrates River near the city of Kufa to the southern areas. It provides important irrigation for the surrounding agricultural lands, but it suffers from pollution due to human activity, which affects water quality and local ecosystems. It is an integral part of Iraq's agricultural economy. (Al-Zahmi, 2018, p. 23)

Section 2: Analysis of the Questionnaire Form

The questionnaire was distributed to all districts and sub-districts within the Najaf Governorate region, with a sample size of 165. The SPSS software will be used to analyze the samples. The questionnaire consists of three sections: Section 1 contains personal information about the respondent, Section 2 includes questions about recreational services, and Section 3 evaluates these services.

**SPSS Software*

SPSS stands for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The first version of the program appeared in 1968 and is considered one of the most widely used programs for analyzing statistical data in social sciences. It is commonly used by researchers in fields like marketing, finance, government, and education, and it is also used for analyzing surveys and managing information.

1- Geographic Distribution of Responses – Section 1 of the Questionnaire

1-1 Geographic Distribution by Gender

Through the analysis of the questionnaire, it was found that the number of male participants was 106, distributed across the districts of Najaf Governorate as follows: (Najaf District 72, Kufa District 15, Al-Manathira District 4, Al-Mishkhab District 15). The number of female participants was 59, distributed across the districts as follows: (Najaf District 33, Kufa District 14, Al-Manathira District 4, Al-Mishkhab District 8), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Geographic Distribution by Gender

Gender	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Manathira District	Al-Mishkhab District	Total
Male	72	15	4	15	106
Female	33	14	4	8	59
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher based on the questionnaire and SPSS software

1-2 Geographic Distribution by Occupation

The occupations were categorized as follows: (Employee, Student, Housewife, Government Employee, Private Sector Employee, Unemployed). The number of participants was distributed among the occupations as follows: 21 participants were employed, 98 were students, 1 was a housewife, 34 were government employees, 9 were private sector employees, and 2 were unemployed. These occupations were distributed across the districts of Najaf Governorate as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Geographic Distribution by Occupation

Occupation	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Manathira District	Al-Mishkhab District	Total
Employee	16	1	1	3	21
Student	64	19	5	10	98
Housewife	1	0	0	0	1
Government Employee	18	6	2	8	34
Private Sector Employee	6	2	0	1	9
Unemployed	0	1	0	1	2
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher based on the questionnaire and SPSS software

1-3 Geographic Distribution by Educational Attainment

The educational attainment was categorized as follows: (Primary, Secondary, Preparatory, Diploma, Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate). The number of participants with primary education was 4, secondary education was 15, preparatory education was 72, bachelor's was 60, master's was 4, and doctorate was 1. These were distributed across the districts of Najaf Governorate as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Geographic Distribution by Educational Attainment

Educational Level	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Manathira District	Al-Mishkhab District	Total
Primary	2	1	0	1	4
Secondary	12	1	0	2	15
Preparatory	49	14	3	6	72
Diploma	5	2	1	1	9
Bachelor's	35	9	4	12	60
Master's	2	2	0	0	4
Doctorate	0	0	0	1	1
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher based on the questionnaire and SPSS software

1-4 Geographic Distribution by Income Level

The income level was categorized into four levels: (Low, Medium, Good, Very Good). The responses were as follows: 13 participants had a low income, 94 had a medium income, 51 had a good income, and 7 had a very good income. These were distributed across the districts of Najaf Governorate as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Geographic Distribution by Income Level

Income Level	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Manathira District	Al-Mishkhab District	Total
Low	8	2	0	3	13
Medium	66	12	4	12	94
Good	29	13	3	6	51
Very Good	2	2	1	2	7
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher based on the questionnaire and SPSS software

1-5 Geographic Distribution by Family Size

The number of family members was divided into four categories: (2 to 3, 4 to 6, 7 to 9, 9 or more). The responses were as follows: 31 responses from families with 2 to 3 members, 81 responses from families with 4 to 6 members, 41 responses from families with 7 to 9 members, and 12 responses

from families with 9 or more members. These were distributed across the districts of Najaf Governorate as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Geographic Distribution by Family Size

Family Size	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Manathira District	Al-Mishkhab District	Total
2 to 3	23	5	0	3	31
4 to 6	51	14	6	10	81
7 to 9	24	8	2	7	41
9 or more	7	2	0	3	12
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher based on the questionnaire and SPSS software

2. The Geographical Distribution of the Answers - Section Two of the Questionnaire

The geographical distribution of each question will be presented according to the order mentioned in the questionnaire sheet as follows:

2-1 What are the recreational services available in the area?

The answers to this question were categorized into seven models:

1. (No recreational services),
2. (Parks, football (five-a-side) fields, swimming pools, public gardens),
3. (Amusement parks, water parks, open green squares),
4. (Commercial streets, malls, cafes),
5. (Kornish al-Shat al-Kufa, the sea of Najaf),
6. (Restaurants, cafes, swimming pools),
7. (Religious shrines).

The distribution of answers for these categories was as follows: Model 1 received 90 responses, Model 2 received 50 responses, Model 3 received 8 responses, Model 4 received 6 responses, Model 5 received 5 responses, Model 6 received 7 responses, and Model 7 received 1 response. The answers were distributed as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Geographical Distribution of Responses to Question one

Recreational Services	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Munadharah District	Al-Mushkhab District	Total
No recreational service	58	17	3	12	90
Parks, football fields (five-a-side), swimming pools, public gardens	32	6	4	8	50
Amusement parks, water parks, open green areas	5	2	0	1	8
Commercial streets, malls, cafes	4	2	0	0	6
Kufa Corniche, Najaf Sea	1	1	0	1	3
Restaurants, coffee shops, swimming pools	5	1	0	1	7
Religious shrines	0	0	1	0	1
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS software.

2-2 Where do you spend your free time?

The answers to this question were classified into the following categories:

1. (No free time),
2. (Going out with friends to restaurants, cafes, swimming pools),
3. (Sitting at home with family, using electronic games, using mobile phones),
4. (Going on recreational trips with family or friends to areas with natural beauty),
5. (Visiting religious shrines in Najaf or outside),
6. (Investing time in reading, researching, studying, painting),
7. (Practicing sports of all kinds).

The answers for the first model were 13 responses, the second model received 29 responses, the third model received 98 responses, the fourth model received 3 responses, the fifth model received 2 responses, the sixth model received 17 responses, and the last model received 3 responses. The distribution of these answers is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Geographic Distribution of Answers to Question Two

Where do you spend your free time?	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Munadharah District	Al-Mushkhab District	Total
No free time	8	1	0	4	13
Going out with friends (restaurants, cafes, swimming pools)	16	9	3	1	29
Sitting at home with family, using electronic games, using mobile phones	65	14	4	15	98
Going on leisure trips with family or friends to areas of natural beauty	2	0	0	1	3
Visiting religious shrines inside or outside Najaf	2	0	0	0	2
Investing free time in reading, research, studying, or drawing	9	5	1	2	17
Engaging in sports of all kinds	3	0	0	0	3
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS software.

2-3 Do you face difficulties in accessing recreational centers? Where do these difficulties lie?

The answers were divided into four models:

1. (I do not face difficulties in accessing recreational centers),
2. (Yes / Lack of public transport to recreational centers, distance),
3. (Yes / Traffic congestion on roads leading to recreational centers, lack of sufficient parking spaces),
4. (Yes / High transportation costs, lack of recreational centers).

The answers were distributed as follows: Model 1 received 66 responses, Model 2 received 44 responses, Model 3 received 23 responses, and Model 4 received 32 responses. The distribution of these answers is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Geographic Distribution of Answers to Question Three

Do you face difficulty reaching recreational centers? Where does this difficulty lie?	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Munadharah District	Al-Mushkhab District	Total
I do not face difficulty in reaching recreational centers	42	13	1	10	66
Yes / Lack of public transportation to recreational centers, long distance	26	8	2	8	44
Yes / Traffic congestion on roads leading to recreational centers, lack of parking spaces	16	2	3	2	23
Yes / High transportation cost, few centers	21	6	2	3	32
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS software.

2-4: Are the recreational services available in the Najaf Governorate sufficient for personal needs?

The responses were either "Yes" or "No." There were 22 answers indicating "Yes" and 143 answers indicating "No." This suggests a lack of recreational services in the Najaf Governorate. The responses were distributed across the districts as follows:

- Najaf District: 12 "Yes", 93 "No"
- Kufa District: 6 "Yes", 23 "No"
- Al-Munadharah District: 3 "Yes", 5 "No"
- Al-Mushkhab District: 1 "Yes", 22 "No"

Table 9: Geographic Distribution of Responses to Question Four

Are the recreational services in the Najaf Governorate sufficient for personal needs?	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Munadharah District	Al-Mushkhab District	Total
Yes	12	6	3	1	22
No	93	23	5	22	143
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS software.

2-5: What recreational services would you like to see in the region?

The responses were divided into four models:

1. Open green areas, family entertainment parks
2. Investment in the sea of Najaf and Kufa shore by establishing a tourist resort
3. Establishment of integrated recreational centers for all societal groups, indoor recreational services
4. Establishment of recreational services to attract youth and young women in a proper way

The most answers were for the first model with 82 responses, representing half of the sample. The second model received 11 responses, the third model received 58 responses, and the fourth model received 14 responses. These responses were distributed across the districts as shown below:

Table 10: Geographic Distribution of Responses to Question Five

What recreational services would you like to see in the region?	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Munadharah District	Al-Mushkhab District	Total
Open green areas, family entertainment parks	51	17	4	10	82
Investment in the sea of Najaf and Kufa shore by establishing a tourist resort	9	1	1	0	11
Establishment of integrated recreational centers for all societal groups, indoor services	36	8	3	11	58
Establishment of recreational services to attract youth and young women in a proper way	9	3	0	2	14
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS software.

2-6: Do you prefer to go to recreational centers with family or friends?

There were 62 responses indicating a preference to go with family, while 103 responses indicated a preference to go with friends. This higher number of answers in favor of friends is due to the sense of restriction felt by youth when going with their families, thus preferring to go with friends.

Table 11: Geographic Distribution of Responses to Question Six

Do you prefer to go to recreational centers with family or friends?	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Munadharah District	Al-Mushkhab District	Total
Family	38	14	1	9	62
Friends	67	15	7	14	103
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS software.

2-7: Does the region lack recreational services? What is it lacking?

The answers were as follows:

1. "Does not lack recreational services"
2. "Yes, lacking all recreational services"
3. "Yes, lacking parks and public gardens"
4. "Yes, lacking recreational services for youth, seniors, and children"

The most frequent answer was "Yes, lacking all recreational services" with 85 responses, indicating that the lack of services is a major concern within the region.

Table 12: Geographic Distribution of Responses to Question Seven

Does the region lack recreational services? What is it lacking?	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Munadharah District	Al-Mushkhab District	Total
Does not lack	11	3	0	0	14
Yes, lacking all recreational services	55	13	5	12	85
Yes, lacking parks and public gardens	35	11	2	9	57

Yes, lacking recreational services for youth, seniors, and children	4	2	1	2	9
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS software.

2-8: Are recreational services available for all age groups?

Most answers indicated that recreational services are not available for all age groups, suggesting a clear gap in service provision. There were 22 responses indicating "Yes" and 143 responses indicating "No."

Table 13: Geographic Distribution of Responses to Question Eight

Are recreational services available for all age groups?	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Munadharah District	Al-Mushkhab District	Total
Yes	13	7	0	2	22
No	92	22	8	21	143
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS software.

2-9: What do you think of the design and location of recreational parks?

Design and location play a crucial role in attracting visitors. Most answers rated the design and location negatively, with 80 responses indicating "Unacceptable" and only 6 responses indicating "Very Good."

Table 14: Geographic Distribution of Responses to Question Nine

What do you think of the design and location of recreational parks?	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Munadharah District	Al-Mushkhab District	Total
Unacceptable	53	10	6	11	80
Acceptable	23	7	1	7	38
Average	18	5	0	5	28
Good	8	4	1	0	13
Very Good	3	3	0	0	6
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS software.

2-10: Do you travel outside the city to enjoy specific types of recreational services?

Travel itself is considered a recreational service for some, and it becomes even more enjoyable when the trip is for a specific recreational activity. Travel outside the region is often for a targeted recreational service, but these services could be provided within the region to attract more visitors. The responses to this question were divided into the following categories:

- "I do not travel": 48 responses
- "Yes, I travel to visit religious shrines, archaeological and heritage sites, and to visit relatives": 30 responses
- "Yes, I travel for relaxation, hunting, swimming, nature sites, or nature-based activities": 31 responses
- "Yes, I travel to large malls, amusement parks, or festivals": 56 responses

The distribution of answers according to the regions is as follows:

- **Najaf District:** 32, 18, 20, 35
- **Kufa District:** 10, 6, 4, 9

➤ **Al-Munadharah District:** 2, 1, 2, 3

➤ **Al-Mushkhab District:** 4, 5, 5, 9

This data is shown in **Table 15**.

Table 15: Geographic Distribution of Responses to Question Ten

Do you travel outside the city to enjoy specific types of recreational services?	Najaf District	Kufa District	Al-Munadharah District	Al-Mushkhab District	Total
I do not travel	32	10	2	4	48
I travel to visit religious shrines, heritage sites, or relatives	18	6	1	5	30
I travel for relaxation, hunting, swimming, nature sites	20	4	2	5	31
I travel to visit shopping malls or cafes	35	9	3	9	56
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS software.

2-11 What is the means of transportation to reach recreational service centers?

Transportation is very important nowadays and is considered the main artery of the region. The quality of transportation routes and vehicles, as they become more advanced, reflects the development of society. Public transportation reduces emissions, which is an important factor for the environment. The means of transport were categorized as follows: (public transport, private transport, personal vehicle, other). The responses for public transport were 25, private transport 57, personal vehicle 74, and others 9 (other refers to walking if the center is nearby, bicycles, or motorcycles). The responses were distributed as shown in **Table 16**.

Table 16: Geographic Distribution of Responses to Question 11: What is the means of transportation to reach recreational service centers?

District	Public Transport	Private Transport	Personal Vehicle	Other	Total
Najaf District	17	37	45	6	105
Kufa District	5	11	10	3	29
Al-Munadharah	0	2	6	0	8
Al-Mushkhab	3	7	13	0	23
Total	25	57	74	9	165

Source: Researcher based on the questionnaire and SPSS program.

2-12 What is your opinion on the recent encroachment on some parks and turning them into commercial investment sites?

This is a very important topic, as it concerns the encroachment on green areas in the region, despite their scarcity. This encroachment leads to a reduction in these green spaces and transforms them from comfortable, relaxing areas into sources of pollution. This, in itself, is a crime that should be penalized. The responses were categorized as follows: (unacceptable, and large financial penalties should be imposed to create alternative parks, we condemn this action and should not tolerate such acts, this is illegal and lawsuits should be filed against such acts, these actions are a result of administrative corruption that must be eradicated, from a planning perspective this is illegal and represents a serious violation of the master plan). The responses were distributed as follows: the first category had 77 responses, the second 28, the third 20, the fourth 22, and the last 18. These responses are shown in **Table 17**.

Table 17: Geographic Distribution of Responses to Question 12: What is your opinion on the recent encroachment on some parks and turning them into commercial investment sites?

District	Unacceptable, large financial penalties should be imposed to create alternative parks	We condemn this action and should not tolerate such acts	This is illegal and lawsuits should be filed	These actions are a result of administrative corruption that must be eradicated	From a planning perspective, this is illegal and represents a serious violation of the master plan	Total
Najaf District	48	18	13	13	13	105
Kufa District	12	5	4	4	4	29
Al-Munadharah	4	1	1	1	1	8
Al-Mushkhab	13	4	2	4	0	23
Total	77	28	20	22	18	165

Source: Researcher based on the questionnaire and SPSS program.

3. Geographic Distribution of Responses: Section Three of the Questionnaire

This section focuses on evaluating the entertainment services. The section includes several questions, as follows:

3-1 What is the level of service provided at recreational centers?

The answers are categorized into five levels: (Unacceptable, Acceptable, Average, Good, Very Good). The first category received 76 responses, indicating a low level of service provided. The second category received 51 responses, the third category received 31 responses, and the fourth category received 7 responses, while the fifth category had no responses. The answers are distributed across the districts of Najaf as follows:

- **Najaf District:** (51, 31, 19, 4)
- **Kufa District:** (9, 10, 8, 2)
- **Al-Muntheria District:** (3, 2, 2, 1)
- **Al-Mishkhab District:** (13, 8, 2, 0)

The table below (Table 18) illustrates the geographic distribution of responses about the service level.

Table 18: Geographic Distribution of Responses Regarding Service Level at Recreational Centers

Service Level	Najaf	Kufa	Al-Muntheria	Al-Mishkhab	Total
Unacceptable	51	9	3	13	76
Acceptable	31	10	2	8	51
Average	19	8	2	4	31
Good	4	2	1	0	7
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS program.

3-2 What is the level of wages relative to recreational services?

Similarly, answers are divided into five categories: (Unacceptable, Acceptable, Average, Good, Very Good). The first category received 77 responses, indicating high wages for the services provided. The second category received 51 responses, the third category received 26 responses, the fourth category received 11 responses, and the fifth category had no responses. The distribution of responses is as follows:

- **Najaf District:** (51, 37, 12, 5)
- **Kufa District:** (11, 4, 11, 3)
- **Al-Muntheria District:** (4, 1, 1, 2)
- **Al-Mishkhab District:** (11, 9, 2, 1)

The table below (Table 19) illustrates the geographic distribution of responses about wages.

Table 19: Geographic Distribution of Responses Regarding Wages for Recreational Services

Wages Level	Najaf	Kufa	Al-Muntheria	Al-Mishkhab	Total
Unacceptable	51	11	4	11	77
Acceptable	37	4	1	9	51
Average	12	11	1	2	26
Good	5	3	2	1	11
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS program.

3-3 What is the level of cleanliness at recreational service centers?

Cleanliness is an important attraction factor for recreational centers. There is a direct correlation between cleanliness and attraction; the cleaner the centers, the more attractive they are. The answers are divided into five levels: (Unacceptable, Acceptable, Average, Good, Very Good). The first category received 79 responses, indicating poor cleanliness. The second category received 45 responses, the third category received 30 responses, the fourth category received 10 responses, and the fifth category received one response. The answers are distributed as follows:

- **Najaf District:** (53, 28, 18, 6, 0)
- **Kufa District:** (10, 9, 6, 3, 1)
- **Al-Muntheria District:** (4, 2, 2, 0, 0)
- **Al-Mishkhab District:** (12, 6, 4, 1, 0)

The table below (Table 20) illustrates the geographic distribution of responses about cleanliness.

Table 20: Geographic Distribution of Responses Regarding Cleanliness at Recreational Service Centers

Cleanliness Level	Najaf	Kufa	Al-Muntheria	Al-Mishkhab	Total
Unacceptable	53	10	4	12	79
Acceptable	28	9	2	6	45
Average	18	6	2	4	30
Good	6	3	0	1	10
Very Good	0	1	0	0	1
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS program.

4-1 What is the level of interaction with entertainment services provided by the public sector?

The presence of services without interaction is a negative indicator, emphasizing the need for feasibility studies before launching any project to assess engagement and benefits, both material and moral. The public sector offers a range of services, including entertainment services, which have a primary moral, rather than material, objective. Responses were divided into five categories: (Unacceptable, Acceptable, Average, Good, Very Good). The first category received 83 responses, indicating poor interaction with public sector services. The second category received 42 responses, the third category received 31 responses, the fourth category received 8 responses, and the fifth category received only one response. The distribution of responses is as follows:

- **Najaf District:** (56, 28, 16, 4, 1)
- **Kufa District:** (11, 9, 7, 2, 0)
- **Al-Muntheria District:** (3, 4, 1, 0, 0)
- **Al-Mishkhab District:** (13, 1, 7, 2, 0)

The table below (Table 21) illustrates the geographic distribution of responses about public sector interaction.

Table 21: Geographic Distribution of Responses Regarding Public Sector Interaction

Interaction Level	Najaf	Kufa	Al-Muntheria	Al-Mishkhab	Total
Unacceptable	56	11	3	13	83
Acceptable	28	9	4	1	42
Average	16	7	1	7	31
Good	4	2	0	2	8
Very Good	1	0	0	0	1
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS program.

4-2 What is the level of interaction with entertainment services provided by the private sector?

The private sector aims to achieve material benefits, and the services offered tend to be of higher quality, which leads to more interaction. Responses were divided into five categories: (Unacceptable, Acceptable, Average, Good, Very Good). The first category received 32 responses, indicating limited interaction with private sector services. The second category received 46 responses, the third category received 38 responses, the fourth category received 42 responses, and the fifth category received 7 responses. The distribution of responses is as follows:

- **Najaf District:** (21, 31, 24, 26, 3)
- **Kufa District:** (4, 8, 5, 8, 4)
- **Al-Muntheria District:** (1, 2, 2, 3, 0)
- **Al-Mishkhab District:** (6, 5, 7, 5, 0)

The table below (Table 22) illustrates the geographic distribution of responses about private sector interaction.

Table 22: Geographic Distribution of Responses Regarding Private Sector Interaction

Interaction Level	Najaf	Kufa	Al-Muntheria	Al-Mishkhab	Total
Unacceptable	21	4	1	6	32
Acceptable	31	8	2	5	46
Average	24	5	2	7	38
Good	26	8	3	5	42
Very Good	3	4	0	0	7
Total	105	29	8	23	165

Source: Researcher, based on the questionnaire and SPSS program.

5. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 23: Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

VIF	T Sig	T	Beta	F Sig	F	R ²	R	X	Y
1.171	0.00	6.627	0.421	0.00	64.3	0.443	0.665	Wage Level	Service Level in Recreational Centers
1.171	0.00	5.975	0.379					Cleanliness Level	

The relationship between the level of service at recreational centers, wage level, and cleanliness was analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS software (Table 23). The dependent variable was the service level, while wage and cleanliness levels were the independent variables. The analysis showed that the model was statistically significant with an F value of 64.3 and a p-value of 0.00, indicating strong explanatory power. The R² value of 0.443 indicates that the independent variables explain 44.3% of the variance in the service level. The Beta coefficients for the service level and wage level are statistically significant, indicating a positive relationship: a one-unit increase in wage leads to a 0.421-unit improvement in service level, while a one-unit increase in cleanliness leads to a 0.379-unit improvement in service level. The VIF value of 1.171 indicates that there is no multicollinearity problem between the independent variables.

Conclusions

1. Recreational Services are essential for providing psychological comfort to the community.
2. Recreational services, at the regional level, create many job opportunities, which help reduce unemployment in Najaf Governorate and neighboring regions.
3. The research revealed that the Najaf region lacks recreational services in terms of both service type and service efficiency.
4. It was found that there is no specific recreational service designated for particular groups in society, such as services specifically for children.
5. The results of the survey showed that recreational services are not evenly distributed to serve all regions within the governorate, leading to a disparity in service quality across these regions.
6. There are difficulties in accessing recreational services, mainly due to the lack of nearby parking areas for service centers.
7. The community, based on the sample taken, prefers to have open green spaces and family-oriented recreational parks that cater to all members of society.
8. There is insufficient attention given to the interior design of recreational services, which presents a weakness in these facilities.
9. Interaction with private sector services is higher than interaction with public sector services. This is attributed to the private sector's attention to service quality and cleanliness of the service sites.

Recommendation

1. Reopen and operate many public parks that have been neglected, leading to a reduction in their recreational role. This can be done by rehabilitating these parks through partnerships with private companies or municipal teams.
2. Activate the role of media to produce programs that raise awareness about the importance of recreational services and their impact on society.
3. Utilize graduates from the College of Urban Planning in various departments, as they possess significant expertise in this field.
4. Prepare a map that shows the locations of recreational services in the region, which would make it easier for people to access these services.
5. Invest in recreational services, as they create a large number of job opportunities in various fields, which can stimulate the local economy within the region and neighboring areas.
6. Regional planning must play a role in supporting the development of services, especially recreational ones, which are vital for urban life. Selecting suitable spaces and optimal locations is essential.

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