ASSESSMENT OF RECREATIONAL PATTERN OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS OF ONDO AND EKITI STATES, NIGERIA.

Adebayo Adewunmi EMMANUEL¹ and Modupe Olayinka AJAYI²

¹Department of Urban and Regional Planning, School of Environmental Technology, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria.

² Council Affairs Division, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria.

¹email address: <u>bayoemmanuel@gmail.com</u>
²email address: modupe ajayi@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Recreation is very vital for all categories of persons in the society no matter the age, social or economic status considering the stress placed upon each individual in order to make ends meet and the resultant hazard on individuals. The assumption is that Nigerian students are too encumbered with heavy academic burden such that they are too busy to recreate. This paper focuses on the recreational pattern of students in institutions of higher learning in two contiguous south-western states in Nigeria, namely Ondo and Ekiti. In particular, the study looked into the adequacy of facilities available in the institutions, the frequency of students' participation in recreation and factors inhibiting their participation in recreational activities. In addition, students' preference for the different forms of indoor and outdoor recreational activities and the propensity to pay for the use of recreational facilities were investigated. Fifty questionnaire copies were administered on randomly sampled students from each of the six institutions of higher learning in both states. A total of three hundred questionnaire copies were thus administered. It was discovered among other things that more students gyrate by going to parties rather than night clubs while (as a big surprise) the greatest number of students see their academic work as posing very little hindrance to their recreation and more than two-third will be willing to pay for the use of recreational facilities provided on campus if the need arises.

Keywords: Outdoor recreation. Indoor recreation. Students. Participation in Recreation.

1. INTRODUCTION

All categories of people need recreation. Students need to recreate for almost same reasons as other individuals. Despite the tight academic schedule of students, it is very important to find time to rebuild mentally and physically in order to be equipped for another round of academic work. The cliché that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" may be applicable here. School authorities have thereby made it a point of duty to provide facilities for students' recreation on campus.

Recreation comes in various forms which could involve both outdoor and indoor games. Except at the level of tourism, which involves major time and

financial outlay, recreation can be embarked upon by all categories of people at any free time. Recreational activities range from playing common table games to watching movies; from reading for fun to visiting resorts or clubs. At times, recreation involves an expression of talents and interests or hobby pursuits of man. No matter that which is involved, it causes a refreshing to the individual. Some students have also found recreation to be a supplement for their social life on campus and a means for character formation (University of Louisville, 2005).

At times, students engage in organised competitive games. In Nigeria, the Nigerian University Games (NUGA) and Nigerian Polytechnic Games (NIPOGA) are avenues for students to engage in such games, though the goals of such games are for students to find an avenue to interact and to develop future sports stars. There are other organised games which the students engage in such as the chess competition organised by various bodies.

The need to assess students involvement in recreational activities cannot be overemphasised in the light of the workload associated with the school course curriculum in virtually every course of study in Nigerian universities. This is not to mention other numerous benefits associated with recreation.

Consequently, this paper focuses on students' recreational pattern in colleges of education, polytechnics and universities in two south-western states of Nigeria. It highlights their form of recreation on campus during the semester, their level of association with the various facilities available on their campuses and the use of such facilities. Also, the functionality or efficiency of the available facilities is judged from the students' perspective and their propensity to pay for the use of some recreational facilities if the need arises is determined among other things.

2. REVIEW OF LITERARY WORKS

Recreation has several benefits attached to it. Observations and researches have revealed that a wide range of benefits which cut across diverse geographical, cultural and age divisions do exist. This is based on the various needs and interests of these various groups. This is not to mention the

religious limitations on a range of sports or recreational activities which some groups could engage in. In certain quarters, benefits of recreation have been categorised into individual, household and communal benefits (Harper, Neider and Godbey, 1997). In any case, availability of recreational facilities at different places also determines the access to such benefits that could be drawn from recreation.

The government spends on the development and maintenance of local recreational facilities as a way of investing in the environment while the people (both residents and visitors) pay to use those facilities to give back to the macro-economy of the region and the country at large (Philip Gray and Associates, 2001). As a matter of fact, certain forms of recreation such as walking for exercise or jogging do not require monetary expenditure but those that require facilities also attract some payment for their use.

The involvement of youths in recreational activities is believed in some quarters to be an antidote to juvenile delinquency. This may not be far from the assumption that organised sports build character in the hands of trainers who emphasize discipline and good character. It is another way of saying that recreation helps to keep idle hands which could have been the 'devil's workshop' busy in the face of lack of employment or qualification for one. As recreation addresses the issue of idle hands, one of its benefits is to relieve 'stress-full hands' of hectic activities and bring a refreshing and renewal to both body and soul.

At times interesting and uncommon benefits are associated with certain groups in the society. Among students, such benefits as improvement of time management skills and retention impact may not come as a surprise though may sound strange in certain quarters. However, it has been found that students' involvement in both informal regular workout and structural intramural sports programme have made them to fix practice and games times which consequently influence disciplined allotment of time for other activities including their academic work throughout the semester. Also, it is a fact that a wide range of facilities and recreational activities on some campuses creates a world of difference between what the students were able to enjoy before campus life and their present experience. This gives them the desire to want

to stay for as long as legally possible on such campuses and also favours their academic performance among other benefits (University of Louisville, *op. cit*).

Other benefits enjoyed by campus students include the fact that recreation acts as part of the learning experience especially for those in physical and health education and also helps to associate with persons from different backgrounds. In order to complement government's efforts, diverse youth organisations provide facilities for youth development even outside the campus community. In county Kilkenny, Northern Ireland, such organisations include youth clubs and centres, debate clubs, drama clubs, sports clubs, scouts and guide among others (NGM Limited, 2002). Additionally, Oyeyinka and Fadamiro (2006) in their study of available open spaces and recreational facilities for children and youths in high density, low-income *Arowomole* and low density, medium/high income *Bodija* residential neighbourhoods of Ogbomoso and Ibadan respectively (in Nigeria) found that available open spaces generally improved social relationships and educational standards and also enhanced physical development among children and youths.

In the larger world, under the auspices of tourism, well developed recreational environment will help to achieve regeneration of urban and rural areas, provide a catalyst for growth in an area by raising its profile and stabilising out-migration. It will also provide opportunities for retraining for the resident workforce and help to diversify over-specialised economies (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006).

The issue of needs assessment cannot be overlooked in the process of providing facilities for campus recreation. From time to time, based on the perceived and measured demand for facilities, proper needs assessment will always point the direction to follow in terms of which and what quantity of facilities to provide both for the general public and the campus environment. Based on the recommendations of Monteith Brown Planning Consultants in her report titled "Needs Assessment Studies for Outdoor Recreational Opportunities" the Waterloo City Council supported the provision of sports field on the University of Waterloo north campus as earlier recommended by her earlier staff report (Anderson, 2007).

Recreation will continue to be part and parcel of human existence. The benefits are inexhaustive. Benefits change from time to time as man passes

different phases of his life. His recreational needs as child changes as he becomes a teenager and also becomes different as he grows into adulthood and becomes a worker with his own family. Later on in life when old age begins to set in, his recreational needs become a totally different "kettle of fish". This paper looks into the recreational lifestyle of campus students within the study area.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Participants

A total of three hundred (300) Students from six (6) institutions of higher learning were targeted to elicit information for this research. Equal number of fifty (50) students were selected from each institution. Three (3) institutions were selected from each of Ondo and Ekiti states. The three institutions from each of the two states were a combination of a university, a polytechnic and a college of education. The institutions are listed below:

- 1. Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State.
- 2. Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State.
- 3. Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Ondo State.
- 4. University of Ado-Ekiti, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State.
- 5. Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State.
- College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State.

3.2 Instrumentation

A multiple-choice questionnaire which was validated by professionals was employed in the gathering of data. A total of 300 copies of the questionnaire were administered while 299 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved. This represents 99.67% return rate.

3.3 Procedure

Forty-one undergraduate students of the department of Urban and Regional Planning from the Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria during the 2007/2008 session were engaged as field assistants to administer the copies of the questionnaire for this research. The questionnaire copies

were administered on a weekend on students who were resident on campus in the various halls of residence of the institutions and retrieved immediately by the field assistants.

3.4 Statistical Analysis

Basic descriptive statistics were involved in the presentation of data collated from the questionnaire to show the relative magnitude of the response for choices in the variables being investigated while inferential statistics using T-test analysis was carried out to determine if there was any significant difference in the students' regularity of involvement in watching movies and watching football which appeared to be the two forms of indoor recreation with the highest frequencies.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section introduces the study area and highlights the major findings of this research. In certain cases, the total number of respondents to questions on particular variables where used in computation in order to have a good sense of judgement with respect to ratio of support for each choice available while in some other cases also, the respondents could possibly select as many choices as are applicable thereby giving rise to figures that could exceed the number of total respondents. In this case, the total frequency of response per choice available is important.

4.1 The Study Area

The study area which is in the south-western part of Nigeria consists of Ondo and Ekiti states which were formerly a single state named Ondo state until the year 1996 when Ekiti state was carved out by the then military government of Nigeria. After the creation of Ekiti state out of the old Ondo state, Akure remained the capital city of Ondo state while Ado-Ekiti became the capital of the new Ekiti state. Ado-Ekiti which is the largest city in Ekiti state had always been privileged with the presence of many facilities and government offices which include two government-owned higher institutions (University of Ado-Ekiti and the Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti) both of which were included in this study. Akure city also has two government-owned higher

institutions (the Federal University of Technology and Federal College of Agriculture) one of which was included in this study. The third institution selected from Ekiti State is found in Ikere-Ekiti which is about 15kilometres from the state capital, Ado-Ekiti while the other two institutions selected from Ondo State are located in Owo and Ondo towns both of which are about 60 kilometres from Akure, the state capital. The study area is shown on the map below in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing the location of Ondo State and Ekiti states.

Source: http://www.nigeriamasterweb.com/5mbebe/NigeriaStatesMap.gif retrieved Monday September 8, 2008.

4.2 Students' Characteristics

The number of students whose questionnaire copies were retrieved amounted to a total of 299 as mentioned earlier on. Due to the fact that most of the field assistants were male, it was easier to get access to the male students' halls on the campuses rather than the female students' halls. This influenced the fact that 57.5% of the respondents were male students while 42.5% were female students as shown on Table 1. The levels of the students were collated and the result on Table 2 resulted. It is not a surprise that only 4.1% of the students were in 500-level as only the two universities among the

six institutions investigated could have students at that level. 100 to 400 level students were distributed in the percentage range of 21.0 to 31.0%.

Table 1: Sex Distribution of Respondent Students

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	172	57.5
Female	127	42.5
Total	299	100.0

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, April 2008.

Table 2: Academic Level Distribution of Respondent Students

Academic level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
100	62	20.7
200	90	30.1
300	61	20.4
400	65	21.7
500	12	4.0
Total	290	100.0

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, April 2008.

4.3 Students' Participation in Outdoor Recreation

Students were able to acknowledge the provision of facilities for the various outdoor games shown on Table 3 below. Despite the fact that some of these games did not all have their facilities in all the schools, certain games which could have been seen as indoor games (performed in halls) were included in this group as they were practised on open fields with only trainers being provided by the institutions for them. The martial arts belong mainly to this group and the three mentioned by students were Judo, Karate and Kickboxing which attracted a respondent each.

It is also very clear from findings that the highest frequency for students participation time (a total of 258) in the outdoor games while on campus was found to be at occasional periods. This signifies the fact that most students do

not observe a definite time or time interval for their involvement in the various outdoor games identified. Lack of determination to achieve something from the games with the intention to just relax once in a while with the games was likely to be responsible for this attitude of the students. Football attracted the highest frequency for almost all the time of involvement especially at those intervals as daily, once in 2 days and twice a week. This does not come as a surprise with the kind of passion among the students for the game of football.

Table 3: Students' Participation in Outdoor Recreation

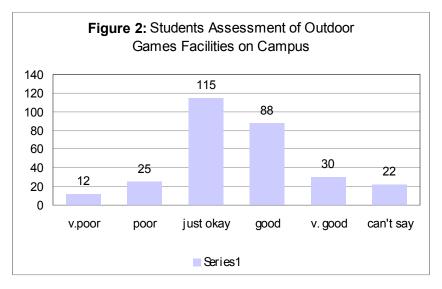
Game	Daily	Once in 2	Twice a	Once a	Once in 2	Once a	occasionally	Never
Involved in		days	week	week	weeks	month		
Football	73	16	34	20	11	4	70	45
Basketball	32	15	20	25	2	5	49	96
Volleyball	28	3	11	15	4	9	29	126
Handball	24	2	7	18	7	8	26	118
Lawn Tennis	27	4	8	12	2	11	29	104
Badminton	12	3	8	7	4	4	26	130
Table	26	9	11	7	4	3	29	98
Tennis								
Javelin				1				
Short-put			1					
Weight -	1							
Lifting								
*Martial arts	1	1	1					
TOTAL	224	53	101	105	34	44	258	717

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, April 2008.

4.4 Students' Assessment of Outdoor Recreation Facilities on Campus

From a range of 20% interval from 0 to 100% (for very poor to very good), the greatest number of students (115 representing 39.5%) felt that the facilities that the authorities of the institutions have provided for outdoor recreation were "just okay" while only 10% felt that the facilities were in very good condition (see Figure 2). This does not speak well of the institutions. Also, it does not encourage or cannot entice the students to recreate and do well academically in the light of the finding in the University of Louisville (*op. cit*) where positive correlation was found between the number of times a student recreates per week and his overall grade point average. The reason is

not far-fetched. When students relax and recreate to refresh mentally and psychologically, their academic performance is likely to be good.



Source: Authors' Fieldwork, April 2008

4.5 Students' Participation in Indoor Recreation on Campus

Table 4 reveals students' involvement in various forms of indoor games during their stay on campus in the semester. The data reveals very interesting findings. It was found that the greatest number of students participate in watching movies and watching football despite the fact that table games dominate the list of games. This is a deviation from the findings of Emmanuel and Olujimi (2008) which reveal that most civil servants play table games as a form or indoor recreation compared with other games or forms of recreation. This reveals variation in recreation interest between workers and students. However, among the table games, Ludo has the highest patronage being a household game in Nigeria.

A closer look also reveals a situation where more people watch football than those who watch movies looking at the frequency of those that indicated for the 2 recreational activities. This is very possible on the premise that the male students who are likely to watch movies and also watch football on a more regular basis are more as respondents than the female students who may not be so much interested in watching football. Also, the greatest frequencies were for *occasional* involvement just like in the case of outdoor

recreation; implying that most students recreate at indefinite times just as situation permits.

Table 4: Students' Participation in Indoor Recreation

Game/ Regularity of	daily	Once in 2	Twice a	Once a	Once in 2	Once a	occasionally	Total
participation		days	week	week	weeks	month		
Monopoly	5	3	3	3	4	3	20	41
Ludo	19	12	17	13	9	12	60	142
Chess	8	9	9	5	7	5	21	64
Scrabble	14	10	6	8	7	7	27	79
Ayo	5	4	9	8	6	1	24	57
Draught	7	6	4	3	5	4	19	48
Card game	14	12	15	13	6	7	34	101
Billiards	3	1	2	3	2	2	15	28
Table Tennis	14	13	20	16	12	5	32	112
Watch	61	18	27	16	10	7	38	177
movies								
Watch	50	25	39	34	6	4	68	226
football								
TOTAL	200	113	151	122	74	57	358	1065

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, April 2008.

T-test analysis was carried out to compare the students' regularity of 'watching movies' with that of 'watching football' (see Tables 5 and 6). The t-test value of -2.010 was found significant at .046 (while working with 95% confidence level) leading to the rejection of H₀ that "there is no significant difference in the students' regularity for watching movies and that of watching football". Therefore there is a significant difference in the number of times students that students watch movies and football within a given space of time. Looking at specific figures for movies and football on Table 4, the values of higher frequencies for the regularity of visit is hardly skewed towards either of the recreational activities. For movies, the frequencies are higher in three (3) cases while for football, they are higher in four (4) cases. However, there is a greater total frequency of 226 for football which makes the total frequency for movies (177) to fall shorter by 22%.

In conclusion, in addition to the fact that the pair-wise t-test gave a significant difference in "how regular" students participate in these activities, the difference of 22% in frequency of response for these activities is very

important to reckon with considering the fact that this research was conducted across six (6) institutions of different systems.

Table 5: Paired Samples statistics for Watching Movies and Football

Pair of	indoor	recreation	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Standard
forms						Error
1011115						mean
Watching	movies		3.39	156	2.313	.185
&						
Watching	football		3.74	156	2.305	.185

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, April 2008.

Table 6: Paired Samples Test for Watching Movies and Football

	Paired diff	erences				Sig (2	
Pair	Mean	Std	Std Error	t	df	Sig.(2- tailed)	
		Dev.	Mean			talleu)	
Watching							
movies	-0.353	2.190	.175	-2.010	155	.046	
&							
Watching							
football							
at 95% conf	at 95% confidence level						

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, April 2008.

4.6 Hindrances to Students' Recreation on Campus

The students identified certain factors as impediments to their recreation on campus at varying degrees for each factor. This information is revealed on Table 7 and Figure 3. The students' response reveal that the greatest number felt that academics posed *very little* hindrance while money, facilities and interest were all of *moderate* hindrance to their recreation on campus. The frequencies affirming this fact are marked on Table 7 below. The Highest frequencies for moderate hindrance with respect to money, facilities and interest were responsible for the highest magnitude pictured on Figure 3 for moderate hindrance for a combination all the hindering factors.

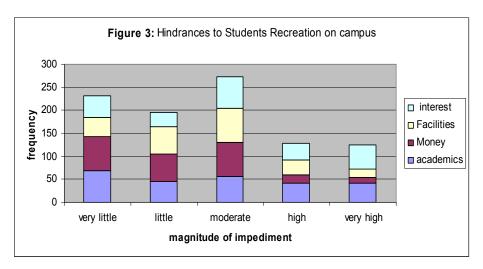
Table 7: Hindrances to Students Recreation on Campus

Hindrance level	Academics	Money	Facilities	Interest	Total
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Very little (1-20%)	69*	73	42	48	232
Little (21-40%)	46	58	61	31	196
Moderate (41-60%)	56	74*	75*	67*	272
High (61-80%)	42	17	33	37	129
Very high (81-	42	13	17	52	124
100%)					
Total					953

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, April 2008

Inferential from this point is the fact that a great number of students have behind their minds a picture of an average or moderate hindrance level of various factors combined. Such that if they actually want to recreate, they could still find time somehow to do and a combination of money, facilities, academics and interest would not pose a *very high* hindrance for their recreation. This agrees with the fact that money, time, academics and interest would not really pose a hindrance to watching movies regularly or watching football occasionally (see frequencies for watching movies daily and watching football occasionally).

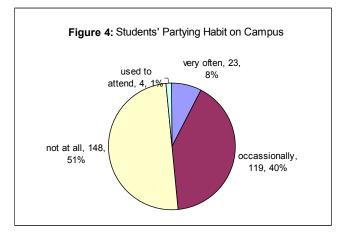


Source: Authors' Fieldwork, April 2008.

4.7 Students' Partying and Clubbing Habit

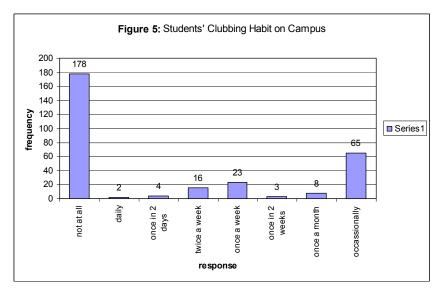
More than half of the students indicated that they do not go to parties at all while on campus while 40% of the students said they attend parties only occasionally. This simply could imply that it is only when the need arises that they go to parties while on campus and not as a habit. Only 8% of the

respondent students make it a habit to go to parties during the semester (see Figure 4).



Source: Authors' Fieldwork, April 2008

Similarly, it was found that a very high percentage of students do not go to clubs while on campus. A total of 178 (59%) do not visit clubs while a little over half of the remaining respondents (representing 22% of total) only visit clubs occasionally (see Figure 5). Conclusively, it is clear that most of the students do not go to parties or clubs while a greater percentage of those who do actually do that only when the need arises. In the social environment where most are brought up, such habits as clubbing or unnecessary partying has been viewed by most persons as a sign of irresponsible attitude for any group of people.



Source: Authors' Fieldwork, April 2008

4.8 Students' Willingness to Pay for Use of Facilities on Campus

It is also interesting to find out that students will be ready to back up their interest in recreation with their willingness to pay some money in order to have access to good recreational facilities. As revealed on Table 7 below, almost 70% responded positively to this. However, 17.1% could not make up their mind on such decision to pay for using good recreational facilities on campus. This implies that even the private sector participation could be encouraged by authorities of higher institutions to provide facilities that students would need for recreation at a token amount for their use. Since some other services are provided by the private sector on campuses, this will not be a strange approach to allowing students' access to good quality recreational facilities.

Table 7: Willingness to Pay for Use of Recreational Facilities on Campus

Willing to pay	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	207	69.2
No	41	13.7
Not sure	51	17.1
Total	299	100.0

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, April 2008

5. CONCLUSION

From the findings above, it is conclusive to say that students still find time to recreate during the semester and a great number of them even see academic work as posing very little hindrance to their recreation. This is possible because most of them spend time watching football and movies at their convenient time with no financial cost in the various 'common rooms' of halls of residence while the greatest percentage (especially the males) also play football as a form of outdoor recreation. While more than half of the students do not involve in partying or clubbing during the semester, the majority of those that do only do so occasionally and not at regular periods. It is also glaring that many of the students will be willing to pay for the use of good quality recreational facilities on campus if the need arises and when made available. In view of the benefits to the society, the institutions and the students whose social life will improve with sound body and soul as they grow

into adulthood, some recommendations would be necessary in order to improve the status quo.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to sustain and likely improve the students' recreation habit on campus with the ultimate aim of helping them to maximize the various benefits associated with recreation both for them and the society, the following recommendations are made.

Authorities of higher institutions will need to focus on the provision of good quality facilities for recreation on their campuses. As it could be observed from Figure 2, only 30 of the respondents representing 10.3% actually felt that the facilities on campus are very good. Invitation of private sector participation into the provision of facilities for recreation on campus, in the light of the fact that students will be ready to pay for such, (see Table 7) will favour this recommendation. The entrepreneur with the aim of making profit is bound to ensure that good quality facilities are provided especially in the light of competition and the need to entice the students to patronise. This is also justified in the light of the management skills that are likely to be found in the hands of the private sector.

Additionally, there is need for the ministry of education and sister agencies to encourage students to participate in field games such as javelin and shot-put. The response rate for this is low. The youths are expected to be the age category in the best form for these games. Even those expected to be involved later on in life in international competitive sports are expected to start from the campuses. In this light, the sport ministry should attract students to these games with high value prices and series of competitions couple with provision of facilities and trainers and tours.

Further reduction in hindrances by money, facilities and interest (which attracted moderate hindrance level) could be facilitated by some of the earlier recommendations. However, the aspect of interest will need more attention. Their will be need to introduce a single unit course on recreation in the school system. The single unit is to ensure that the extra load does not put much academic pressure on the students and also to make the students relax and not become desperate in passing the course rather than gaining the benefits

of recreation from the introduction of the course. The course is expected to highly enlighten the students on the benefits of recreation throughout life and to expose them to opportunities at their disposal within and outside school life.

It is necessary to say that students' willingness to pay for the use of recreational facilities (provided by university authorities or the private sector) should be encouraged. This is by charging affordable amounts for the use of such facilities. The contrary could discourage students from patronising such facilities and the purpose will be defeated.

With the implementation of the above recommendations, students' recreation habit on campus will improve and their whole fabric of life will be improved.

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