

Socio-Demographic Factors Associated with Participation in Recreational Activities among Undergraduate Students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka

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Abstract

This paper investigated socio-demographic factors associated with participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Four research questions guided the study. The cross sectional survey design was employed in order to accomplish the purpose of the study. The population for the study consisted of 9,973 undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in Enugu State Nigeria. A sample size of 392 was drawn using the multi-stage sampling procedure. The instrument for data collection was a self structured Factors Associated with Participation in Recreational Activities Questionnaire (FAPRAQ). The instrument was validated by five experts from the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The instrument had a reliability index of 0.67, adjudged reliable for the study. Data generated were analyzed using phi coefficient. Results of the findings indicated that economic-related factors had strong relationship with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students, based on age ($\phi = 0.69$) and year of study ($\phi = 0.67$); while gender ($\phi = 0.56$) and faculty of respondents ($\phi = 0.36$) has moderate relationship with participation in recreational activities. The findings also revealed that time-related factors had moderate relationship with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students based on gender ($\phi = 0.36$) and year of study ($\phi = 0.39$). Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that facilities and equipment for recreational sports in the campus should be situated close to the hostels or classrooms so that it would be easily accessible to the students.

Keywords: Recreational activities, Participation, Undergraduate, University

Introduction

Participation in recreational activities is a necessity among undergraduates in universities due to the workload associated with the school course curriculum in every course of study in Nigerian universities. Recreation is an important aspect of life that has been reduced to the background in our society today. Many people including undergraduates tend to work tirelessly without adequate time and sometimes desire to recreate (Okpala, 2015). According to Opadiji (2002), people need to make time for the kind of activity that will help them to recreate their mind and body because it provides both physical and mental relaxation. The benefits students derive from regular participation in recreational activities include: weight reduction, resistance to stress, obedience to rules, good relationship, and ability to cope with emergencies (Adeyemo, 2013). The author also observed that recreational activities were necessary to sustain students' academic performance and social life both during lectures and examination periods. Recognizing the benefits derivable from participation in recreation, university authorities endeavour to provide facilities for students' recreation on campus.

Despite the existence of recreational facilities in universities, some of the students did not fully utilize the facilities. Fullerton (2011) stated that while universities are allocating large financial resources for the development athletic and recreational sport facilities, university students are not taking a full advantage of the services provided. A study by Emmanuel and Ajayi (2008), reported that most students in higher institutions in Ondo and Ekiti States do not observe a definite time or time interval for their involvement in the various outdoor recreational games.

Recreation is an activity one engages in during leisure. Hurd and Anderson (2011) stated that it is an activity that people engage in during their free time which they enjoy and recognize as having socially redeeming values. The authors further explained that recreation has a connotation of being morally acceptable not just to the individual but also to the society as a whole. Recreation refers to discretionary leisure time activity or experiences that are socially adopted, but intrinsically motivated and directed towards meeting one's personal and social needs (Abbah, 2014). Participation in recreation must therefore be constructive, positive, and socially acceptable and engaged in for the fun and enjoyment derivable from it.

Recreational activities abound. Its range is infinite, which could be active or passive, indoors or outdoors. These activities according to Nolan and Surujlal (2009) could include hiking, walking, jogging, dancing and playing any game which involves physical exertion for fun. Others could be indoor activities or experiences such as: drama, watching television, reading or even watching sporting activities on a television screen.

The benefits derived from participation in recreation cannot be overemphasized. All recreational activities involve some degrees of learning thereby providing opportunities for intellectual development of participants (Mwisukha & Wanderi, 2009). In modern society, people use leisure and recreation as a way of counter-balancing stresses that result from living in a competitive and rapidly changing society. In other words, recreation revitalizes the spirit, restores a person's vitality, initiative and perspective of life, thereby preparing the individual to return to his/her toil. This makes recreation a necessity for students. According to Godbey and Mowen (2010), the positive outcomes of the physical activity component of recreational sport include: enhancement of circulatory health, provision of mental clarity, promotion of successful aging, and social interaction. Quality recreation and physical activities benefits to students include: increased academic success, smoother transitions to college, better mental and physical health, lower levels of stress and anxiety, better and more numerous social connections, better intra- and interpersonal skills, increased environmental sensitivity, and improved connectedness to nature and to place (Andre, Williams, Schwartz, & Bullard, 2017). Participation in recreation activities by university students is therefore very beneficial.

Students are learners enrolled in a school. Students are according to Collins (2018) persons that are formally engaged in learning especially those who enrolled in a school (which could be a university, such as University of Nigeria, Nsukka). In other words, students are individuals undertaking a study in a university. The students are the ideal target group for an early participation in recreation because they are mostly adolescents at their youthful and formative age. University students are learners within the university environment. The word university as conceptualized by Harcourt (2010) is an educational institution of the highest level, with one or more undergraduate colleges, together with a programme of graduate studies and a number of professional schools, and authorized to confer various degrees, such as the bachelor's, master's and doctor's. Also, Collins (2018) defined university as an institution of higher education having authority to award bachelors' and higher degrees, usually having research facilities. From the above, one can deduce that a university is a tertiary institution, following the completion of a school providing secondary education. It is an educational environment where different transactions take place irrespective of gender, age, and year of study. Transition to, and navigating through university education can be stressful for students. Balancing classes, work, social, and family responsibilities pulls students in many directions. Recreation, especially when it takes place outdoors, can reduce that stress (Clark & Anderson, 2011) among students.

Many modern technology and inventions have increased the leisure time available for people including students through modern time saving devices. Undergraduate students are group of people with more free time and autonomy to decide what to do in their free time than possibly any other group (Wang, Kao, Huan, & Hu, 2011), yet they still feel constrained to participate in recreational activities. Dike (2005) confirmed that lifestyle factors such as academic pressure on the students and the determination of the students to do well in the examination due to the current emphasis on paper qualification has kept many students busier in academics than necessary. It has been discovered that many students in the university do not participate very well in most recreational pursuits. Despite the existence of a number of recreational facilities in universities, most of the students did not fully utilize the facilities. Fullerton (2011) stated that while universities are allocating large financial resources for the development athletic and recreational sport facilities, university students are not taking full advantage of the services provided because of several factors, such as accessibility and time that are associated with participation in recreational activities. These factors enforce or inhibit the extent to which individuals can participate in recreational activities (Orel & Yanuz, 2003).

The success of any recreational programme to a large extent depends on the identification of the factors that are susceptible to its intervention. For students to be motivated

to participate in recreation, they need facilities that are conducive for recreational participation. This means that these facilities should be accessible and cost effective for the participants. Among the physical barriers that hamper recreational participation among students are lack of well maintained and accessible facilities and equipment. University recreational facilities are important in order to avoid student's physical inactivity (Abdullah & Mohamad, 2016). According to Reed (2007), the designing of university infrastructure, including the location of recreational physical activity facilities, could be related with the physical activity patterns of university students. Also, Humpel, Owen, and Leslie, (2002) examined the association between physical and environmental factors, such as accessibility of facilities to recreation and physical activity. The researchers found that accessibility had significant associations with physical activity.

Time availability is another factor considered to be influencing recreational participation among undergraduate students in universities. Time availability is the amount of time available for an individual at a particular time. Time scarcity is the feeling that one lacks enough time to do all the things that one would like to do. This has become one of the great problems facing many undergraduates from participating in recreation (Scott, 1993). Various studies have documented that time constraints are the most frequently mentioned reasons for ceasing participation in recreational activities among undergraduates (Scott & Kim, 1998). Lack of time is also noted as the most constraining factor to many people who want to participate in a variety of recreational activities (Jackson, 1989). In a study by Daskapan, Tuzun, and Eker (2006), it was reported that lack of time due to a busy lesson schedule, and lack of time due to responsibilities relative to family and social environment, were the most commonly cited barriers to participation in physical activities among university students in Turkey. Also, in a study by Menon (2008), lack of time (94%) is cited as one of the important barriers to participation in physical activities by the respondents. Time allotted to lectures and other class activities in the university do not give students room to participate in recreational activities, and is seen as one of the factors influencing students' participation in recreational activities. Most universities while planning their curriculum and lecture time table do not consider time for recreation as part of school activities and as such students are often unable to dedicate sufficient time to recreation due to expectations of their academic programmes. Sometimes during sports events organized by the university, the sports events tend to clash with lecture time table and it affects students' participation in sports.

Furthermore, students' social relationship is another factor considered to have influence on recreational participation among undergraduate students. Most students like to participate in recreational activities with their friends. Many of them especially girls do not like participating

with those that are not their friends. This influences their participation in recreational activities to a great extent because once their friends do not have time for recreation; they too are likely not to participate. In a study by Menon (2008), social influence (86%) is one of the important barriers to participation in physical activities as reported by the participants. Therefore for students to participate highly in recreational activities, there is need to identify recreational activities that are of interest to most students.

Economic-related factors can also influence participation in recreational activities by undergraduate students. Most undergraduates depend on their parents or guardians for financial support in school. Most of them may therefore not be able to participate in some recreational activities due to lack of the ability to finance it. This is because some recreational activities may involve purchase of equipment or supplies, travelling, or payment of gate pass/ticket. Sutjaho, Ball, Warren, Inglis, and Crawford (2004) conducted a study that found that the most commonly perceived barriers to physical activity among young women were excessive cost. Similarly, cost was cited as one of the structural determinants to physical inactivity among adolescent males (Allison et al., 2005). The study therefore determined the socio-demographic factors associated with participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate socio-demographic factors associated with participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of university of Nigeria Nsukka. Specifically the study sought to determine the:

1. relationship between time-related factors and participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, based on gender, age, year of study and faculty;
2. relationship between facilities and equipment-related factors and participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, based on gender, age year of study and faculty;
3. relationship between economic-related factors and participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, based on gender, age year of study and faculty; and
4. relationship between social factors and participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, based on gender, age year of study and faculty;

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between time-related factors and participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, based on gender, age year of study and faculty?
2. What is the relationship between facilities and equipment-related factors and participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, based on gender, age year of study and faculty?
3. What is the relationship between economic-related factors and participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, based on gender, age year of study and faculty?
4. What is the relationship between social factors and participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, based on gender, age year of study and faculty?

Materials and Methods

The cross sectional survey design was employed in order to accomplish the purpose of the study. The population for the study consisted of 9,973 undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in Enugu State Nigeria (Academic Planning Unit, 2017). There are 10 faculties in the Nsukka campus of the University of Nigeria. A sample size of 392 was arrived at using the Taro Yamane formula for a finite population, while the multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to select the respondents. The first stage involved the use of simple random sampling of balloting with replacement to select four faculties used for the study. The second stage involved the use of simple random sampling of balloting with replacement to select one Department from each of the four faculties sampled for the study. This produced a total of four departments. The third stage involved the use of purposive sampling to select 20 students from year one, two and three from each of the departments sampled for the study. This produced a total of 240 respondents from years one, two and three. Also, 38 students were drawn from years four and above from each of the departments sampled for the study using the purposive sampling technique. This produced a total of 152 students from year four and above. Thus, a total of 392 respondents were sampled for the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a self structured Factors Associated with Participation in Recreational Activities Questionnaire (FAPRAQ). The questionnaire was validated by five experts from the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The instrument had a reliability index of 0.67. A total number of 392 questionnaires were administered to the respondents, 24 of the questionnaires were improperly filled out and so were discarded during the analysis of data. Only 368 copies of the

questionnaire were used for analysis, which is 94% return rate. Data generated were analyzed using phi coefficient. The relationship was determined using Jackson (2009) scale for interpretation of relationship. The scale indicates that a value within .00 is termed no relationship; $\pm .01 - .29$ is termed weak relationship; $\pm .30 - .59$ is termed moderate relationship while values within $\pm .60 - 1.00$ are regarded as strong relationship.

Results

Table 1: Time Related Factors Associated with Participation in Recreational Activities

Time related factors	Gender		Age		Yr of Study		Faculty	
	Phi	Sig	Phi	Sig	Phi	Sig	Phi	Sig
I do not have enough time	.03	.59	.13	.04	.49	.69	.20	.06
I spend much time in academics	.60	.59	.17	.38	.78	.84	.20	.10
After school, I spend time in my parents business	.41	.45	.08	.33	.13	.31	.29	.03
I need time to attend to my friends	.19	.08	.28	.33	.43	.36	.19	.18
I need time to fern for my school fees	.27	.18	.06	.53	.31	.40	.20	.11
I need time to attend church activities	.68	.15	.09	.50	.22	.42	.13	.60
Cluster Total	0.36	.34	0.14	.35	0.39	.50	.20	.18

key: 0.00 = No relationship; 0.01 -0.29 = Weak relationship; 0.30 – 0.59 = Moderate relationship; 0.60 – 1.00 = Strong relationship

Table 1 above presents the time-related factors associated with participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, based on gender, age year of study and faculty. From the table, time related factors have moderate relationship with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students based on gender ($\phi = 0.36$) and year of study ($\phi = 0.39$). The table also indicated that time related factors have weak relationship with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students based on age ($\phi = 0.14$) and faculty ($\phi = 0.20$).

Table 2: Facilities and Equipment Related Factors Associated with Participation in Recreational Activities

Facilities/Equipment Related Factors	Gender		Age		Yr of Study		Faculty	
	Phi	Sig	Phi	Sig	Phi	Sig	Phi	Sig
There are not enough facilities	.03	.59	.13	.04	.09	.69	.20	.06
There are not enough equipment	.03	.59	.07	.38	.08	.84	.20	.10
My home is not near to facilities	.04	.45	.08	.33	.13	.31	.29	.03

It takes time to get to the facilities	.09	.08	.08	.33	.13	.36	.19	.18
There are a lot of people whenever I go there	.07	.18	.06	.53	.12	.40	.20	.11
Cluster Total	0.05	.43	0.10	.32	0.11	.52	0.22	.09

key: 0.00 = No relationship; 0.01 -0.29 = Weak relationship; 0.30 – 0.59 = Moderate relationship;

0.60 – 1.00 = Strong relationship

Table 2 above presents the facilities and equipment related factors associated with participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, based on gender, age, year of study and faculty. The table shows that all the facilities and equipment related factors have weak association with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students, based on gender ($\phi = 0.05$), age ($\phi = 0.10$), year of study ($\phi = 0.11$) and faculty ($\phi = 0.22$). However, faculty and year of study had higher Phi values than gender and age, irrespective of the fact that they all fell under weak associations with the variables.

Table 3: Economic Related Factors Associated with Participation in Recreational Activities

Item	Gender		Age		Yr of Study		Faculty	
	Phi	Sig	Phi	Sig	Phi	Sig	Phi	Sig
There is not enough money to buy equipment for the activity I like	.84	.43	.76	.39	.88	.33	.25	.00
Transportation to and fro recreational arena is costly	.20	.70	.44	.80	.61	.52	.25	.00
I do not have money for refreshment after recreational participation	.51	.90	.73	.24	.63	.28	.64	.46
There is not enough money to buy supplies for the activities I like	.71	.79	.83	.45	.56	.38	.29	.00
Cluster Total	0.56	.70	0.69	.47	0.67	.38	0.36	.12

key: 0.00 = No relationship; 0.01 -0.29 = Weak relationship; 0.30 – 0.59 = Moderate relationship;

0.60 – 1.00 = Strong relationship

Table 3 above presents the economic related factors associated with participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, based on gender, age year of study and faculty. From the table, economic related factors have strong relationship with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students, based on age ($\phi = 0.69$) and year of study ($\phi = 0.67$). The table also indicates that gender ($\phi = 0.56$) and faculty of respondents ($\phi = 0.36$) has moderate relationship with participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Table 4: Social Factors Associated with Participation in Recreational Activities

	Gender	Age	Yr of Study	Faculty
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Social Factors	Phi	Sig	Phi	Sig	Phi	Sig	Phi	Sig
There is no one to participate in the activities with	.37	.19	.22	.08	.12	.18	.28	.00
Friends do not like participating in the activities I like	.28	.15	.39	.23	.22	.37	.25	.00
I am not happy with the social environment in recreation centres	.42	.69	.27	.40	.34	.22	.15	.38
I am not interested in participating in recreation with those that are not my friends	.52	.74	.51	.97	.38	.03	.24	.01
My friends do not have enough time to participate with me	.17	.22	.17	.38	.17	.05	.17	.23
Cluster Total	0.35	.40	0.31	.41	0.25	.17	0.22	.12

key: 0.00 = No relationship; 0.01 -0.29 = Weak relationship; 0.30 – 0.59 = Moderate relationship; 0.60 – 1.00 = Strong relationship

Table 4 above presents social factors associated with participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, based on gender, age year of study and faculty. The table shows that social factors studied have moderate relationship with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students based on gender ($\phi = 0.35$) and age ($\phi = 0.31$). The table also revealed that year of study ($\phi = 0.25$) and faculty ($\phi = 0.22$) have weak relationship with participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students in University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Discussion

Findings in Table 1 showed that time-related factors have positive moderate relationship with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students based on gender ($\phi = 0.36$) and year of study ($\phi = 0.39$). Also, time-related factors have positive weak relationship with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students based on age ($\phi = 0.14$) and faculty ($\phi = 0.20$). This is not surprising but expected as the time allotted to lectures and other class activities in the university do not give students room to participate in recreational activities. This can be seen as one of the factors influencing students' participation in recreational activities. This is in line with Crawford and Godbey (1987), who reported a positive association between lack of time and participation in recreational activities. The implication of this is that time availability for participation in recreational activities is more pronounced based on gender and year of study and faculty of student

Results in Table 2 showed that all the facilities and equipment related factors have weak association with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students, based on gender ($\phi = 0.05$), age ($\phi = 0.10$), year of study ($\phi = 0.11$) and faculty ($\phi = 0.22$). However, faculty and year of study had higher Phi values than gender and age, irrespective of the fact that they all fell under weak associations with the variables. This is not surprising as facilities and equipment are very essential in participation in recreational activities. This agrees with Hashim (2012) who reported that convenient facilities, knowledge of available activities and personal transportation were positively associated with participation in recreational activities. Also,

findings in the demographic variables of age, gender, year of study and faculty of students all have positive weak association with participation in recreational activities.

Results in Table 3 revealed that economic related factors have strong relationship with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students, based on age ($\phi = 0.69$) and year of study ($\phi = 0.67$). The table also indicated that gender ($\phi = 0.56$) and faculty of respondents ($\phi = 0.36$) has moderate relationship with participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This is not surprising but expected as money is needed for engagement or participation in most recreational activities. Finance is essential for planning and execution of most recreation programmes. This finding is in line with Chung and Godbey (2013) who reported that finance was positively associated with participation in recreational activities among university students.

The findings in Table 4 showed that social factors studied have positive moderate relationship with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students based on gender ($\phi = 0.35$) and age ($\phi = 0.31$); while year of study ($\phi = 0.25$) and faculty ($\phi = 0.22$) have positive weak relationship with participation in recreational activities among undergraduate students in University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This finding agrees with Crawford and Godbey (1987) who reported that students like to engage in the same recreational sports activities as their friends and age grades. Crawford and Godbey further stated that they feel secured, relaxed and as well understood in the mist of their peers and friends. In other words, students of the same year of study and or faculty will tend to participate in recreational activities jointly than with students of other year of study and faculty.

Conclusion

Participation in recreational activities helps students in balancing stresses that result from the crowded academic programmes. It revitalizes students' spirit, restores vitality, initiative and perspective of life of students. The findings of the study depicted a positive strong relationship between economic factors and participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students, based on age and year of study. This no doubt may be as a result of the economic hardship prevailing in Nigeria.

Time related factors had positive moderate relationship with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students based on gender and year of study. Also social factors studied had positive moderate relationship with participation in recreational activities among the undergraduate students based on gender and age.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommended that the university authority should:

1. Enforce where available lecture free times for the students to engage in recreational sports.
2. Provide adequate facilities and equipment for recreational sports in the campus. These facilities should be situated as close as possible to the hostels or classroom so that it would be easily accessible to the students.
3. Organize recreational activities based on year of study to give the students opportunity to participate along their social groups.

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