



INFLUENCE OF RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES ON STRESS, SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG LECTURERS IN UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR

JOSEPH ODEY OGABOR, NKANU, ENENDEME IREM, MARTINA AYIBEYA APIE, MOSES IMAM BEPEH, PETER OWOGOGA ADUMA AND SHANTALI SHUAIBU AMINU

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated impact of recreational activities on stress, subjective wellbeing and job satisfaction among lecturers in the University of Calabar Nigeria. Three null hypotheses guided the study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select the 150 lecturers from the faculties of education who participated in the study. The instrument for data collection was a twenty (20) item structured questionnaire which was presented for validation by two experts in Test and Measurement and one from the department of Human Kinetics and Health Education. Data were collected by physically administering copies of the instrument to the respondents. The data collected were statistically analyzed using simple linear regression and the study documented a statistically significant influence of recreational activities on stress management, subjective wellbeing and job satisfaction among lecturers in the University of Calabar. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended among other suggestions that relevant authorities should ensure that recreational activities are deliberately introduced into lecturers' work schedules to sustain their job satisfaction and attain educational goals and objectives.

KEYWORDS: Recreational Activities, Stress, Subjective Wellbeing, Job Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Recreational activities are free time activities often performed for the purpose of relaxation.

Leitner and Leitner (2012), defined recreational activity as any bodily movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscle that increases energy expenditure above a resting level.

Joseph Odey Ogabor, Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, University of Calabar, Calabar.

Nkanu, Enendeme Irem, Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, University of Calabar, Calabar.

Martina Ayibeya Apie, Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, University of Calabar, Calabar.

Moses Imam Bepeh, Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, University of Calabar, Calabar.

Peter Owogoga Aduma, Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, Faculty of Vocational and Science Education, University of Calabar, Calabar.

Shantali Shuaibu Aminu, Department of Human Kinetics and Health education Shehu Shagari University of Education, Sokoto.

They could include leisure time activities, which encompasses sport and exercise activities, cultural activities, outdoor activities, social activities and similar activities with the purpose of improving mood as well as general health and wellness. According to Aksoy, Cankaya and Taşmektepligil (2017), recreational activities constitute the most significant area of sports activities in terms of enhancing health.

However, many people and lecturers tend to delegate an insignificant place and time to recreational activities in their life due to the numerous responsibilities they undertake in a bid to earn a living, forgetting that the impulse to recreation is so fundamental and universal that it cannot be suppressed (Gulam, 2016). Hence, the need to participate in recreational activities is a natural desire that is inherent in every human (Sönmez, 2023). Gulam (2016) opined that recreation means anything done to regain lost vigour and get a sense of excitement, refreshment and satisfaction. The importance of recreation in improving one's quality of life is well known, with recreational activities known to relax the mind, reduce stress and anxiety as well as boost self-image and confidence, (California State Parks, 2005; Mustapha, Mohammad & Mohammed, 2022; Dawudu & Sholanke, 2023).

Scholars have adduced those recreational activities increases physiological and cognitive functioning; counterbalances the effects of stress; provides opportunities for social interactions and thereby increases social satisfaction, consequently leading to improved quality of life and functional ability (Elliott, Gale, Parsons, & Kuh, 2014; Delhey & Dragolov, 2016; Okiljević, Stojanović & Abohllala, 2017). Sönmez (2023) added that relief from the stress of life, emotional relaxation, creative thinking, mental relaxation, the feeling of achieving success, enjoyment of life, happiness, strengthening spiritual feelings, a sense of freedom, mental development, among others are some of the psychological benefits of participating in recreational activities. Its social benefits include a better understanding human relation, establishing positive relationships, making friends, empathizing, getting along with them, understanding the thoughts of others, sharing ideas, and receiving support from them (Yan, 2013). However, it has been noted that the culture of consciously engaging in recreational activities is very low in Nigeria (Dawudu & Sholanke, 2023).

Several reasons have been identified for the participation or non-involvement in recreational activities. Among these include age, gender, family/marital status, socioeconomic position, health related issues (Galenkamp et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2018); time, proximity of recreational places, lack of, or inadequate recreational facilities, poor recreational design elements in recreational facilities (Sava, 2015); for relaxation, to get away from stressful situations, boredom and loneliness (Mustapha, Mohammad & Mohammed, 2022). Psychological, economic, and environmental variables could also affect the participation in recreational activities.

With rapidly changing technology, stressful working environments and the complexities of modern life, more importance has been placed on recreational activities to boost quality of life, which includes physical and emotional vitality and is tied to a person's satisfaction with life, subjective well-being, happiness, functional competence, and social well-being (Aksoy, Cankaya & Taşmektepligil, 2017). Admittedly, employees in workplaces are faced with a variety of risks and problems that can decrease their spirits and motivation, leading to poor job performance. Sönmez, (2023) averred that although the various benefits of recreational activities in various subpopulations are well documented, academic staff have been neglected in most of such studies. Substantial evidence attests to the fact that the job of academic staff of tertiary institutions is extremely stressful to the level that it is affecting their effectiveness (Akah et al., 2022; Gabrielli & Lund, 2020; Aina & Adeleke, 2018; Osaat & Ekechukwu, 2017).

Lecturers' job effectiveness refers to the dedicated conducts of lecturers in performing their official duties (Onwuachu, 2007). In addition to being a teacher and researcher, a highly effective lecturer possesses the attributes of being a supervisor, counsellor, facilitator, motivator and leader (Modebelu & Kalu-uche, 2013; Udoh-Uwah & Etim, 2018). However, academic staff are faced with problems such as heavy workload, long career process, inflexible working conditions, unfair wage distribution among which tend to interfere with their job effectiveness. Without giving conscious attention to the need for recreation, most academics tend to view engagement in recreational activities as a waste of time which would have been utilized towards achieving occupational goals. In fact, findings

obtained from Sönmez, (2023) presented that the participation levels of academics in recreational activities in general are quite low. It is therefore needful for academics to create time for recreational activities in the midst heavy job demands to recuperate from the stress and challenges induced by their job so as to enhance their effectiveness for service delivery. Hence, this was found relevant because it sought to investigate the impact of recreational activities on stress level, subjective wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Stress is a global problem, which is affecting the quality of life and job performance of employees in almost every sector of the economy. Stress occurs when the demand of a job is observed to be greater than the individual's coping mechanisms (Obinna-Akakuru, Njoku, Agunanne, Nelson-Okata & Onwujaliri, 2022). Ogabor, Ekpo, Apie, Mohammed, Aduma & Shantali (2023) Observed that, high levels of perceived stress can lead to cognitive impairments, reduced attention, and decreased decision-making abilities. Stress management, particularly among academic staff of tertiary institutions is getting an increasingly important consideration globally. Lecturers tend to experience extreme exhaustion, reduced productivity and burnout due to workplace demands and stress (Eseadi et al., 2023). Occupational stress has been identified as a major factor contributing to job ineffectiveness and diminished productivity among workers which ought to be kept at the barest minimum if performance is to be maximized (Obinna-Akakuru, et al. 2022; Murphy, 2005). Indeed, recreational activities aid in stress management (Lowella-Fe & Hendely, 2022).

Various studies have been conducted on the role of recreational activities in reducing stress. For instance, a study by Aksoy, Cankaya & Taşmektepligil (2017) investigated the effects of participating in recreational activities on quality of life and job satisfaction and submitted that there was a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of life quality scale of those who participated in recreational activities and those who did not. It was revealed that those who participated in sports activities were found to have higher quality-of-life total scores than those who did not. Therefore, management of universities must find ways of managing stress at the workplace. Also, Vurgun (2015) revealed that recreational activities in the form of regular exercise significantly reduced

stress, anxiety and depression level. Likewise, the study by Rogowska, Kusnierz and Bokszczanin (2020) submitted that recreational activities have the potential to reduce nervous tension. In addition, several studies (Ozdenk and Kaya, 2019; Lee et al., 2014) attested to the fact that recreational activities had a positive effect in reducing stress levels.

Recreational activities have also been revealed to have a favourable effect on subjective wellbeing (SWB). SWB is closely associated with feelings or emotions and life satisfaction concerned with people's cognitive evaluations and judgments about their life when they think about it, which might include evaluations of their work, personal relationships, or perception of health status (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999; Ngamaba, Panagioti & Armitage, 2017). Ngamaba, Aksoy, Cankaya & Taşmektepligil (2017) investigated the effects of participating in recreational activities on quality of life and job satisfaction and submitted that there was a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of life quality scale of those who participated in recreational activities and those who did not. It was revealed that those who participated in sports activities were found to have higher quality-of-life total scores than those who did not. Therefore, management of universities must find ways of managing stress at the workplace. Also, Vurgun (2015) revealed that recreational activities in the form of regular exercise significantly reduced stress, anxiety and depression level. Likewise, the study by Rogowska, Kusnierz and Bokszczanin (2020) submitted that recreational activities have the potential to reduce nervous tension. In addition, several studies (Ozdenk and Kaya, 2019; Lee et al., 2014) attested to the fact that recreational activities had a positive effect in reducing stress levels.

Job satisfaction is also an important factor that can determine performance. It simply refers to how an employee feels about his or her job. It is an attitude that reflects what a employees feel about their job, colleagues and the working conditions (John, 2011). Çavuşoğlu, Tasmektepligil, Islamoglu & Unver, (2015) disclosed that job satisfaction is an extremely important aspect of performance among employees. Albritton (2008) equally presented that recreational programme influence overall levels of job satisfaction. A study by Aksoy, Cankaya & Taşmektepligil (2017) reported that participation in recreational activities was found to

have a positive effect on job satisfaction levels. Likewise, Shujat, Ameer and Cheemer (2011) presented that there was a strong positive correlation between recreational and entertainment activities and job satisfaction among staff in the telecommunication sector. They justified their result by stating that leisure time activities often result in better interpersonal relationships, as well as ease up traditional work environment while making workplace comfortable and a less stressful place. Koç and Er (2020) in their study on leisure satisfaction and job satisfaction among academics submitted that there was no statistical difference between leisure and job satisfaction with regards to gender, marital status, possession of enough leisure, age, title, weekly course hours and service life variables. The study equally found a positive and low-level relationship between leisure satisfaction and job satisfaction.

From the above, it could be observed that, the relevance of recreational activities to the overall health of an individual including lecturers cannot be overlooked. However, seemingly little studies have been conducted in tertiary institutions especially University of Calabar regarding the benefits of recreational activities. Academic staff of tertiary institutions play a very significant role in knowledge generation and dissemination and sometimes they tend to be overburdened with the need for quality service delivery which sometimes make it difficult for them to a lot time for recreation. Unbeknownst to the academic staff of the University of Calabar, recreational activities can be vital for revival of energy and Vigor to effectively perform their jobs. And like the age long Nigerian adage "all work without play makes Jack a dull boy", the researchers perceive that not creating time for leisure activities may have a detrimental effect on the productivity of lecturers. Hence, the study was deemed relevant as the researchers sought to assess the influence of recreational activities on the stress level, subjective wellbeing and job satisfaction of lecturers in the University of Calabar.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, this study assessed:

- i. The influence of recreational activities on stress level among Lecturers in University of Calabar
- ii. The influence of recreational activities on subjective wellbeing of lecturers in University of Calabar

- iii. The influence of recreational activities on job satisfaction of lecturers in University of Calabar

Research Hypotheses

The following hypothesis were formulated to guide the study:

- i. There is no significant influence of recreational activities on the stress level of Lecturers in the University of Calabar
- ii. Recreational activities do not significantly influence the subjective wellbeing of lecturers in the University of Calabar
- iii. There is no significant influence of recreational activities on the job satisfaction of lecturers in the University of Calabar.

METHODS

This research adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of all academic staff of the Faculties of Education in the University of Calabar. The sampling technique utilized was stratified random sampling technique, which was used to select a sample of 150 academic staff. The instrument used for data collection was a twenty-item structured questionnaire titled Recreational Activities on Stress, Subjective Well-being and Job Performance Questionnaire (RASSWJPQ). Items 1-5 measured recreational activities, items 6-10 measured stress, items 11-15 measured subjective wellbeing while items 16-20 measured job satisfaction.

The instruments were validated by three experts. Two in Human Kinetics and Health Education and one from Test and Measurement unit of the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Calabar. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha reliability method and a coefficient of 0.77 to 0.79 was obtained.

The researchers applied for permission to conduct the research from each of the Head of the various departments used in the study. Upon approval, an appointment was booked with the Head of Departments. The respondents (Lecturers) were briefed by the researchers on the purpose of the study. There were assured that their responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used for research purpose. The researchers then, accompanied with two research assistants distributed the questionnaire to the respondents (Lecturers).

The completed copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and analyzed using Simple linear regression

Results

Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of recreational activities on the stress level of Lecturers in University of Calabar. The independent variable in this hypothesis is recreational activities while the dependent variable is stress level among lecturers in the University of Calabar. The result of this analysis is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Simple linear regression analysis of the influence of recreational activities on stress level among lecturers in the University of Calabar (N = 150)

Model	R	R ²	Adj.R ²	Std error of estimate
1	.374*	.264	.262	3.25472

Model	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig
Regression	141.511	1	141.511	44.312*	.000
Residual	1036.015	148	18.547		
Total	1184.526	149			

The result of analysis of data presented in Table 1 showed that the independent or predictor variable (Recreational activities) have a significant influence on the dependent or predicted variable (stress level) among lecturers in the University of Calabar. This implied that recreational activities accounted for 26.4% of management of stress level among lecturers in the study area. Secondly, the result of regression ANOVA presented in Table 1 revealed that there was a significant influence of recreational activities on management of stress level among lecturers $F(1, 148) = 44.312; p < .05$. The result of this analysis indicated that there is a low contribution of recreational activities to management of stress

level among lecturers in the University of Calabar. This indicated that recreational activities are significantly influencing stress level management among University lecturers in the study area.

Hypothesis two

Recreational activities do not significantly influence the subjective wellbeing of lecturers in University of Calabar. The independent variable in this hypothesis is recreational activities while the dependent variable is subjective wellbeing of lecturers. Simple linear regression statistical tool was employed for data analysis. The result obtained from the analysis is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Simple linear regression analysis of the influence of recreational activities on subjective wellbeing of lecturers in the University of Calabar (N = 150)

Model	R	R ²	Adj.R ²	Std error of estimate
1	.368*	.233	.231	3.18072

Model	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig
Regression	131.362	1	131.362	24.348	.000
Residual	1953.174	148	15.427		
Total	1184.536	149			

The result of analysis of data presented in Table 2 showed that the independent or predictor variable (Recreational activities) have a significant influence on the dependent or predicted variable (subjective wellbeing) among lecturers in the University of Calabar. This implied that recreational activities accounted for 23.3% of subjective wellbeing among lecturers in the study area.

Secondly, the result of regression ANOVA presented in Table 2 revealed that there was a significant influence of recreational activities on subjective wellbeing among lecturers $F(1, 148) =$

24.348; $p < .05$. The result of this analysis indicated that there is a low contribution of recreational activities to subjective wellbeing among lecturers in the University of Calabar. This indicated that recreational activities are significantly influencing subjective wellbeing among University lecturers in the study area.

Hypothesis three

There is no significant influence of recreational activities on the job satisfaction among lecturers in the University of Calabar. The independent variable in this hypothesis is recreational activities while the dependent variable is job satisfaction of lecturers. Simple linear regression statistical tool was utilized for data analysis. The result obtained from this analysis is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Simple linear regression analysis of the influence of recreational activities on job satisfaction among lecturers in the University of Calabar (N = 150)

Model	R	R ²	Adj.R ²	Std error of estimate
1	.245*	.168	.166	2.94631

Model	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig
Regression	138.731	1	138.731	17.611*	.000
Residual	1036.015	148	13.547		
Total	1184.526	149			

The result of analysis of data presented in Table 3 showed that the independent or predictor variable (Recreational activities) have a significant influence on the dependent or predicted variable (job satisfaction) among lecturers in the University of Calabar. This implied that recreational activities accounted for 16.8% of job satisfaction among lecturers in the study area.

Secondly, the result of regression ANOVA presented in Table 3 revealed that there was a significant influence of recreational activities on job satisfaction among lecturers $F(1, 148) = 17.611$; $p < .05$. The result of this analysis indicated that there is a low contribution of recreational activities to job satisfaction among lecturers in the University of Calabar. This indicated that recreational activities are significantly influencing job satisfaction among University lecturers in the study area.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis one in the study revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected. The implication of this finding is that there was a significant influence of recreational facilities on stress level among lecturers in the University of Calabar. The reason for this finding could be that as lecturers become more aware of the need to engage in recreational activities and take more active part in various forms of recreational activities, there has been a significant reduction in their stress level. This has enhanced the mental health and emotional stability of the lecturers used in the study. This accounted for the influence of recreational activities on the management of stress level among lecturers in the University of Calabar.

The finding of this study agrees with that of Aksoy, Cankaya and Taşmektepligil (2017) who investigated the effects of participating in recreational activities on quality of life and job satisfaction and submitted that there was a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of life quality scale of those who participated in recreational activities and those who did not. It was revealed that those who participated in sports activities were found to have higher quality-of-life total scores than those who did not. Therefore, management of universities must find ways of managing stress at the workplace.

The finding of this study also supported that of Vurgun (2015) who revealed that recreational activities in the form of regular exercise significantly reduced stress, anxiety and depression level. Likewise, the study by Rogowska, Kusnierz and Bokszczanin (2020) submitted that recreational activities have the potential to reduce nervous tension. In addition, several studies (Ozdenk & Kaya, 2019; Lee et al., 2014) attested to the fact that recreational activities had a positive effect in reducing stress levels.

The finding obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis two in the study revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected. The implication of this finding is that there was a significant influence of recreational activities on subjective wellbeing of lecturers in the University of Calabar. The reason for this finding could be that as more lecturers continue to realize the benefits associated with participating in recreational activities, there has been a significant increase in recreational activities. This situation has enabled lecturers to enjoy high levels of subjective wellbeing due to increased level of relaxation among lecturers in the University of Calabar.

The finding of this study agrees with that of Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith (2019) who reported that recreational activities have also been revealed to have a favourable effect on subjective wellbeing (SWB). SWB is closely associated with feelings or emotions and life satisfaction concerned with people's cognitive evaluations and judgments about their life when they think about it, which might include evaluations of their work, personal relationships, or perception. Ngamaba, Panagioti and Armitage (2017) established a link between health status and SWB stating that they do not differ significantly. The study further presented that when SWB is operationalized as life satisfaction

as opposed to happiness the relationship is even stronger. Subjective well-being is often viewed as having the affective and cognitive components (Sönmez, 2023).

The finding of Schulz et al. (2018) also revealed that interest and participation in social activities and sports had a strong and positive relationship (in different dimensions) with subjective well-being. This was like Tian et al. (2020) who found that leisure satisfaction is positively associated with subjective well-being. Findings from Kuykendall, Tay and Ng, (2015) revealed that participation in recreational activities is moderately and positively associated with subjective well-being. Likewise, Mackenzie and Hodge (2020) study agree with this study that stated that recreation increases subjective well-being by supporting the satisfaction of primary psychological needs vital for a beneficence, competence as well as a healthy and happy life.

The finding obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis three in the study revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that there was a significant influence of recreational activities on job satisfaction among lecturers in the University of Calabar. The reason for this finding could be that participation in recreational activities has continued to help lecturers feel more relax and refreshed while carrying out their professional functions. The attainment of job satisfaction could be attributed to a feeling of relaxation created by recreational activities. This accounted for the significant influence of recreational activities on job satisfaction among lecturers in the University of Calabar.

The finding of this study agrees with that of Aksoy, Cankaya and Taşmektepligil (2017) who asserted that job satisfaction is also an important factor that can determine performance. It simply refers to how an employee feels about his or her job. It is an attitude that reflects what a employees feel about their job, colleagues and the working conditions (John, 2011). Çavuşoğlu, Tasmektepligil, Islamoglu & Unver, (2015) disclosed that job satisfaction is an extremely important aspect of performance among employees. Albritton (2008) equally presented that recreational program impact overall levels of job satisfaction. A study by Aksoy, Cankaya & Taşmektepligil (2017) reported that participation in recreational activities was found to have a positive effect on job satisfaction levels.

The finding of this study also supported that of Shujat, Ameer and Cheemer (2011) who stated that there was a strong positive correlation between recreational and entertainment activities and job satisfaction among staff in the telecommunication sector. They justified their result by stating that leisure time activities often result in better interpersonal relationships, as well as ease up traditional work environment while making workplace comfortable and a less stressful place. Koç and Er (2020) in their study on leisure satisfaction and job satisfaction among academics submitted that there was no statistical difference between leisure and job satisfaction with regards to gender, marital status, possession of enough leisure, age, title, weekly course hours and service life variables. The study equally found a positive and low-level relationship between leisure satisfaction and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the influence of recreational activities on stress, subjective wellbeing and job satisfaction of lecturers in the University of Calabar. The findings obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypotheses in the study revealed that there was a significant influence of recreational activities on stress, subjective wellbeing and job satisfaction among lecturers in the University of Calabar. In conclusion, recreational activities significantly influence stress, subjective wellbeing and job satisfaction among lecturers used for this study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers made the following recommendations based on the findings obtained in the study.

- i. Lecturers should continue to engage more in recreational activities that suits their schedule to promote effective stress management.
- ii. Lecturers should be adequately sensitized on the need to engage more effectively any recreational activity of their choice so as to improve their subjective wellbeing at all times.
- iii. Relevant authorities such as the University management and others should ensure that recreational activities are deliberately introduced into lecturers' work schedule to sustain their job satisfaction and attain educational goals and objectives.

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