

Leisure Patterns Among Nigerian University Lecturers: the Potential for Leisure Education in Industries

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Abstract: *Regular leisure activities obviously have their health benefits and effect on productivity and when adults do not have enough of leisure activities or rest, there are bound to be negative repercussions. University lecturers are expected to perform optimally, but there are mitigating circumstances like external stressors and inadequate provision of facilities that may lead to stress and, if not well managed, can affect the productivity level. This survey was conducted on Lecturers in Nigerian Universities where 250 were randomly selected from six Nigerian Universities cutting across Private, Federal and State Universities. Five research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested. A set of researcher-designed and validated questionnaire 'Questionnaire on Lecturers' Leisure Time Activities' (QLLTA) were used to collect data. Analysis was done using percentages, Chi-Squared and Factorial analysis. Results show a somewhat adequate awareness of leisure time activities and provision of facilities; however Lecturers cited work and time constraints and family responsibilities as possible deterrents to participating in leisure activities. The introduction of specialists like leisure counselors, among others, was recommended to conduct leisure education.*

I. Introduction

Lecturers, as full time and adult workers in the service industry face the challenge of ensuring a high productivity level as a part of the manpower producing industries of the nation towards manpower development and national growth. Findings of the Ofuegbu (2006) research showed that there was a high stress level among Nigerian University Lecturers which is in agreement with other previous researches like that of Jarvis (2002). Stress itself is not necessarily bad, in minimum doses, but constant stress can result in decrease in the level of performance of one's duty and poor health, among others (UK Health Service, 2001).

Stress, the inability of the body mechanisms to cope with the demands made on it is a process whereby environmental events or forces threaten the well being of an individual in the society. Nigerian Lecturers are expected to perform optimally within the given curriculum, but researches have revealed that basic necessary infrastructure are not available or are inadequate (Bakare, 2009). Mounting evidence has also shown that prolonged occupational stress can lead to both mental and physical illness which will obviously affect the quality of teaching. All of these have serious implications for the degree and quality of one's output as well as the need to consider effective coping strategies. Adults, as full time workers are also susceptible to many other external stressors that affect their productivity level as well as their health.

Leisure is non-work activities that are freely chosen. It is seen as recreational or discretionary free time spent out of work, before or after compulsory activities like working, schooling, doing housework and other day to day normal activities. Godbey (1985) defines leisure as 'relative freedom from the external compulsive forces of one's culture and physical environment, so as to be able to act from internally compelling love in ways which are personally pleasing and intuitively worthwhile'. There are different options for leisure activities like *active, passive, sport and social*. It is however good practice to engage in one or more of these activities for relaxation (Otinwa, 2008); as often as is necessary to maintain a natural balance.

Leisure Education is a method of adult education that provides individuals the opportunity to enhance the quality of their lives; understand opportunities, potentials, and challenges in leisure; understand the impact of leisure on the quality of their lives; and gain knowledge, skills, and appreciation enabling broad leisure skills (Datillo, 2002). Teaching leisure skills may be done formally or informally. Leisure Education involves the process of helping people to develop appreciation, interest and the skill to help them use their leisure time in a more personally rewarding way. In Nigeria, we do not have people who specialize mainly in coaching leisure skills as in the more developed countries. The closest we have are Adult Educators, people in Sports and the Health sectors who collectively have different but partial input.

1.2 Problem of the study

Adults, more especially those who are full time workers, learners and professionals in industries generally face all manners of stress. They therefore need to have some type of coping mechanism or strategies to reduce the effect of this challenge. As professionals in the teaching industry, Lecturers are stressed and do not have enough of leisure time activities which will surely influence the quality of their ability to produce the

expected manpower for national development. If lecturers are expected to be highly productive and there are mitigating factors that constitute stress; they will need to learn how to balance their various commitments.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The primary objective of the study was to determine the participation patterns of Lecturers in leisure activities as well as investigate other contributors to a healthy lifestyle and improved productivity. The specific objectives were to:

1. document lecturers participation patterns in leisure activities and their preferred leisure time activities;
2. examine the adequacy of lecturers' leisure skills and familiarity with leisure counselors;
3. identify the availability or provision of leisure facilities on campus;
4. elicit their opinion on the adequacy of their leisure time activities;
5. determine their attitude to leisure, and identify factors that prevent their full participation in leisure time activities.

1.4 Research Questions

To guide the study the following research questions were raised:

1. a) What are lecturers' participation patterns in leisure time activities?
b) and what leisure activities do lecturers prefer?
2. a) Do lecturers have adequate leisure skills?
b) Are they familiar with leisure counselors?
3. Are there adequate leisure facilities provided on the University campuses?
4. What is the attitude of lecturers to leisure?
5. Do they have enough leisure time activities, and what factors prevent lecturers from having sufficient leisure time?

1.5 Hypotheses

1. Gender will not have a significant effect on lecturers' perception of leisure time activities.
2. The residential status of lecturers will not significantly affect their choice of leisure time activities and participation patterns.

II. Methodology

The study was a descriptive survey of Lecturers taken across Faculties and stratified into designation, age and sex for convenience. The population for the study consisted Lecturers in all Nigerian Universities. Purposive sampling technique was used to select only Universities with options of on-campus accommodation for their staff, which excluded Universities without on-campus accommodation for lecturers. Lecturers were then randomly selected across all Faculties with male and female representation. The overall staff size of the various Universities was also considered and proportionate random sampling technique was used to select a total of 250 Lecturers from the six Universities, made up of two representatives each of Federal, State and Private Universities in Western Nigeria as shown in figure 1 below:

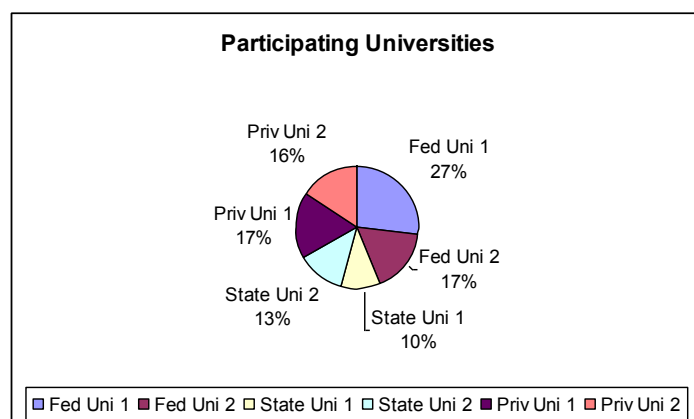


Figure 1: Pie chart showing the distribution of the sample for the study

This chart shows the selection pattern of the sample size. Respondents were selected based on the staff strength of the institutions and on convenience. A total of 44% were from the two Federal Universities, 23% were selected from the State Universities and 33% of the respondents were from Private Universities. 144 (57.6%) of the respondents were male and 106 (42.4%) were female. The modal age range fell between 36-45 years of age, at 41.6%, followed by 46-55 at 21.6%. The lowest were below 25 years of age and between 66-70 years, both at 10%. 180 (72%) of the respondents were married with children. Most of the respondents were Lecturer I (27.2%) followed by Assistant Lecturers at 20.8% and the smallest group were Associate Professors at 5.6%. Majority (68.8%) resided off campus and the rest at 31.2% lived on campus as indicated in the next pivot chart:

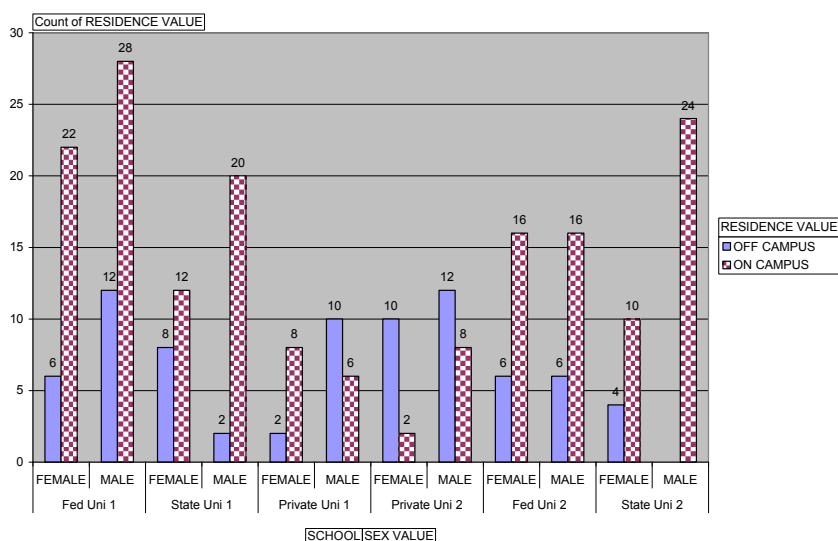


Figure 2: Pivot chart showing residential status

This Pivot Chart shows a breakdown of the number of respondents who lived on or off campus in the six Universities, according to their gender.

The main instrument used to collect the relevant data for the study was a researcher-constructed questionnaire titled Questionnaire for Lecturers' Leisure Time Activities (QLLTA). It had three sections. Section one sought the bio-data of the respondents. Section two was a 20 – item closed ended statements on lecturers' leisure time activities. The third section contained statements with Likert-type responses on belief, attitude and knowledge about leisure benefits. The instrument was validated with the help of professional colleagues to ensure face and content validity. The questionnaire had a test-retest reliability coefficient value of 67.4 at three weeks interval. The instrument was administered with the help of four graduate assistants and all 250 copies were retrieved. The SPSS package was used to analyze the data collected, using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The results were presented using tables and a Pivot Chart. The levels of significance of the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level using the chi-squared tool.

III. Results and the discussion of findings

The respondents were aware of leisure, as most of them agreed that it had to do with resting/relaxing and participating in one's favourite activities. Responses to research question 1(a) revealed that Lecturers do participate in leisure activities, although the majority (47.2%) of them do so only once a week; 23.4% say they take part in leisure activities once a day and up to 11.3% claim they never participate in leisure activities, while 8% do it once a year!. This suggests that they probably are not as knowledgeable as they should be about what constitutes leisure activities; do not get enough leisure time or are not exploring the full range of potentially available leisure activities that could also be relaxing and could easily be incorporated into routine daily activities. Majority of the respondents (39%) saw leisure in terms of sleeping, followed by watching Television (17%) as indicated by the chart below and in response to question 1b.

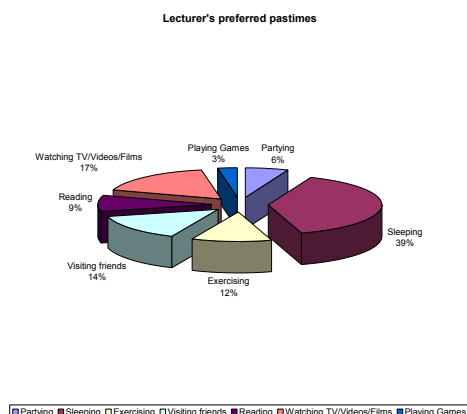


Figure 3: Pie Chart of Lecturers' favourite leisure time activities

Lecturers, in the most part, participate in sleeping 39% and 17% in watching television. 12% do exercises to relax and the least (3%), play games for relaxation (figure 3). 42.4% of the respondents see leisure activities as something that must be planned in advance and 67% had also indicated that they preferred leisure activities that involved other people.

In response to the research question 3 on the possession of leisure skills; majority of the respondents (39%) possessed two leisure skills, mainly reading for leisure and interacting with others (figure 3). The more common leisure skill for those who had only one skill (20.8%) was interacting with others. Those who had two or more added using the gym for exercises, swimming or appreciating the Arts, among others. However, even though lecturers claim to have three or more skills, many of them admit that they do not use them as often as they would like. The next figure shows a distribution of Lecturers' leisure skills:

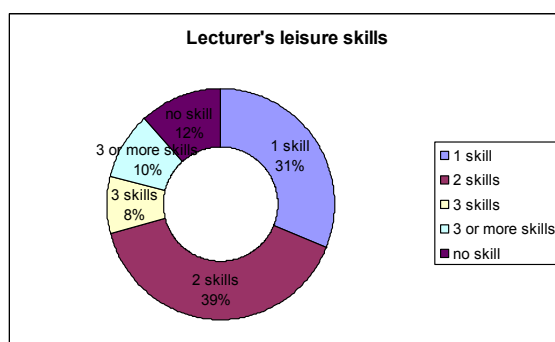


Figure 4: Distribution of possession of leisure skills by Lecturers

Figure 4 shows Lecturers' possession of leisure skills. Majority (39%) claim that they possess two leisure skills followed by those who have only one skill (31%) and 12% claim they do not have any leisure skills.

Asked if they were familiar with leisure counselors, the responses were are shown in the next figure:

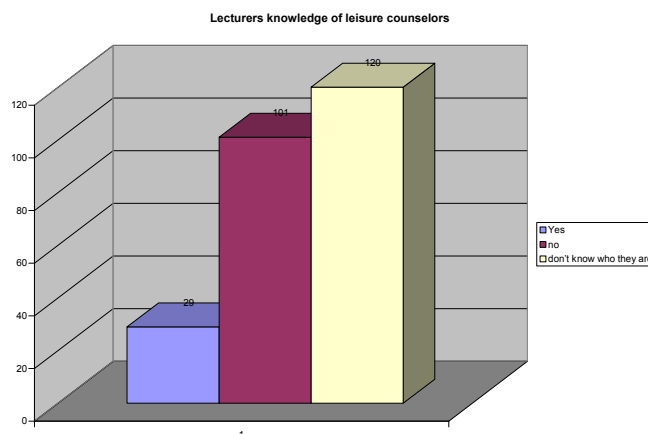


Fig. 5: lecturers’ awareness of leisure counselors

Figure 5 shows lecturers’ familiarity with leisure counselors. The majority (48%) of the respondents answered ‘no’ when asked whether they were familiar with leisure counselors. 29 of the respondents, representing (11.6%) claimed they were familiar with leisure counselors while 40.4% did not know who they were.

Most of the respondents were aware of provisions for leisure activities on campus (75.8%) and 43.2% were actually close to these facilities which were mostly jogging routes, gym, swimming pool and the majority knew of the staff club which is what they mostly saw as the prime relaxing place on a campus, where they could relax and socialize after work. 54.5% believe there is adequate provision of leisure opportunities on campus while 24% do not know where these facilities were on campus. From the responses, most of the Universities had at least the Staff Club as a place where Lecturers could relax after work by socializing; 57% had also indicated that they preferred leisure activities that involved others. Frequency of the responses indicated that there were at least basic leisure facilities (the staff club) in all of the universities, apart from others. This answers research question five on the adequacy of provision of leisure facilities on campus, there is averagely enough.

Research question 4 dealt with lecturers’ attitude to leisure. A Likert Scale type of response was used to elicit information about lecturers’ attitude to leisure. The responses are shown in table 1.

TABLE 1: Lecturers’ attitude to leisure

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
	1. I don’t care about leisure	2.106	35.107	35.107	2.106	35.107
2. I know I it is good but I do not have the time	1.324	22.073	57.180	1.324	22.073	57.180
3. I feel it is detrimental to my health	1.023	17.047	74.227	1.023	17.047	74.227
4. I do not feel it is really useful	.656	10.933	85.160			
5. I feel only lazy people spend time to relax	.532	8.865	94.025			
6. I fee it is beneficial	.359	5.975	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 1 addressed research question 4 which sought to determine what contributes to lecturers’ attitude towards leisure time activities. The first 3 items were significant enough to account for 74.23% of the attitude of the respondents.

In the respondents’ opinion, 59% of them believe that they do not have enough of leisure time activities. In response to the second part of the research question 5, possible hindrances were indicated as follows: 52% claim that work can be a hindrance to their leisure time activities. 10% believe that nothing can disturb their leisure while the others find that a combination of family and other responsibilities may disturb them, some see timing schedule as a problem and 5.2% see the lack of interest as a possible hindrance.

3.2 Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Gender will not significantly contribute to lecturers’ perception of leisure time activities.

TABLE 2: Gender influence on leisure participation.

		What do you see as relaxation						Total
		Watching TV/video	Reading	Visiting friends	Exercise	Sleeping	Partying	
Sex	Female	13(12.3%)	16(15.1%)	13(12.3%)	23(21.7%)	39(36.8%)	2(1.9%)	106
	Male	36(25.4%)	22(15.5%)	17(12.0%)	24(16.9%)	43(30.3%)	0(0.0%)	142
	Total	49(19.8%)	38(15.3%)	30(12.1%)	47(19.0%)	82(33.1%)	2(0.8%)	100%

Table 2 is a cross-tabulation between gender and lecturers' perception of leisure activities. Further statistics show that the chi-squared calculated value of 11.07 (df = 5) is less than the table value of 9.49 at 5% level of significance. Thus, there was no significant difference between gender and what lecturers saw as leisure time activities. This suggests that lecturers' perception of what constitutes leisure time activities were not determined by sex.

Hypothesis 2: the null hypothesis states that lecturers' residential status will not significantly influence their frequency of participation in leisure time activities.

TABLE 3: Frequency of participation in leisure activities against residence cross-tabulation.

		How often do you participate in leisure activities					total
		Once a day	Once a week	Once a month	Once a year	never	
Residence	outside campus	36 (20.0%)	88 (51.8%)	20(11.8%)	12(7.1%)	16(9.4%)	172 (100%)
	on campus	24(30.8%)	30(38.5%)	4 (5.1%)	8 (10.3%)	12 (15.4%)	78 (100%)
	Total	60 (23.4%)	118 (47.6%)	24 (9.7%)	20(8.1%)	28 (11.3%)	100%

Table 3 indicates the cross-tabulation between residential status and frequency of participation in leisure activities. Further statistics show that the chi-squared calculated value of 9.44 and a degree of freedom = 4, is less than the table value of 9.49 at 5% level of significance. Thus, there was no significant effect of residence on lecturers' frequency of participation in leisure time activities, which shows that the place of residence will not influence the propensity to participate in leisure time activities. Although there is little difference in choice of leisure activities, the study shows a slight difference in participation patterns because lecturers on campus tended to exercise and sleep more.

Although 75.8% were aware of the leisure facilities on campus, only 43.2% took advantage of these facilities. That some responses to the frequency of leisure activities was 'never' or 'once a year' may be an exaggeration, as the human body normally would demand for and get enough respite to function. This again suggests that lecturers may not be as knowledgeable as they should be about leisure activities or do not take leisure with enough gravity. All of these become even more relevant when one also notes that they are not as knowledgeable about other available avenues that could be explored for relaxation; this again makes the leisure counselor more relevant and important to the educational system, especially if the level of productivity of Lecturers is to be raised, and incidences of bad health and early death occurrences curbed. Respondents also saw leisure as something to be planned in advance rather than spontaneous. This again shows a gap in the knowledge of what constitutes leisure time activities. Most of the respondents have undertaken to make more conscious effort to participate in leisure activities in future.

IV. Conclusion and recommendations

This study has documented Lecturers leisure patterns and emphasized the necessity for the integration of leisure counselors into the education system. Major findings of the study reveal that even though many of the Lecturers were aware of leisure facilities on their campuses as well as the benefits of leisure, and even though some claim to be near these facilities, only a disappointing 47% actually make use of the provision. There is also a dearth of knowledge about various leisure activities and leisure skills that could enhance and enrich their leisure time activities and therefore contribute to a more productive, healthy and stress free life. This means that though the awareness level was somewhat high, participation in leisure activities was low; some also claim not to be familiar with the leisure facilities. All of these can prove to be a major challenge for any initiative aimed at increasing the level of leisure participation in the University environment. There is definitely a more urgent need to increase awareness and knowledge about leisure time activities, and there is need for professionals to counsel people on leisure skills and activities. The traditionally relevant departments who deal with adults, sports, health and counseling need to get more involved and help to create awareness and better grasp of the implications of leisure activities, and to sensitize lecturers to the need for leisure counselors. There

is also the pressing need for adult educators to specialize in leisure counseling in order to enhance adult productivity, especially in the work place.

The study confirms previous studies by Crombie et al (2004) which, among others, agree that there is need for more accessible leisure facilities to encourage participation. It is also necessary for the University authorities to pay more attention to the entrenchment of leisure activities into the system. Seddon (2010) also reports results of research enumerating the importance of music while you work. It is obvious that there is the need for leisure counselors to help direct and equip lecturers with needed skills and pertinent advice. This also has serious implications for, not only University lecturers but also the University authorities, administrators, workers in industries as well as planners.

The implication of the study for education is that if Lecturers are to be as productive as they are expected to be, they need to be able to balance their activities for best results. If participating in leisure activities enriches people's experience to the extent that it creates a healthier being as well as greater productivity, then it stands to reason that authorities should be interested in making policies that will be inclusive and ensure provision, access and participation by all Lecturers in leisure activities. Ruskin (1987) agrees that national policies need to be established, implemented and leisure skills taught, right from the level of public schools while also providing the necessary opportunities and facilities. Godbey, G. (1997) supports the provision of leisure services, but also emphasizes the need to involve professional counselors.

Leisure Education is appropriate for everyone and there is need for adult educators to train specifically in the area of leisure counseling, judging by the enormity of the task involved, so that Lecturers can take their leisure activities more seriously and even improve the quality of their leisure time activities. The life of the working adult can be further enriched with the correct balance between work and leisure, using leisure as a method to achieve the healthy balance in life. Also pertinent is the input of adult education, through specifically trained leisure counselors who can help spread awareness about the virtues of leisure time activities as well as help in equipping Lecturers with leisure skills and best practice for healthier lives and enhanced productivity.

LEISURE ACTIVITIES



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