

## **Influence of Recreational Activities on Healthy Living of Academic Staff In Federal University Of Technology, Akure.**

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### **Abstract**

*The health related benefits of recreation are not taking serious by most academics in our society. They perceive recreation to be a mere waste of time and this had cost them a lot of money in attending hospitals, clinics as well as paying for treatment bills. Therefore, the study was designed to investigate the influence of recreational activities on healthy living of academic staff of federal university of technology, Akure. The researchers used survey design of the descriptive type of research for the study. The research instrument used for this study was a self – structured closed ended questionnaire designed by the researchers. The sample size of three hundred (300) academic staff was used for the study. Purposive and accidental sampling techniques were used to select the respondents used for the study. The face, content and construct validity of the instrument was ensured by given draft copies to experts for vetting. The reliability of the instrument was ensured by using the split half method and a coefficient of 0.99 was obtained. Inferential statistics of Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) was used to test the hypotheses postulated at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that recreational activities have influence on well-being of academic staff. It was revealed that recreational activities have influence on cardiovascular health of academic staff. Also it was revealed that recreational activities have influence on stress among academic staff. From the findings it was concluded that recreational activities influenced the well-being of academic staff. It was also concluded that recreational activities have influence on cardiovascular health of academic staff. The researchers recommended that higher institutions of learning should encourage academic staff to participate in recreational activities so as to bring about healthy living and well-being. Also, management of higher institutions should establish recreational parks for the academic staff as this will serve as relaxation venue for them when they are stressed.*

**Keywords:** *Cardiovascular health, Healthy living, Well-being, Recreational activities, Stress*

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### **I. Introduction**

Recreation is an essential part of human life and finds many different forms which are shaped naturally by individual interest but also by the surrounding social construction. Recreational activities can be communal or solitary, active or passive, outdoors or indoors, healthy or harmful and useful for society or detrimental. A significant section of recreational activities are designed as hobbies which are activities done for pleasure on a regular basis (Kulkarni, 2013).

Recreation is a distinct phase of human activity which is beneficial and constructive to the health of an individual. Recreation is the refreshment of the mind and body or both through some means which in itself is pleasurable (Dada, 2017). Recreation consists of activities or experiences carried out within leisure, usually chosen voluntarily by the participant – either because of satisfaction, pleasure or creative enrichment derived or because he perceives certain personal or social values to be gained from them. It may also be perceived as the process of participation or as the emotional state derived from involvement.

Healthy living means maintaining a healthy lifestyle and introducing habits that improve your health. It can be difficult to change old habits but there are steps you can take to become healthier. An important first step is identifying less healthy habits and learning new, positive ones to replace them. Healthy living to most people means both physical and mental health are balanced or functioning well together in a person. In many instances, physical and mental health are closely linked, so that a change (good or bad) in one directly affects the other (Shipway & Holloway, 2010).

Health promoting lifestyles include activities that are focused on improving the level of well-being. The focus of these activities is on the development of positive potential for physical, social, mental, intellectual

or spiritual health (Ebem, 2007). Specialists also found a growing interest of youth for sports activities and also presented the consequences of lack of physical activity with negative effects on human life (obesity, excess in body mass index, deformation of the spine, heart problems etc.), also practicing sports activities can improve socialization, communication and friendships (Sopa & Pomohaci, 2016).

People who take part in park activities such as walking, hiking or skiing, schedule fewer office visits, maintain lower body fat percentages and have lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Mental wellness is critical to overall physical health. Participating in recreational activities helps manage stress. Taking time to nurture oneself provides a sense of balance and self-esteem, which can directly reduce anxiety and depression (Clinton, 2019). Recreational activities and exercise are a major contributor to a healthy lifestyle; people are made to use their bodies and disuse leads to unhealthy living. Unhealthy living may manifest itself in obesity, weakness, lack of endurance and overall poor health that may foster disease development.

In most universities in Nigeria, sports and exercise facilities are assembled for students only. Most of the members of staff do not use these facilities, therefore the universities pay huge medical bills for their staff. In addition, there are indirect costs which include decreased productivity and lost of time due to increased absenteeism, as well as opportunity cost (Kravitz & Heyward, 2017). The academic staff are more affected. Academic staff are personnel whose primary assignment are instruction, research, evaluation and public service. Due to the nature of their work, they undergo stress on a daily basis. In order to overcome stress and be productive, they need to possess good cardiovascular health and well-being. Recreation is an avenue through which these can be achieved. Kainin (2019) opined that making recreation activities a priority is likely to make one feel satisfied with their overall life. This is because they help in creating a balance between pressures from academic works with mental and physical well-being.

A healthy population is the nation's greatest resource, the source of its vitality, creativity and wealth. Citizens and entire nation should therefore strive to attain optimum health and vitality knowing fully well that good health is essential to happiness and happiness is essential to good citizenship. Since health is a quality of life, people should be taken through an educational process of health knowledge, attitude, practice and skills, for protection, maintenance and promotion of their health status through recreation. Having realized that recreation is a means of catching fun, enjoyment and relaxation. The health related benefits of recreation is not taken seriously by most academic in our society despite their level of education. They have termed it to be waste of time and this had cost them a lot of money in attending hospitals, clinics as well as paying for treatment bill.

The lecturing profession is time consuming, stressful and places a lot of demands on lecturers (Physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, psychological etc). To worsen the situation, many state governments and the federal government are insensitive to the plight of workers. This definitely will impact on the health and happiness of lecturers. Therefore, it is important for lecturers to create time for recreation. It is perceived that this will serve as an antidote to stress and source of happiness to academic staff. Which will further improve their health status. But it is disturbing that a lot of academic staff do not show interest in recreational activities. From personal interaction with some academic staff, many are of the opinion that they do not stand to gain much from recreational activities. Therefore, the research is aimed at investigating the influence of recreational activities on healthy living of academic staff in the Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA).

### **Objectives of the study**

The study examined influence of recreational activities on healthy living of academic staff. Specifically, it investigated the influence of recreational activities on well-being of academic staff, influence of recreational activities on cardiovascular health (i.e. reduction of the risk of heart related diseases) among academic staff and influence of recreational activities on stress among academic staff.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant influence of recreational activities on well – being of academic staff in FUTA.
2. There is no significant influence of recreational activities on cardiovascular health of the academic staff in FUTA.
3. There is no significant influence of recreational activities on stress among academic staff in FUTA.

## **II. Methodology**

The researchers used survey design of the descriptive type of research for the study. The area of the study is FUTA. The population of the study consisted of all members of academic staff of FUTA. The total population of academic staff in FUTA was eight hundred and six (806). Six hundred and six (606) were male while two hundred (200) were female, ranging from Professors to graduate assistants. It was from this population that the number of respondents needed for the study was selected. The sample size of three hundred

(300) respondents was used for the study. The respondents were the academic staff from all the five (5) schools of study in the institution. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the five (5) schools of study in the institution, while accidental sampling technique was used to select respondents from each of the schools. Sixty (60) respondents were selected from each school. The selection cut cross male and female academic staff from professors to graduate assistants.

The research instrument used for this study was a self-structured closed ended questionnaire designed by the researchers. The questionnaire was designed in line with the research variables. Five items were generated for each of the variables. The questionnaire was of Yes or No format. In order to validate the instrument for this study, drafts of the questionnaire prepared by the researchers were given to two (2) experts for face, content and construct validity.

Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using split half method. One of the tertiary institutions in Akure metropolis was used. Twenty (20) academic staff were randomly selected. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Spearman Brown's Formula were used to analyse the reliability and coefficient of 0.99 was obtained. The completed questionnaire were gathered and analysed by using inferential statistics of Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

### III. Results and discussion

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant influence of recreational activities on well-being of academic staff in FUTA.

**Table 1:** Chi-square analysis of influence of recreational activities on well – being of academic staff.

S/N	Items	Yes	No	Total	df	$\chi^{2cal}$	$\chi^{2cri}$	Result
1	Does your involvement in recreational activities make you feel relaxed?	258	42	300	4	126.63	9.49	S
2	Do you become happy anytime you take part in recreation?	142	158	300				
3	Does participation in recreational activities increase level of mental alertness?	144	156	300				
4	Does your involvement in recreational activities help to put you in good mood?	173	123	300				
5	Does your participation in recreational help to control your emotions?	157	143	300				
		<b>874</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>1500</b>				

Table 1 above shows the Chi-square analysis of influence of recreational activities on well-being of academic staff. The chi square calculated ( $\chi^2$  cal) value was 126.63, the chi square critical value ( $\chi^2$  cri) was 9.49 with the degree of freedom (df) 4 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the  $\chi^2$  calculated value was greater than  $\chi^2$  critical value, hypothesis 1 which stated that there is no significant influence of recreational activities on well-being of academic staff was rejected. This implies that recreational activities have influence on well-being of academic staff of FUTA.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant influence of recreational activities on cardiovascular health of the academic staff in FUTA.

**Table 2:** Chi-square analysis of influence of recreational activities on cardiovascular health of the academic staff.

S/N	Items	Yes	No	Total	Df	$\chi^{2cal}$	$\chi^{2cri}$	Result
1	Will involvement in recreational activities help to reduce the risk of cardio-vascular disease?	220	80	300	4	30.40	9.49	S
2	Can involvement in recreational activities help to reduce the risk of obesity?	177	123	300				
3	Can participation in recreational activities help to strengthen the heart muscles?	156	144	300				
4	Will involvement in recreational activities help to reduce the risk of hypertension?	185	111	300				
5	Can participation in recreational activities help to improve cardiac output and blood circulation?	177	123	300				
		<b>915</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>1500</b>				

Table 2 above shows the Chi-square analysis of influence of recreational activities on cardiovascular health of the academic staff. The chi square calculated ( $\chi^2$  cal) value was 30.4, the chi square critical value ( $\chi^2$  cri) was 9.49 with the degree of freedom (df) 4 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the  $\chi^2$  calculated value was greater than  $\chi^2$  critical value, hypothesis 2 which stated that there is no significant influence of recreational

activities on cardiovascular health of the academic staff was rejected. This shows that recreational activities have influence on cardiovascular health of academic staff of FUTA.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant influence of recreational activities on stress among academic staff of FUTA.

**Table 3:** Chi-square analysis of influence of recreational activities on stress.

S/N	Items	Yes	No	Total	df	X <sup>2cal</sup>	X <sup>2cri</sup>	Result
1	Do recreational activities help to reduce stress?	250	50	300	4	28.60	9.49	S
2	Do recreational activities help to get rid of tension?	170	130	300				
3	Do recreational activities help in handling work pressure?	200	100	300				
4	Can recreational activities help to reduce tiredness?	185	111	300				
5	Will participation in recreational activities help to prevent general body weakness?	168	132	300				
		<b>973</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>1500</b>				

Table 3 above shows the Chi-square analysis of influence of recreational activities on stress, anxiety and depression. The chi square calculated ( $x^2$  cal) value was 28.60, the chi square critical value ( $x^2$  cri) was 9.49 with the degree of freedom (df) 4 at 0.05 level of significance. Since the  $x^2$  calculated value was greater than  $x^2$  critical value, hypothesis 3 which stated that there is no significant influence of recreational activities on stress was rejected. This implies that recreational activities have influence on stress among academic staff of FUTA.

#### IV. Discussion

The finding from hypothesis 1 revealed that recreational activities have influence on well being of academic staff. The finding supported the assertion of (de Rezende et al., 2014), who opined that there was a positive association of recreational activities, mental well – being and healthy living among different age groups, including middle – aged adults. It also gives a strong support to the finding of Wiese, Tay and Kuykendall, (2018) who asserted that recreational activities contribute to well – being and subjected health because of its physical benefits, mastery experiences gained during exercise, positive experiences of recovery and relaxation and social interaction. Nowadays, when most jobs are sedentary, recreational activities play a key role in the recuperation of both mind and body. Previous studies have shown recreational activities to be an effective way to increase well – being (Mikkelsen, Stojanovska, Polenakovic, Bosevski & Apostolopoulos, 2017).

The finding from hypothesis 2 revealed that recreational activities have influence on cardiovascular wellbeing of academic staff thereby promoting their healthy living. This finding goes in line with the assertion of Matthews et al. (2014) who asserted that increased recreational activity level and exercise as well as decreased leisure time, show a consistent benefit in the prevention of cardiovascular disease and mortality. An increased amount of time that is spent being sedentary also shows a significant correlation to cardiovascular disease (Bjork, Bauman, Gronbaek, Wulff, Thygesen & Tolstrup, 2014), even with regular exercise. Overall, time being physically active appears to be the most important influence on the reduction of cardiovascular disease risk. The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2010) stated that substantial health benefits can be achieved by moderate intensity PA of at least 150 minutes a week, or vigorous intensity recreational activities of at least 75 minutes a week, or any combination of moderate and vigorous intensity PA. However, it is also emphasized that any amount of PA leads to health benefits (Piepoli, Hoes & Agewall, 2016).

The finding from hypothesis 3 revealed that recreational activities have influence on stress of academic staff thereby increasing their healthy living. The finding supported the view of Robinson, Segal and Melinda-Smith (2019) that exercising is an effective way to break cycle. As well as releasing endorphins in the brain, recreational activity helps to relax the muscles and relieve tension in the body. Since the body and mind are so linked, when ones body feels better the mind the mind feel better as well. Ones muscles may be tense, especially in the face, neck and shoulders, leaving one with back or neck pain, or painful headaches. The finding also supported the investigation of Lindwall and Asci (2015), they investigated the effect of recreational activities on healthy adults and found that increasing recreational activity in this group resulted in reduced anxiety and stress. There is mounting evidence that recreational activities are beneficial as a treatment for people with both mild and severe (clinical) anxiety and stress.

#### V. Conclusions

The conclusions for this study were derived from the findings. The researchers concluded that recreational activities influenced the well-being of academic staff, it was also concluded that recreational

activities have influence on cardiovascular health of academic staff. Finally, the researchers concluded that participation in recreational activities by academic staff help to reduce stress.

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