

## **Demographic factors and recreation as correlates of social well-being of University undergraduates**

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### **Abstract**

*The impact of demographic factors and recreational activities on individual's well-being cannot be overemphasized especially among youths. It contributes in a great way to positive social well-being of both old and young. This study examined demographic factors and recreation activities as correlates of university undergraduates' socialwell-being. Data was collected using a structured social well-being questionnaire given to two hundred and thirty respondents. Result indicated that there was significant relationship between recreational activities and social well-being of undergraduate students. It further revealed that male undergraduates have more positive social well-being than their female counterparts. More so, age is also significantly related to social well-being of university undergraduates. The author concludes that recreational activities, gender and age have significant positive relationship with social well-being of university undergraduates. It is therefore recommended that university authorities should construct more recreational facilities in schools and also encouraged youths especially the female folk to involve more in recreation as it contribute to positive well-being*

**Keyword:** Demographic factors, Recreational activity, Social Well-Being and Undergraduate Students

## INTRODUCTION

The need for recreational activities in universities cannot be over emphasized because it contributes immensely to the development and well-being of students. Recreation is any activity pursued during leisure, either individual or collective, that is free and full of pleasure, having its own immediate appeal, not impelled by a delayed reward beyond itself, or by any immediate necessity (Torkildsen, 2005). Research confirms that adolescents with easy access to recreational facilities and programs are more active than those without (Salis & Prochaska 2000). Participating in recreational activities helps to build relationships because it provides individuals with the ability to meet different kinds of people from different backgrounds, by getting to know them, and being involved with them. Recreation can be indoors or outdoors, healthy or harmful. Recreation may involve reading novels, playing, listening to music, watching television, traveling etc. Elegbeleye (2005) noted that recreational facilities in schools provide several options for students to free themselves and become less stressed up. Inability to let off steam can affect undergraduates in terms of being aggressive and possibly violent which can in turn disturb the social well being of undergraduates.

Recreational activities help a person relax and decrease the effects of work related stressors. Adolescents' girls' physical

activity is related to the proximity of recreational facilities (Atare & Sanubi, 2009). The more often young adolescents use recreational facilities, the greater their total physical activity. Parks and the neighborhood play areas are most important for boys, and the commercial facilities and neighborhood play areas are most important for girls (Hofer et al. 2002.). Coleman and Hendry (2000) suggested that adolescents need to make sense of their social world and find a comfortable place within it. It is necessary to follow rules and regulations and to perform tasks expected of one, and at the same time, they need to know their sense of worth and the need to stand alone when it is called for. At the same time, it is also necessary to be able to build healthy relationships, mix freely with others, and communicate with people effectively in order to attain a state of excellent social well-being. This can be achieved by engaging in recreational activities. Australia Bureau of Statistics indicated that there is high level of male participation in recreation than female among the same age group (ABS, 1998). There are more domestic activities carried out by female than male which hinder the ability of female to partake in recreation. Another problem of female indifference to recreation has to do with assault and rape (Henderson, 1991; Pittman et al., 1999; Virden and Walker, 1999). Finance is another constraint that affect female in partaking in recreational activities, as they depend on their spouses for their finances of their recreational

activities. Recreation is a function of age and state of health of people as healthy people and youth are more involved in recreation than old people. Health issues and aging has been identified as a hindrance to recreation among the adults. Grahn and Stigsdotter (2003) indicated that people with health issues are less interested in recreational activities. 28.8% of the adults in US between the ages of 65 and 74 have lower ability to recreate less frequently than their counterparts who are healthy. Age has an important effect on recreational prospective because as people get older, their ability to recreate reduces due to prolonged health problem (NSRE, 2003). Lack of company due to old age, also contributes to their ability to recreate (Shores et al, 2007). Jackson and Scott (1996) indicated that health problems, lack of companion, and fear of crime are the most significant recreational constraints for old people. Recreation is an activity of leisure, and the need to do something for recreation is an essential element of human biology and psychology. The main aim of recreation is for enjoyment, relaxation, amusement or pleasure and is considered to be fun; it helps to reduce tension and stress in individuals. Every individual in one way or the other needs a form of recreation to relax after a long day's work, in order to be able to perform better in the day to day activities and also to reduce accumulation of stress that may have set in whilst over stretching the body limit.

The concept of social well-being of undergraduates is a very important issue that affects the students themselves, their families and the society at large. Although many universities in Nigeria have quite a number of recreational facilities available most especially federal and state universities. In the case of private universities, some have few while many do not have such facilities. One of those private universities where recreational facilities are lacking is Redeemer's university. Non availability of recreational facilities has the capacity to inhibit student's productivity, happiness and a feeling of self-satisfaction and achievement. Many delinquent acts such as drug abuse, violent behavior, pre-marital sex and poor academic performance have been attributed to lack of involvement in recreation by students. Spiritual activities are very good but should be balance with recreation so that the whole man can be complete. Some psychological problem such as feeling of hopelessness, loneliness, boredom and anxiety are also associated with lack of recreation among adolescents. Regular recreation participation helps to prevent illness by contributing to healthy and happy living.

### **Recreation and Leisure**

The term recreation is a subjective term as it implies different meaning to different people. It is activities that engage people attention for leisure and play. Recreation is any multifaceted activity that involves exercises of physical, cognitive, mental,

emotional and social interaction (Broadhurst, 2001). These activities lead to enjoyment, relaxation and profession for some who use it as means of livelihood. It freshen human ability and creates better health conditions. Thus, this implies that recreation involves both active and passive engagement of human body and soul together. Aho (2007) saw leisure as a form of play, that frees a man from strenuous works and gives him an opening to face the abyssal nature of his own being and the worries that 'beings are'. Recreation is both indoor and outdoor in nature. This include visitation to national parks and garden, lake of importance to history, rivers, forest and sporting activities. It also involves the playing for fun such as trekking, fishing, hunting, festivals, camping among other. The engagement in recreational activities helps to create balance in both health and physical well being of individual, household, community and nation as well (Neuvonen et al, 2007). Marchildon (2013) said the way one sees an activity will determine if such activity will be enjoyable or not. Several researchers have proved that there is relationship between well-being and health status of people that engage in recreational activities for 30 minutes a day or twice or thrice a week, is beneficial to the health of man (Pouta and Sievanen, 2001; Miilunpolo, 2001; Oja, 2000). Further research by Frumkin 2003; Henderson and Bialeschki, 2005 indicated that there is correlation between green field, parks and human health. They are of the view that

public health is favourable where there is green area, Ideal Park and facilities to encourage recreation by man.

Household relationship is enhanced by recreation as it brings about mutual understanding, maintenance of physical and mental health. Strengthening of relationship between families and among the community is ingrained by recreational activities, increase mental development, create conducive environment for business, integrate society and reduce crime in the community at large (Driver, 2008). For any individual or group of individuals to achieve maximum level of satisfaction and benefits, he has to participate at length in recreational activities (Neuvonen, Sievanen, Tonnes & Koskela, 2007). There is apathy on the part of people in participating in recreational activities due to some limitations. The limitations are the concerns that can affect the participation of individuals to partake in recreational activities (Jackson and Scott, 1996). Crawford et al (1987) developed a hierarchical model which categorises the hindrances to recreation in developing countries like Nigeria into three broad types: intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural. The intrapersonal hindrances are related to psychological constraints such as personality, attitude, moods, self-skill, kin and non-kin attitude. Interpersonal constraints are lack of proper time management, finance, family problem and lack of friendship for recreation. Structural

constraints are: availability of recreational area, facilities, and accessibility to these facilities and infrastructure. Walker and Virden (2005) discoursed that the structural recreational limitation can be classified into four types namely, natural environment, social environment, territorial environment and institutional environment.

Availability of recreational infrastructure and facilities, attitude, perception of gender, race, assault, first aid services and poverty has been identified as constraints to recreation as well. Lack of care and broken equipment are other factors affecting preferences and participation of people in recreational activities (Shaw, Bonen, McCabe 1991; Shores, Scott & Floyd 2007; Stodolska, 1998; Walker and Virden, 2005). Income level of people play a prominent role in access to recreation, this determine the role of individual in partaking in recreational activities than any other constraints (Shores et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2001). There is significant correlation between level of income and recreational potentials among people. The high income level people have a higher potential to recreate more than the low-income people (Scott and Munson, 1994). There is apathy on the level of participation in outdoor recreation between different genders in the developing world. Male are more involved in recreation than females (Johnson et al, 2001; Henderson and Bilaeschki, 1991; Wearing and Wearing, 1988). Infrastructure and recreational facilities in recreational

area also contributed to the ability to recreate. This can either encourage or discourage recreation, as lack of it will reduce the ability and where it is available, it encourages the ability to recreate. Bright (2003) and Neuvonen et al, (2007), revealed that people recreate more where there are chances for them to do so. Recreational potentials availability is a function of age as different age group requires different recreational facilities to allow them to recreate well. The research by Irwin et al, (1990) and Gobster (2002) implies that availability of facilities affects the choice of recreation among the races, such as Hispanics choice of recreation and participation due to their preferences and age group. Stodolska and Livengood (2003) corroborated this assertion when comparing the recreational potentials of American Muslims which proved that lack of worship centre and gathering among women affects their ability to recreate in US.

The total distance in terms of financial distance is also a factor to ability to recreate (Neuvonen et al 2007). Recreational area that are closer to neighbourhood encourages people to visit the place than a place that is farther, this is due to time and financial resources outlay it requires to get to the recreational site. This indicated that the farther the recreational site the lower the frequency of visitation and vice versa, therefore, recreational facilities has to be closer to urban centres (Grahn and Stigsdotter 2003; Roovers et al., 2002).

### **Recreation, Health and Well-being**

Recreation activities improve health and well-being in among individuals, the more people engage in recreational activities, the more their health and well-being increases positively. Han & Patterson (2007) introduced a model based on several leisure studies suggesting that leisure activities improve health and well-being in people in two main ways. First is that it can provide a direct impact to psychological well-being and health which is based on experiencing the right moods and feelings, establishing good relationship with others and reinforcement of the immune system. Second, recreation activities have a controlling effect on stress and the effects of stress. According to Han & Patterson (2007), people who engage in recreational activities which they find interesting and fulfilling add to their personal resources and resilience. This enables improvement of social, psychological, intellectual and physical health well being. Iwasaki (2006) pointed out the importance of giving more attention to the role of recreational activities as a means of handling stress and increasing well-being. To guide this study theoretically, social cognition theory was adopted. The social cognitive theory states that when people observe a model performing behaviour and the consequences of that behaviour, they remember the sequence of events and use this information to guide subsequent behaviours. Observing a model can also prompt the viewer to engage in behaviour

they already learned.

The social cognitive theory consists of the reciprocal nature and relationship between the person, behaviour and environment. Noted by Bandura, principles including reinforcement and punishment, people learn from observing others and cognitive processes that mediate behaviour, influence behaviour change and or adoption. With regards to physical activity, Bauman suggests the SCT is closely associated with variables such as expected benefits, self-efficacy, activity during childhood, skills related to coping with barriers, and external influences including interpersonal relationships and social support; all of which have been “repeatedly documented with positive association with physical activity” among adults. This theory explains that human behaviour has often been shaped and controlled by either environmental influences or by internal dispositions, peoples environment are shaped by the way they behave. Also, it is easy for an individual that engages in recreational activities to influence another individual who does not if there is adequate facilities and if the individual who does not participate sees that participating promotes a peaceful environment, sense of belonging and in general positive social well being.

### **Hypotheses**

- i. There will be no significant relationship between recreational activities and social well-being of

- undergraduates.
- ii. There will be no significant gender difference in recreational activities and social well-being of undergraduate students
- iii. There will be no significant age difference in recreational activities and social well-being of undergraduates.

## **METHOD**

### **Design**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study with the intent to find out the relationships between the operating variables within the context of the study. The independent variable in this study is recreational activities while the dependent variable is social well being.

### **Study Population**

A population refers to the combination of elements that have that have similar characteristics and/or behaviour (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).The population for this study were students of The Redeemers University.

### **Sampling Technique**

The purposive sampling technique, also known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling was adopted in selecting students from levels 100-400. Two hundred and thirty students responded to a self-administered questionnaire. The sample cuts across respondents of different

sexes and varying ages.

### **Research Instrument**

The research instrument was a self-structured questionnaire titled Recreational Activities and Social Wellbeing of Undergraduates of Redeemers University Ede. The questionnaire consists of closed ended questions and the range of responses restricted to a four point likert scale. The scales ranged from strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. It is designed to collect information from respondents. Section A assessed demographic characteristics of the respondents, Section B contained questions on participating in recreational activities and how often students participate. Section C included questions on social well-being of undergraduates. After constructing the instrument, the researcher measured the validity using face and content validity reviewing each item to assess its relativity to the objectives of the research. The reliability of the instrument was tested through a pilot study. The Cronbach Alpha (coefficient Alpha) was conducted on the questionnaire to test for reliability. A result of 0.75 was arrived at which showed that the questionnaire was effectively reliable for collecting data.

### **Data Analysis**

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation and t-test.

**RESULTS**

This section presents the demographic characteristics of respondents and results of the study. The results are presented based on the hypotheses formulated for the study.

Table one reveals that 92(40%) of the respondents were males, while larger proportion 138(60%) were females. The table further demonstrates that larger

proportion 119 (51.7%) of the respondents were between the ages of 15-20 years while 83 (36.1) fall between the age brackets of 21-26 years and 28(12.2%) were 27 years and above. Lastly it shows on the table a larger proportion of students 67(29.1%) were in 100 level, 62(27%) in 200 level, 72(31.3%) in 300 level and 29(12.6%) in 400 level.

**Table 1:** Showing Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

<b>SEX</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	92	40.0
Female	138	60.0
Total	230	100.0
<b>AGE</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
15-20 years	119	51.7
21-26 years	83	36.1
27 years and above	28	12.2
Total	230	100.0
<b>LEVEL OF STUDY</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
100 level	67	29.1
200 level	62	27.0
300 level	72	31.3
400 level	29	12.6
Total	230	100.0

**Hypothesis I**

Hypothesis one states that there will be no significant relationship between recreational activities and social well-being

of undergraduates. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson's correlational analysis. The result is presented in table 1.

**Table 2:** Pearson Product Moment correlation showing the relationship between recreation activities and social well-being

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Social wellbeing</b>	69.53	15.55	230	.271**	<.01
<b>Recreation activities</b>	14.73	2.39	230		

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table shows that there was significant positive relationship between recreational activities and social well-being ( $r = .271$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The result shows that increase in recreational activities significantly relate to increase in social well-being.

**HYPOTHESIS II**

Hypothesis two states that there will be no significant gender difference in recreational activities and social well-being of undergraduate students. This hypothesis was tested using the t-test.

**Table 6.3:** t-test summary table showing difference between male and female on social well-being

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>P</b>
Social well-being	Male	92	60.03	15.13	228	-8.71	<0.01
	Female	138	75.86	12.31			

The result from table two shows that male respondents ( $M = 60.03$ ,  $S.D = 15.13$ ) significantly reported lower social well-being compared to female respondents ( $M = 75.86$ ,  $S.D = 12.31$ ). The result implies that gender significantly influence social well-being ( $t(228) = -8.71$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The hypothesis is thus rejected.

**HYPOTHESIS III**

Hypothesis three states that there will be no significant relationship between age and social wellbeing of undergraduates. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson's correlational analysis.

**Table 4:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the relationship between Age and Social Well-being

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Social well-being</b>	69.53	15.55	230	.323**	<.01
<b>Age</b>	19.17	2.76	230		

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Result from table 4 shows that there was significant positive relationship between age and social well-being ( $r = .323$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The result shows that increase in age significantly relate to increase in social well-being.

**DISCUSSION**

The result shows that there was significant positive relationship between recreational activities and social well-being. The result shows that increase in recreational activities significantly relates to increase in social

well-being. The result of the finding corroborates with the study by (Brajsa-Zganec, Merkas & Sverko, 2011) who investigated that People-centered activities, such as team sports or other group activities have been associated with increased quality of life. Also, According to Engström and Redelius (2002) the inner logic of a physical activity relates to the experience of participating in an activity, which has consequences both academically and in terms of health. For example, while competitive sports are common leisure activities among children and youth, they are based on subordination and the attitude of winning. Students who engage in recreation are very more likely to experience positive social well-being as taking part in recreation allows them to interact with their colleagues and also afford those opportunities of making new friends. It also gives them sense of belonging to a community where they can share their experiences and communicate in a meaningful way with others. These experiences in a way play a positive role in the overall well-being of the students. It eliminates feelings of loneliness, anxiety; adolescent depression and bring in feelings of friendliness and cooperation.

The second hypothesis stated that there will be no significant gender difference on recreational activities and social well-being of undergraduate students. The result shows that male respondents significantly reported higher social well-being compared to

female respondents. The result implies that gender significantly influence social well-being. The result of the finding is in contrast to the study by Weissinger et al. (1992), Weissinger (1995) and Hickerson et al. (2007) who found that there were no significant differences between leisure boredom and gender especially during the developmental adolescent period. The result revealed that male students have positive social well-being that their female counterpart. This is as result of the fact that more male students participate in recreation activities more than female. Women are generally non expressive this may be due to the fact that traditionally women are meant to stay at home and get involve in household activities. More also the fact that some recreation activities requires physical energy and the need to go out and participate women lack the energy and have fear of been getting physically attacked by men.

The third hypothesis stated that there will be no significant relationship between age and social well-being of undergraduates. Result revealed that there was significant positive relationship between age and social well-being. The result shows that increase in age significantly relate to increase in social well-being. The result supports the findings of (Wilkinson et al., 2007; Zambon et al., 2010; Pressman et al., 2009; Hickerson et al., 2007) who opined that it has been repeatedly shown that participation in leisure activities, such as social, cultural

and physical is associated with an overall improvement in physical health, psychological well-being, quality of life and survival and reduction of leisure boredom due to age. Older students are more likely to find recreation more exciting and rewarding than younger students. They are likely to want to make new friends and explore the school environment. This may be as a result of understanding the importance of recreation to their overall well-being. More also, the older students have the required energy and feel more secure in going out to participate in recreation than the younger students. They also tend to have knowledge of recreation centers more than the younger ones due to the fact that they are old enough to know the school environment and have more friends than the younger ones. Drawing essentially from the social cognition theory, the older students have learnt the recreation behavior from their senior and the rewarding aspect of it. The expected rewards from taking part in leisure motivate them to want to engage in recreation. Therefore recreation behavior is a learnt one through the process of cognition and motivation to want to engage in such learnt behavior is as a result of expected rewards that are associated with such behaviours.

### **Conclusion**

The study revealed that there was significant positive relationship between recreational activities and social well-being. This indicates that increase in

recreational activities significantly relate to increase in social well-being. Female respondents significantly reported higher social well-being than male respondents. The result implies that gender significantly influence social well-being. Furthermore, age has significant positive relationship with social well-being. The result shows that increase in age significantly relate to increase in social well-being.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made to serve as key guidelines for the development of recreational facilities for good social well-being:

- i. The overall health needs of students and the society at large should be adequately addressed.
- ii. Recreational activities such as basketball court, football field, swimming pool, snooker boards, track and field events, chess, scrabble and other board games should be made provision for in Redeemers University
- iii. There should be an increased support from the federal, states and local governments in recreational facilities investments.
- iv. Organizations and state governments should give renewed attention to the role of recreational facilities in promoting the well-being students in higher institutions.
- v. More so, there should be unrelenting efforts for physical and health

education in all institutions for the maintenance of good health in society especially for female students.

### **Implications of findings for Social Work Practice**

The findings of this paper has implication for school social workers in that it will help them understand the importance of recreation to physical, emotional and social well-being of students, thereby helping them know about factors influencing well-being of students. More also, knowing how recreational and demographic factors influence social well-being and the need to create awareness in schools on the need for participating in recreational activities. It also affords school social workers the opportunity of contributing to policy on education at the level of making recommendations on how to improve student's well-being via recreation activities.

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