



**LEISURE UTILIZATION CONSTRAINTS AS
PERCEIVED BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF
UNIVERSITY OF UYO, NIGERIA**

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to investigate leisure utilization constraints as perceived by undergraduate students of University of Uyo. Five indicators were adopted which were lack of self-skill, lack of time, anxiety, academic workload and religious activities. From these, five objectives were formulated with subsequent research questions and hypotheses. The study adopted a survey design with 278 respondents selected from six faculties using stratified and clustered sampling technique. A self-developed questionnaire validated by experts with a reliability co-efficient of .78 was used as the main instrument for data collection. The data generated were analyzed using percentages and mean to answer the research questions, while chi-square statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The result of the study revealed that self-skill, lack of time, anxiety, academic workload and religious activities were perceived as significant constraints to leisure utilization among undergraduate students of the University of Uyo. This finding support earlier research work. It was recommended that the school directorate of sport should organized sensitization on available leisure activities requiring little or no special skills, proper scheduling of leisure activities compatible with the school time table, the school should provide a framework for emergency healthcare particularly for sport injuries and individuals should take responsibilities for their own health by enjoying the leisure time. Also, school authority should work in collaboration with various religious leaders within the campus to establish control and effective time management.

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Keywords: leisure utilization constraints, undergraduate students, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Campus recreational sports programmes are designed to provide an on-campus leisure opportunity for college life and providing a means for the wise use of free time. Young, Ross and Barcelona (2013) stated that campus recreational sports are a service provided to offer students an opportunity to participate in sport activities. Most campuses provide a wide variety of programs and activities through sport and games. This is purposely done as it is recognized that not all students prefer to participate in the same way or in the same type of activity. In spite of this variety, researches still indicate that large number of students on many campuses still do not participate in campus recreational sports. For instance, Douglas, Collins and Warren (2005) indicated that 42.2 percent of undergraduates college students did not participate in moderate or vigorous physical activity prior to their survey. Rosen (2010) reported that 74 percent of college students did not engage in vigorous physical activity during the week prior to his study. Similarly, Suminski and Petosa (2012) found that 47 percent of the college students in their study did not engage in vigorous or leisure services provided within the campus.

Professionals responsible for providing these programs often organized over those non-participants asking questions such as *“Why are more students not participating?”* or *“What can be done to attract more students to utilize the available leisure services?”* Young, Ross and Barcelona (2013) stated that understanding why people choose not to participate in recreation and make wise use of the leisure time to utilize the available leisure services has been the focus of study for more than 25 years.

The term *“leisure constraints”* has been defined by Jackson (2010) as the factors that are assumed by researchers and/or perceived or experienced by individuals to limit the formation of leisure preferences and or inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure. The author further stated that constraints on leisure participation are relative to the individual and his/her circumstance. In other words, perception of constraints varies from individual to individual and from type of leisure activity, yet they may also be shared widely within the community, as a result, investigation of leisure constraints should be focused on specific types of leisure activities within a single community (Jackson, 2010).

Elkins and Beggs (2007) explained that Crawford and Godbey in 1987 put forth a three-level model to conceptualized constraints to leisure services utilization. This mode

identified three levels of constraints which are intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural constraints.

Intrapersonal constraints involve individual psychological states and attributes that interact with leisure preferences and influence individual preference. These factors include personality traits, attitudes and moods. Young, Ross and Barcelona (2013) noted that intrapersonal constraints are considered the most powerful determinants of participation and these include feelings towards participation and competition, shyness, stress, anxiety, perceived self-skill and subjective evaluations of the appropriateness of a particular activity.

The second level of constraints consists of interpersonal constraints. This type of constraints is the relationship between individual's character or the lack of a friend or partner with whom to participate in an activity for a variety of reasons, including differing levels of skills or not having similar blocks of available free time (Young, Ross and Barcelona, 2013). Elkins and Beggs (2007) stated that interpersonal constraints also involve the individual's activities and constraints as it relates to the workload and occupation. This may significantly influence leisure preference and participation.

The third level which is the structural constraints as explained by Elkins and Beggs (2007) include such factors as the lack of opportunities or the cost of activities that result from the external conditions in the environment. This also involves the lack of time or a lack of money to participate. Similarly, Young, Ross and Barcelona (2013) noted that structural constraints consists of intervening factors that get in the way of participation and this include lack of time or money, attributes of the facilities, (that is, too crowded, not accessible), or commitments to family, job or another activity.

Perceived constraints to leisure services utilization varies among individuals and have a wide range. When considering it from the structural constraints, lack of facilities within the school and lack of time has constantly been a significant constraints to leisure services utilization among university students. Akindutire and Oyeinyi (2011) stated that lack of standard facilities and equipment, academic stress and university policy on sports has been some of the inhibiting factors to participation in recreational sport activities.

Similarly, Oyeinyi (2002) submitted that facilitates and equipment are the power house of sport, hence, they are indispensable to competitive and recreational sports. Young, Ross and Barcelona (2013) noted that lack of adequate facilities do not only act as a barrier to recreational sports participation but also modifies and influence the preference of physically active college students.

When considered from interpersonal constraints perspective group support is essential. As explained by Drakou, Tzetzis and Mamantzi (2008) peer group and

parental influences tend to be some of the factors considered constraints to leisure services utilization. When friends have a common activity with similar time frame, it tends to stimulate or motivate each other to participate in recreational activities and leisure services. Parents who understand and regularly participate in recreational activities encourage and motivate their children to participate in recreational activities and utilized available leisure services.

The university environment has been considered as one the most stressful environment for both students and of staff as different activities ranging from academic to social are constantly been carried out (Akindutire & Oyeniyi, 2011). It is a common phenomenon that stress build tension within an individual that must be released in one way or the other to ensure a healthy lifestyle. Recreation and leisure time has been identifies as one effectively way of easing tension and pressure. It has been observed that most university of Uyo undergraduates students do not participate in recreational or leisure activities with the available leisure opportunities been underutilized such as the basketball court, the volleyball courts, the hand ball courts, etc often laid to waste. This observation agrees with the report of Douglas, Collins and Warren (2005), Rosen (2010) and Suminski and Petosa (2012) report which indicated that 42.2 percent, 74 percent and 47 percent of campus students respectively did not engage in physical activities. Often neglected in recent research is the effects of entry sports skill levels, anxiety and religious activities on campus which are basically intrapersonal and interpersonal constraint. This why this study aims as investigating leisure utilization constraints as perceived by undergraduates students of the University of Uyo. It is hoped that this will provide understanding to the problem and become the basis for finding solutions.

The following hypotheses were also formulated to guide the study.

1. Lack of skill is not a significant constraint to leisure utilization among undergraduate students of University Uyo.
2. Lack of time is not a significant constraint in the utilization of leisure among University of Uyo undergraduates.
3. Anxiety is not a significant constraint to the utilization of leisure among University of Uyo undergraduates.
4. Academic workload is not perceived as a significant constraint to leisure utilization among University of Uyo undergraduates.
5. Religious activities on campus are not perceived as a significant constraint to leisure utilization among University of Uyo undergraduates.

2. Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was the survey design. This design was considered appropriate base on the fact that the information in this study was needed exactly the way they existed in the population. According to Akpabio and Ebong (2009), this design is relevant when the researcher is required to undertake a systematic collection, analysis and presentation of data to give account of the characteristics of particular individuals, groups or the state of events without the manipulation of data as applicable in experimental studies. Since the study was aimed at seeking information on the perceived constraints of University of Uyo students towards leisure utilization, the design was considered suitable.

The target population for this study comprised of all University of Uyo undergraduate students, irrespective of programme or level. The population of University of Uyo undergraduate students, according to the Students Affairs Division, as at end of 2014/2015 academic year stood between 23,000 and 25,000. A sample size of three hundred respondents was drawn for this study using stratified and clustered sampling technique. Stratification involves dividing the population into separate strata on a characteristics to be closely associated with variables under study, and clustered sampling technique is one where more than one stage of selection is used. Clusters are often used for geographical areas such as local government wards or institutions (Osuala, 2005).

University of Uyo operates a multi-campus system with three campuses and in each campus; there are cluster of faculties and departments. The students were stratified into three based on the characteristics of location and from each stratum, two faculties were selected and 75 respondents from each faculty randomly giving a sample size of 300 respondents. The table below shows the various faculties selected from the various campuses.

A 20 item self-developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was divided into the sections, A and B. Section A was designed to collect bio-data of respondents while section B was designed to collect data relevant to the variables under study, that is, self-skill, time, anxiety, academic workload and religious activities and leisure utilization. A four type of Likert scale were used with Strongly Agreed, Agreed Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed scale.

To ascertain the validity of the instrument the draft were given to three lecturers in the Department of Physical and Health Education for both face and content validity. Their corrections were effected for instance, modification and reconstruction of some of the items before it was presented to the supervisor for final corrections and approval of

instrument for the study. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted using the validated version of the questionnaire involving 20 randomly selected students from Uyo City Polytechnic. The data obtained were correlated using split half method and it yielded reliability co-efficient of .78 before the instrument was used for the study.

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents with the help of two trained research assistants. The students that were sampled are those from the chosen faculties. The researcher and the research assistants visited the venue of their lecture halls of the selected faculties, the questionnaires were distributed after seeking the consent of the students. The completed questionnaires were retrieved on the spot to ensure a high successful return rate of 278 out of the 300 distributed. The data generated from the questionnaire were coded, summarized and analyze using chi-square statistics to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

3. Results and discussion of findings

Hypothesis 1: Lack of skill is of a significant constraint to leisure utilization among University of Uyo undergraduates.

Table 1: Summary of Chi-square test of lack of skill as constraints to leisure utilization

Options	Values	X ² -cal	X ² -crit	Remark
Strongly Agreed	56			
Agreed	160			
Disagreed	49	163.8	7.82	Significant
Strongly Disagreed	13			
Total	278			

df = 3, P ≤ .05.

The result in the table above show that the chi-square calculated value of 163.8 is greater than the critical value of 7.82 at .05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 3. This result is significant, hence, the null hypothesis rejected, meaning that lack of self-skill is perceived as a significant constraint to leisure utilization among University of Uyo undergraduates.

In the course of this study, the first finding was that self-skill is perceived as a significant constraint to leisure utilization among University of Uyo undergraduates. It was found that 77.6 percent of the respondents indicated that they are aware that every leisure activities require some level of skills in which they do not consider themselves to possess such skills. Also, they feel they do not have the stamina/energy required and

this limit their leisure activities participation. The test of the hypothesis yielded a significant result of 163.8 as against the critical value of 7.82 at .05 level of significance. This result is in line with the opinion of Menon (2008) which stated that the efficacy and successful participation of an individual in any physical activity largely depends on his/her perception about his/her energy level, self-skill required for the activities and the perceived benefit of the activities. The result is also similar to that Philips (2009) who reported that in his study, lack of will power (98.5%) was the most important barrier to leisure activity participation, followed by lack of energy and self-skill (91.0%)

Hypothesis 2: Lack of time is not a significant constraint to the utilization of leisure among University of Uyo undergraduates.

Table 2: Summary of Chi-square test of lack of time at constraint to leisure utilization

Options	Values	X ² -cal	X ² -crit	Remark
Strongly Agreed	52			
Agreed	129			
Disagreed	62	73.29	7.82	Significant
Strongly Disagreed	35			
Total	278			

df = 3, P ≤ .05

The chi-square test of the above hypothesis shows that the chi-square calculated value of 73.29 is greater than the critical value of 7.82 at .05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 3. And because of this, the result is considered significant, thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning that lack of time is perceived as a significant constraint to leisure utilization among University of Uyo undergraduates.

The second findings of the study was the level at which lack of time is perceived as constraint to leisure utilization by University of Uyo students. It was found that 65.1 percent of the respondents agreed that lack of time has been their major constraint as they have numerous engagement and most leisure activities scheduling conflict with the important engagements which leaves them with limited time to think of leisure activities participation. The test of the hypothesis yielded a significant result of 73.29 against critical value of 7.82 at .05 alpha level. This result is in consonant with Daskapan, Tazun and Eker (2006) who reported that the most commonly cited barrier by University students in their study was lack of time due to study commitments and responsibilities related to family and social environment. Similarly, Cheng and Hashem (2007) noted that for any type of leisure activity to be attractive to students significantly, the scheduling of the activity(ies), coupled with adequate equipment, supplies of facilities and staffing must be considered.

Hypothesis 3: Anxiety is not a significant constraint to the utilization of leisure among University of Uyo undergraduates.

Table 3: Summary of Chi-square test of anxiety as constraint to leisure utilization

Options	Values	X ² -cal	X ² -crit	Remark
Strongly Agreed	45			
Agreed	101			
Disagreed	63	22.98	7.82	Significant
Strongly Disagreed	69			
Total	278			

df = 3, P ≤ .05

The result in the above table shows the chi-square calculated value of 22.98 to be greater than the critical value of 7.82 at .05 level of significant and degree of freedom of 3. This means that the result is significant; hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This result means that anxiety is perceived as a significant constraint to leisure utilization by undergraduate students of the University of Uyo. Furthermore, the result from the study also revealed that anxiety has been a significant constraint to leisure utilization among University of Uyo undergraduates. It was found that 52.5 percent of the respondents considered leisure activities to stressful, fear of injuries, poor performance and the perception of others have hindered their participation in leisure activities. The test of the hypothesis gave a significant result of 22.98 at .05 level of significance. This result agrees with the earlier report of Jones (2008) which stated that anxiety may arise from such situations as societal expectations, feeling of dissatisfaction, concern for personal safety and issue of self-skill. An individual self-perception and the societal expectation can raise concern which may act as a constraint to leisure utilization. In the same way, Omolayo, Olawo and Omole (2013) reported that some young adults are afraid that fitness exercise would be too stressful and could harm them, this leads to non-participation.

Hypothesis 4: Academic workload is not perceived as a significant constraint to leisure utilization among University of Uyo undergraduates.

Table 4: Summary of academic workload as constraint to leisure utilization

Options	Values	X ² -cal	X ² -crit	Remark
Strongly Agreed	77			
Agreed	115			
Disagreed	63	129.42	7.82	Significant
Strongly Disagreed	23			
Total	278			

df = 3, P ≤ .05

The result from the chi-square test of the above hypothesis is significant because the chi-square calculated value of 61.0 is greater than the critical value of 7.82 at .05 level of significance and a degree of freedom of 3. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected meaning academic workload is perceived as a significant constraint to leisure utilization by University of Uyo undergraduates.

Moreso, the result from the study shows that academic workload of students is significantly constraint to leisure utilization among University of Uyo undergraduates. It was found that 69.1 percent of the respondents indicated that the lectures last late into the evening, they spend most of time on school work with bulky materials to cover and numerous assignment to be submitted in limited time. This takes better part of their time limiting the leisure utilization. The test of the hypothesis yielded a significant result of 61.0 at .05 alpha level. This result confirms with the report of Ogunjimi, Akpan and Ikorok (2014) which stated that University students in Nigeria find themselves in a precarious situation where regular fitness exercise is not built into the academic programmes and are faced with long hours of cogitation, listening to lectures, reading in libraries and browsing on computers. Earlier, Adesoye and Talabi (2004) reported that one of the factors responsible for the low participation in recreational activities in Nigeria higher institutions is academic and occupational demand.

Hypothesis 5: Religious activities on campus are not perceived as a significant constraint to leisure utilization among University of Uyo undergraduates.

Table 5: Summary of chi-square test of religious activities as constraint to leisure utilization

Options	Values	X ² -cal	X ² -crit	Remark
Strongly Agreed	32			
Agreed	76			
Disagreed	101	35.12	7.82	Significant
Strongly Disagreed	69			
Total	278			

df = 3, P ≤ .05

The result as presented in the above table shows that the chi-square calculated value of 35.12 is greater than the critical at .05 level of significance. This result is significant thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, meaning, religious activities is a significant constraint to leisure utilization among University of Uyo undergraduates. Finally, it was found that religious activities within the campus are significant constraint to leisure time utilization. The result revealed that 38.8 percent of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they have church activities everyday of the week, belonging to different religious organizations demanding their time and presence. Also, that they prefer

attending religious meetings to be significant with a value of 35.12 at .05 alpha level. This result agrees with the Ojo (2004) who reported that today, several fellowships and religious organizations are found within the campus environment all over Nigeria universities with their different religious programme throughout the week lasting for two or more hours each day and three hours or more on Sundays.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

University students are always on intense stress and if this remains unmanaged can have damaging effects on the health of the students. Leisure and recreational activities can provide a good windows opportunity for students to enhance their own well-being. The result from this study has been able to reveal that the available leisure activities within the campus have been under-utilized by students. This is because some barriers such as lack of self-skill, lack of time, anxiety, academic work load and religious activities have become barriers to effective use of leisure time. The school is not just established to provide only educational services, but also other services such as health services, recreational services, etc. It therefore beckons on the school authority to take a critical look at these barriers and find a way to conscious remove or reduce such barriers and promote a healthy, active lifestyle among students and the general campus community.

The recommendations given in this study are based on the findings reported above and it is hoped that when adopted, they will increase leisure utilization by students and promote good health.

1. The university sport directorate should launch sensitization programmes to educate the students on some simple leisure and recreational activities requiring little and no special skills for participation. This can be done by creating various sports clubs mandating every newly admitted student to belong to one. This will provide better understanding of leisure and recreation clearing the wrong perception about specialized skills required to leisure utilization.
2. Scheduling of leisure activities within the campus and equipping students with proper time management skills by introducing such topics into the General courses offered by school. This will stimulate the interest of students to make themselves available at the recreational and leisure time activities provided by the school.
3. The school authority should provide a framework for providing emergency healthcare particularly for sport accidents as a unit within the school health center with proper creating of awareness among the students. Employees of such units should always come out to provide first aid for students at different recreational venues within

the school. This will provide psychological boost for students and giving them a feeling of satisfaction when participating in leisure activities.

4. Curriculum and time table planners within the university should work hand in hand with the sport directorate to develop a time table that recognizes the importance of leisure and recreational activities giving ample time to students to participate in such activities as designed by the school sport directorate.

5. The school authority should work with religious leaders operating fellowship and religious meetings within and around the school that have students as majority of its members. Such religious leaders should also work with the consciousness that the school has its own programmes and proper scheduling of both activities can help and limit their meeting days to twice or thrice a week. also students should take responsibilities for their own well-being understanding the need for leisure and making efforts to avail themselves of such opportunity.

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APPENDIX I

Please tick the option that best express your opinion. Note that SA – Strongly Agreed; A – Agreed; D – Disagreed and SD – Strongly Disagreed.

A	LACK OF SELF-SKILL AS CONSTRAINT TO LEISURE UTILIZATION	SA	A	D	SD
1	All kinds of leisure activities require some level of skills				
2	I always feel I do not possess adequate skill about leisure activities within the campus				
3	I think I don't have the energy/stamina required the needed skills for leisure activities				
4	I don't even know the rules involve in many leisure activities and this hinders my participation				
B	LACK OF TIME AS CONSTRAINT LEISURE UTILIZATION				
5	Lack of time has been my major constraint to leisure activities participation				
6	I have numerous engagements that limit my chances of leisure time utilization				
7	The scheduling of most leisure activities conflict with other important engagements of mine				
8	There is always not adequate time to think of participating in other leisure activities				
C	ANXIETY AS CONSTRAINT TO LEISURE UTILIZATION				
9	Leisure activities is always too stressful that is why I don't participate regularly				
10	I am always afraid of injuries because I feel it is not safe				
11	Fear of poor performance has also contributed to my not participating in leisure activities				
12	I am always worried about how others will look at me this limits my leisure utilization				
D	ACADEMIC WORKLOAD AS CONSTRAINT TO LEISURE UTILIZATION				
13	My lectures always last long into the evening which takes much of my time				
14	I spend most of my time on school work due to bulky materials to cover before exams				
15	I have several assignments with limited time for submission and these takes my time				
16	My academic workload takes the better part of my time with no opportunity for leisure participation				
E	RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES CONSTRAINTS TO LEISURE UTILIZATION				
17	I have church activities almost every day of the week this occupy my evenings				
18	I prefer going for church meetings rather than participating in leisure activities				
19	I belong to different religious groups and I must be in attendance for meetings				
20	My religious belief does not allow people to take part in sport				

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