



INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON PARTICIPATION IN LEISURE ACTIVITIES AMONG FEDERAL CIVIL SERVANTS

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Abstract

Without some form of stress relief or fun in our life, one will find himself only working and that can lead to increased stress, illness, disease or other factors that may hinder appropriate and successful performance. Human beings weren't meant to work without a break; individuals should have a balance of work and leisure. Our bodies need rest, relaxation and enjoyment every once in a while; and that's where the benefits of leisure come into play. This study was conducted to assess the influence of gender on participation in leisure activities among federal civil servants in Nigeria. To achieve this purpose, ex-post facto research design was used. A total of 663 respondents were selected through multi-stage sampling procedures. Descriptive statistics of Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question, Inferential statistics of independent sample t-test was used to test the hypothesis formulated. The results revealed that gender significantly influenced the federal civil servants' participation in leisure activities. Based on the result, it was concluded that gender is one of the factors that determines civil servants' participation in leisure activity. Based on the finding, it was recommended that more recreational facilities should be provided for females within their establishments while encouraging both male and female to be more active in leisure activities and Governments at all levels should endeavor to provide affordable leisure infrastructures that could be easily accessible by the low-income earners in order to encourage participation in leisure activities.

Keywords: Gender, Participation, leisure, civil servant, Influence

Introduction

Study of leisure activities has become an interesting area of research. A specific body of knowledge has been developed, directly related to work as well as non-work, to the effect of changing patterns related to mental and physical health (Godin, 2013). To Michiels and Kauger (2011) leisure is an activity to which the individual may freely devote himself outside the needs and obligations of his occupation, his family and society; for his relaxation, diversion and personal development. People may wonder why and how they can think of and partake in any leisure activities when in real sense, they are struggling to survive and make ends meet. It is indeed necessary here to emphasize that we can only struggle well and think properly when we are mentally sound and physically fit (Suleiman, 2014). Peterson and Gunn (2018) submitted that

participation in leisure activities make one fit, gives participants more energy, greater mental alertness, reduces stress and allows for better time management. Recent findings revealed the potential of participation in leisure-time physical activities to contribute to positive health not merely the absence of diseases but associated with the capacity to enhance life satisfaction and ability to improve individual's capability to withstand stress (Godin, 2013).

Participation in leisure activities have the power to create social cohesion and increase productivity, prevent cardiovascular diseases, reduce the risk of diabetes and improve plasma lipid, reduce premature mortality and morbidity, enhance bone health later in life and improve academic achievement and influence a person's mentality, prevent musculoskeletal disorder (Couneya & Fredrich, 2014). Heasman and Arwal (2014), stated that participation in leisure activity helps in building and maintenance of muscular strength and endurance, enhances self-esteem, self-confidence as well as self-concept.

Throughout the history participation in leisure was found to be one of the productive means of social and economic development. Hunnicutt (2016) explained that understanding the factors that motivate people to participate in leisure-time physical activity is important to encourage persistence in physical activity which is advantageous to the development of physical and psychological well-being of the people. In interpreting leisure behaviour, Hutchinson and Brooks (2011) suggested that moods play an important role in leisure experiences. In the same light, individuals act upon their perception of reality rather than on objective facts themselves. In other words, the extent to which an individual participate in some activities is not purely a function of the capacity of this activity to satisfy their needs, wants or motives. It is rather a function of how the individual perceives the benefits provided by the activity.

Despite the availability of recent researches that focus on discussing the important benefits of leisure activities, it was observed that some federal civil servants seem not to be participating actively in leisure activities as expected. Lack of interest was assumed to be primary cause of not participating in leisure activities, apart from interest there are some factors that may serve as barriers to leisure participation some barriers may permanently or temporarily hinders individual participation. Gender is one of the factors that may affect individual participation in leisure activities.

It is also noted that in daily routine, one's behavior, interest and choices of life style is directly affected by his /her gender. Gender differences reflect on individuals' leisure behaviour because some of the leisure activities need certain physical abilities. There are differences in men and women socialization, some community beliefs that women are generally in the position of having home-centered life style and their socio- economic status is lower (Mesch & Manor, 2011).

This study was focus to assess the influence of gender on participation in leisure activities among federal civil servants in Nigeria.

Research Question

Does gender influence participation of the federal civil servant in leisure activities?

Hypothesis

Gender has no significant influence on the federal civil servants' participation in leisure activities.

Methods and Materials

Ex- post- facto research design was employed to assess the influence of gender on participation in leisure activities among Federal civil servants. According to Cresswell (2012), this research design is deemed appropriate largely because the phenomenon is best applied from given target units. Also information collected using this design cannot be manipulated, can be retrieved through questionnaire and most appropriately used to assess the influence gender on participation in leisure activities.

The population for this study comprised all junior and senior, Male and Female federal civil servants working in all Ministries and MDAs of the Federal Government.

A sample size of Six hundred and Sixty Three(663) was used for this study as suggested by Research Advisor (2006). A multi stage sampling procedure was used in this study. Stratified sampling technique was used to select the subjects for this study. The six(6) geo-political zones were considered as a stratum. From each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select two States at random. Simple random sampling procedure was also used in selecting sample (male/ female junior and senior federal civil servants) from each of the federal secretariat, located at each of the State selected.

The instrument that was used in this study was a self-developed questionnaire. The questionnaire used consisted of two main sections A and B. Section A was on personal information of the respondents such as age, income status, family type, gender, educational status and employee status, while section B consisted of leisure activities participated in by federal civil servants. To score the responses of the respondents, based on how they participate in leisure activity, three scoring mode scales was used as follows: Always =3points, Sometime = 2points and Not at all = 1point.

Data collected was analyzed with the use of SPSS package version 22. Descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage and mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents and to answer the research question respectively. Independent sample t test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level of significant.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Mean Responses on the influence of Gender on Participation of Federal Civil Servants in Leisure Activities.

	N	Gender	Mean	Mean Difference	Constant Mean
Participation of leisure activities	435	Male	17.1072	3.1662	2.5000
	228	Female	13.9173		

Table 1 above shows the mean responses on the influence of gender on participation of Federal civil servants in leisure activities. This showed that gender influence the participation of federal civil servants in leisure activities. Male have a mean of 17.1072 while female have a mean of 13.9173 with a mean difference of 3.1662. This shows gender influence participation of federal civil servants in leisure activities because the mean difference of 3.1662 is greater than constant mean of 2.50.

Hypothesis: Gender has no significant influence on the federal civil servants’ participation in leisure activities.

Table 2: Independent t-test Analysis on gender influence on the federal civil servants’ participation in leisure activities

	Gender	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig(p)
Participation in leisure activities	Male	17.1072	4.3566	662	11.099	0.001
	Female	13.9173	3.9871			

t-crit. = 1.972, Confidence Level = 0.05

Table 2 above shows the t-value of 11.099 at 662 degree of freedom (df) and a significant level of 0.001 at 0.05 level of confidence. This shows that the t-cal. is greater than the t-crit. of 1.972 and the p-value is lower than alpha level of significance. This result indicates that gender of federal civil servant has significant influence on participation in leisure activities as opposed the null hypothesis which states that “gender has no significant influence on the federal civil servants’ participation in leisure activities.” Hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the influence of gender of the federal civil servants on their participation in leisure activities. The finding revealed that gender of Federal Civil Servants has significant influence on their participation in leisure activities. One of the reasons for this outcome may be because of difference in gender which

on its own imposes some levels of limitation on the amount of time available to women. For instance at the close of work women are expected to rush home to cater for the needs and welfare of their households whereas their male counterparts are not necessarily bound to provide such responsibilities beyond facilitating what will make their women folks to be able to provide family needs. This may have enabled the men folk to be more involved in participation in various leisure activities than their female counterparts. This is in line with the finding of Evenson, Birnbaum, and Bedimo-Rung, (2011), which revealed that males have more free time after their working hours, than their female counterparts more likely to participate in leisure activities than their female folks.

Conclusion

On the basis of the research findings it is concluded that:

- Gender of federal civil servants has significant influence on their participation in leisure activities, it is also concluded that males has more time to participate in leisure activities than females.

Recommendations

On the basis of the finding and conclusion of this study following recommendations were made:

- The Federal Ministries and agencies should provide more recreational facilities within the establishment while encouraging female civil servant to participate more.
- Governments at all levels should endeavor to provide affordable leisure infrastructures that could be easily accessible by the low-income earners in order to encourage them into participation in leisure activities.

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