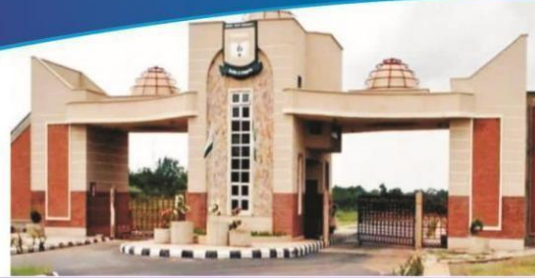


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LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES AS CORRELATE OF well-being OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN KWARA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The well-being of academic staff goes beyond mere absence of illness at work. Rather, it refers to healthy and successful functioning at work. This study therefore investigated the correlation between leisure time activities and the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State. The study employed descriptive design of correlational type, a proportionate sampling technique was used to determine the number of respondents to be drawn from each institution based on their staff population size. Thereafter, simple random sampling was used within each institution's staff list to randomly select respondents until the required sample for that institution was reached. The researcher and two assistants collected data, analyzed demographics using frequency counts and percentages, and tested four null hypotheses using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result showed that all the calculated values were greater than the table value; hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. The finding of the study revealed that there was a positive correlation between communication, outdoor recreational activities, participating in board games and social activities, and the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Ilorin South, Kwara State. Based on the findings, communication, outdoor recreational activities, participating in board games, and social activities are factors that correlate to well-being among academic staff in Kwara State. The study recommended that to promote well-being, management and stakeholders of schools Implement digital tools for efficient communication, promote wellness programs, and create recreation spaces for staff. Host cultural events, team-building exercises, and retreats to enhance team bonding.

Keywords: *Communication, Outing Activities, Playing of Board Games, Social Activities, Leisure Time Activities and well-being.*

Introduction

Teaching is a highly demanding and challenging profession with a history of crisis, dissatisfaction, stress, burnout, and depression. Factors contributing to this include excessive workload, high student population, indiscipline, precariousness, and professional instability. Okuoyibo et al. (2023) reported in their study that stress significantly impacts the performance of academic staff at Nigerian tertiary institutions.

In Nigeria, lecturer inability to detach themselves from work because they are always saddled with the responsibility of taking care of a very high number of students does not afford academic staff sufficient free time to take care of their health (Abdulrahman, 2018). Due to lecturer busy nature, most do not engage in active leisure activities and previous research (Rodríguez-Bravo, De-Juanas, & García-Castilla, 2020) has shown that a person's involvement in leisure activities improves well-being.

The well-being of academic staff is not just the mere absence of illness at work. Rather, it refers to healthy and successful functioning at work. well-being is a multidimensional concept encompassing personal and social aspects that impacts how individuals perceive, interpret, and navigate life's events and challenges. well-being is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional balance, life satisfaction, quality of life, happiness, personal growth, positive relationships, autonomy, and overall psychological functioning (Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders, 2020).

The importance of leisure-time activities in Nigeria has often been undervalued compared to developed countries, where stronger emphasis is placed on work–life balance and structured recreational practices (Adisa, Gbadamosi, & Osabutey, 2021). Leisure activity can be defined as a “non-obligatory activity that is intrinsically motivated and engaged in during discretionary time, that is, time not committed to obligatory occupations such as work, self-care, or sleep” (Glen, 2016). The basic characteristics of leisure are relaxation, enjoyment, freedom of choice, intrinsic motivation, commitment, control, and challenge.

Communication is recognized in leisure studies as a form of social leisure activity. It is frequently practiced informally during free time, and it aligns with the study's aim to examine diverse leisure behaviours. Reviewing literature, observing common social practices, and ensuring conceptual relevance guided the researcher's decision to include communication as a leisure variable. Meier et al. (2021) reported that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of computer-mediated communication (CMC) as a means to maintain social connections during leisure time. Many individuals shifted to using instant messaging and video calls to engage in leisure activities, such as casual conversations and virtual gatherings.

Board games are played by moving game pieces in particular ways on special boards marked with patterns. Board games are traditionally seen as an important leisure time activity in Nigeria culture. Popular board games that are played in Nigerian communities are ayo (mancala), draft (checkers), ludo, and chess. Engagement in board game playing has been shown to protect against depression and dementia especially in elderly individuals and it serves as a form of stress management (Mutsuhiro, 2019).

Well-being is a term used synonymously with a wide range of psychological and social constructs such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-determination, resilience, quality of life, mood enhancement, positive mental health, life satisfaction, and worthwhileness (Huppert, 2017). Achieving well-being, therefore, depends on a combination of factors, one of which is the effective use of leisure time. Leisure time itself consists of several indices which includes physical activities (such as; sports, exercise), social activities (such as; communication, peer interaction), cognitive activities (such as; reading, games), and digital or media-based activities (such as; music, movies, internet use). These indices represent diverse pathways through which individuals relax, recover, build social ties, and derive personal satisfaction. Recognizing and engaging in these leisure dimensions is essential, as each contributes uniquely to emotional stability, stress reduction, social connectedness, and overall well-being. Thus, the importance of leisure participation cannot be overemphasized; it is a vital component that directly or indirectly influences multiple facets of human functioning and overall life satisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

In most tertiary institutions in Kwara State, stakeholders have expressed concern on the issue of occupational stress which may have been responsible for lecturer job ineffectiveness. The researcher observed that academic staff experience stress and burnout as a result of the demanding nature of the career. The perceived indices of occupational stress which appear to be seriously affecting lecturer job ineffectiveness in the area are: unconducive working environment which makes academic staff demoralized in preparing themselves for effective teaching, inadequate provision of infrastructural facilities, and giving academic staff

excessive workload. Due to the arduous and numerous tasks academic staff have to complete that do not just require physical energy but also mental energy, academic staff spend little or no attention to their well-being. The high level of stress has led to negative consequences such as emotional exhaustion, work-family conflict, job dissatisfaction, low excitement to teach, lateness to work and health challenges such as frequent headaches or even stroke. As a result of these negative consequences of stress affecting lecturer well-being, the researcher observed that participation in leisure time activities can be a suitable coping strategy. Many academic staff devote little or no time in engaging in leisure time activities because most do not even realize its importance in improving their well-being.

Participation in leisure time activities has been proposed to positively impact well-being and its effect is not limited to just academic staff but every other workgroup. Therefore, it becomes essential to conduct an in-depth investigation into the leisure time activities commonly practiced in this context and to examine how these activities collectively influence the well-being of academic staff.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered to guide the study:

1. To what extent does communication impact the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?
2. To what extent does participation in outdoor recreational activities impact the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?
3. To what extent does playing of board games impact the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were postulated and tested for the study:

H₀ 1: There is no significant relationship between communication and well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State.

H₀ 2: There is no significant relationship between participation in outdoor recreational activities and well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State.

H₀ 3: There is no significant relationship between playing of board games and well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State.

Methodology

This chapter presents the procedures and methods used in gathering and analyzing data for the study. The research design was a descriptive design of the correlational type. The descriptive research method was used to gather accurate information to examine the correlation between leisure time activities and the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of four hundred and sixteen (416) academic staff in the three randomly selected tertiary institutions in Kwara State (Kwara State Ministry of Education, 2024).

The study population comprised 416 academic staff from three tertiary institutions owned by Kwara State, namely Kwara State University, Kwara State Polytechnic, and Kwara State College of Education (Kwara State Ministry of Education, 2024). To obtain a representative and manageable sample, the researcher selected 209 respondents, which is approximately 50% of the total population.

The selection of respondents was carried out through a multi-stage sampling process. To begin with, the three tertiary institutions were purposively chosen due to their relevance as the main public institutions under Kwara State ownership. Thereafter, a proportionate sampling technique was employed to allocate the number of respondents from each institution in accordance with their staff population sizes. This ensured that larger institutions contributed more respondents while smaller institutions contributed fewer. For the last stage of the

process, a simple random sampling was used to select individual academic staff, which gave each staff member an equal opportunity to be included in the study.

This combined approach of purposive, proportionate, and simple random sampling ensured that the sample was both relevant to the research objectives and representative of the population, while minimizing selection bias and enhancing the reliability of the findings.

The instrument that was used for the collection of data is titled: Leisure Time Activities' Correlation to well-being of Academic staff Questionnaire. The questionnaire (LTACTION) was divided into two Sections: Sections A and B. Section A contained questions relating to the bio-data of the respondents. Section B was designed to collect data on the key variables under investigation in the study. All the items were rated on a modified 4-point rating scale: Strongly Agreed (SA) _4, Agreed (A) _3, Disagreed (D) _2, and Strongly Disagreed (SD) _1. The respondents were expected to choose one of the options that best suit their opinions on the items in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was submitted to the researcher's supervisor and three experts from the Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education to establish both its face and content validity. Their feedback and recommendations were incorporated to refine the items and produce the final version of the instrument.

To determine the reliability of the instrument, the researcher adopted the test-retest method whereby 10 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the same respondents who share similar characteristics with the respondents at the interval of two (2) weeks. The purpose of the test was to establish the effectiveness of the questionnaire and the consistency of the items on the instrument. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine the reliability level of the instruments 0.75.

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to academic staff in designated tertiary institutions. Adequate time was given to academic staff to fill in the questionnaire after which the instrument was collected immediately. This is to ensure that enough time is given to fill them and to enhance the return rate. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency and mean were used to answer research questions while inferential statistic of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the null hypotheses postulated for this study at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Answers to Research Question

Research Question One: To what extent does lack of communication impacts the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?

Table 1: Percentage and mean of responses of the extent to which communication impacts the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State.

S/ N	Items	X	SD	Remark
1	I feel more connected to my peers when we engage in casual communication.	2.2125	.60991	Agreed
2	Conversations help me share work-related challenges in a relaxed setting.	2.8125	1.08025	Agreed
3	I feel less stressed when I spend time discussing non-work topics with my colleagues.	1.7750	.88554	Agreed
4	Sharing jokes or humorous stories during leisure activities improves my emotional well-being.	1.8500	.82830	Agreed
Weighted Average		2.16	0.85	Agreed
Decision:	Negative (1.00-1.49)	Positive (1.50-4.00)		

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of responses regarding the impact of communication on the well-being of academic staff in Kwara State tertiary institutions. The respondents agreed with all items, with individual means ranging from 1.77 to 2.81 and standard deviations between 0.60 and 1.08. The weighted average of 2.16 (SD = 0.85) indicates a generally positive perception among respondents. This finding suggests that increased engagement in communication activities such as casual conversations, sharing work-related challenges, and lighthearted interactions positively influences the well-being of academic staff. Therefore, lack of communication is associated with lower well-being. This highlights that communication is a key leisure activity that contributes significantly to staff mental and emotional health.

Research Question Two: To what extent does participation in outdoor recreational activities impacts the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?

Table 2: Percentage and mean of responses of the extent to which participation in nature and outing activities impacts the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State.

S/ N	Items	X	SD	Remark
1	Spending time in nature helps me feel more relaxed and reduces work-related stress.	2.812 5	1.080 25	Agreed
2	Participating in outdoor activities enhances my mental clarity and focus.	1.775 0	.8855 4	Agreed
3	Group outings in natural environments improve my relationships with colleagues.	1.850 0	.8283 0	Agreed
4	Engaging in recreational activities in nature enhances my creativity and problem-solving skills.	2.987 5	1.119 38	Agreed
Weighted Average		2.36	0.98	Agreed

Decision: **Negative (1.00-1.49)** **Positive (1.50-4.00)**

Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation of responses regarding the impact of participation in outdoor recreational activities on the well-being of academic staff in Kwara State tertiary institutions. Respondents agreed with all items, with individual means ranging from 1.77 to 2.98 and standard deviations between 0.82 and 1.11. The weighted average of 2.36 (SD = 0.98) reflects a generally positive perception. This finding indicates that regular engagement in outdoor and recreational activities such as walking in natural environments, group outings, and other leisure-based excursions enhances the mental, emotional, and social well-being of academic staff. This shows that participation in outdoor recreational activities is positively associated with staff well-being, demonstrating that these activities serve as effective avenues for relaxation, stress reduction, and interpersonal bonding.

Research Question Three: To what extent does does participation in board games impacts the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?

Table 3: Percentage and mean of responses of the extent to which playing of board games impacts the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State.

S/N	Items	X	SD	Remark
1	Board games offer a healthy distraction from the pressures of academic work.	2.212 5	.6099 1	Agreed
2	Engaging in board games reduces feelings of burnout from academic responsibilities.	2.812 5	1.080 25	Agreed
3	I feel more motivated and productive after participating in board game sessions.	1.850 0	.8283 0	Agreed
4	Regular involvement in board games improves my overall job satisfaction and happiness.	2.987 5	1.119 38	Agreed
Weighted Average		2.47	0.90	Agreed

Decision: **Negative (1.00-1.49)** **Positive (1.50-4.00)**

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation of responses regarding the impact of board game participation on the well-being of academic staff in Kwara State tertiary institutions. Respondents agreed with all items, with individual means ranging from 1.85 to 2.81 and standard deviations between 0.60 and 1.11. The weighted average of 2.47 (SD = 0.90) indicates a generally positive perception. This finding suggests that engaging in board games such as chess, ayo, ludo, and draft positively influences the well-being of academic staff by providing mental stimulation, reducing work-related stress, and promoting social interaction. Therefore, participation in board games is positively associated with staff well-being, highlighting its role as an effective leisure activity for enhancing cognitive, emotional, and social health.

Hypotheses Testing

H01: There is no significant correlation between communication and well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State LGA.

Table 5: Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation analysis showing the Correlation between Communication and well-being of Academic staff in Tertiary institutions in Kwara State.

Variable	N	Mean	Std	Cal. v	Df	Crit.V alue	Sig	Remark
Communication	209	44.13	30.12	0.224	207	0.116	0.000	Rejected
well-being of academic staffs	209	32.20	1.330					

P < 0.01 alpha level

Table 5 indicates that the mean and standard deviation 44.13± 30.12 calculated value of 0.224 and the critical value of 0.116 with the degree of freedom of 207 at 0.01 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than

the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that communication has positive relationship with well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State LGA, Kwara State.

Ho2: There is no significant correlation between outdoor recreational activities and well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State LGA.

Table 6: PPMC analysis showing the correlation between nature and Outing activities and well-being of Academic staff in Tertiary institutions in Kwara State LGA, Kwara State.

Variable	N	Mean	Std	Df	Cal.r-value	Crit.Value	Sig	Remark
Nature Outing activities	209	11.13	2.100					
				207	0.200	0.116	0.000	Rejected
well-being of academic staffs	209	14.11	3.124					

P < 0.01 alpha level

Table 6 indicates that the mean and standard deviation 11.13 ± 2.100 calculated value of 0.200 and the critical value of 0.116 with the degree of freedom of 207 at 0.01 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that outdoor recreational activities are correlates of well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State.

Ho3: There is no significant correlation between participation in board games and well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State LGA.

Table 7: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis showing the correlation between playing of board games and well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State LGA, Kwara State

Variable	N	Mean	Std	Df	Cal.r-value	Crit.Value	Sig	Remark
playing of board games	20	17.21	14.17					
	9		7	207	0.214	0.116	0.000	Rejected
well-being of academic staffs	20	15.01	2.210					

P < 0.01 alpha level

Table 7 indicates that the mean and standard deviation 17.21 ± 14.17 calculated value of 0.214 and the critical value of 0.116 with the degree of freedom of 207 at 0.01 alpha level. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that participation in board games is a correlate of the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined the relationship between leisure time activities and the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State. The discussion is structured around the research questions, followed by the tested hypotheses, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings.

Findings from Research Question One indicated that communication significantly influences the well-being of academic staff. Respondents reported that casual conversations, sharing work-related challenges, and engaging in lighthearted interactions reduce stress and enhance emotional stability. This suggests that engagement in activities that facilitate verbal interaction or information exchange, whether face-to-face or online positively impacts individual well-being. These results are consistent with Gallistl and Nimrod (2020), who noted that communication activities foster social interaction and promote mental health and overall well-being.

Results from Research Question Two indicates that participation in nature and outing activities was found to have a positive effect on well-being. Academic staff indicated that outdoor leisure activities such as walking, picnicking, camping, and other nature-based engagements enhance relaxation, reduce stress, and improve cognitive functioning. These findings align with Balogun (2021), who emphasized that regular physical leisure activities can counter stress-related ailments, which are becoming increasingly common in Nigeria. Cho, Post, and Kim (2018) also affirm that walking and outdoor engagement alleviate symptoms of depression and stress, ultimately improving quality of life.

In Research Question Three, board game participation emerged as a significant correlate of staff well-being. Respondents indicated that games such as chess, ayo, ludo, and draft provide mental stimulation, reduce feelings of burnout, and encourage social interaction. This supports the findings of Babatunde, Abikoye, Mabayoje, Akintola, and Oderemi (2015), who reported that playing board games is an effective way to cope with occupational stress by engaging the mind in enjoyable and cognitively enriching activities. Moreover, Obinwanne and Alozie (2019) emphasized that mental and social health are integral to overall well-being, underscoring the positive impact of board game activities.

The findings from tested hypothesis one in Table 5 revealed that communication impacts the well-being of academic staffs. This means that, engagement in activities that allows verbal interaction or information exchange (which could either be physical or online), will impact positively on the well-being of an individual. This finding is in line with the report of Gallistl and Nimrod (2020), that communication activities encourages social interaction which promotes mental health and well-being.

The findings from tested hypothesis two in table 6 revealed that nature and outing activities impacts well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State. Balogun (2021) emphasized that stress-related ailments are becoming common cause of deaths in Nigeria and regular physical leisure activities are potential antidotes. Nature and outing activities encapsules certain physical leisure activities such as farming, picnicking, camping and walking. Apart from the physical benefits such activities also improve cognitive performance and mental processes. Cho, Post, and Kim (2018) affirms that walking relieved symptoms of depression and stress, which results in improvement in individual quality of life.

Hypothesis three showed that participation in board games is a correlate of well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Ilorin South, Kwara State. This finding supports the assertion of Babatunde, Abikoye, Mabayoje, Akintola, and Oderemi (2015) who reported that, playing board games is a way to cope with occupational stress because it helps engage the mind in an edifying and enjoyable manner. Games such as chess, ayo, ludo and draft are common games played in Nigerian setting. These games do not just improve cognitive function but also foster social interaction and stress alleviation, and Obinwanne and Alozie (2019) averred the mental and social health are integral to overall well-being.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that leisure time activities play a significant role in enhancing the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State. Specifically, engagement in communication activities positively contributes to staff well-being by fostering social interaction and emotional support. Similarly, participation in nature and outing activities enhances mental, emotional, and social health by providing opportunities for relaxation, stress relief, and interpersonal bonding. Playing board games was also found to improve well-being by offering cognitive stimulation, enjoyment, and stress

alleviation. Finally, involvement in social activities generally supports overall well-being by promoting connectedness, collaboration, and a sense of community among staff members. Collectively, these findings highlight the importance of diverse leisure activities as vital contributors to the holistic well-being of academic personnel.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to improve the well-being of academic staff in tertiary institutions in Kwara State:

1. Enhance Introduce digital tools and platforms to streamline communication and information sharing, as engagement in communication activities positively influences staff well-being.
2. Encourage participation in nature-based and outing activities by creating green spaces, organizing group excursions, and implementing wellness programs that facilitate relaxation and connection with the natural environment.
3. Establish dedicated recreation areas, host regular board game tournaments, and organize inter-departmental competitions to reduce stress, enhance cognitive stimulation, and foster social interaction among staff.
4. Organize cultural events, team-building exercises, and staff retreats to strengthen camaraderie, improve interpersonal relationships, and enhance overall social and emotional well-being.

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