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LEISURE AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN OJO LGA, LAGOS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the extent of pupils' involvement in recreation and leisure activities in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State. One thousand and seventy-six [1076] pupils from public primary schools in the area of study served as participants. A self-developed structured questionnaire with r-value of 0.71 was used for data collection, while Percentage, Weighted Mean Score (WMS) and Chi-Square were used for data analysis. Inferences were made at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings revealed that most pupils have no time for leisure and recreational activities outside the school hours as they were engaged in domestic works, business activities and labour works for their parents and/ or guidance; and take-home assignments from schools, the study further revealed that the pupils prefer sporting activities to other forms of recreation

INTRODUCTION

As a society becomes more complex, the need for the release of pent-up emotions becomes much more important. Recreation and leisure are areas that demand interest and attention of

every individual, irrespective of specialization, education, gender, age or status (Suleiman, 2004).

At a point in daily activities, one needs some rest, relaxation and recreation when all or most energies and efforts have been exhausted. This is in order to refresh, be physically fit again, and mentally alert to start, or continue with work. According to South Australia Labour Policy (SALP, 2005), recreation is a key 'contributor to quality of life. For many people, it is the recreational opportunities available that could make communities wonderful places for people to live. In line with this, Kola (1993) opined that participating in leisure and recreation activity can foster a range of positive experiences; from simple relaxation, funs and enjoyment to personal development and fulfilment, and improved health.

For the health however, recreation provides opportunities to develop skills and build sense of self. According to Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD, 2001), when children participate in recreational activities, they have better emotional health and they perform better academically. Suleiman (2004) also corroborated this position as he stated that recreation and leisure activities open the door to a whole new world of learning for children. This is appreciated if one reflects on how much children learn when they are reading books and magazines for pleasure, when they are travelling or when they are watching educative programmes on televisions and movies.

Suleiman (2004) emphasized that recreation and leisure are laboratories for the education process to flourish. This is for the fact that the purpose of education to stimulate thinking, to nurture appreciations and interest; to impart skills, and to help achieve sound physical, social and mental health could be achieved via recreation and leisure. Suleiman [2004] also mentioned that recreation assists in appreciating beauty and understanding the world and universe in which we live, enhances human relations and broaden personality growth and development.

About two decades back, Onifade [1986] took a similar position, stressing the fact that physical recreation should be used as an effective vehicle for character development in youths so that the country c—n grow, develop and progress. Such growth and development are in the aspects of

culture, education, economy and politics. Based on this, Onifade [1986] posited that the administration of recreation programmes should be directed primarily at providing youths withadequate opportunity recreation.

White (2005) stressed the importance of children's interaction with nature and engagement in leisure and recreational activities in natural environment. According to him, recreation in a diverse natural environment helps children develop powers of observation andcreativity and instils a sense of peace and being at one with the world. Early experience with the natural world according to White (2005) has a positive association with the development of imagination and the sense of wonder. Other values of recreation in natural environment to children as pointed out by White (2005) include:

- Reduction or elimination of bullying
- Advance motor fitness, which include coordination, balance and agility
- Better concentration and self-discipline
- Improved cognitive development viaimproved awareness, reasoning and observational skills
- Good social interaction and positive feelings about each other
- Development of independence and autonomy
- Affinity to and love of nature, along with positive environmental ethics.

With these overwhelming values, White (2005) concluded that the best way to assist children is to give them direct experiences with the blessings of nature through recreation.

Children should be children, and should have the right to recreation. But convention on the rights of the child (2005) observed that for many children in developing countries (and for some in industrialized countries as well), recreation is afairly infrequent activity, fitted in for sportperiods between work activities. For other children, particularly those in industrialized

countries, recreational areas have been over-planned or inappropriately planned by adults who have not taken into account children's views when designing the areas.

The world declaration on the survival, protection and development of children, adopted by the world summit for children in September 1990, asserted that the children of the world are innocent, vulnerable and dependent. They are also curious, active and full of hope; therefore, their time should be one of joy and peace, of playing and learning and growing [Convention on the Right of the Children, 2005). It was based on this position that this study was conceived to investigate the extent of pupils' involvement in leisure and recreational activities in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Answers were sought for the following research questions in this study:

1. Do pupils have time for leisure and recreational activities outside school hours?
2. Would some activities be hindrances to pupils' involvement in leisure and recreational activities?
3. What are leisure and recreational activities' preferences of pupils?

Methods

Survey method of descriptive research design was used in this study, and from the population of the study, which consisted of all primary school pupils in Ojo local government area of Lagos State; one thousand and one hundred (1100) pupils were purposively selected. The pupils selected were those in primaries 4, 5, and 6. Their ages ranged between 9-13 years. 603 (56%) of them were males and 473 (44%) were females.

A self-developed close-ended questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection in this study. The questionnaire has three sections. Section A dealt with demographic data of age, sex and class. Section B was on pupils' involvement in leisure and recreational activities, and

hindrances to involvement. This was constructed on Yes, No and Not Sure responses. Section C was based on leisure and recreational activities' preferences of pupils. The responses of this section were based on the scale of 0-3, with 0 representing "No interest" and 3 for "very high interest." This instrument was showed to three colleagues for validation and their suggestions were considered in the final draft of the instrument. Test-retest reliability test of the instrument also gave r-value of 0.71.

The researchers and four research assistants administered the instrument to the respondents in their various schools during the break periods. Twenty-four (2.2%) copies of the filled questionnaire were either lost or destroyed in the process of data collection; therefore responses of 1076 (97.8%) participants were used in this study.

The data collection were coded and subjected to statistical analysis. Frequency, percentage, Weighted Mean Score (WMS) and chi-square non-parametric statistical tools were used for data analysis. Inferences were made at 0.05 alpha level and criteria for very high preference in WMS was set at 2.50.

RESULTS

Table 1: Chi-square statistics on pupils' involvement in leisure and recreational activities

Variable	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not sure	df	X ² -cri	X ² -cal	Decision
Responses on if pupils have time for leisure and recreational activities outside school hours	331.7 (30.8)	377.4 (35.1)	366.9 (34.1)	2	5.99	3.20	NS

NS = Not Significant at 0.05

Results in table 1 show that only 331.7 (30.8%) responses indicate that pupils do have time for leisure and recreational activities outside school hours. Greater percentage of the responses (69.2%) disagreed with this opinion.

Chi-square analysis of the data shows that the calculated value (3.20) was less than critical value (5.99) at 0.05 alpha level. This result indicates that pupils in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State do not significantly have time for leisure and recreational activities outside school hours.

Table 2: Chi-square results on pupils' activities . of hindrance to pupils' leisure and recreational activities

Variable	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not sure	df	X ² -cri	X ² -cal	Decision
Domestic works	511 47.5	428 39.8	137 12.7	8	15.51	162.52	S
Parent's Business	625 58.1	351 32.6	100 9.3				
Labor	471 38.8	489 45.5	170 15.8				
School Homework	728 67.7	201 18.7	147 13.7				
Extra Coaching classes	118 11.0	695 64.6	263 24.4				
AVERAGE	479 44.6	432.8 402	163.4 15.2				

S = Significance at 0.05

Results presented in table 2 show that a higher percentage of respondents stated that pupils' involvement in domestic works (47.5%), parents/guardian's business (58.1%) and school home

works (67.7%) are the main activities that prevent them from involvement in leisure and recreational activities outside school hours. High percentage of the respondents (64.6%) was of the opinion that extra academic coaching classes were not a hindrance to their involvement in recreation.

Chi-square analysis of the data shows that the calculated value (162.52) was greater than critical value (15.51) at 0.05 alpha level. This indicates that activities such as domestic work, parents' business, labour and school homework significantly hindered the pupils' involvement in leisure and recreational activities outside school hours. Figure 1 further expresses this result.

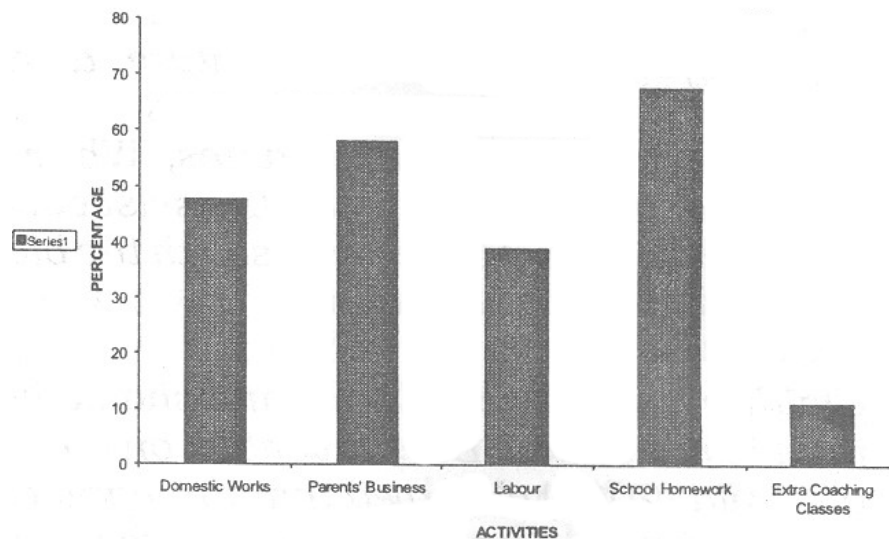


Figure 1: Component bar chart on percentage value of activities that hinder pupils' participation in leisure and recreational activities.

Table 3: Weighted Mean Scores (WMS) results on leisure and recreational activities preference of pupils

ACTIVITIES	0	1	2	3	WMS
Soccer	18	74	281	703	*2.55
Table Tennis	12	102	147	815	*2.64
Swimming	147	162	228	539	2.08
Computer Games	66	68	223	719	2.48
Card Games	117	143	129	687	2.29
Draught, Ludo &	121	95	186	674	2.31
Watching TV &	08	37	156	875	*2.76
Playing & Listening	49	202	413	412	2.10
Reading for pleasure	168	550	243	115	1.28
Arts & Crafts works	496	325	98	157	0.92
Services e.g Red	120	422	65	469	1.82
Fishing & Gardening	512	238	110	216	1.03
Average	152.8	201.5	189.9	531.8	2.02

= 2.50 criteria value

Result presented in table 3 shows that soccer (2.55), table tennis (2.64), and watching television and movies were of very high preference among the pupils. Computer games (2.48), card games (2.29), draught, ludo and Ayo games (2.31) and music (2.10) were slightly below the set criteria value (2.50). Art and craft works (0.92), and fishing and gardening (1.03) rated far below the set criteria value. On average, leisure and recreational activities preference of pupils (2.02) rated slightly below 2.50 set for very high preference. This result is further reflected in figure 2.

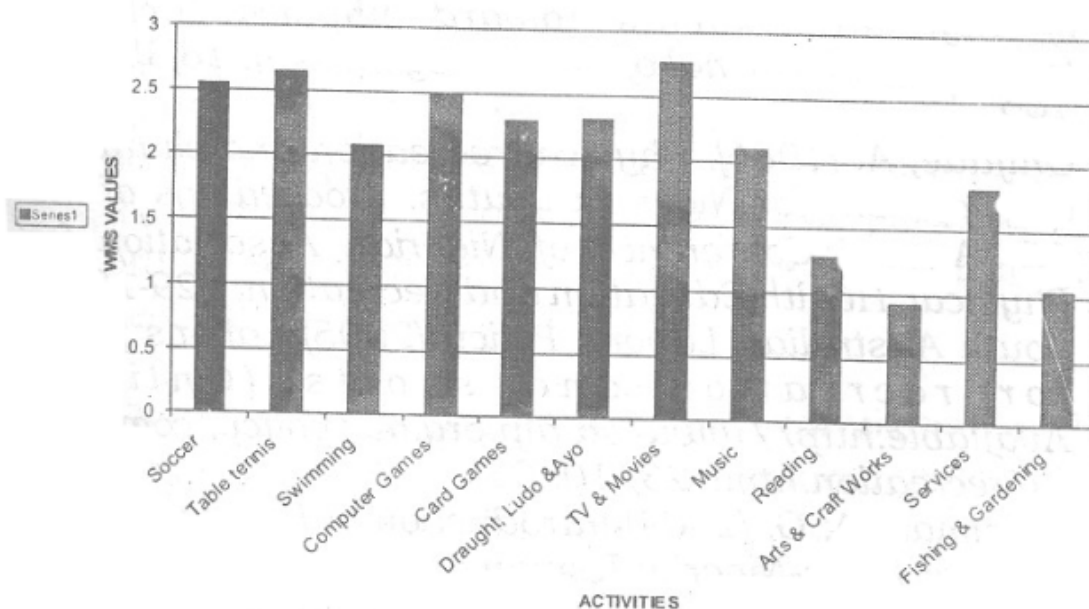


Fig. 2: Component bar chart on Weighted Mean Score [WMS] of leisure and recreational activities preferences of pupils

DISCUSSION

Results in this study indicated that pupils do not have time for leisure and recreational activities outside school hours in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State. This finding is in agreement with the Report of Convention on the Right of the Child (2005) that many children in developing countries, and for some in industrialized countries, recreation is fairly infrequent; fitted in for short periods between work activities. Similarly, Bloemhoff and Coetzee [2007] reported serious decline in participation in recreation and sports among a group of students. In line with this, White (2004) opined that the lives of children nowadays are much different from what it used to be in the past; that children today have very few opportunities for outdoor free play and regular contact with the natural world. Convention on the Right of the Child (2005) however, pointed out the fact that children should be children, and should have right to play. Based on this, two articles (12 & 31) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2005) spelt out children's right to participation in leisure and recreation.

Results of this study further revealed that certain activities hindered the pupils from involvement in leisure and recreational activities outside school.. Of these, domestic work at home, involvement in parents' businesses and time spent on home works from schools ranked high. Bloemhoff and Coetzee [2007] reported similar finding that study responsibility, lack of time for participation and motivation to participate are major hindrances to students' participation in recreation. Children from socioeconomically poor background have been reported to be at disadvantage when it comes to participating in leisure and recreational activities (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2005; White., 2005; 2004; Suleiman, 2004; & Kolar, 1993). Convention on the Rights of the Child (2005) also pointed out that children from developing countries are also at a disadvantage of regular participation in leisure and recreational activities. Acknowledging the fact that Nigeria is still classified as a developing country. The finding of this study therefore, corroborates previous reports.

On preference to leisure and recreational activities, as revealed in this study, pupils indicated very high preference for sports and games. Adeogun and Setonji (2002) reported similar finding, that the most preferred activity among primary school pupils was playing games like soccer, volleyball, basketball, swimming and handball. Bloemhoff and Coetzee [2007] reported similar result among grade 12 to university students. An insight into the active nature of children of this age validated these findings. According to Ogunsina (1999), children are very active and restless; therefore need activities requiring fitness and developmental exercises.

The result of the study also revealed that watching television and movies were highly preferred among the pupils. Adeogun and Setonji (2002) also reported watching television as the second most preferred activity among school children. White (2004) also identified watching television, movies and films as significant recreational activity among . children.

Literature has, however, made it clear that there are enormous benefits to participation in regular leisure and recreational activities for children (Bloemhoff and Coetzee 2007; Offord, Henna & Hoult, 2'005; Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2005; White, 2005; 2004; Suleiman, 2004; Uchegbu, 2003; & Kolar, 1993; Onifade, 1985; & 1986). Bloemhoff and Coetzee [2007]

however stated that there are various theoretical approaches in sociology which suggest that physical activity inform of recreation and other forms of social activities, once started are likely to continue as long as they remain rewarding, opportunities for participation are available and competing rewarding activities do not intervene.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is concluded in this study that primary school pupils in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State do not have time for leisure and recreational activities outside school hours. The hindrance to their involvement is mainly, due to engagement in domestic work at home, involvement in parents and guidance's businesses, labour and times spent on home works from school and if given opportunity to participate, pupils preferred sports, games and watching television and movies as leisure and recreational activities outside school hours:

Based on these findings, it is recommended that children's involvement in labour, businesses and domestic works at home should be reduced to the barest minimum. The children should be given opportunities to participate in leisure and recreational activities of their choice after school hours during week days, weekends and holidays. Government, private organizations and individual should create recreational centres in our communities. Preferences of children should be put into consideration when building such recreational centres. Further studies on leisure and recreational activities of school pupils should be extended to every Local Government areas of the State and other States of the Nation. Such studies should also compare the involvement and choices of pupils by age and sex.

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