



doi 10.5281/zenodo.11079505

Vol. 07 Issue 04 April - 2024

Manuscript ID: #1340

## RECREATION AND JOB SATISFACTION OF LECTURERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

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### ABSTRACT:

Lack of job satisfaction threatens university education in Nigeria. It is a critical feature of their overall well-being and performance within an academic institution. Recreation on the other hand has been identified as a factor that enhances overall well-being. This study was undertaken to determine the associations between recreational activities and job satisfaction of lecturers in university of Port Harcourt. The study utilized a cross-sectional survey involving an online distribution of questionnaire and interview methods to collect data on recreational activities of 299 academic staff in University of Port Harcourt using a pretested questionnaire. Data was collected on the demographic characteristics of the lecturers, their level of participation in recreational activities and job satisfaction. A construct of six items was used to measure job satisfaction. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The results showed that a good proportion of lecturers (76.9%) reported to indulge in some form of recreational activities while only about 23.1% did not. Walking (38.5%) was found to be a common activity among the lecturers. Observing break hour significantly correlated with recreational participation of lecturers ( $r = 0.822^{**}$ ). Job satisfaction correlated positively with lecturers' age ( $r = 0.481^{**}$ ). Participation in recreation, age and rank accounted for about 40% variation in job satisfaction. However, recreational participation alone was found not to correlate with job satisfaction ( $r = 0.080$ ). It was thus concluded that lecturers' participation in recreational activities was commendable but can be improved by encouraging observance of break time.

### KEYWORDS:

Recreation, job satisfaction, performance, break hour.



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## Introduction

Job satisfaction among lecturers is a crucial aspect of their overall well-being and performance within an academic institution. Lack of job satisfaction among lecturers in Nigeria has been identified as a threat to a successful university education (Okolocha et al., 2021). Recreational activities play a significant role in contributing to the job satisfaction of individuals across various professions (Kelly et al., 2020), including the academia. In the context of the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, understanding the relationship between recreational activities and job satisfaction among lecturers is essential for promoting a healthy work environment and enhancing productivity.

Job satisfaction among lecturers has been extensively studied globally, with various factors influencing their level of satisfaction. Studies have highlighted the importance of factors such as work-life balance, job autonomy, staff recognition, workload, and organizational culture in determining lecturers' job satisfaction levels (Ahmed, 2017; Onukwufor&Aluede, 2019). In addition, societal status and age have also been identified to be associated with job satisfaction. While some studies argue that job satisfaction is favoured by age (Statista Research Department, 2020; Topino et al., 2021) others argue that age is not a factor that significantly influences job satisfaction (Association for Psychological Science, 2016;Matagi et al., 2022). Furthermore, Anser et al. (2020) and Watkins (2024) disagree that job satisfaction is enhanced with increasing age. It was equally noted that job satisfaction increases with age but tends to decline the longer one stays in a job (Association for Psychological Science, 2016). There is need to sustain job satisfaction irrespective of how long one stays at a job. How can this be done?

The role of recreational activities in enhancing job satisfaction has gained attention in recent years. Engaging in recreational activities outside of work has been linked to reduced stress, improved mental health, and increased overall job satisfaction among employees (Reio& Callahan, 2019). This means that with the introduction of opportunities to participate in recreational activities can sustain job satisfaction through the years. However, the specific impact of recreational activities on the job satisfaction of lecturers in the Nigerian context, particularly at the University of Port Harcourt, warrants further investigation.

Work-life balance is a critical factor influencing job satisfaction among lecturers. Engaging in recreational activities is often cited as a strategy for achieving a better work-life balance, leading to greater job satisfaction (Adewumi&Sanni, 2020). However, the availability and accessibility of recreational facilities for lecturers at the University of Port Harcourt may differ, potentially affecting their capacity to participate in such activities and, consequently, their job satisfaction levels. Although, there are ample provision of recreational facilities in the University of Port Harcourt, lectures' involvement is observed to be low (Etuk&Kolawale 2023). This study recommended sensitisation programmes to enlighten the lecturers on the need to participate in recreational activities. To what extent has this recommendation yielded the desired result?

The role of organizational support in facilitating recreational opportunities for employees cannot be exaggerated. Universities can play a significant role in promoting the well-being of their academic staff by providing access to recreational facilities, organizing recreational events, and fostering a culture that values work-life balance (Musa, 2018). The extent to which Universities support recreational activities for its lecturers is crucial for understanding their impact on job satisfaction. It is evident that the University of Port Harcourt has played a substantive role in the provision of sufficient recreational facilities for all staff, the issue here becomes the utilization of

these facilities by members of staff. There have been several movements within the campus to encourage members of staff to adequately utilize these facilities for a variety of reasons ranging from health-related to job performance. Such movements include; ASUU Walk for Life, ASUU Inter-faculty games competition for both men and women and so on. The University's healthcare center also periodically organizes sensitization programs to enlighten the University community on the importance of relaxation and recreation among other topics as part of proactive measures to ensure good health at all times.

It is important for workers to relax, rest and refresh oneself periodically (Fryer, 2014; Tork, 2018; WHO, 2021). According to Afadameh and Ogomudia (2019), normal hours of work shall be those fixed by mutual agreement, collective bargaining and by an industrial wages board. This suggests that the Labour Act does not expressly state the statutory hours of work for workers but section 13(3) provides that for every six hour a worker works, they are entitled to at least an hour break (Afadameh&Ogomudia, 2019; Workforce Africa, 2024). This is to allow for adequate rest of the body organs for the maintenance of good health, improve job satisfaction and promote productivity (Fryer, 2014; Tork, 2018). Long working hours led to 745000 deaths in 2016 from stroke and ischemic heart disease (WHO, 2021). Working more than fifty-five hours a week can have some negative effects on health (WHO, 2021). Working forty to forty-eight hours a week is the golden rule (ILO, 2024) while observing a minimum of an hour break (Afadameh&Ogomudia, 2019; Workforce Africa, 2024).

The choice of recreational activities to adopt may vary among individuals of the same group. Prestige, cultural and religious factors may influence the types of recreational activities preferred by lecturers in the Universities. Understanding individual preferences and norms regarding leisure and recreational pursuits can provide insights into how universities can effectively promote employee well-being and job satisfaction (Obinna et al., 2020).

Therefore, exploring the relationship between recreational activities and job satisfaction among lecturers at the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria, is essential for identifying strategies to enhance employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. The objectives of this study were to determine how:

- i. recreational participation influence job satisfaction
- ii. certain demographic factors such as age and rank/position, influence job satisfaction.

### **Methodology**

A descriptive survey involving a stratified sampling method was adopted. The sampling procedure was stratified to separate lecturing staff from non-lecturing staff. Online and hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed to collect responses from academic staff of the University of Port Harcourt. The questionnaire was sectioned into three parts. Part one was to collect demographic data, part two was to collect data on recreational involvement of lecturers while the third part was to collect data on job satisfaction of lecturers. The part three was structured on a 4-point Likert scale. The Cochran's formula (1977) was used to determine the sample size for the study. A total of 299 responses were used representing 97.7% of the sample size determined for the study. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.67 was obtained as a measure of the internal consistency of the items. Job satisfaction was measured as a construct of six items (with a maximum score of 24). Means, percentages and standard deviation were used to describe the data while Pearson Correlation and regression analysis were used to draw up inferences from the data.

## Results

The results on the descriptive characteristics of the lecturers as presented in Table 1 revealed that most of the lecturers were married (89.6%) and above thirty-five years. There were more males (61.5%) than females (38.5%). Many of them were professors (46.2%). The findings revealed that breaktime was not always observed however, majority of the lecturers observed their breaks sometimes (69.2%) while others have never (30.8%) observed breaktime. The average number of hours spent in the office was  $7.4 \pm 0.89$  hours. A good proportion of lecturers (76.9%) reported to indulge in some form of recreational activities while only about 23.1% did not. Walking (38.5%) was found to be a common activity among the lecturers and this was done about three times a week. Nearly all the lecturers (92.3%) reported to have unmet recreational needs which were found to be diverse in nature. Such activities include: safe and secure opportunities for dancing, travelling, bird watching, cycling, water games and yoga. Availability of free time (84.6%) and financial (38.5%) constraints were found to be the major set-back hindering full participation in the desired recreational activities. Less than half (46.2%) of the lecturers felt satisfied with their work-life balance and they felt their jobs were secure (84.6%). Table 2 shows that age (0.481\*\*) correlated significantly and positively with job satisfaction, observing break hour had a positive correlation with recreational participation of lecturers significantly ( $r = 0.822^{**}$ ). Rank ( $r = 0.406^{**}$ ) also had a positive correlation with indulging in recreational activities but not significantly with job satisfaction. However, recreational participation alone was found not to correlate with job satisfaction ( $r = 0.080$ ) but produced a significant effect on job satisfaction when combined with age and rank of the lecturers. The model comprising; indulging in recreational activities, rank and age of the lecturers were observed to account for about 40% variation in job satisfaction and displayed in Table 3.

**Table 1: Characteristics of the respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
<40	23	7.7
40-49	69	23.0
50-59	115	38.5
≥ 60	92	30.8
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	184	61.5
Female	115	38.5
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	31	10.4
Married	268	89.6
<b>Rank</b>		
Lecturer I and below	23	7.7
Senior Lecturer	69	23.1
Assoc. Professor	69	23.1
Professor	138	46.2
<b>Recreational involvement</b>		
Observed break	207	69.2
Participated in recreation	230	76.9
<b>Constraints for recreation</b>		
Free time	253	84.6
Finance	115	38.5
<b>Average no. of hours spent in office</b>	7.4±0.89	
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>		
Satisfactory relationship with colleagues	299	100
Enjoyable academic culture	115	38.5
Participated in team work	276	92.3
Satisfactory work-life balance	138	46.2
Satisfactory compensation	23	7.7
Perceived job to be secure	253	84.6

**Table 2: Correlations Matrix of some Selected Variables**

	Age	Rank	Break	Indulged in recreation	Jobsatisfaction
<b>Age</b>	1	.711**	.175**	.222**	.481**
<b>Rank</b>	.711**	1	.219**	.408**	.034
<b>Break</b>	.175**	.219**	1	.822**	.291**
<b>Indulged in recreation</b>	.222**	.408**	.822**	1	.080
<b>Jobsatisfaction</b>	.481**	.034	.291**	.080	1

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

**Table 3: Model Summary**

Model	R	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics	
				F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.700 <sup>a</sup>	.385	1.868	4.427	.002

a. Predictors: Rank, Indulgeinrecreation, Age

## Discussion

It was observed that breaktime was not always observed although, majority of the lecturers sometimes observed their break while others have never observed breaktime given the average number of hours spent in the office. This shows that a small but considerable proportion of lecturers do not obey the Labour Act, 2004 by not observing their one-hour break. The reason for this needs to be extensively studied. A cumulative effect of this behaviour may become counter-productive in the future as this may lead to burnout and high stress level (WHO, 2021).

Recreational participation was found to be commendable among lecturers in the University of Port Harcourt. This finding does not align with that of Etukand Kolawole (2023) who opined that Lecturers' involvement in Recreational activities was low. Lecturers might have obtained better enlightenment on the benefits of recreation as well as the improvements in the accessto the recreational facilities on campus between the two periods

The popularity of walking by lecturers as a preferred form of recreational activity might have arisen due to the ongoing "walk for life" currently being organisedat the time of data collection by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)to help increase physical activity level of lecturers as well as improve fitness. This assumption is in line with the recommendations ofMusa (2018) who observed that institutions that provide enabling environment for recreation foster good quality of life.

Availability of free time and financial constraints were the major set-backs observed to hinder full participation in recreational activities.A few lecturers reported to experience both constraints simultaneously. These findings align well with the position of previous studies indicating that; in the developing countries such as Nigeria, leisure time is not a priority because many people are engaged in daily work to survive thus may not create time for recreation (Khasnabis et al., 2010), some factors such as distance and low financial strength hindered participation in recreational activities by workers in Federal Polytechnic Ilaro (Dawodu&Sholanke, 2023).

Recreational participation was recognised to be influenced by observing break hour and lecturers who observed break experienced job satisfaction. This aligns with the thoughts of Fryer (2014) and Tork (2018) in the sense that observing break hourprovides opportunity for adequate rest of the body organs for themaintenance of good health and improvement in job satisfaction.

Age of the lecturers were observed to show a significant influence on job satisfaction. The older the lecturers, the more satisfied they were with their lecturing jobs. This agrees with the statement that job satisfaction increases with age made by Statista Research Department (2020). Although,Anser et al. (2020) observed that subjective age and chronological age (Watkins, 2024) inversely associated with job satisfaction. There is need to find out the reason for these dissimilar views.

Although, recreational participation of lecturers did not show a significant influence on job satisfaction alone but when combined with age and rank in a regression model produced a significant variation in job satisfaction of lecturers. This corroborates previous studies such as; Kollmann et al., (2020), Piosik et al., (2019) and Shrestha, (2019) that age and image (Claude et al., 2002) other factors favour job satisfaction.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, lecturers' participation in recreational activities was commendable. However, there were still observed constraints hindering participation. Observing break hour enhanced participation and consequently job satisfaction. Therefore, lecturers should be encouraged to regularly take a break from work especially when they work for up to six hours and more.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

1. Further research is needed to investigate the specific recreational preferences of lecturers in the University of Port Harcourt due to the unmet need for recreation
2. In addition, it will be appreciable to assess the impact of organizational support for recreational activities on their job satisfaction levels to further enrich the knowledge bank.
3. There is a need to study the reason some lecturers in the University of Port Harcourt do not observe their break time.

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