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Leisure activities: A key to sustaining a better lifestyle

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the participation in leisure activities and level of leisure satisfaction of college students, thus the survey method using the questionnaire of Leisure Satisfaction Scale (LSS) is employed in this study.

The result shows that the activities participated in by college students are those that are relaxing, for health and being with friends. The result implies that these students nurture not only their physical health but their emotional health as well.

The research findings could serve as guidepost for future researches and designing recreational and leisure programs for institutions and organizations.

Keywords: Leisure activity, leisure satisfaction, healthy lifestyle

Introduction

To say that nothing is as valuable to life as life itself may seem slightly redundant. But it is still and will always be the most basic truth about our existence. And to have a healthy life is the basis of existence. To become healthy and to stay healthy belong not only to the educated man but also to the man who is educated to use his leisure time wisely.

The word leisure is used with different meanings. It substitutes such terms as free time, play, recreation, relaxation and so on. Leisure has always been related with a person's physical condition in relaxation to a specific lifestyle that could be deemed healthier. It also provides much satisfaction, which can be of personal, social and economic benefit. The frequency of leisure activities differs according to social groups, profession, education and gender. It is just a matter on how one uses it. A leisurely-relaxed manner without too much rush and stress has long been viewed as healthier one.

The study of leisure could be analyzed according to the human needs it satisfies. The purpose of leisure needs in leisure research is certainly one of the best accurate gauges as to why people indulge in activities, Barros (1982) ^[1].

As Thomas L. Goodale states in his essay Leisure's Relationship to Health, Recreation and leisure activities may be one of our best methods for curbing our rising medical costs. In an era in which medical costs continue to escalate and our ability to provide medical care for all segments of the population has lessened, maintaining good health pays dividends. From this statement, we can observe that leisure provides not only physical exercise but also other medical benefits as well.

Objectives

This study aims to determine the level of leisure satisfaction and participation in leisure activities of college students. Specifically, this study was conducted to: 1) identify the leisure activities participated in by college students; 2) identify the level of leisure satisfaction.

Materials and Method

The study was conducted among 215 college students (n= 85 male; n= 130 female) A.Y 2018-2019, from University of the Philippines in Los Banos (UPLB) participating in leisure activities.

The data was gathered using a questionnaire of 2 parts: The Leisure Satisfaction Questionnaire, where leisure activities of the students could be identified; and the Leisure Satisfaction Scale (LSS) by Beard and Ragheb.

The mean was identified as the equivalent of the frequency of participation in the different leisure activities and the level of leisure satisfaction of the students' descriptive statistics. These were presented to describe the status of the students in both participation and satisfaction levels. The mean and its equivalence values of the frequency of participation were as follows: 1 =not at all, 2 = Seldom, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always. While for the level of satisfaction, the following mean were used: 1 =Almost Never True, 2 =Seldom, 3 =Sometimes True, 4 = Often True, 5 = Almost Always True. Further, the items were ranked based on the means. Statistical analyses were performed using descriptive statistics (mean and frequencies).

Results and Discussion

Figure 1 shows the different leisure activities participated in by college students. *Walking* as an activity obtained a mean score of 4.70. This shows that among all leisure activities that are available to the college students, this is the activity they always engage in. Other than being enjoyable and being intrinsically motivated by the activity, people exercise for health benefits (Mobily *et al.*, 1993). On the other hand, *chatting/texting* friends obtained the second highest mean score at 4.63. It is clear that just being, talking and texting friends are great form of spending time without much physical exertion. Not surprisingly, *reading* with a mean score of 4.65 is another favorite activity that does not need too much energy. The use of technology has become a part of almost everybody's life and due to social trends promoted by mass media and marketing (Jimenez, J., 2017)^[3], *Surfing the net* and *Playing online games* was favored by the students as their leisure activity, with a mean score of 4.45 and 4.41 respectively. *Listening to music* an activity for entertainment and relaxation, got a mean score of 4.35. In *watching tv/videos*, the college students believed that this activity could help them relax and relieve stress that they may contribute to their well-being, as indicated by a mean score of 4.10. They also participate in *jogging*, (mean=3.93) because they consider that activity can retard or reverse physiological and behavioral decline and slows the onset of many chronic debilitating conditions (Jones and Rikli, 1993). They participate in *Sightseeing*, on the other hand, got a mean score of 3.26 and *zumba* at 2.98. These activities can contribute to the reduction of physical and emotional tension in the body (Corbin and Metal-Corbin, 1997). College students seldom participate in *picnicking* with a mean score of 2.34. *Volunteerism* as an activity (mean=2.32) for college students give them a sense of accomplishment through service to society. *Playing sports* and *Yoga* have been identified as and average to below average participation as

seen in their mean score of 2.03 and 1.90 respectively. Looking at the characteristics of the activities ranked by the subjects it is evident that they cater more to activities that do not require much physical exertion, those that are relaxing both to the mind and the body. Social interaction is high in one activity (chatting/texting) which answers their need to belong. Related to this are the physical activities for health benefits (walking and jogging) which are observed to be done by the college students with their colleagues. Thus, such physical activities which are not strenuous and have socialization demands are popular among the college students. Yoga is an activity that may be relaxing but may lack in social function of the activity.

As shown in Table 1 the college students' level of leisure satisfaction. It is clear that the important matter to them is that leisure activity should help by relieving stress and helping them to relax. Indeed, their chosen activity should first provide relaxation to them.

Further maintaining health and fitness level, especially at this stage in their lives, is also of importance. Mental and emotional well-being comes next. The students value social relationship and interaction when engaging in leisure activity.

The environment, where the preferred leisure activity of college students take place does not create much of an impact when it comes to their level of leisure satisfaction as compared to the relaxational and fitness aspects of the activity. Nonetheless, certain characteristics of the place, such as being well designed, fresh, clean and beautiful adds to their satisfaction. Well-designed places reduce accidents probable occurrence of injuries. Another thing is that the place is appealing enables them to appreciate the beauty and complexity of God's creation. In turn, appreciating all these things alongside their leisure activity creates in them a feeling of true satisfaction.

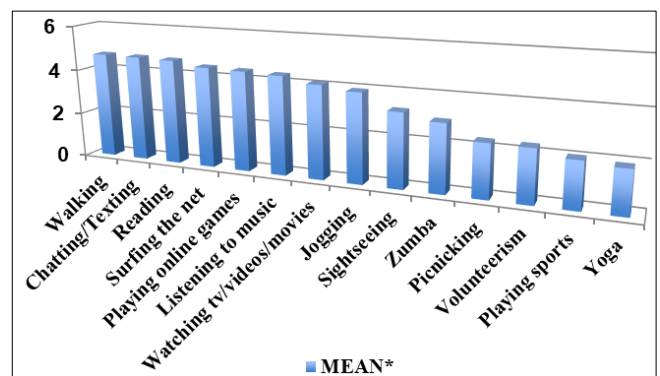


Fig 1: Mean average of leisure activities participated in by college students

Table 1: College Students' Level of Leisure Satisfaction (N=215)

Rank	No.	Statement	Mean*
1	7	My leisure activities help relieve stress.	4.7592
2	3	My leisure activities help me to relax.	4.7083
3	12	My leisure activities help me to stay healthy.	4.6852
4	8	I do leisure activities which restore me physically.	4.6110
5	11	My leisure activities contribute to my emotional well-being.	4.6064
6	15	I engage in leisure activities simply because I like doing them.	4.6018
7	22	I do leisure activities, which develop my physical fitness.	4.5370
8	1	My leisure activities are very interesting to me.	4.5185
9	5	My leisure activities give me self-confidence.	4.4675
10	9	My leisure activities give me a sense of accomplishment.	4.4491

11	16	The areas or places where I engage in my leisure activities are interesting.	4.4120
12	6	My leisure activities help me to learn about other people.	4.3889
13	10	I have social interaction with others through leisure activities.	4.3833
14	14	My leisure activities provide opportunities to try new things.	4.3704
15	4	The areas or places where I engage in my leisure activities are fresh and clean.	4.3657
16	20	The areas or places where I engage in my leisure activities are beautiful.	4.3194
17	18	The people I met in my leisure activities are friendly.	4.2639
18	19	My leisure activities are physically challenging.	4.2129
19	2	My leisure activities help me to learn about myself.	4.2037
20	17	My leisure activities increase my knowledge about things around me.	4.2036
21	24	The areas or places where I engage in my leisure activities are well designed.	4.1805
22	13	I use many different skills and abilities in my leisure activities.	4.1111
23	23	I associate with people in my free time who enjoy doing leisure activities a great deal.	4.0833
24	21	My leisure activities provide opportunities to try new things.	4.0277

* Interpretation of the mean: 1=Almost never true; 2=seldom; 3=sometimes; 4=True; 5=Almost always true

Conclusion

Understanding how people decide on what activity to pursue could be of great value in promoting activities which are in the lower rungs in terms of preference or popularity but has proven effective to maintain fitness by burning excess energy and improving muscle tone among others. But this requires a minimum level of exertion both physical and intellectual to be effective which according to the findings is not supported by the current popular trends as far as preference for leisure activities are concerned.

Adherence to academic values is premium in the respondents as they were students of UPLB at the time of the survey and hence understanding certain items in scientific manner is generally accepted and common place. This may account, for example why reading is one of the popular past time among the respondents. If similar research would be conducted and keeping the age level the same, but changing the limiting parameter from student to working youths, we may come up with a data set with items radically different from the samples used in this study.

But even given the limitation of the study, its importance to educational and community development is self-evident and greater understanding and appreciation of recreational and leisure pursuits may yield a better perspective in engaging the youths towards productive past times and consequently the benefits may accrue to communities as it go about satisfying the basic requisites of taking care of the wellbeing of its members. Well-being starts with good health and fitness practices.

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