

# ATTITUDE AND BELIEFS IN RECREATION OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COLLEGE STUDENTS IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*This study assessed the attitude and beliefs in recreation of Wildlife Management College Students in Niger State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 254 respondents for the study. Primary data were obtained on respondents' demographic characteristics, their attitude and beliefs in recreation with the use of a structured questionnaire. Frequency counts and percentages were used for data analysis. Results showed that 63.39% of the respondents were males, 55.12% of the respondents were between the ages of 20 years to 29 years, 81.5% of the respondents were not married and 66.54% engaged in recreation activities weekly. A major attitude of the respondents on recreation was that it makes them meet new friends and interact with them ( $\bar{x} = 3.91$ ) while a major belief of the respondents in recreation was that it helped them to ease tension and stress ( $\bar{x} = 4.34$ ). The study concluded that the respondents have a positive attitude and beliefs in recreation. It was recommended that respondents should improve their recreational attitudes and beliefs through awareness of the benefits in recreation and the introduction of recreation curriculum into the educational system.*

**Keywords:** Attitude, Beliefs, Recreation, Youths

## Introduction

Recreation is defined as a restoration of depleted motor power or emotional state. It was also described as a socially acceptable leisure experience or activity that rests youth from work, brings satisfaction often by giving them a change, and restores them for work (Hutchinson, 2005). Okolie (2008) described recreational facilities to provide green places for people to come together promoting communal bonding among the youth and infuses the

social content of life. How student spends their time, especially their leisure time, provides important information about their societal roles, attitudes and social experiences. According to Potgieter (2003), among the non-traditional methods of preventing psychological problems, Participating in recreational activities is recommended for the maintenance and enhancement of mental health. It is generally accepted that there are many psychological benefits offered by regular participation in recreation activities such as promoting feelings of well-being and self-efficacy.

One significant area of recreation is the growing field of student campus recreation (Daprano, et al., 2008). Comprehensive campus recreation programs include formal and informal recreational opportunities such as intramural sports, fitness programs, sport clubs, outdoor recreation, aquatics programs and aerobic dance classes (Zhang et al., 2004). Campus recreation centers exist for reasons that align with overall missions of universities; namely education, enhancing the quality of student life and preparing people for the future (Weese, 1997).

These attractive new facilities, in addition to being a powerful recruiting tool, can also facilitate the adoption of healthy lifestyles at a time when many young adults are likely to become sedentary (Reisberg, 2001). One of the reasons for campus recreation programs is the positive impact that the use of such programs, services and facilities has on the quality of life of its users, most often students (Lewis et al., 2001).

Campus recreation has important responsibilities in terms of promoting the overall well-being of students, helping to reduce negative or destructive forms of play, extending and enriching academic learning and contributing to other college and university goals (McLean et al., 2005). The integration of recreation services with the overall student experience has led to an increase in importance of recreation programming on college campuses (Turman and Hendel, 2004). The physical and mental health benefits of engaging in the types of physical activity offered by campus recreation facilities are well known and strongly supported by over a half century of research (Bouchard et al., 1990).

Research in the past few decades has shown that participation in campus recreational programs helps with students' wellness (Ellis et al., 2002), student attrition (Chrurchill and Iwai, 1981), retention and recruitment (Belch et al., 2001), academic performance (Belch, et al., 2001) and students' overall satisfaction with their college experience (Dalgarn, 2001). Research supports recreational sport facilities and programs as recruiting enhancements, which increase overall satisfaction with the collegiate experience and make a positive contribution to institutions retention efforts (Banta et al., 1991).

A number of recent studies have focused on usage of campus recreation facilities as it relates to student learning, development and academic success (Artinger, et al., 2006; Belch, et al., 2001; Bryant, et al., 1995; Haines, 2001; Hall, 2006; Lindsey and Sessoms, 2006). Given the importance of physical activity for health, the irregular pattern of college students' activity

and the potential for colleges to have an effect on physical activity, including free or low-cost fitness facilities, recreation programs and exercise classes, scientific study of this behaviour is warranted (Suminski and Petosa, 2002). Ellis et al. (2002) reported findings on the frequency of participation in campus recreation services in relation to health and quality of life variables. They found significantly positive effects of frequency of participation on four variables; satisfaction with life as a whole, satisfaction with experience at the university at which they were studying, extent to which emotional health interfered with social functioning and how often the individuals felt like they had "a lot of energy" (Ellis et al., 2002). Another study of college freshman found that students who used the student recreation center not only persisted at a greater rate than those who did not, but also earned higher grade point averages and more credit hours at the end of their freshman year than non-users (Belch et al., 2001).

Availability of free time is the major determining factor for people's participation in recreation activities (Mwisukha, 2009). Recreation affords individuals a chance to relax and refresh after performing household and school tasks (Mattingly and Bianchi, 2003). Free time or leisure is an important aspect of daily life. On the other hand, recreation is an organized activity that one engages in during free time. It is voluntarily chosen by an individual because of satisfaction, pleasure or enrichment in their lives. The activity should be pleasurable and have social redeeming qualities. Recreation participation must result in constructive, positive and socially acceptable behaviour (Mattingly and Bianchi, 2003). Despite the existence of recreational facilities in our tertiary institution, some of the students did not fully utilize the facilities. Fullerton (2011) stated that while tertiary institutions are allocating large financial resources for the development of athletic and recreational sport facilities, tertiary institution students are not taking a full advantage of the services provided. This scenario could either suggest that the institution community is not physically active or they may just choose to use facilities provided by privately-owned sports and recreation centres.

Some institutions are lacking in facilities especially for those that are faced with limited financial resources. Some of the sections of the female student population may show reluctance when compelled to share the facilities with the male students for moral reasons. Female students may experience a general feeling of discomfort sharing a gymnasium that is fully occupied by male students. In a similar vein, the equipment provided by the institution may have been of much inferior quality compared to that provided by most privately-owned recreation centres. As a result, most of the students preferred to use the services of these private facility providers even if they had to pay for these services. The institution too, may lack efficiency in managing their facilities especially with regard to good maintenance and cleanliness of existing facilities while such things as booking arrangements are mired with unnecessary bureaucratic procedures. Baker *et al.* (2008) also stated that the nearness of public recreation facilities such as playgrounds and recreational

facilities has been found to affect physical activity behaviour in a positive way. This shows that the availability of recreational facilities has the potential to attract people to be more physically active.

The existence of recreational facilities in a tertiary institution helps to create a healthy community of students who not only excel academically but are also physically active. Allen and Ross (2013) reported that students generally have clear expectations about the quality of health care, fitness and wellness services and this helps them reap the full benefits of their educational experience. Physical activity such as recreation can help young people to develop important values for continuous self-improvement. Involvement in recreation provides them with the opportunity for interaction while enabling them to reap the full benefits of physical activity. Therefore, students may well be actively involved in any form of recreational activity in order that they be more physically active.

Understanding the attitude and belief of students in recreation might help to explain better the motivation or demotivation for recreation participation or non-participation among students in Institutions of higher learning. More so, ascertaining the motives that propel groups to exhibit certain recreation habits would inevitably provide an important clue in formulating effective policy framework, strategy and advocacy for improved recreation participation programme. Unfortunately, studies on the attitude and belief of students regarding recreation in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria are scanty, and to the best of the researcher's knowledge, none of such studies has ever been carried out in Niger State.

In addition, there is paucity of local baseline data on attitude and belief in recreation among the students, which can be relied upon for further study and formulation of policies, strategies and programmes needed for designing and implementing improved recreational lifestyles initiative for different populations in Institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. This study therefore is set out to bridge the gap in knowledge by revealing the attitudes and belief of students of Federal College of Wildlife Management in recreation.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the attitude of the Wildlife Management College Students on recreation?
2. What are the beliefs of Wildlife Management College Students in recreation?

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to assess the attitude and beliefs in recreation of Wildlife Management College Students in Niger State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. describe the personal characteristics of Wildlife Management College Students;

2. assess the attitude of Wildlife Management College Students on recreation; and
3. ascertain the beliefs of Wildlife Management College Students in recreation.

### Materials and Methods

Niger State is located on latitude 11.30° N and longitude 3.20° E (Agbasiere, 2019). The area making up Niger State today comprised of the old Nupe and Kontagora kingdoms, Abuja (Suleja) is the link to the famous kingdom of Zauzau and host of other political entities. Niger State was excised from the defunct North-Western State and made a full-fledged State in the federation in April, 1976.

The Federal College of Wildlife Management, New Bussa, Niger State, Nigeria was established in 1978 as National Diploma and Higher National Diploma awarding institution in Wildlife and Ecotourism Management, Animal Production Technology, Leisure and Tourism, Computer Science and Forestry Technology. The population of the study comprised all the 698 students in the Federal College of Wildlife Management, New Bussa, Niger State, Nigeria.

However, a multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the 254 respondents (36.39% of the sample population) using disproportionate simple random sampling from the five departments in the Federal College of Wildlife Management, New Bussa, Niger State, Nigeria for the purpose of the study. This is due to the heterogeneous nature of the study population

Primary data used for the study were collected through the administration of a questionnaire which was tailored towards realizing the objectives of the study. Variables studied included the attitude of the students on recreation which was measured using an 11-item instrument and the beliefs of the students in recreation which was measured using a 10-item instrument on a 5-point Likert scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage.

### Results

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	161	63.39
Female	93	36.61
<i>Age</i>		
≤ 19	60	23.62
20-29	140	55.12
≥ 30	54	21.26
<i>Marital Status</i>		

Married	47	18.5
Not married	207	81.5
<i>Frequency of recreation activities</i>		
Daily	41	16.14
Weekly	169	66.54
Monthly	44	17.32

Table 1 showed the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The results showed that 63.39% of the respondents were males while 36.61% were females. Most of the respondents (55.12%) were between the ages of 20 years to 29 years. This signified that the majority of the respondents are mature and have out-grown their teenage period. Also, it was revealed that 81.5% of the respondents were not married while a greater proportion of the respondents (66.54%) engage in recreation activities weekly.

**Table 2: Attitude of the respondents on recreation**

My attitude on recreation...	Mean	Rank
1. ... makes me meet new friends and interact with them	3.91	1 <sup>st</sup>
2. ... improves my mental relaxation	3.88	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3. ... develops my social experience	3.87	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4. ... keeps me in close relationships	3.85	4 <sup>th</sup>
5. ... ease my academic stress and boredom	3.84	5 <sup>th</sup>
6. ... escalates my enjoyment and pleasure	3.83	6 <sup>th</sup>
7. ... improves my daily life activities	3.81	7 <sup>th</sup>
8. ... advances my knowledge expansion	3.80	8 <sup>th</sup>
9. ... progresses my self-improvement and esteem	3.79	9 <sup>th</sup>
10. ... brings people around me together	3.78	10 <sup>th</sup>
11. ... makes me explore new things	3.75	11 <sup>th</sup>

Attitude of the respondents on recreation refer to the approach of the respondents on leisure. Table 2 indicated that their attitude on recreation makes them meet new friends and interact with them ( $\bar{x} = 3.91$ ) and this was ranked highest by the mean score rating. This was followed that their attitude on recreation improves my mental relaxation ( $\bar{x} = 3.88$ ), develops their social experience ( $\bar{x} = 3.87$ ), keeps them in close relationships ( $\bar{x} = 3.85$ ), ease their academic stress and boredom ( $\bar{x} = 3.84$ ), escalates their enjoyment and pleasure ( $\bar{x} = 3.83$ ), improves their daily life activities ( $\bar{x} = 3.81$ ), advances their knowledge expansion ( $\bar{x} = 3.80$ ), progresses their self-improvement and esteem ( $\bar{x} = 3.79$ ), brings people around them together ( $\bar{x} = 3.78$ ) and makes them explore new things ( $\bar{x} = 3.75$ ).

**Table 3: Beliefs of the respondents in recreation**

I believe recreation...	Mean	Rank
1. ... helps me to ease tension and stress	4.34	1st
2. ... provides me an opportunity to test skills and physical endurance	4.32	2nd
3. ... gives me joy and happiness	4.31	3rd
4. ... benefits me educationally	4.29	4th
5. ... benefits me emotionally	4.28	5th
6. ... benefits me psychologically	4.26	6th
7. ... benefits me medically	4.25	7th
8. ... benefits me economically	4.24	8th
9. ... benefits me socially	4.21	9th

Beliefs of the respondents on recreation refer to the principles of the respondents on time-out. Table 3 indicated that their belief in recreation helped them to ease tension and stress ( $\bar{x} = 4.34$ ), provides them the opportunity to test their test skills and physical endurance ( $\bar{x} = 4.32$ ), gives them joy and happiness ( $\bar{x} = 4.31$ ), benefits them educationally ( $\bar{x} = 4.29$ ), emotionally ( $\bar{x} = 4.28$ ), psychologically ( $\bar{x} = 4.26$ ), medically ( $\bar{x} = 4.25$ ), economically ( $\bar{x} = 4.24$ ), socially ( $\bar{x} = 4.21$ ).

### Discussion of Results

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitude and beliefs in recreation College Students of Wildlife Management in Niger State, Nigeria. The objectives of this study were to describe the personal characteristics, assess the attitude and ascertain the beliefs of the respondents in recreation. The findings indicated that majority of the respondents were male, in their twenties, single, engaged in recreation activities weekly. This assertion collaborates the empirical findings of Bulaklak and Pilobello (2014) and Omar-Fauzee, Yusof and Zizzi (2009) who observed classroom practices and academic behaviour in physical education of freshman psychology and education students and college students' attitude towards the utilization of the sport recreation centre.

However, the respondents' major attitude on recreation encompassed making them meet new friends while interacting with them. Based on analysis, students in general showed a favourable attitude towards recreational activities. The results corroborates with the study Tsang and Chan (1993) using local student as respondents.

On the other hand, the respondents' major belief made contained them to ease tension and stress. This assertion collaborates the empirical findings of Eja, *et al.* (2017) in their study on spatial distribution and utilization of selected recreational facilities in Calabar, Nigeria.

Furthermore, in the study of Kerr *et al.* (2012) on the use of recreation activities as positive coping with chronic stress and mental health outcomes

associated with unemployment of people with disabilities, it was established that recreation activities that are physically active, culturally relevant, and conducive to relaxation were found to be effective at reducing the types of stressors experienced.

### Conclusion

The study examined and made contributions to research on the attitude and beliefs in recreation of Wildlife Management College Students in Niger State, Nigeria. From the results of the study, it was established that a large proportion of the respondents are post-teenage youths, dependants, participate in recreation activities weekly, have positive attitude and beliefs in recreation. The students has positive attitude towards recreation and this made them to meet new friends by interacting with them thereby improving their mental relaxation. Besides, they also believed in the participation of recreation and this has further helped them to ease tension and stress by providing them the opportunity to test skills and physical endurance.

### Recommendation

Based on these findings, it is recommended that more recreational facilities should be provided, more free time should be provided for recreational activities, more awareness of the benefits in recreation and the introduction of recreational curriculum into the educational system.

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