

Leisure Time Use in Kenya, an assessment of University Undergraduate Students in Eldoret Town.

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Abstract

This study examines leisure time-use amongst undergraduate students in Kenyan universities based in Eldoret Town; using data collected from 100, individuals from 4 campuses. The objective of this study included to establish which activities they participate in, to find out their understanding of leisure time, to determine the consequences of leisure to undergraduate students. The response rate was 100%. The results of this study indicated significant relationships existed between leisure participation and leisure satisfaction ($P=0.004 < 0.05$), leisure participation and life satisfaction ($P=0.002 < 0.01$), and leisure satisfaction and life satisfaction ($P=0.000 < 0.01$) of university students in Kenya. Such findings supported other research on the relationship of leisure participation and leisure satisfaction to other facets of life.

Keywords: *Leisure time, Leisure, University undergraduates, Kenya*

Introduction

Higher education is no longer devoted exclusively to the education of the young but also to their lifelong learning structures and experiences (Patterson & Pegg 1999). Time as an individual resource, of course, has received substantial attention in economics research on outdoor recreation. For example, it is standard practice in recreation demand studies to consider time as a form of travel cost to access recreation sites (Englin and Shonkweiler 1996; Phaneuf and Smith 2005). Valuation of benefits from outdoor recreation therefore critically depends on the valuation of time as a travel cost. Rather than setting travel time values ad hoc at some fraction of the wage rate, some studies have concentrated on estimating the value of travel time by structurally incorporating a time budget constraint into recreation decisions (e.g., Larson and Shaikh 2004; Larson et al. 2004). However, basic research on the general use of time for outdoor recreation, including what explains its historic trends, has not been conducted.

More broadly, this study is motivated by both the practical policy usefulness and the potential scholarly importance of learning more about the use of time for outdoor recreation. General economics research has long recognized the importance of individual time allocation decisions (Becker 1965), but empirical research on detailed time-use data has only recently become more frequent and recognized (Hamermesh and Pfann 2005; Aguiar and Hurst 2007). From a practical policy perspective, better understanding people's use of time for recreation and the drivers of their time-use decisions provides potentially important lessons for the design and evaluation of public policy toward outdoor recreation. For example, much of the policy and physical infrastructure for outdoor recreation was developed decades ago, and it is vital to evaluate whether this infrastructure still meets the demands of today and the future. Activities should no longer be viewed as a way to keep the people busy but should provide a way to establish meaning in daily life. Each activity should accomplish a variety of outcomes and enable the participants to contribute, play, learn, feel safe, and be with others.

Leisure as an Element of Time

The concept of leisure as an element of time assumes that leisure is a phenomenon which can be quantified in time (Kelly, 1996). That is, leisure exists in a moment of time lived by an individual. Thus, one is able to identify when one is or is not in leisure. Within this framework, leisure time has been seen as: (1) A block of unoccupied time when one is free to rest or do what he or she chooses (discretionary time), (2) residual time or time beyond what is needed for existence, and (3) time that is not used for subsistence (Brightbill, 1961; Godbey, 2003; Kelly, 1996).

Although researchers have widely embraced the idea that leisure contains an element of time, some criticisms were raised against the use of time as a sole defining characteristic of leisure. Godbey (2003), for instance, argued that we must first determine what constitutes free time. Although the question has been so far answered by stating that free time is the unoccupied time, outside of obligatory activities, that is not used for subsistence, this argument can also be problematic.

Leisure as an Activity

Leisure has also been conceptualized as an activity; apart from work, family, and society (Dumazedier, 1967; Kelly & Freysinger, 2000). In this framework, individuals engage in leisure at will, out of personal choice, for

relaxation, diversion, or broadening of their knowledge, and as a spontaneous social participation (Dumazedier, 1967). Such understanding of leisure allows researchers to quantify and compare groups and individuals. Defining leisure as an activity also provides an opportunity to include the social context of the activity and the meaning of the activity to the individual (Kelly & Freysinger, 2000). Thus, leisure is not necessarily the left over time (Kelly, 1983), but an activity that must possess certain essential elements. They include: (1) perceived freedom, (2) having a purpose of its own (being auto telic), and (3) expectation of a beneficial outcome. That is, one is able to freely decide when to participate and when not to participate; the activity is done for its own sake, and with a beneficial outcome in mind.

According to Kelly (1983), “one difficulty with such an approach is that it opens the question of the possible functions of leisure without being exhaustive” Kelly (1996) claimed that almost no one defines leisure as a list of activities and there are no comprehensive lists of activities that would accurately capture the concept of leisure. Moreover, “no activity is always leisure because of its form” (p. 20), but because of its relative freedom to choose and its motivation.

Although leisure involves doing something by choice (Kelly, 1983), it also has a purpose, and is chosen in some way to enhance the self (Dumazedier, 1967). Leisure as an activity, according to Kaplan (1960), provides opportunities for recreation, personal growth, and service to others. Further, according to Kaplan, leisure is an activity that falls into the perception of free time by the participant, is psychologically pleasant in anticipation and recollection, has commitment and intensity, and can have constraints. Thus, to understand the concept of leisure, one must also understand the motivations for involvement in leisure.

Leisure should be universal and a vital component to experiencing life at its fullest. In many societies throughout the world this is a reality; for many others leisure or greater leisure is merely an aspiration. What is clear is that leisure can support the creation of global civil society as it is integral to the social, cultural, economic, and sustainable environmental development and the wellbeing of individuals, communities and nations.

It is through leisure that exploration, growth, renewal, reflection and self-actualization are possible. Leisure, supported by skilled leadership, enables the creation of quality of life experiences offered in sustainable environmental settings. Leisure encourages world peace by promoting cross cultural communication and common values, equality and social justice across diverse populations. Leisure contributes to the improvement of the human condition, promotes opportunities for inter-generational perspectives by supporting inclusive, accessible, pro-social and health, holistic human experiences. Leisure is characterized by the quest for satisfaction, pleasure, discovery and socialization. As a pro-social public policy, leisure is a means of achieving a happy and good life and is consistent with the aims of environmental sustainability. Leisure plays an essential role in individual, community and national development, contributing to the quality of life and well-being, the enhancement of social relationships and social capital and as a place of expression and engagement in democratic life. Leisure is an important place for social and voluntary involvement as well as the expression of solidarity and a sense of belonging. Leisure is a significant aspect of cultural life in all societies throughout the world and is related to cultural creation, development and preservation. Cultural identity is formed in part within the leisure context and contributes to the formulation of valued lifestyles. Leisure may be the most important element of life for realizing relaxation, happiness and self-fulfillment. Leisure contains possibilities for enhancing the health, wellbeing, and human development for individuals across the life span regardless of physical or mental ability or objective status. Leisure provides opportunities for family development, relationship building and community bonding. Leisure promotes social benefits such as shared experiences, intimacy and emotional closeness, and cooperation and collaboration. Leisure goods and services account for 20-25% of all consumer expenditures and are rapidly increasing. Leisure contributes to environmental quality, enjoyment of natural areas as a significant contributor of quality of life.

Leisure and the Kenyan Youth in Universities

The youth form the majority (more than 60%) of Kenya's population and for this group, leisure and recreation occupies over 80% of their time. A majority over 500,000 are in institutions of higher learning such as Universities and colleges. It is therefore paramount that issues pertaining to leisure and recreation for the youth are given priority. Leisure, and recreation, is important activities in the life of youth as they contribute to their personal development. These activities positively engage youth and are particularly important in promoting social skills and values such as teamwork, tolerance, physical skills and exploitation of natural talents. Although some young people undertake recreation activities for pure enjoyment, recreation and community service can be used to build networks that could lead to job opportunities. Leisure, recreation and community service are important for the psychological and physical development of the youth. It contributes to their personal development by promoting good health, personal discipline, leadership and team building skills. It also provides

opportunity for appreciation, participation and creative experience in leisure, music, art, dance, drama crafts, novelty events service and cultural activities. This helps engaging the youth to make good use of their leisure time, express their beliefs and values as well as promote and preserve local art and culture for the benefit of the future youth. However, current investment in leisure and recreation has not reflected its importance. Universities and local councils suffer from inadequate funds and facilities while the talented youth lack motivation and are often forced to seek alternative ways to pass time when they are not studying and they run the risk of being exploited by organizations.

Materials and Methods

Research design

The study adopted an exploratory approach using descriptive survey design to investigate if there is a direct relationship between participation in leisure activity' and time as described by Kothari (2004), Orodho (2004), Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). A case study was selected, Eldoret town is a host of different universities who have opened campuses within the town centre, because Eldoret town is expanding rapidly in terms of business and population it is a perfect example of how a fast growing town can attract a large number of people who join campus after high school and those who chose to go back to school after working for some time regardless of the industry. Eldoret town is a home of more than five universities, both private and public and for the purpose of this study were chosen randomly. Once students join university, they rely on universities to provide them with enabling environments for studying and this includes common rooms for indoor recreation and outdoor recreation facilities such as fields and courts. Eldoret town is sufficiently large to ensure areas of leisure and recreation are available for the public population including university students. The study is aimed at investigating the various ways in which undergraduate students use their time for leisure and recreation activities and the contribution of leisure facilities to ensure productivity and enabling environment for students to learn

Sample design

Stratified random sampling was applied to come up with the sample size, since the population in different campuses was heterogeneous, implying that a simple random sample would have been unrepresentative of the population. Stratified random sampling ensured that each campus was represented in the sample in sufficient numbers for fair comparison and generalization of the findings. Therefore, the population was divided into 4 strata (the 4 university campuses) and a 25% simple random sample was taken.

Instruments and procedures

Through the use of structured and unstructured questionnaires and oral interviews, data related to undergraduate students leisure time use was collected from campuses within Eldoret town. The questionnaire survey was mainly interviewee completed because of the high literacy rate in the area, a technique that was supported by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). The researcher interpreted the questions in the language and manner, in which the respondent would understand. The questionnaires consisted primarily of 'closed' questions. A few open-ended questions were included in order to give the respondents a chance to freely express their attitude and perceptions hence providing qualitative insights and illuminations. . A few captive group surveys were also applied to gather information from the public. A 5 point Likert scale, questionnaire survey was the main instrument providing quantitative data on the use of leisure time.

Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) programme was used for analysis. A number of techniques were used; frequency and mean (central tendencies) as tools of descriptive data analysis, and one way analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and correlation as instruments of bivariate analysis. One way ANOVA was conducted in order to find out if undergraduates perception on social determinants and consequences of leisure.

Results and Discussion

Participation in leisure

The environment inside and outside the university campus provides activities for students to participate in during their leisure and spare time. Leisure is an element that can be found in any activity, and it plays a significant role in the modern world. (Huang, 2003). Traditional leisure and recreation activities chosen are used to meet a diversity of needs. Watch TV and Videos or going to the movies for entertainment and to pass time, reading books for enlightenment, and attending cultural events, for entertainment and learning experience, visiting friends and relatives to catch up and see how they are doing and for the company,, playing cards and board games to pass time , listening to music, sports active and passive, for relaxation handicraft and the internet for entertainment, work, relaxation. For the undergraduates who participate in various leisure activities , it was found that 79 % of undergraduates spend time watching TV, DVD and movies, daily , 21% for going to the movies, reading books (47%), attending cultural events (72%), getting together with relatives and friends(32%), playing cards and board games(55%), listening to music(37%), taking part in physical activities such as

sports(69%), attending sporting events such as football(32%), doing handicraft(16%) and spending time in the internet/PC(89%)

Contribution from leisure activity to establishing contacts is inversely related to boredom this is indicated by a negative sample coefficient of correlation (-0.497) between boredom and the establishment of contacts. The implication therefore is that the leisure activity is more significant as establishing contacts. (Table 1)

Table 1. Participation in leisure

| Activity | Daily (%) | Several times a Week (%) | Several times a Month (%) | Several times a Year or less (%) | Never (%) |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Watch TV,DVDs and Videos at home | 37 | 42 | 11 | 5 | 5 |
| Go out to the movies | 5 | 16 | 25 | 26 | 28 |
| Go out Shopping | 16 | 31 | 22 | 18 | 13 |
| Read books | 18 | 54 | 6 | 10 | 12 |
| Attend Cultural events | 0 | 6 | 33 | 21 | 40 |
| Visit friends and relatives | 0 | 26 | 18 | 45 | 11 |
| Play cards and board games | 37 | 18 | 45 | 0 | 0 |
| Listen to music | 27 | 10 | 8 | 33 | 27 |
| Take part in physical sports | 53 | 16 | 7 | 19 | 5 |
| Attend a sporting event | 15 | 17 | 22 | 30 | 16 |
| Do handicrafts | 5 | 11 | 15 | 27 | 42 |
| Spend time on the internet | 53 | 36 | 6 | 0 | 5 |

Gender participation in leisure activities

Four areas were selected to establish which activity is popular with which gender. Women dominated in reading books at 53 % as opposed to 47%. However male gender dominated in watching TV, DVD and Movies at 69%. Looking further, the study showed that as for getting together with friends was at 50/50% for both male and female and taking part in physical activity such as sports, going for a walk.at 62% for Male and 31% for females.(Table 2)

Table 2 Gender based enjoyment

| Activity | Males (%) | Female (%) |
|------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Reading books | 47 | 53 |
| Getting together with friends | 50 | 50 |
| Taking part in physical activities | 62 | 38 |
| Watching TV,DVD and Videos | 69 | 31 |

People do different things during their free time, when asked to indicate how often the use time to establish contact a bipolar result indicated a 38% for seldom/never and a 35% for very often and often and sometimes and 27%.to relax and recover, very often/often was at 78% and 51 % to learn and develop. This is supported by results in table 4 whereby students indicated their reasons for participating in leisure activities for physical and mental health is very important at 70% followed by competition, meeting people and looking good at 32%, 24% and 11% respectively.

Table 3. Meaning of leisure time

| Meaning Factor | Very often& often (%) Bipolar | Sometimes (%) | Seldom and Never (%)Bipola |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| To establish contact | 35 | 27 | 38 |
| To relax and recover | 78 | 12 | 10 |
| To learn or develop skills | 51 | 27 | 22 |

Table 4.Reasons for participation

| Factors | Very Important | Somewhat important | Not very important |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| For physical or mental health | 70 | 8 | 22 |
| To meet other people | 11 | 73 | 19 |
| To compete with others | 32 | 21 | 60 |
| To look good | 24 | 55 | 21 |

Social determinants and consequences of Leisure

There are conditions which contribute or prevent one from doing the free time activities in a likert scale of 5. Both at 30% of students indicated the lack of facilities nearby and lack of time contributed very much to their participation in leisure time. This was followed by lack of money at 25%. However to a very large extent personal health, age and disability prevented them from participating in leisure.

Table 5. Social determinants and consequences of Leisure

| Factors | Very much | To a large extent | To some extent | Not at all |
|---|-----------|-------------------|----------------|------------|
| Lack of facility nearby | 30 | 16 | 52 | 0 |
| Lack of money | 21 | 33 | 40 | 6 |
| Personal health, age or disability | 0 | 67 | 0 | 33 |
| Need to take care of someone (e.g Child) | 0 | 11 | 41 | 48 |
| Lack of time | 30 | 22 | 40 | 8 |

The results of this study indicated that significant relationships existed among leisure participation, leisure satisfaction, of undergraduate campus students in Eldoret. Also, the results showed leisure participation, and gender and leisure participation of university students in Eldoret. From this research, university in Kenyan universities could benefit from understanding and realizing how leisure participation and leisure satisfaction affect students' life satisfaction.

The results of this study will assist in consideration and development of facilities to support students use of leisure time and also in developing future research. Several researchers stated that students with higher leisure satisfaction scores have significantly lower levels of stress (Chang 1998; Cunningham & Bartuska 1989; Hu 2000; Wu 2001).

Therefore, universities should provide students with an adequate fitness center and appropriate equipment to increase students' leisure motivation and leisure satisfaction. In addition, university of universities should plan leisure activities for both males and females. These suggestions are designed to increase university students' leisure participation and leisure satisfaction, which will in turn enhance performance. Because university is an important time in the life of students and because there is a significant relationship among leisure participation, leisure satisfaction, and life satisfaction, students in Eldoret should participate in leisure activities on and off campus. By participating in different kinds of leisure activities, students could release academic stress, make their bodies stronger, make good use of their free time, build personal confidence, and adapt to a new university life. The results of this study indicate that leisure participation is positively related to leisure satisfaction. The more satisfied university students are with their leisure, the more frequencies they participate in leisure activities and vice versa ($p=.004$). The results of this study show a positive relationship exists between leisure participation and life satisfaction of university students in Kenyan ($p=.002$). And the results of this study indicate that leisure satisfaction has positive relationships with life satisfaction ($.000$). Several studies have pointed out that leisure satisfaction is an important component of a healthy life. So leisure satisfaction is one of the main contributors to life satisfaction.

Conclusion and Recommendation

With the increasing number of universities and student population, universities in Kenya have been force to open campuses and or learning centres in town and these facilities are only giving provisions for learning space and not areas for recreation. With this in mind it has made it necessary for students to look for alternative means of spending their leisure time because facilities and areas of recreation are within the main campuses which are not near town. The Municipal council does not have public facilities for recreation as well. Undoubtedly people's quality of life is enhanced by satisfying and enjoyable leisure experiences. Leisure activities also play an important role in promoting good mental and physical health. When people find themselves with free time they often positively choose to put it to leisure use. From this research, universities in Kenya can realize that leisure activities are an important factor of life for university students and provide an essential element of life satisfaction. University administrators can benefit by knowing how leisure participation and leisure satisfaction affect students' life satisfaction. The results of this study may help them plan and organize leisure activities, and provide a more satisfying university environment for students.

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