

## **Recreation as a Complementary Capacity Building Strategy among Oyo State Civil Servants**

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### **Abstract**

Meaningful capacity building should essentially include promotion and maintenance of health of workers. The nature of office responsibilities, if care is not taken easily predisposes workers to sedentary, aetiology of heart diseases capable of promoting social, physical and mental health problems with adverse consequences on workers' productivity. The study focused complementary role of recreation in capacity building among state civil servants of Oyo State in order to enhance, sustain and maintain their health. 2800 participants involving males and females drawn from 20 Ministries on equal basis, through randomization were used for the study. Self-developed questionnaire, validated for construct and content assurance were employed to collect data which were analysed with chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) inferential statistics at 0.05 alpha level. Based on the conclusions, recommendations were proffered on strategies to promote recreation among workers with the provision of recreational facilities at secretariats as well as introduction of mandatory monthly 'walk for fitness' by every rank and file of workers under the leadership of recreation experts..

**Key Words:** Recreation, complementary, capacity building, strategy

## 1. Introduction

The government at all levels and non-governmental organisations worldwide usually organise series of capacity and empowerment programmes for workers in public and private organisations with a view to updating and increasing the ability of workers which is believed will translate into quality performance and productivity of the organisations. In support of this aspiration, Babatunde (2004) stressed that government at all levels and individuals worldwide are always interested in developmental strategies capable of raising the quality of life which is undoubtedly a potent prerequisite to quality productivity. To successfully embark on functional capacity building, the issue relating to human being is of great importance.

Empirical observations as hinted by Omolawon (2002) and Babatunde (2006) have shown that, despite the robust empowerment programmes organised for workers in developing nations in terms of training, re-training, in-service courses, introduction/invention of sophisticated technologies, the objective of improvement of workers' performance and productivity have only been partially attained due to the glaring and obvious misplacement of priority in the approach. It is not out of place to say that only a 'healthy worker can be compellant or amenable to training and technologies of varying degrees. Associating with this stand, Nwankwo (1990) and Babatunde (2006) agreed that human beings constitute the ultimate basis for development. Therefore, to aim for a realistic achievement in education, industry career and social welfare, we must ensure healthy individuals by ensuring a balanced equation between the body and its natural propensity for exercise. Designing, installing and operating machines require healthy human beings for proper and maximal use. According Nwankwo (1990), a machine such as the computer is designed to carry out most sophisticated operations and often to provide answers to intricate problems in a matter of seconds. Yet, the computer cannot activate itself; it needs a known input to function. Babatunde (2006) reported that, the basic objective for any social activity is to positively affect or influence the quality of life. Akintunde (2001), Moronkola and Abass (2001), Omolawon (2002) and Babatunde (2004), corroborate the collaborative role of recreation in promoting, securing, improving and rehabilitating the quality of life for man.

It is an incontestable view that health is wealth, meaning which coupled with all other relevant variables health is an indispensable factor in the attainment of wealth. Health as a quality of life is a precursor to greater height of performance that attracts wealth. In both private and public organisations, stable health of workers is of top most necessity for advancement and achieving their objectives. Babatunde (2006) said that the employer will not live to attract unhealthy workers or retrain them. To be healthy is among the means to be wealthy. Health encompasses many stems such as mental health, social health, physical health, cardiovascular health, cardio-respiratory health that are interrelated into a complex whole. Of course, whatever affects one negatively will produce negative effect on the others. Capacity building process should be extended to alternative health promotion. More often, the technique towards this is usually multi-dimensional. Health as a state of complete mental, social and physical well-being can be maintained, sustained and continually improved with certain instruments such as regular but moderate exercise, balanced diet and desirable personal lifestyle as well as environmental health. Nwankwo (1990), Babatunde (2007) and Babatunde (2011) reported that regular and moderate intensity exercises as well as balanced diet represent lubricants that keep the body going. The nature of civil service job makes the workers more vulnerable to inactivity which is a situation of partial death as a result of taking sedentary position most of the time.

Akinloye (2011) reported that physical inactivity can cause premature death, chronic disease and disability. The health benefits of recreation to individuals according to Haastrup (2011) include the following: improvement of individual health and fitness, increased personal satisfaction, adding a boost to an individual's self-esteem, development, new skill in individual, reduction of stress, socialisation and participation are improved. Babatunde (2004) and Haastrup (2011) emphasised the role of recreation in maintaining physical and mental health as well as useful in controlling stress. Babatunde (2006) in stressing inactivity as a partial death reiterated the fact that the need to maintain optimal level of health and sustain it requires prompt and adequate attention with the use of recreation along with other approved methods. Omolawon (2002) remarked that to recreate is to revitalise one's body and be born with health, vigour and vitality. Babatunde (2004, 2006) indicated that, progressive productivity can be ensured through participation in recreation. Recreation provides preventive benefit as it assists in the development of buffer to diseases. Babatunde (2006) was of the view that successful implementation of human capacity building is facilitated with the mechanism of recreation in collaboration with other developmental strategies.

Nwankwo (1990) and Babatunde (2004) as well as Azuibuike (2011) indicated that exercise brings about significant increase in the level of physical fitness which is an indispensable factor in weight control as well as essential in the maintenance of cardiovascular health that seeks to protect the heart from coronary heart disease, heart failure and other circulatory problems. Babatunde (2006) emphasised the importance of regular leisure activities in promoting psychological and social well-being. The potency of physical fitness in relation to quality productivity cannot be over-emphasised. The medical experts have duly recognised the indisputable contributions of exercise on regular basis to improving, sustaining and maintaining health. Without health, no meaningful performance in any human endeavour can be achieved. Akinloye (2011), Asubuike (2011), Babatunde (2011) and Haastrup (2011) keenly observed the incessant hospital attendance of civil servants through hospital records for treatment of cardiovascular and cardiorespiratory related health problems as a result of obesity and overweight; a product of inactivity.

## 2. Objective of the Study

A colossal amount of money is often set aside for empowerment and capacity building of both state and federal workers in Nigeria yearly with a prime view to updating them for quality services which are catalyst to development; yet no appreciable change is recorded. Meaningful governments at all levels, especially with high demand of accountability are now skeptical about retaining non-viable workers either as a result of persistent ill health or not being amenable to new technologies.

The physical and mental are closely interwoven into the fabric of human being. It has been proved that what affects one dimension of person's makeup will affect the other and workers will be strong to the extent that they develop both qualities. The focus of this study therefore was to examine the collaborative role of recreation in promoting effective capacity building in terms of physical fitness, mental alertness and social well-being/psychological well-being.

### Research Hypotheses

- a. Physical fitness would not be a significant product of recreation as strategy for capacity building.
- b. Mental alertness would not be a significant outcome of involving recreation as strategy for capacity building.
- c. Social well-being would not be a significant outcome of participatingg in recreation as alternative strategy for capacity building.

### 3. Methodology

There are thirty-six (36) states in Nigeria, Abuja being the capital. Oyo state which is the third largest state has twenty (20) ministries with twenty-eight thousand (28,000) civil servants. (Oyo State Government Diary, 2013) Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Oyo State Civil servants were the respondents of the research. Self-developed questionnaire tagged (RECCABS) was the only instrument of the study, patterned on modified four-likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Two thousand, eight hundred (2,800) questionnaire forms were administered to respondents on equal basis from each ministry by the researcher. Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, the approval was obtained from the Head of Service and later from the permanent secretary of each ministry. This actually accounted for the commitment of the respondents to fill the questionnaire with all seriousness and honesty. Although convenience sampling technique was used, effort was made for gender equity during the administration of the questionnaire.

To ascertain the reliability of the measuring instrument, a test re-test technique was applied which gave a correlation coefficient of .95. Chi-square(x<sup>2</sup>) inferential statistics at 0.05 alpha level was utilised for the analysis of the data after being coded.

### 4. Data Presentation and Discussion

**Table 1.** Chi-square table of recreation for Physical fitness

Response	Frequency	Total % Agreement/ Disagreement	X <sup>2</sup>	Remark
SA	320	21.42	99.15	S
A	280			
D	1200	78.58		
SD	1000			
Total	2800	100		

Table 1 shows the obtained chi-square value of 99.15 with 3 df at 0.05 at 0.05 alpha level which is greater than the table value of 7.815. This shows that regular participation in recreation has significant contribution in the development of physical fitness. Hence, the hypothesis which stated that physical fitness of workers would not be a significant outcome of involvement in recreation was rejected. This result confirms the assertion of |Nwankwo (1990) and Babatunde (2006) and Haastrup (2011) that a high degree of physical fitness is

related to the development of functional capacity of the body. Nwankwo (1990) and Babatunde (2004) which reported that a high degree of physical fitness is imperative for individual well-being. Nwankwo (1990) and Babatunde (2004, 2006) stated that, physical fitness increases physical vitality and zest for life and ability to work effectively, enabling the beneficiaries of active recreation develop physical fitness to perform their daily activities or routine chores or tasks be it domestic, professional or social responsibilities with sufficient energy and enthusiasm. This shows glaringly that, recreation in form of moderate intensity exercise is among the lubricants that maintains the body.

**Table 2.** Chi-square table of recreation for mental alertness

Response	Frequency	Total % Agreement/ Disagreement	X <sup>2</sup>	Remark
SA	251	18.32	114.42	S
A	262			
D	1210	81.68		
SD	1077			
Total	2800	100		

Mental health, mental concentration and mental alertness have been recognised as cogent and crucial impetus for success in any human activity, whether business, profession, academics or career. Stressful work environment and monotonous nature of the service being engaged in can disorganise coping mechanism of an individual. Nwankwo (1990) indicated that exercise in form of recreation interspersed with acute mental work offers an avenue for the release of tension. The individuals whether students, business people or professionals, career officers like civil servants are more refreshed after participating in recreation to continue their daily activities. Vibrancy in one’s daily activities is associated with being mentally alerted. Babatunde (2006) remarked that the propensity to perform well in any endeavour hinges on state of mental health.

The above table sufficiently reveals that avenue for active participation in recreation improves mental alertness which is vital in achieving success. With the chi-square observed value of 111.42, 3df at 0.05 level of significance is greater than table value of 7.815. Babatunde (2004) argued that the nature of civil servants duties often predisposes to fatigue or boredom, which is often counterproductive. One of the ways to resuscitate mental health is active recreation. Babatunde (2012) acknowledged the significance of moderate and constant recreation in mental health, a view consistent with Babatunde (2006) who found recreation as producer of essential life components like social, mental and physical aspects of health that enhance mental concentration necessary for optimal output and productivity. Babatunde (2006) and Haastrup (2011) reported the physiological basis of exercise in maintaining the alertness in that when one exercises, more nutrients are transported to the brain by blood circulation for upkeep

**Table 3.** Chi-square table of recreation for social well-being

Response	Frequency	Total % Agreement/ Disagreement	X <sup>2</sup>	Remark
SA	257	18.89	110.41	S
A	269			
D	963	81.21		
SD	1311			
Total	2800	100		

A good recreational activity, according to Babatunde (2004), encourages some forms of positive social and interpersonal interaction which hitherto has favourable social benefits and leads to greater social adjustments for community integration. The above table contains information on recreation as a means for social well-being. From the table the obtained chi-square of 110.41 at alpha level of 0.05, with 3df is appreciably higher than the table value of 7.815. It can be inferred/concluded that the hypothesis which stated that engagement in active recreation would not significantly affect the social well-being was rejected.

Babatunde (2004) indicated that planned recreational activities for community and organisations enables the beneficiaries establish meaningful interaction among one another. Life qualities such as social interaction, social adjustment and social integration among people are promoted through community recreation. Haastrup (2011) said that a good state of health enables individuals cope with everyday demands of life in physical, mental and social sense. The sports psychologists vehemently affirm the direct relationship between obesity and duration and frequency of hospital stays

## 5. Conclusions

Based on the research outcomes, it is deduced that:

- a. Participation in organised recreation is significant in facilitating physical fitness among Oyo State Civil Servants, Nigeria.
- b. Mental health/alertness concentration can be significantly enhanced through the improvement in active recreation.
- c. Significant social well-being in terms of personal adjustment, interpersonal cordial relationship can be induced/enhanced through the medium of regular recreational activities by civil servants in Oyo State, Nigeria
- d. Promotion of recreational exercises for office workers is strong alternative complementary strategy for ensuring meaningful capacity building.

## 6. Recommendations

On the premise of the findings from the study, the following are preferred for the better involvement of the Oyo State Civil Servants in leisure time activities.

1. Oyo State Government is adjured to make recreational facilities available for the workers at the secretariat.
2. Such variety recreational facilities should consider adequately the needs and interest of the workers irrespective of their varied ability and disability.
3. Mandatory periodic “walk out for fitness”, preferably monthly should be introduced for the workers.
4. Certificate of physical fitness should be regularly issued to the workers, having being participated in physical fitness programmes comprising various planned physical activities or active participation in organised “walk out”.
5. Organising certificate course on fundamentals of recreation for every rank and file of the workers will undoubtedly instil culture of recreation among them.
6. Formation of sports competitions in various sports serves as conventional approach to inculcate sustained habit of recreation among workers. This can be inter-ministry competitions under the leadership of sports engineers.

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