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## Workplace Recreational Strategies and Employee Happiness in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

Low morale and work related stress have been reported among academic staff of federal government-owned universities in Nigeria. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to examine the correlation between workplace recreational strategies and employees' happiness in tertiary institutions in Rivers State, drawing our empirical analysis from the academic staff of University of Port Harcourt in South-South Nigeria. The survey research design was considered appropriate to the study. Primary data were collected from academic staff who willingly participated in the through completing a well-structured questionnaire method. Statistical tools for data analyses included simple percentage, mean scores and standard deviation as well as Pearson Product Moment Correlation method. The study revealed absence of wellness promotion program, inadequate modern recreational facilities for staff leisure and relaxation, absence of sponsored leisure travel for its academic staff which did promote or support academic staff happiness. The study concluded that the current recreational strategies of Uniport as an institution did not promote good leisure culture and relaxation for academic staff's happiness. In the light of the findings and conclusions of the study, it was recommended that modern recreational facilities and sponsored leisure travel should be provided.

### Keywords:

Workplace recreational strategies. Employee happiness.

### Introduction

The human resource management functions are very crucial to the success of any profit and non-profit organization in ensuring the achievement of both the corporate goals and those of employees in a way that promote mutual harmonious relationship for employee commitment and workplace growth (Bono & Patton, 2001). To achieve this, organizations formulate strategies and policies that guarantee employee happiness. Happiness is a

precursor to success. Employee happiness is one of the strongest determinants of employee work morale and performance. When an employee is in positive state of mind, he/she is willing to give out his best towards the achievement of workplace goals (Armstrong, 2005). Improving employee happiness leads to a better atmosphere at the workplace. In pursuit of achievement of workplace objectives, management puts in place good incentive system, training & development and

conducive environment which Bomsu, (2014) contends should include employee recreation. Recreational strategies have to do with activities that enable an individual to feel relaxed, get energized and refreshed in order to perform their day-to-day activities with maximum drive and energy (Boore, 2006). Consequently, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, companies are realizing that work and play are powerful tools to meet the modern day-to-day challenges in today's era (Cryer, McCraty, & Childre, 2003). In order to add enjoyment and excitement in the work environment on a regular basis, recreational strategies are generally thought to be some of the most effective way. The workplace recreational concept is designed to promote the health of staff in an organisation (Diana, 2004). These programmes include annual family days, sports days, leisure travel, gym membership, and availability of sports facilities. Workplace recreational strategies also include wellness promotion programmes such as weight loss classes, hypertension and cancer screenings, substance management classes, self-help or counselling classes, and subsidised pharmacotherapy treatments (Hallowell, 2004). These programmes are designed to increase morale, motivate employees, and enhance their job satisfaction (Helen, Holmes & Abbot, 2002).

While formulation of workplace recreational strategies appears to be pervasive across many industrial settings in some developed nations, the situation in Nigeria is not encouraging. Unfortunately, Essi and Akanimo (2018) have observed absence of recreational facilities and programmes and negative attitude towards physical exercises in many industrial organizations, which have led to many deaths in developing countries, including Nigeria (EDM, 2015). Some of such sectors that have been identified with poor workplace recreational culture are the Nigerian tertiary institutions (Asikaa & Rumere, 2020). It is common knowledge that work in many organizations, especially that of academic staff, is characterized by long working hours; much of which requires standing on feet or in a sitting position while rendering services. In

addition, majority of them have problems maintaining a work-life balance. These factors individually or in combination lead to ill-health, low morale, lack of employee happiness, conflicts and high levels of stress (WHO, 2003). The Maxim, "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" appears to have been lost on many workers. The consequence is stress-related deaths and ailments associated with poor leisure culture. McDarami (2017) argues that many academic staff dies of work stress and lack of physical exercises than from other causes.

Research reveals that workplace physical activity programmes in USA have helped reduce short-term sick leave (by 32%), health care costs (by 20-55%) and increased productivity (by 52%). However, scanty empirical data is available of the situation in developing world (WHO, 2003). Reduction of such kinds of avoidable costs is potentially important, especially in the developing countries such as Nigeria as it would lead to higher employee happiness and by extension, productivity in our higher institutions.

Although, some tertiary institutions have established staff clubs to create "happy hour" in a bid to provide leisure and relaxation to staff, however, knowledge is lacking in the literature with regard to the quality and adequacy of their recreational activities and their effect on staff participation for employee happiness. It is against his background that this study was designed to evaluate workplace recreational strategies and their relationship with employee happiness, drawing our empirical analysis from academic staff of University of Port Harcourt.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Foundation**

This study is anchored on the social exchange theory. The Social exchange theory holds that human behaviour and social interactions is basically an exchange of both tangible and intangible activities (Homans, 2011). Pfeffer (2012) noted that in social exchange theory, behavioral compliance on the part of the individual is exchanged for something more valuable to them than is costly to the giver and

vice versa (Homans, 2011). It can thus be argued that people in organizations engage in self-interested exchange process with the owners of the organization and among themselves, strive to maximize the benefits of such an exchange process. This is the point where the theory relates best with the research topic i.e. if the management of the tertiary institutions, effectively manage the stress level of the employees' through effective recreational strategies, the employees will reciprocate with commitment to the organizations which is an exchange that benefits both parties involved.

The above statement by the researcher corroborates with the general statement of social exchange theory, posited by Zafirovski (2005) that social exchange is composed of actions of purposive actors that presuppose constellations of their interest and resources, since these processes are assumed to be governed by reciprocal relations. Exchange is defined as social interaction characterized by reciprocal stimuli-they would not continue in the long run if reciprocity were violated in consequence, exchange theory examines the process establishing reciprocity in social relations or the mutual gratifications between individuals.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

#### **The Concept of Workplace Recreational Strategies**

Workplace recreational strategies are leisure activities created to enhance employee individual behavior conducive to maintaining or improving employee physiological, mental, and social wellbeing (Wolfe & Parker, 2014). The purpose of recreational strategies in an workplace context is to promote the competency of manpower by improving their health (Johnson & Johnson). Workplace recreational strategies are designed to maintain employee health enhancement and health care ((Fielding, 2011; Goliath, 2007). Workplace recreational strategies are programmes that promote outstanding health to the employee, and it is organized purposely to upscale the quality of life in the organization. The trend in workplace recreational strategies has continued to gain momentum as the

demand for recreation increases. Many entertainment and sports venues have attempted to meet this demand by providing diverse leisure and recreation activities for employed workers (Mokaya and Gitari, 2012). Recreational strategy is a concept in the organization that started from America and later spread in the organization of all over the globe. The trend started in late 1990's and now managers and most of the businesses recommend the recreational activities in the work setting that contains indoor-outdoor activities, special event parties, social events, celebrations, dinner parties, and numerous other activities. Furthermore, wellness promotion curricula like weight loss activities, psychological stress, high blood pressure and cancer testing, self-help or therapy classes, management classes and subsidized psychotherapy treatments also came under the head of recreational strategies (Goetzel Ozminkowski & .Ronald, 2008).

#### **Dimensions of Workplace Recreational Strategies**

**Wellness Promotion Programmes:** Wellness promotion programme is any workplace health promotion activity or workplace policy designed to support healthy behaviour in the workplace and to improve health outcomes (Hrubes, 2001). Wellness promotion programmes often comprises activities such as health education, medical screenings, weight management programmes, on-site fitness programs or facilities (Akala, 2008). American Psychological Association in Forbes Magazine (2011) states five elements that should be considered in workplace to make it a healthy working environment. These five elements are work-life balance, health and safety, employee growth and development, employee recognition and employee Involvement (Hallowell, 2004).

In recent years, workplace wellness has been expanded from single health promotion interventions to create a more overall healthy environment, for example standards of building and interior design to promote physical activity. This expansion is largely been in part to creating greater access and leadership support from leaders in the participating companies.

**Sports Facilities Availability:** Sport facilities availability entails the provision of sports

materials and equipment to improve the health of workers. Kekov (2014) opined that sport facilities availability allows an employee to be actively involved in sports activities and maintain healthy behaviour in the organization. Sport facilities availability plays an important role in keeping workers physically and mentally healthy as well as improving productivity.

Sport has been defined as a human activity capable of achieving results that require physical skill and/or exertion, and which, by its organisation and nature, is competitive (Chalmers, 2002). Some organisations have introduced formal organisational team sport activities, without knowing what effect it has on their employees (Bennett, 2009). Sport facilities availability in organization specifically introduced to facilitate sports participation by the employees as well as the attainment of sports activities in order to achieve common goals. Huppy (2010) observed that Sport facilities availability enhance organisational team sport participation and improve employee attitudes and relationships within the organisation. Sport facilities availability improves employee commitment because it requires the participant to remain focused on specific goals.

**In-house Guest Centers Services:** According to Augustine (2012), in-house guest centers services are guest centers owned by the organization that render services to employee and staff of that particular organization. Services rendered include accommodation services, feeding services, recreational services etc in a clean, safe and conducive environment for relaxation and happiness.

**Sponsored Leisure Travel:** Madran (2011) deduced that most organizations sponsored their workers to visit different places for recreational activities such as golf playing, cycling, skiing, jogging, theme park/movie, zoo, theatre, ballet/dance, concert classical and art gallery etc.

Stebbins (2001) defined leisure travel as travel for fun away from unpleasant obligations. Stebbins (2001) distinguishes three types of leisure travel: serious leisure travel, casual

leisure travel and project-based leisure travel. Serious leisure travel constitutes three kinds: career volunteering, hobbyist activities and amateur pursuits. Casual leisure is fleeting and offers no 'leisure career'. Project-based leisure is free time dedicated to a leisure project. This type of leisure travel is fixed in time, unlike a hobby. The leisure domain also includes a fourth domain that of leisure travels (i.e. tourism). Leisure travel takes place outside one's normal environment. It includes at least one overnight stay elsewhere (UNWTO, 2015).

**Annual Get-togetherness:** This represents the annual get-together party, which is a gathering of people who have been invited by a host for the purposes of socializing (Parks & Steelman, 2008). These could be festivities organized by individuals, business, professional and charity organizations, for example, many companies have chosen to host annual corporate get-together festivities to strengthen relationship between management and their employees, and showcase company culture and celebrate the accomplishments of their team. Through annual family get-together party employee receive tremendous pay-back from their employers through the year-end functions (Dentricviv, 2017.)

One of the best things about annual get-together party is that it is an anniversary, an event which every employee looks forward to. Annual get-together celebrations enable employees to be happy, engaged and inspired in order to reach their goals and implement their vision (Martha, 2005). Anderson and Hicks (2019) opine that annual get-togetherness can improve employee wellbeing by promoting unity and sense of togetherness among employees. It also creates healthy work environment and contributes positively to employee happiness and satisfaction.

### **The Concept of Employee Happiness**

Employee happiness is defined as an individual's total well-being, satisfaction, and pleasant emotional state in their work environment. It includes aspects like job satisfaction, engagement, motivation, and fulfilment (Edeman & Anaiakuo, 2019).

Happiness is a widely recognized phenomenon, acknowledged as a fundamental human need across diverse cultures (Aydin, 2012; Fisher, 2010; Roy and Konwar, 2020).

Happiness encompasses feelings of hope, optimism, and satisfaction, representing a subjective state of human emotions characterized by joy, contentment, and a sense of well-being, derived from perceiving life as meaningful and rewarding (Lyubomirsky *et al.*, 2005). When people use the term “subjective well-being”, they often imply having a high level of positive affect, a low level of negative affect, and a high level of life satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

### **Measure of Employee Happiness (Employee Satisfaction)**

A comprehensive measure of individual-level happiness might include work engagement, job satisfaction, and affective workplace commitment. Hockey (2006) defines job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”. Job satisfaction is an attitude. It is both a general attitude that a person has toward an overall job, and it is a set of specific attitudes a person has toward a particular components of a job, such as the pay or working conditions, (Robert, 2011). Implicit in Hockey’s definition is the importance of both affective (feeling), and cognition (thinking) aspects of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a type of satisfaction that describes the contentment/happiness or cognitive attitude a worker or employee feels in doing the job or the task he/she is assigned (Olusegun, 2011). Job satisfaction can be considered as one of the main factors when it comes to efficiency and effectiveness of business organization.

### **Empirical Review and Hypotheses Development**

#### **Wellness promotion programme and employee happiness**

Falkenberg (2007) established a link between institutional wellness programmes and workplace behaviour happiness in the telecommunication industry. His study was based on the premise that wellness promotion programmes were attractive to employees,

were mechanisms for retaining employees, and were significant in reducing stress which had a negative impact on work satisfaction and productivity. His study showed that wellness promotion programme had a significant positive impact on employee satisfaction. It showed that majority of employees who participated in wellness promotion programme had above average performance, lower rates of absenteeism, higher commitment to work, and lower employee turnover. Similar studies by Pronk and Kottke (2009) and Kerr and Vos (2003) supported the implementation of fitness programmes to improve employee well-being and reduce absenteeism.

Wattles and Harris (2013) also conducted a study on the relationship between outdoor recreational strategies and employees’ well-being. Their research showed that employees who participated in regular recreational activities reported lower absenteeism rates, higher job satisfaction, and higher productivity. Parks and Steelman (2018) asserted that these positive impacts were associated with higher flexibility and muscular strength levels of employees who engaged in wellness promotion programme. Similarly, a report by Western Australia’s Department of Health revealed that wellness promotion programmes had the potential to influence or motivate behaviour of employees leading to better job satisfaction and happiness. The report showed that wellness promotion programmes had a positive impact on the health of employees and subsequently economic benefits for their employers. However, there is dearth of publications on the effect of wellness programme on employee happiness in the tertiary institutions context in Nigeria. Therefore, our proposition is stated thus:

HA1: Wellness promotion programme has a positive and significant effect on employee happiness in tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

#### **Sport Facilities Availability and Employee Happiness**

Richard (2017) researched on recreational facilities availability and recreational participation by employees in banking industry

in Southampton, UK.. The qualitative exploration study was conducted with employees (N=226) of two financial organisations that participate in organisational team sport. The data were collected by means of focus group interviews and follow-up interviews. The results indicated that a strong correlation was established between sport facilities availability and employee satisfaction. Chalmers, (2002) conducted a research on the relationship between recreational facilities availability and employee workplace satisfaction in Washoe County School District. A population of 357 respondents was used for the study. The findings showed a significant relationship between recreational facilities availability and employees' positive emotional and physical well-being. Nevertheless, there is limited knowledge regarding the phenomenon in the Nigerian tertiary institutions context. Consequently, our second hypothesis is formulated thus:

HA2: Sport facilities availability has a positive and significant effect on employee happiness in tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

### **In-house guest centers (Staff club) services and Employee Happiness**

Augustine (2012) carried out a study on institutional hospitality services and employee satisfaction in Taipei, involving a sample of 674 employees. Regression analytical tool was used to test hypotheses. The analysed data indicated a strong correlation between in-house guest centers services and employee satisfaction.

Fakidouma (2015) studied institutional guest house services, perceived value and employee satisfaction in selected oil companies in Lagos State. The study adopted cross-sectional survey research design and data was collected from 228 respondents drawn through purposive sampling technique. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient test result indicated a positive correlation between institutional guest house services and employee satisfaction. Nevertheless, there is insufficient data on the phenomenon in the Nigerian tertiary institution context, which

should be empirically validated. Therefore, we need to test the proposition that:

HA3: In-house guest center (Staff club) service provision has a positive and significant effect on employee happiness in tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

### **Sponsored Leisure Travel and Employee Happiness**

Usoro and Okpoide (2018) investigated the effects of welfare programmes on employee satisfaction in NNPC subsidiaries in the Niger Delta. A sample size of 288 was selected for the whereby data were collected through the questionnaire technique. The analysed data revealed that sponsored leisure travel was highly valued by the staff and correlated positively and significantly with employee satisfaction. The study further revealed that sponsored leisure travel exposes employee to different environment and improve employee social life.

Saidu and Khalic (2017) studied leisure travel and employee commitment in the federal service among top officials in Abuja, using data from a sample of one hundred and eighty-nine (189) employees obtained through structured questionnaire. It was found in the study that leisure travel enhanced employee health and vitality in the workplace. However, sponsored leisure travel and employee happiness in the Nigerian tertiary institution context is an under-researched area, which requires more empirical validation. Therefore, we hypothesized that:

HA4: Sponsored leisure travel has a positive and significant effect on employee happiness in tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

### **Annual Get-togetherness and Employee Happiness**

Matikiti and Afolabi (2021) conducted an important study on empirical evidence of annual management/staff get-together celebration on employee satisfaction and commitment in the banking sector in Ibadan. The data was gathered using a questionnaire and this was analyzed using a combination of descriptive, inferential and relational statistics.

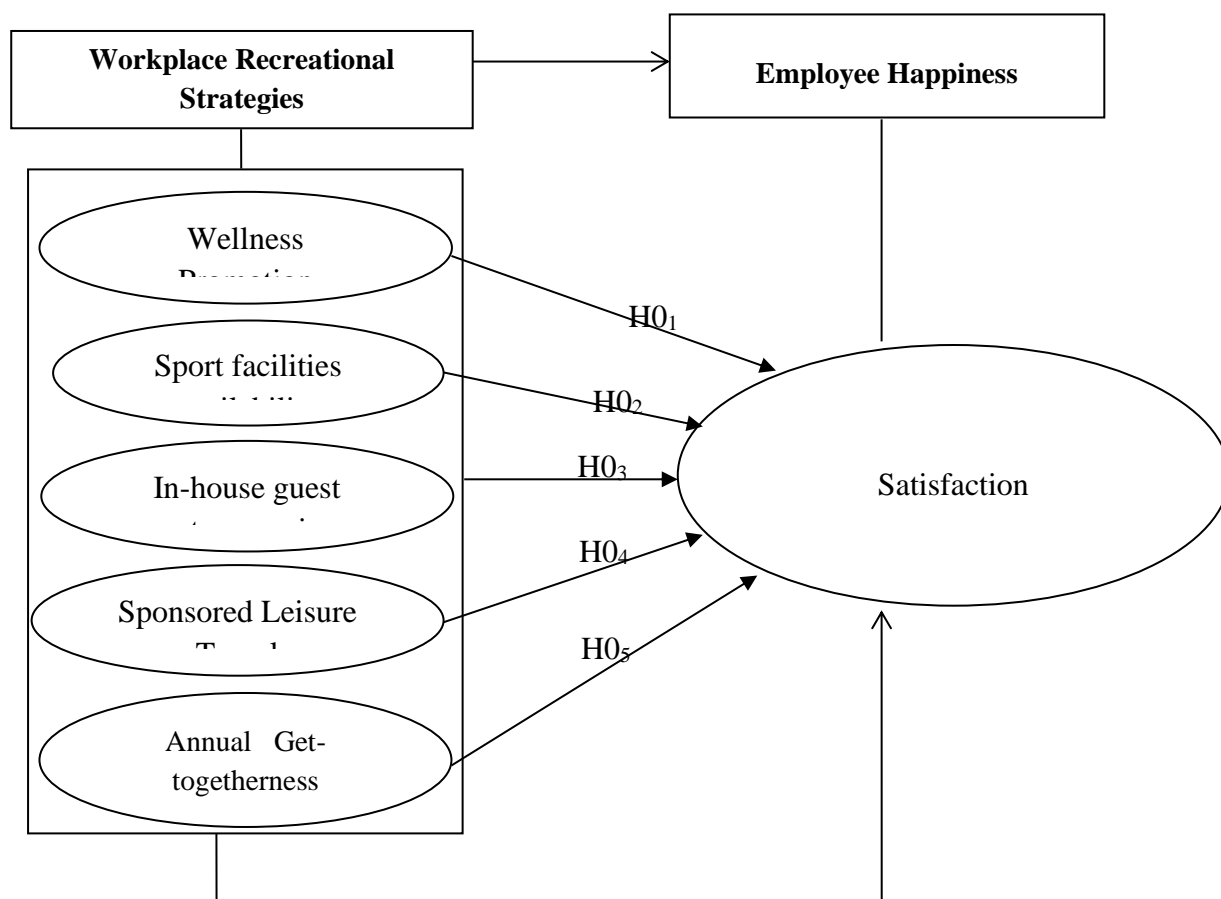
The outcome of the study indicated that annual get-together party positively correlated with employee satisfaction and commitment. Yannopoulos (2012) also established in his study that annual get-together celebration between management and staff had a positive and significant effect on employee satisfaction and retention.

Kamau and Ayuo (2014) conducted a study titled the effect of get-together festivities on employee commitment in the South African health sector. Correlation and regression methods of analysis and their findings revealed that annual get-togetherness was positively correlated with employee happiness and low turnover intention. In the same vein, Osundina and Osundina (2014) conducted a study on workplace recreational activities and employee work attitude in manufacturing firms in Lagos

State, Nigeria, The result indicated that annual get-together celebration was a strong and positive predictor of employee satisfaction and staff retention. However, knowledge is lacking in the literature regarding the extent to which this pertains to the Nigerian tertiary situation. Therefore, there is need to test the proposition that :

HA5: Annual get-togetherness has a positive and significant effect on employee happiness in tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

So far, the empirical review suggests a link between the variables of our study in the Nigerian university context. The hypothesized relationship is depicted in the operational framework of the study as shown in Figure 1 which formed the bases of our hypotheses development.

**Figure 1: Operational Framework of the Study**

**Source:** Conceptualized and operationalized by the researcher (2021).

## Methodology

**Research Design:** The study adopted the case study design which is an in-depth study or examination of a phenomenon in a spectrum involving one organization (Darby, 2017). Our case study approach is consistent with most extant research on workplace recreational products which have been observed to vary according to workplace characteristics. Therefore, the case study research design is appropriate to investigating recreational strategies and employee happiness in one - organization basis due to the fact that other organizations may not adopt the same strategies (Asserouosi & Qui, 2019).

**Population and Sampling:** As it relates to the present study, the population of this study consisted of academic staff of the University of Port Harcourt that patronized their workplace staff club and other recreational centres. According to ASUU Uniport data base (2021), there were 1,268 in the academic nominal roll

as at October, 2019. However, convenience sampling technique was adopted to draw a sample of 262 academic staff of the university of Port Harcourt based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study during the researcher's visits to staff club, the sports stadium, lawn tennis courts, basketball court and other recreational centres on the campus where staff meet to recreate themselves or unwind after working hours on weekdays and weekends when the study was being conducted.

**Instrumentation and Measures:** The questionnaire was the research instrument for primary data collection, which was designed and divided into two section: section 'A' deals with the demographic characteristics of the respondents, and section 'B' answers the question raised in the study. A "5" point Likert scales with 5 as strongly agree, 4 as agree, 3 undecided, 2 as disagree and 1 as strongly



disagree were used as the alternative response expected from the respondents.

Regarding validity of the instrument, expert judgments which involve the use of experts to validate the content of the scale was employed whereby copies were made available to them for validation. To ensure reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of 0.812 (cumulative) was obtained for all items.

Workplace recreational strategies was operationalized with wellness promotion programmes, sport facilities availability, in-house guest centers services, sponsored leisure travel and annual end-of-the year get-together

festivity whereas employee happiness was measured in terms of satisfaction.

### Analysis and Results

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze questionnaire distribution and respondents' demographics characteristics. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique was performed to determine the correlation between workplace recreational strategies and employee happiness with the aid of SPSS software to decide the degree of linear relationship between any two of the image variables.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents  
S/NO Demographic Variable

1	<b>Gender</b>	Freq.	Percentage (%)
	Male	149	92
	Female	13	8
	Total	162	100
2	<b>Age</b>		
	30 – 40 years	21	13
	41 – 50 years	64	40
	51– 60 years	70	43
	61 years & above	7	4
	Total	162	100
3	<b>Education Qualification</b>		
	Masters Degree	67	41
	PhD	95	59
	Total	162	100
4	<b>Marital Status</b>		
	Single	46	28
	Married	104	64
	Divorced	12	8
	Widowed	Nil	Nil
	Total	162	100
5	<b>Academic Rank</b>		
	Prof.	32	20
	Assoc. Prof.	13	8
	Senior Lecturer	60	37
	Lecturer 1	52	32
	Lecturer 2	3	2
	Graduate Assistant	2	2
	Total	162	100

Table 1 shows the information on demographic profile of respondents. The table revealed that

149 respondents (92%) were male while 13 respondents (8%) were female. This implies that male respondents were of the majority.

The information on age bracket of the respondents in section 2 of Table 1 above shows that 21 respondents (13%) were within 30 – 40 years. 64 respondents (40%) were within 41 – 50 years, 70 respondents (43%) were within 51 – 60 years. 7 respondents (6%) were within 61 – 70 years. This information shows that majority of the respondent were within the age bracket of 51 – 60 years.

Section 3 of Table 1 above shows information on the respondents' level of education. They were represented as follows: Master's degree (67) (41 %), PhD (95) (59%). From the information it shows that respondents with PhD were of the majority.

Section 4 of Table 1 shows the marital status of respondents. 46 respondents (20%) were single, 104 respondents (64.4%) were married, 12 respondents (8%) were divorced. This information shows that married respondents were in the majority.

Section 5 of Table 1 records the academic rank or status of our respondents in the institution. 32 respondents (20%) were professors, 13 respondents (8%) were associate professors, 60 respondents (37%) were senior lecturers, 52 respondents (32%) were of lecturer 1 status, 3 respondents (2%) were lecturer 2 while 2 lecturers (2%) were graduate assistants. This information shows that most of the respondents in our sample were senior lecturers.

## Univariate Analysis

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics on items of Wellness Promotion Programmes**

Item Statistics			
Items of Wellness Promotion Programmes	Means	Std. Deviation	N
Health Talks	2.2521	.05023	262
Organized Physical Fitness Activities	1.4537	.09816	262
Responsible Consumption	2.0209	.89618	262
sensitization	1.7343	.86509	262
Leisure culture Advocacy			

Information on Table 2 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of wellness promotion programme with the use of IBM SPSS Statistics version 20.0 output. The mean scores on all the items were less than the threshold of 3.5 The grand mean of 3.5 > 3.0 mean score on five point Likert scale is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. This suggests that there was an appreciable disagreement by the respondents that there was no organized wellness promotion programme for academic staff of UNIPOINT.

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics on items of Availability of Recreational Facilities**

Items of Recreational facilities Availability	Means	Std. Deviation	N
Good playfield for physical recreational activities	4.4720	.76807	262
Availability of well-equipped gym at staff club	1.3680	.83797	262
Availability of physical fitness instructor at the club	1.5423	.82305	262
Availability of Lawn tennis court	4.0038	.95672	262
Standard clean swimming pool	4.6721	.69849	262
	4.0112	.92536	262

Availability of snooker tables/accessories			
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Table 3 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of availability of sport facilities with the use of IBM SPSS Statistics version 20.0 output. 4 items had a mean score that is above the threshold of 3.5 while 2 items had a mean score of less than 2 points. The grand mean of 3.5>3.0 mean score on five point Likert scale is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. This result therefore shows that respondents showed an appreciable agreement on the 5 items of availability of sport facilities, except for the absence of a gym centre and fitness instructor.

**Table 4 : Descriptive statistics on items of In-house (Staff Club) Services**

Items of In-house Guest (Staff Club) Service Provisions	Means	Std. Deviation	N
Provision of assorted tasty local foods and drinks	4.4320	.78633	262
Provision of clean, safe and comfortable accommodation	1.2855	.71410	262
Recorded background musical entertainment	4.3840	.86867	262
Sport view entertainment	4.6721	.46729	262

Information on Table 4 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of in-house (staff club) services with the use of IBM SPSS Statistics version 20.0 output. Three items exceeded the threshold of 3.5. while the mean score of 1 item was less than 2. The grand mean of 3.5>3.0 mean score on five point Likert scale is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. This shows an appreciable agreement by respondents on three items and disagreement on one item of the staff club services. The implication here is that the majority the respondents agreed that Uniport's staff club provides assorted tasty local foods/drinks, regular musical entertainment as well as sports view entertainment.

**Table 5: Descriptive statistics on items of Corporate Sponsored Leisure Travel**

Items of Corporate Sponsored Leisure Travel	Means	Std. Deviation	N
Government-sponsored foreign leisure travel	1.0163	.26363	262
	1.1491	.74673	262
Government-sponsored local leisure travel	4.2376	.14345	262
	2.3622	.21240	262
Self-sponsored leisure travel			
Sponsored travels for academic conferences			

Information on Table 5 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of sponsored leisure travel with the use of IBM SPSS Statistics version 20.0 output. The mean scores of three items fell below the threshold of 3.5. while the mean score of 1 item was more than 4 points. The grand mean of 3.5>3.0 mean score on five point Likert scale is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. This shows an appreciable disagreement by most of the respondents on three items and disagreement on one item. The implication here is that the majority the respondents disagreed on sponsored leisure travel items, suggesting that government did not sponsor staff leisure travel.

**Table 6: Descriptive statistics on items of Staff /Management Get-together Party**

Items on Staff/Management Get-together Festivities	Means	Std. Deviation	N
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Regular annual Christmas party for staff and management	1.1636	.19974	262
Staff children's party/shows	4.4653	.06543	262
Daily Staff's get-together and relaxation/leisure at staff club	4.1739	.25645	262
Staff's birthday/achievement celebration	2.3410	.13642	262

Information on Table 6 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on items of staff family get-together party with the use of IBM SPSS Statistics version 20.0 output. The mean scores of two items fell below the threshold of 3.5 while the mean scores of 2 items were more than 4 points. The grand mean of 3.5>3.0 mean score on five point Likert scale is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. This shows an appreciable disagreement by most of the respondents on two items and disagreement on two items. The implication here is that was no regular organized annual Christmas get-together party by the institution's management for their academic staff. However, staff children's party and daily staff's get-together happy hour were important features of the staff club's leisure/relaxation strategies.

**Table 7: Descriptive statistics on items of Employee Happiness**

Items	Means	Std. Deviation	N
Satisfied with wellness promotion programmes of the organization.	1.1849	1.26727	262
Satisfied with sports facilities of the organization.	1.0686	.92356	262
Satisfied with the quality of staff club services	1.2530	.74937	262
Satisfied with sponsored leisure travel	1.	.05362	262
Satisfied with staff/management get-together party	3374	.59876	262
	0.1032		

Information on Table 7 above shows the result of descriptive statistics on employee happiness with the use IBM SPSS Statistics version 20.0 output. The mean scorers of all the items were less than 2 and the threshold of 3.5. The grand mean of 3.5>3.0 mean score on five point Likert scale is considered appropriate as regards acceptability. This shows that there was appreciable disagreement on the four items of employee happiness. The descriptive statistics suggests that respondent were not happy with the quality of recreational strategies of their organization.

**Table 8: Summary of Aggregate Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Workplace Recreational Strategies and Employee Happiness**

**Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Wellness promotion Program.	262	1.20	4.60	1.8653	0.47747
Recreational Facilities	262	1.25	5.00	3.7541	0.83938
Staff club services	262	2.00	4.75	3.6934	0.70918
Sponsored leisure travel	262	2.00	4.67	2.1913	0.34155
Annual Get-together party	262	1.40	5.00	3.0360	0.16451

Academic staff	262	1.91	4.18	1.2368	0.89815
satisfaction N	262				

Information on table 8 above indicates the summary of the aggregate mean and standard deviation scores of dimensions of workplace recreational strategies and measure of employee happiness through the application of descriptive statistics with statistical package for social science (SPSS).

The mean scores of four dimensions of workplace recreational strategies were less than 3.5 (the criterion mean), thus implying that most of the respondents perceived them as ineffective. However, most of the respondents agreed that Uniport has good sport facilities and that the staff club services were fairly satisfactory. This is reflected by the mean scores 3.7541 and 3.6934 respectively which

were greater than the criterion mean (3.5) regarding acceptability.

The mean score of 1.2368 on employee happiness is less than 3.5, suggesting that most of the respondents were not satisfied with the quality of the recreational strategies of their institution.

### Bivariate Analysis

A correlation analysis was carried out to test the hypothesized relationships as established in chapter one. The Pearson Moment Correlation statistical technique was used to ascertain the degree of relationship existing between them in line with the hypothesized relationship.

**Table 9 : Summary of Hypotheses Test of Correlation between Workplace Recreational Strategies and Employee Happiness**

HP	Ind. Variables	Dep. Variable	Co-efficients	P-Value	Level of Sig.	Decision
Ho 1	Wellness Promotion	Staff Satisfaction	.941	.000	$p=.000 < 0.05$	<i>Supported</i>
Ho 2	Sports Facilities	Staff Satisfaction	.899	.000	$p=.000 < 0.05$	<i>Supported</i>
Ho 3	Staff Club Recreation	Staff Satisfaction	.834	.003	$p=.003 < 0.05$	<i>Supported</i>
Ho 4	Org. Sponsored travel	Staff Satisfaction	.798	.001	$p=.001 < 0.05$	<i>Supported</i>
Ho 5	Annual Get-together	Staff Satisfaction	.816	.002	$p=.002 < 0.05$	<i>Supported</i>

Table 9 shows that the five (5) dimensions of workplace recreational strategies as used in the context of our study, have a positive and significant correlation with employee happiness through satisfaction in Uniport, Nigeria, thus, implying the rejection of all the null hypotheses.

## Discussion

### Wellness Promotion Programme and Employee Happiness

For hypothesis one, the Pearson correlation result showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between wellness promotion programme and academic staff satisfaction in the university of Port Harcourt.

The correlation coefficient ( $r=.941$ ) with a probability value of  $.000 < 0.05$  indicates the existence of very strong and positive correlation between wellness promotion programme and academic staff satisfaction in the university of Port Harcourt. This result is consistent with Berry (2010), Comtollar (2012), Falberg (2007). The finding is also in agreement with Park and Steeham (2002), who

reported that the quality of wellness promotion programmes put in place for individuals by their organizations or by the individuals improve their productivity, longevity and satisfaction or happiness in the workplace. The reverse can be the case in an organization characterized by poor recreational culture and attendant health risks which are common among academic staff in many universities in Nigeria.

### **Availability of Sports Facilities and Employee Happiness**

The result of the test of hypothesis 2 shows a positive and statistically significant relationship between availability of sport facilities and academic staff satisfaction. The correlation coefficient ( $r=.899$ ) with a probability value of  $.000<0.05$  indicates the existence of very strong, positive and significant correlation between availability of sport facilities and academic staff satisfaction. This result is supported by Richard (2017) and Chaldarms (2013). As noted by the various authors on recreational tourism, availability of recreational facilities influences recreational participation which improves employees' mental and physical wellbeing. Consequently, employees' productivity is positively impacted. The availability of sport facilities in Uniport such as its high performance centre, football stadium, king-size swimming pool, good playfield, etc may have informed the hosting of most of the national universities game and West African Universities' sport competitions by the University of Port Harcourt, with outstanding performance. As various studies have shown, workplace recreational culture has a significant effect on employee productivity. The common saying 'all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy' illustrates the importance of workplace 'play' in improving productivity through employee happiness. Therefore, the contribution of recreational facilities in achieving employee relaxation objective cannot be over-emphasized.

### **In-house (Staff Club) Service Delivery and Employee Happiness**

The result of the test of hypothesis 3 shows a positive and statistically significant relationship between in-house (staff Club) recreational services and academic staff satisfaction. The correlation coefficient  $r=.0834$  shows there is a strong and positive relationship between in-house (staff Club) recreational services and academic staff satisfaction. The probability value of  $.000<0.05$  shows that the relationship is significant. The finding of this study is consistent with Fakhidouma (2015) and Augustine (2012). The reason could be that staff club recreational services such as gaming, gastronomic and musical entertainment are important components of 'happy hour' for employees because they provide the platform for staff to dine and wine away the stress associated with their work. The finding also implies that the establishment of an integrated staff club recreational centre for employee relaxation after work hours could support and promote staff happiness. Conversely, the absence or inadequacy of such a recreational facility can lead to low productivity among staff.

### **Sponsored Leisure Travel and Employee Happiness**

The Pearson test result of hypothesis 4 suggests a relationship between the two variables.

The Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient ( $r=.798$ ) with a probability value of  $.001<0.05$  indicates the existence of very strong and positive correlation between sponsored leisure travel and academic staff satisfaction in the university of Port Harcourt. This result is corroborated by Morrow and Rundee (2011), Meior and Hicklin (2007) who reported a strong correlation between sponsored leisure travel for employees and employee satisfaction and retention. As gleaned from our mean score, Academic staffs of University of Port Harcourt do not enjoy such incentives which prevail in many public and private sector organizations. In fact, some of them revealed that they sponsored their national and international travel for conferences without any financial support from their institution. Research shows that

sponsored leisure travel by organizations for deserving employees is a veritable strategy for improving employee and workplace productivity through relaxation. Such get-away which sometimes is a packaged tourist product for employees and their families provide them with the opportunities to travel to see the world and learn from other cultures. The goal of such travel is for recreation and relaxation from work stress which translates into staff productivity arising from job satisfaction.

### **Employee/management Annual Get-togetherness and Employee Happiness**

The result of the test of hypothesis 5 shows a positive and statistically significant relationship between the employees/management annual get-together party and academic staff satisfaction in Uniport. The correlation coefficient ( $r=.816$ ) with a probability value of  $.002 < 0.05$  indicates the existence of very strong, positive and significant correlation between employee/management annual get-together relaxation and employee happiness and academic staff satisfaction. This result is supported by Kuma and Ayuo (2014), Matiki (2012), Osudele (2008). As our analysis shows, annual Christmas party is usually organized by the institution's management for staff 's children and not for academic staff. The neglect of this recreational strategy by Uniport's management to bond with staff and appreciate their contributions for the year can demoralize them, which is inimical to workplace productivity.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This study examined the relationship between workplace strategies and employee happiness in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria, drawing our empirical analysis from academic staff of the University of Port Harcourt. The findings of this study are hereby summarized as follows:

i. There was no organized wellness promotion program for staff in the

institution, which in turn did not support academic staff satisfaction.

- ii. Recreational facilities for staff leisure and relaxation were inadequate in Uniport, thus unable to promote academic staff satisfaction.
- iii. Staff club 'happy hour' services were fairly satisfactory and supported academic staff satisfaction through relaxation.
- iv. The institution's management did not sponsor any leisure travel for its academic staff which in turn led to low satisfaction.
- v. Annual Christmas get-together party was organized only for children and not for academic staff, thus influencing dissatisfaction through low morale.
- vi. Academic staffs of Uniport were not satisfied with the corporate recreational strategies of their institution.

These findings suggest that the current recreational strategies of Uniport as an institution did not promote good leisure culture and relaxation for academic staff's happiness.

### **Conclusion**

On the basis of the findings of this study, conclusion is drawn that a positive and significant relationship exists between the dimensions of workplace strategies and measure of employee happiness in Uniport. This implies that a well-organized wellness promotion program, adequate sports/other recreational facilities, good quality staff club services, corporate sponsored leisure travel and annual get-together relaxation between management and staff can improve employees' physical and mental wellbeing, thus promoting bonding and supporting satisfaction and enhancing productivity. Conversely, employee morale will be negatively impacted with serious consequences for the organization when and where poor corporate recreational culture is prevalent. Therefore, there is a correlation between workplace recreational

strategies and employee happiness in the University of Port Harcourt.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are put forth:

1. The management of University of Port Harcourt should organize regular health /wellness programmes for staff in all the faculties. Such educational programme should include outdoor physical exercises, wellness talk show and responsible consumption to acquaint the people with the health and social benefits of recreation.
2. The present staff club should be upgraded with improved poolside entertainment services and facilities for 'happy hour' relaxation.
3. The Management of Uniport in conjunction with a private investor, should establish an integrated commercial gym centre with modern equipment at Abuja campus to meet the recreational needs of students and staff while generating revenue in the process.
4. The management of Uniport should see recreation as a primary need and put in place measures to sponsor a 2-week leisure travel to local or international tourist destinations on annual basis for deserving academic staff of certain ranks to recreate themselves from work stress. Such leisure get-aways should be funded by TETFUND so as not to impose financial burden on the institution.
5. The institution should organize annual get-together party whereby management and staff can relax their nerve after a stressful year of work. Such strategies tend to promote bonding between management and workers for improved productivity.

### Suggestion for Further Study

The study only examined the relationship between workplace recreational strategies and employees' happiness based on the perspectives of academic staff of the University of Port Harcourt. The study failed to examine the phenomena in other tertiary institutions in Rivers State and beyond. Further studies should consider those institutions or other dimensions and measures for the independent and dependent variables. Further researchers should also focus on other units of analysis. Finally, further research should investigate the link between Employee profile and recreational participation for more insight and robustness.

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