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An Analysis of the Recreational Preferences of School Teachers in Rural Areas of South Africa: The Case of Gender Differences

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ABSTRACT

The recreational preference is a chosen individual lifestyle that is socially constructed for multiple purposes such as enjoyment and relaxation of the mind, and therapeutic purpose. However, if the chosen lifestyle is not well combined with a recreational system, it defeats the major purpose and causes more. The study aimed to examine gender differences in the recreational preferences of school teachers in rural areas of Limpopo Province, South Africa. A quantitative survey design was used on a sample of 250 school teachers. The results showed significant ($P<0.05$) gender differences among male and female teachers ranging from the age of 31-50 years old in active and passive recreational activities. Female participants scored high preference rates in most passive recreational activities, and lower preference rates in active recreational activities, as compared to their male counterparts, more especially in activities that demand more physical exertion. However, among all the mentioned active activities, female teachers only scored a high preference rate in netball. Furthermore, participation on social media was the only activity that had an equal preference rate in all age groups and across all genders of the school teachers. Therefore, this study suggested that recreational service providers should provide a variety of recreational activities that could integrate gender mainstreaming into the recreational system. Also, awareness campaigns on the importance of balancing both active and passive preferences should be implemented in rural areas of Limpopo Province, South Africa.

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INTRODUCTION

Recreational preference is a chosen individual lifestyle or a social behavioral pattern that is associated with a healthy and sedentary lifestyle. Choosing an individual lifestyle determines the quality of life. This means that participation in a particular recreational activity is likely to determine a health and social health status. This implies lifestyle could be clarified as a healthy lifestyle or either sedentary life, however, classification is based on consistent participation. For example, regular participation in active recreational activities (ARA) is regarded as a healthy style, while consistent participation in passive recreational activities (PRA) is regarded as a sedentary lifestyle.[1] All these types of lifestyles are informed by the preferences of recreational activities. The recreational preferences depend on the choice of the individuals in social structures. A person has a personal responsibility to choose a particular lifestyle that is associated with particular recreational activities and

[1] Teresa Rubio-Tomás, Maria Skouroliakou, and Dimitrios Ntountaniotis, "Lockdown Due to COVID-19 and Its Consequences on Diet, Physical Activity, Lifestyle, and Other Aspects of Daily Life Worldwide: A Narrative Review," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 11 (June 2, 2022): 6832, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19116832.

participate in them. However, it is not just participation, it should be regular to associate it with specific lifestyles.

It is of paramount importance to note that even though it might be regular, the participation in these ARAs should have components of aerobics and muscle-strengthening activities, and the frequency should be at least twice or three times a week to regard it as a healthy lifestyle.[2] These types of activities serve as therapeutic recreational activities in a social and health system. They help to reduce and prevent the development of hypertension diabetes and premature death from cardiovascular diseases (CVD) among the adults within any given social structure.[3] Moreover, they also play a significant role, because they improve the physical, mental, and social health status of individuals or groups of people in social institutions.

On the other hand, passive recreational participation (PRP) also has a significant impact on the overall health of people, it can improve or deteriorate the overall health of a person. For instance, participating in passive recreational activities improves the mental and social health status of individuals. Because it helps for relaxation of the body and mind after work and reduces boredom during leisure time of the person. However, it is worth noting that, in as much as it plays a fundamental role in social and mental health, Andersen, et al. have shown that PRP also plays a negative role in the quality of life, it is regarded as a sedentary lifestyle.[4] Regular participation in PRA is a risk factor for hypokinetic conditions, such as overweight/obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes.[5]

Equally important, the outcomes of all these types of lifestyles cut across every age group in a social system, including school teachers. A wide body of academic literature showed that the occupational demands of school teachers are strongly associated with a sedentary lifestyle because teaching and learning are passive.[6] The researchers argue in this study that it could be due to the type of recreational activities that individual prefers or the occupational roles allocated to them. The literature also reiterates that female teachers are more at risk as compared to their male counterparts due to the types of occupational roles allocated to them and the preferred recreational activities. [7]

Moreover, this ongoing trend of unfairly allocating occupational roles is observed in recreational systems regardless of the outcomes of such roles to individuals. Women and men are not given equal opportunities to freely or fully participate or choose any given recreational activities of their choice.[8] This ongoing trend defeats the purpose of recreation. Women should be given equal opportunity with men, to choose and participate in their preferred recreational activities, literature reiterates that women and girls prefer domestic and indoor recreational activities.[9] What informs the preferences is not yet clear. It is envisaged that it might be gender roles. The focal point of this study is to examine gender differences in the recreational preferences of school teachers in rural areas of Limpopo Province of South Africa. The central argument for this study is that Afrocentric social norms derail other genders from choosing recreational activities that are associated with a particular gender, regardless of the benefits that are associated. These norms are informed by the cultural and religious systems. According to Odhav, social norms of the members of society put more emphasis on male-dominated recreational activities than female-dominated activities.[10] The positions of female participants appear

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[2] Ronit Jakobovich et al., "Developing Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors in Early Age—An Intervention Study in Kindergartens," *Nutrients* 15, no. 11 (June 2, 2023): 2615, https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15112615.

[3] Melissa K. Tibbits et al., "Longitudinal Patterns of Active Leisure among South African Youth: Gender Differences and Associations with Health Risk Behaviours," *World Leisure Journal* 58, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 60–68, https://doi.org/10.1080/16078055.2015.1089317.

[4] Lars Bo Andersen et al., "Physical Activity and Cardiovascular Risk Factors in Children," *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 2011.

[5] Tavershima Kparev et al., "Effect of Recreational Physical Activities on Health Related Components of Physical Fitness of Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria," *Journal of Educational Research in Developing Areas* 3, no. 1 (March 29, 2022): 49–64, https://doi.org/10.47434/JEREDA.3.1.2022.49.

[6] Theresa Dicke et al., "A Longitudinal Study of Teachers' Occupational Well-Being: Applying the Job Demands-Resources Model.," *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 23, no. 2 (April 2018): 262–77, https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000070; Paul G. Fitchett et al., "An Examination of US First-Year Teachers' Risk for Occupational Stress: Associations with Professional Preparation and Occupational Health," *Teachers and Teaching* 24, no. 2 (February 17, 2018): 99–118, https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2017.1386648.

[7] Fitchett et al., "An Examination of US First-Year Teachers' Risk for Occupational Stress: Associations with Professional Preparation and Occupational Health"; Joy C. Nwoko et al., "A Systematic Review of the Factors That Influence Teachers' Occupational Wellbeing," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 20, no. 12 (June 6, 2023): 6070, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20126070.

[8] Jacqueline McDowell et al., "Title IX and Campus Recreation: Guidelines to Increase Gender Equity in Club and Intramural Sport Programs," *Recreational Sports Journal* 40, no. 2 (2016): 133–51.

[9] Jakobovich et al., "Developing Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors in Early Age—An Intervention Study in Kindergartens."

[10] Kiran Odhav, "Sports Policy Uncertainties in South Africa and Its Universities.," *Ife Centre for Psychological Studies/Services. PO Box 1548, Ile-Ife Osun State, Nigeria* 18, no. 4 (2020): 16787.

to be less valued, as compared to their male counterparts in rural communities in terms of active outdoor recreational choices.[11]

According to the South African constitution, women and men are equal and, therefore should be treated as such. They are equally free to choose recreational activities that develop or deteriorate their quality of life without any limitations set by the social stereotypes of the community members. However, reality does not permit them, there is little attempt to close the socially constructed gender discrepancy gap in social institutions that remains a high priority in a policy framework in South Africa.[12]

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recreational Preferences and Gender

According to Farhud, recreational preference is a chosen lifestyle that determines the health and social status of individuals within a social system.[13] Meaning that the recreational preferences that the participants prefer will either improve or deteriorate the quality of life. The preferences of the participants are influenced by different factors. Burnett, affirms that gender, recreational needs, and the availability of leisure time for the participant influence these recreational preferences.[14] In addition, Zipp and Nauright, point out that the knowledge of the particular activity and the skill to participate in that activity influence the preferences.[15] Sevin and Özil are of the similar view that gender, age, and marital status of the person influence recreational preference and participation.[16] For example, in some social contexts, married middle-aged male adults prefer outdoor and team recreational activities, while their female counterparts prefer domestic recreational activities. In contrast, another study on recreational preference showed that senior male adults prefer individual outdoor recreational activities, while female counterparts prefer indoor and domestic recreational activities.[17]

Based on the above, the study conducted in sub-Saharan by Burnett revealed that gender plays a significant role in recreational preferences within a social system, and gender is associated with specific recreational activities.[18] For instance, in any given social system, men and boys are culturally and religiously associated with outdoor activities that involve physical exertion, while women and girls are associated with domestic activities that demand less physical exertion. Heise et al., revealed that cultural systems orientate men and women to participate in culturally accepted activities.[19] They further showed that, within a social system, men appear to be dominant in most social activities. This suggests that men are highly valued as compared to women due to the major role they play in a social system. Forsdike et al. believe that the social and cultural expectation for women and men in a social system determines their social patterns.[20] This suggests that women and men are expected to socialize in a particularly acceptable way, according to the cultural system. This includes recreational preferences and participation. These ongoing social trends and expected behavioral patterns, disadvantage one gender while favoring the other. This creates gender inequality in a social system. Odhav revealed that gender equality is socially constructed within social structures and that the members of the social structures are expected to adhere to those social norms for social control purposes and the smooth running of the social system.[21] However, in some instances, some members find the constructed norms unacceptable, while others find them acceptable.

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[11] Sachita Sharma Dhakal, "Assessing the Role of Social Stigma in Relation to the Concept of Social Inclusion and Exclusion," *KMC Research Journal* 1, no. 1 (June 29, 2017): 87–93, https://doi.org/10.3126/kmcrj.v1i1.28248.

[12] A. Styodana, "Challenges in Implementing Gender Equality Policy" (University of Pretoria, 2015).

[13] Farhud D. D., "Impact of Lifestyle on Health. ," *Iranian Journal of Public Health* 44, no. 11 (2015): 1442–44.

[14] Cora Burnett, "Politics of Gender (in)Equality Relating to Sport and Development Within a Sub-Saharan Context of Poverty," *Frontiers in Sociology* 3 (October 10, 2018), https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2018.00027.

[15] Sarah Zipp and John Nauright, "Levelling the Playing Field: Human Capability Approach and Lived Realities for Sport and Gender in the West Indies," *Journal of Sport for Development* 6, no. 10 (2018): 38–50.

[16] Levent Özil and H. Dilek Sevin, "The Relationship between Teachers Level of Participation in Recreation Activities and Emotional Intelligence and Life Satisfaction," *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies* 7, no. 3 (September 30, 2019): 2038–65, https://doi.org/10.21325/jotags.2019.461.

[17] Moses Changala and Emmanuel Ndhlovu, "Sport, Leisure and Recreation Preferences among Older Persons in Lusaka Urban District: Implications for Adult Education Programmes," 2020.

[18] Burnett, "Politics of Gender (in)Equality Relating to Sport and Development Within a Sub-Saharan Context of Poverty."

[19] Lori Heise et al., "Gender Inequality and Restrictive Gender Norms: Framing the Challenges to Health," *The Lancet* 393, no. 10189 (2019): 2440–54.

[20] K. Forsdike, A. Donaldson, and E. Seal, " Responding to Violence Against Women in Sport: Challenges Facing Sport Organizations in Victoria," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 2020, 1–16.

[21] Odhav, "Sports Policy Uncertainties in South Africa and Its Universities."

METHODOLOGY

In this study, a quantitative research approach was integrated with an explanatory descriptive design. The research instrument was divided into three segments. The primary segment was the demographic data of the participants. The secondary segment was on passive recreational preferences. Then the tertiary segment was on active recreational preferences. The instrument was on a five-linkert-scale format where the highest value was 5 which represented the most preferred, 4 preferred, 3 was undecided, 2 least preferred and 1 was not preferred at all. The study population was composed of primary and secondary school teachers from selected rural areas in Limpopo Province. The accidental sampling method was used on 250 participants (118 male and 132 female) that met the inclusion criteria of the study. This sampling technique was used in sampling participants from 5 public primary schools in 2 different circuits and 4 public secondary schools within the 2 circuits in a selected rural area of Limpopo Province.

To ensure the validity of the research instrument, a test-retest approach was used in this study. Their results did not show any discrepancies between the two tests. The research instrument was developed based on the extensive literature on recreational preferences and participation patterns. It was also distributed among the experts in the same subject matter to guide the instrument. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the stability and consistency of the instrument were established before the actual data collection. The descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages were used to summarise data on Linkert-scale questions on the recreational preferences of the participants.

Ethical clearance was granted by the University of Western Cape through the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) herewith the Ref no: HS21/06/13. In support of HSSREC approval and the study protocol. Limpopo Provincial Research Committee (LPRC) and Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) supported the study. LPREC issued a committee clearance certificate (Ref no: LPREC/108/2021:PG) through the Limpopo Department of Education.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Data

Variables	Age		Total N (%)
Male	31-40		59 (50)
	40-50		43 (36.4)
	50-60		16 (13.5)
Female	31-40		67(50.7)
	40-50		45(34.1)
	50-60		20(15.1)
Marital status	Married	Male	32(27.1)
		Female	31(23.5)
	Divorced	Male	10 (8.5)
		Female	13 (10)
	Widower	Male	7(5.9)
	Widow	Female	8(6.8)
	Single	Male	75(63.5)
		Female	74(56.1)
Highest qualification	BEDTEF	Male	67(56.8)
		Female	36(27.3)
	BSCED	Male	37(31.4)
		Female	13(9.8)
	STED	Male	44(37.3)
		Female	53(40.1)

Statistically at 0.05

Table 1 illustrates the demographic data of the participants. The study consisted of 250 participants (male 47.2% and female 52.8%). The age group of the participants ranged between the ages of 31 to 60 years old. The entire participants were of similar socio-economic status and geographic settings. However, the marital status of the participants differs, the majority are single. While few are married and fewer are widowers and widows. The age, marital status and qualifications of participants play significant roles in recreational preferences.

Table 2: Recreational preferences in passive activities

Activities	Most Preferred		Preferred		Undecided		Less Preferred		Not Preferred	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)
Listening to Music	28 (23.7)	54 (40.9)	51 (43.2)	64 (48.5)	10 (8.5)	01 (0.7)	02 (1.7)	08 (6.1)	27 (22.9)	05 (3.8)
Social media	69(58.5)	63(47.7)	31(26.3)	38(32.2)	06(5.1)	07(5.3)	10(8.5)	12(9.1)	2(1.7)	12(9.1)
Watching TV	13(11.1)	67(50.7)	38(32.2)	32(24.2)	01(0.8)	0(0)	40(33.9)	18(13.6)	25(21.2)	15(11.4)
TV games	54(45.8)	11(8.3)	28(23.7)	04(3.0)	0(0)	04(3.4)	17(14.4)	43(32.6)	19(16.1)	70(53.0)
Phone games	23(19.5)	67(50.7)	11(9.3)	45(34.1)	19(16.1)	04(3.0)	43(36.4)	12(9.1)	22(18.6)	04(3.0)
Drinking beers	43(36.4)	32(24.2)	47(39.8)	47(35.6)	03(2.5)	09(6.8)	12(10.1)	32(24.2)	13(11.0)	12(9.1)
Road trips	23(19.5)	43(36.4)	15(12.7)	32(24.2)	09(7.6)	32(24.2)	43(36.4)	20(15.1)	28(23.7)	05(3.8)
Parties	69(58.5)	80(60.6)	31(26.3)	32(24.2)	01(0.8)	05(3.9)	09(7.6)	8(6.1)	08(6.8)	07(5.3)
Wedding	27(27.9)	83(62.9)	35(29.7)	36(27.3)	21(3.7)	07(5.3)	23(19.5)	02(1.5)	12(10.2)	04(3.0)
Board games	56(47.4)	20(15.1)	47(39.8)	15(11.4)	02(1.7)	42(31.8)	08(6.8)	20(16.9)	05(4.2)	35(26.5)
Reading	06(5.1)	53(40.10	12(10.2)	35(26.5)	32(27.1)	19(14.4)	18(15.2)	14(10.6)	50(42.4)	11(8.3)
Cooking/braai/ baking	38(32.2)	62(52.5)	22(18.6)	41(31.1)	03(2.5)	08(6.1)	39(33.0)	10(7.6)	16(13.5)	11(8.3)
Music Concert	51(43.2)	34(25.70	49(41.5)	61(46.2)	03(2.5)	09(6.8)	12(10.11)	21(15.9)	03(2.5)	07(5.3)
Church	23(19.5)	67(50.7)	18(15.2)	45(34.1)	20(16.9)	02(1.5)	43(36.4)	12(9.1)	14(11.9)	06(4.5)
Traditional ceremonies	37(31.4)	55(41.7)	41(34.7)	43(32.6)	13(11.0)	09(6.8)	18(15.2)	18(13.6)	09(7.6)	07(5.3)
Picnic	39(33.0)	69(52.3)	47(39.8)	41(31.1)	02(1.7)	09(6.8)	23(19.5)	09(6.8)	07(5.9)	04(3.0)
Chess	67(67.8)	18(13.6)	22(18.6)	11(8.3)	03(2.5)	01(0.7)	24(20.3)	13(9.8)	02(1.7)	89(67.4)
Beauty contest	27(19.5)	50(37.9)	68(57.6)	57(43.2)	0	09(6.8)	16(13.5)	09(6.8)	07(5.9)	07(5.3)
Choir	23(19.5)	67(50.7)	71(60.2)	43(32.6)	0	01(0.7)	12(10.2)	12(9.1)	1(10.2)	09(6.8)
Snooker	51(43.2)	13(9.8)	12(10.2)	08(6.1)	03(2.5)	12(9.1)	33(27.9)	11(8.3)	19(16.1)	88(66.7)
Monopoly	37(31.3)	11(8.3)	23(19.5)	13(9.8)	04(3.4)	17(12.9)	34(28.8)	23(17.4)	20(16.9)	68(51.5)
Spinning cars	61(51.7)	31(23.5)	32(27.1)	23(17.4)	12(10.2)	15(11.4)	12(10.2)	33(25)	01(0.8)	30(22.7)

Statistically at 0.05

Table 2 illustrates the descriptive and statistical results on gender differences in passive recreational preferences among the participants of the study. The Linkert scale of mostly preferred, preferred, undecided, less preferred and, not preferred was used to determine the gender preference rate using the percentage. The results showed gender differences in passive domestic recreational activities and outdoor recreational activities across all the age groups of participants. This implies that should the participants be allowed to participate in the above-mentioned activities. Some of the activities will be their most preferred and preferred while others will be less preferred or not preferred recreational activities at all.

Table 3: Recreational preferences in active activities

Activities	**Most Preferred**		**Preferred**		**Undecided**		**Less Preferred**		**Not Preferred**	
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
	N(%)	**N(%)**	**N(%)**	**N(%)**	**N(%)**	**N(%)**	**N(%)**	**N(%)**	**N(%)**	**N(%)**
Soccer	49(41.5)	03(2.3)	30 (25.4)	02 (1.5)	04(3.4)	45(34.1)	12(10.20	15(11.4)	22(18.6)	67(50.7)
Netball	01(0.8)	45(34.1)	09 (0)	29 (22)	0(0)	03(2.3)	0(0)	32(24.2)	117(99.1)	23(17.4)
Brisk Walking	12(10.2)	33(25)	31 (26.3)	47 (35.6)	09(7.6)	01(0.7)	29(24.6)	32(24.2)	37(31.5)	19(14.4)
Jogging	43(36.4)	22(16.7)	35 (21.2)	34 (25.8)	03(2.5)	12(9.1)	23(19.5)	28(21.2)	14(11.9)	36(27.3)
Aerobics	23(19.5)	42(31.8)	11 (9.3)	55 (41.7)	07(5.9)	09(6.8)	43(36.4)	18(13.6)	32(27.1)	08(6.1)
Shopping	02(1.2)	39(29.5)	01 (0.8)	61 (46.2)	09(7.6)	06(4.5)	03(2.50	13(9.8)	102(86.4)	13(9.8)
Swimming	45(38.1)	15(11.4)	31 (26.3)	32 (24.2)	03(2.5)	01(0.7)	20(16.9)	37(28.0)	19(16.1)	47(35.6)
Hiking	24(20.3)	11(8.3)	21 (17.8)	07 (5.3)	30(25.4)	34(24.8)	29(24.6)	43(32.6)	14(11.9)	37(28.0)
Fishing	18(15.2)	09(6.8)	42 (35.6)	09 (6.8)	20(16.9)	23(17.4)	04(3.4)	39(29.5)	34(28.8)	52(39.4)
Jazz Dance	30(25.4)	03(2.3)	39 (33.0)	12 (9.1)	11(9.3)	03(2.3)	27(22.9)	37(28.0)	11(9.3)	77(58.3)
Traditional events	57(48.3)	14(10.6)	23 (19.50	23 (17.40	12(10.2)	43(32.6)	09(7.6)	07(5.3)	17(14.4)	45(34.1)
Initiation events	67(56.8)	45(34.1)	32(27.1)	59(44.7)	09(7.6)	04(3.0)	04(3.4)	11(8.3)	06(5.1)	13(9.8)
Fun Walk	23(19.5)	23(17.4)	34 (28.8)	14(10.6)	09(7.6)	0(0)	33(27.9)	23(17.4)	19(16.1)	72(54.5)
Hunting	34(28.8)	0(0)	18 (13.6)	0(0)	11(9.3)	13(9.8)	17(14.4)	3(2.3)	38(32.2)	118(89.4)

Statistically at 0.05

Table 3 illustrates the descriptive and statistical results on gender differences in active recreational preferences among the participants of the study. The findings showed gender differences in team and outdoor recreational activities across all age groups and marital status. This implies that, should recreational opportunity prevail itself, gender, age and marital status should be taken into consideration when providing recreational activities.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to examine gender differences in the recreational preferences of school teachers in Limpopo Province. The current findings showed that female participants ranging from the age of 31-50 years old scored high preference rates in the following domestic passive and active recreational activities: listening to music, attending parties and weddings, cooking/baking, watching TV, going out for picnic, singing the choirs playing phone games, brisk walking, aerobics, and netball as the mostly preferred and preferred activities, while male counterpart with the same age group, scored less in the following activities: watching TV, reading, road trips, attending church and beauty contest. This implies that female participants prefer domestic passive recreational activities as compared to their male counterparts. The findings further indicate that male participants that range from the age of 31-50 years old scored high preference rates on the following recreational activities: soccer, swimming, hiking and initiation school. This implies male participants prefer outdoor and team recreational activities. On the other hand, the present findings showed that male and female participants who range from 50-60 years old scored similar preference rates in watching TV, reading and attending church. This implies that, from the age group of 50-60 years old both male and female participants, prefer similar indoor and passive recreational activities.

More equally important than above, among all the recreational activities, social media is the only recreational activity that cuts across all genders and age groups. The study did not find any gender differences in the preferences of social media for recreational purposes. The findings showed approximately high equal scores in the preferences and usage of social media for recreational purposes as a passive recreational activity. The findings are consistent with the existing contemporary findings on China's new mania for live streaming.[22] In contrast, another study has revealed that male and female participants differ in the usage of digital gadgets, female participants use them for social media and male participants use them for playing games and communication.[23] In the same breath, Dlodlo and Mahlangu suggest that usage of mobile phones for social media starts from an early age, it is addictive.[24] Contrary to this a study conducted by Mudliar in India has revealed that female respondent's internet usage is limited as compared to their male counterparts, the restriction is caused by social norms that limit their movement. [25]

Flowing from above, the findings showed that, attending parties are the most preferred activity for participants, followed by watching TV and playing phone games. Female participants reported high preference levels in watching TV and phone games as the most preferred recreational activities as compared to their male counterparts. While male participants reported low in reading novels and attending church. In subsequence, attending church and wedding ceremonies was the preferred recreational activity by female participants. The least preferred activities by female participants are snooker and monopoly. The current trend of women concerning their preference for outdoor recreational activities is gradually changing and resembles that of men.

Equally important to the above, it is notable with curiosity that the findings revealed significant gender discrepancy in active recreational preferences. Gender discrepancy has been observed in soccer and netball. Hunting, jazz dance and window shopping. Male participants have scored high preference rates in soccer, hunting, drinking alcohol and jazz dance. The findings are consistent with existing literature and findings by Roper and Evans et al..[26]

Female participants scored high in window shopping and annual initiations schools' activities among others, and scored less preference level in hunting and weight lifting while men scored high. The findings also showed that female participants do not prefer hunting and weight lifting at all as recreational activities. Female participants do not prefer hunting, soccer, swimming and fun walking as part of their recreational activities. It is commonly associated with masculinity. Masculine activities are also associated with a male gender

[22] Quan Long and Alec C. Tefertiller, "China's New Mania for Live Streaming: Gender Differences in Motives and Uses of Social Live Streaming Services," *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction* 36, no. 14 (August 26, 2020): 1314–24, https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2020.1746060.

[23] Jean M Twenge and Gabrielle N Martin, "Gender Differences in Associations between Digital Media Use and Psychological Well-Being: Evidence from Three Large Datasets," *Journal of Adolescence* 79 (2020): 91–102.

[24] N. Dlodlo and H.B. Mahlangu, "Usage of Mobile-Devise for Recreation among the Millennial Generation. ," *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance* 19, no. 3 (2013): 661–77.

[25] Preeti Mudliar, "Public WiFi Is for Men and Mobile Internet Is for Women: Interrogating Politics of Space and Gender around WiFi Hotspots," *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 2, no. CSCW (2018): 1–24.

[26] Emily A. Roper and Katherine M. Polasek, "Girls and Women in Sport.," in *APA Handbook of Sport and Exercise Psychology, Volume 1: Sport Psychology (Vol. 1).* (Washington: American Psychological Association, 2019), 345–65, https://doi.org/10.1037/0000123-018; Kate E. Evans et al., "'Try Not to Make Waves': Managing Gender Discrimination in Outdoor Recreation," *Leisure Sciences* 45, no. 6 (August 18, 2023): 542–58, https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2020.1842824.

Summary
The current study has revealed significant gender differences among school teachers that range from the age of 31-50 years old in some passive recreational activities, while in other activities such as social media and watching TV, there was no significant gender difference among the school teachers. This suggests that male teachers are more likely to be associated with a healthy lifestyle and female teachers are associated with a sedentary lifestyle. Because, the current study revealed that female participants prefer a PRA, while male school teachers ARA for recreational purposes. Passive recreational participation is regarded as a sedentary lifestyle. This finding implies that recreational providers should focus on gender mainstreaming as a responsive strategy to this unguided gender discrepancy in recreation preferences in rural settings. This study has also revealed pressing needs to be addressed regarding gender discrepancy between female and male participants. Gender mainstreaming in recreational programs should be prioritized as a responsive strategy to outline the social problem of gender discrepancy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Equally important to the above, the current study on gender differences was the first of its kind in this selected area carried out to examine gender differences in the recreational preferences of school teachers in selected rural settings. The current study recommends that more studies are required to address gender discrepancy among school teachers who are staying in rural areas. Those studies should include people with different socio-economic statuses so that they can establish baseline data for diverse people. The reasons for their preferences must be established and incorporated in those studies to guide the policy makers for service delivery.

CONCLUSION

Recreational preference is strongly associated with a healthy or sedentary lifestyle. Regular participation in a particular recreational activity develops patterns in a social circle and determines a quality of life. This means that regular participation in ARAs develops a quality of life, while PRAs improve or deteriorate the quality of life in general. It is envisaged that there are a variety of factors that influence recreational preference in this particular study setting. The central argument is that Afrocentric social norms derail and determine recreational preferences. These Afrocentric social norms are unfairly socially constructed, they appear to favor one gender while in some instances disadvantaging the other gender. It classifies the activities according to the specific gender, irrespective of the benefits that it is associated with. However, The choice lies within the teachers, regardless of what is considered recreational acceptable for a specific gender. This study examines gender differences in the recreational preferences of rural-based school teachers. This study will help recreational policymakers in the provision of plans for diverse populations in rural settings in a South African context.

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