

PSYCHOSOCIAL VARIABLES INFLUENCING RETIRED WORKERS PARTICIPATION IN KEEP FIT ACTIVITIES IN ALIMOSHO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF LAGOS STATE

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Abstract: *The retirees are considered to be an important component of a nation's economy primarily because they help keep the economy running by saving their money little by little which then, in turn, get used by the government for different kinds of development works. The transition to retirement has been recognized as a turning point in determining physical activity and may present a critical "window" for promoting a physically active lifestyle in older adults. The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of psychosocial variables on retired workers participation in keep fit activities in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State . The objectives of the study were to determine the impact of social support, fear of injury and socio-economic status among retired workers in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State and inferential statistics of Chi-square. The study adopted the descriptive statistics design in analyzing the data collected. The sample size for this study consisted of 100 among retired workers in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State selected through the simple random sampling technique. A total of 100 questionnaire were distributed and analyzed. The findings of the study showed that retired workers with more social support are more likely to participate in keep fit activities and retired workers with higher socio-economic status participated more in keep fit activities than those with lower socio-economic status. The study recommended among other things that social support and access to affordable fitness facilities are essential to participation of retired workers in keep fit activities and there should be more inclusion of people with disabilities when planning fitness interventions in communities.*

Keywords: Keep fit activities, Participation, Psychological variables, Retired workers, Social support.

INTRODUCTION

Retirement has been recognized as a critical turning point in determining physical activity behaviours in old age. Retirement may therefore present an important 'window' for targeting interventions to promote increases in, or maintenance of, overall physical activity levels. Retirement is a major life transition that is associated with life changes including those involving social networks, income, and time flexibility that may all affect physical activity behaviors. As governments around the world discuss reforms of existing retirement schemes to account for the rising number of retirees, it is important to gain better insight into the effects of retirement on protective health behaviours such as physical activity (Barnett, van Sluijs & Ogilvie, 2012).

The global population is aging rapidly. According to data from World Population Prospects as reported by the United Nations (2016), the number of older persons, those aged 60 years or over, has increased substantially in recent years in most countries and regions, and that growth is projected to accelerate in the coming decades. A major challenge of the growing number of old people is the potential increase in healthcare demands due to age-related chronic diseases and disabilities. Physical activity has been shown to be crucial for reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and some cancers; prevention of falls; and maintenance of independence in the later years of life. Despite these benefits, objectively

measured physical activity levels are consistently low in older adults.

Abou, Elmagd and Mohammed (2016) identified four basic categories of exercise. These are; endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility. However, most people have a habit of focusing on one activity or type of exercise and think they are doing enough for their health. Each type of exercise is different; however, doing them all will give you extra benefits. Mixing it up also helps to reduce boredom and stop the possibility of injury.

WHO (2002) identified social support as a key determinant of active ageing, because of the importance of strong social ties for life and subjective wellbeing in older adults. It is vital that social interactions are maintained with increasing age, as good social functioning is associated with improved self-efficacy, reduced risk of depression and a reduced risk of all-cause mortality.

Older adults have the potential to experience greater levels of loneliness and decreased social support as they encounter significant life events such as retirement, loved ones becoming unwell or passing away, or moving into adult care facilities (Victor et al, 2000).

Josephie (2020) submitted that those who are about to or who have recently retired are receptive to changing their behaviors, feeling that retirement offers opportunities, specifically additional time, to develop a healthy lifestyle. Thus, understanding the psychology of exercise in those who are retiring and have been retired for some time will help those working in this area to support their physical activity needs effectively. Some care providers call exercise the "miracle" or "wonder" drug alluding to the wide variety of benefits that it can provide for many individuals. Blair, Cooper and Keneth (2021) report states that every adult should participate in moderate exercise, such as walking, swimming, and household tasks, for a minimum of 30 minutes daily. The cognitive benefits found in exercise at younger ages still apply for those who are retired. Exercise at this age will still lead to improvements in executive

function and cognitive performance, and there are also a growing number of studies looking at the impact of exercise on neurodegenerative health conditions. Studies showed that physically active older people have a reduced risk of developing Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia. This shows that exercise could be a powerful protective strategy against many of the health declines we tend to expect as we age (Graff-Radford, 2021; Andrea et al., 2016).

Despite the numerous benefits, studies have shown that as people go through the process of retirement, even though theoretically they have more time to exercise, they actually reduce the amount of physical activity they do (Perry, 2020). The theory of activity substitution suggests that as people retire, they should have more time to exercise as they gain leisure time. The reduced physical activity levels are thought to come from less travel (mainly to and from work) and a lack of routine. Instead of compensating by increasing their leisure-time physical activity, retirees are increasing the amount of time they are sedentary to, on average, 9.4 hours a day (WHO 2014). Even physical activities such as walking decline significantly when people get to much older ages. This is thought to be a response to musculoskeletal problems and concerns about personal safety.

Positively, studies have shown that those who are about to or who have recently retired are receptive to changing their behaviors, feeling that retirement offers opportunities, specifically additional time, to develop a healthy lifestyle. Understanding the psychology of exercise in those who are retiring and have been retired for some time will help those working in this area to support their physical activity needs effectively (Josephie, 2020). Those joining programmes to improve their health find improvements in cardiovascular fitness, muscular fitness, psychological health, functional capacity and in their quality-of-life indicators. They reduce their levels of loneliness and isolation, have fewer depressive symptoms and find that the habit of regular attendance to a physical activity provides a sense of structure and purpose to their day-to-day lives, something

particularly valuable for those recently retired from paid work. Even older people with major depressive disorder have been found to be able to reduce their depressive symptoms with aerobic and strength training (Perry, 2020; Greaney, Lees, Blissmer, Riebe & Clark, 2016).

The regular practice of physical activity has a positive influence on the physical and psychological health of participants. In a context such as sports or physical education classes, knowledge and manipulation of psychological variables such as attention, self-confidence, stress control, anxiety, motivation, cohesion, self-control (or emotional self-regulation), moods and interpersonal skills can influence commitment and performance. Furthermore, it has also been confirmed that a highly competitive context under a motivational climate involving ego can generate feelings of fear of failure and the appearance of feelings of shame, causing some degree of insecurity, anxiety or stress and avoidance behaviors in individuals, which will negatively affect their well-being, interpersonal behavior and performance. Therefore, physical and psychological well-being depends on the social environments in which physical activity and sport are practiced, bringing us to the significant agents in the environment (Malm, Jakobsson, & Isaksson, 2019).

Regular physical activity is a well-established protective factor for the prevention and treatment of the leading non-communicable diseases (NCDs), namely heart disease, stroke, diabetes and breast and colon cancer. It also helps prevent other important NCD risk factors such as hypertension, overweight and obesity, and is associated with improved mental health, delay in the onset of dementia and improved quality of life and well-being (World Health Organization, 2014).

Adopting and maintaining physical activity is essential to postpone or prevent chronic disease. Yet, it can be challenging for health-care experts and clinicians to develop intervention programs to assist older adults in adopting and maintaining regular physical activity due to many factors such as existing health-related problems,

functional limitations, and safety concerns e.g., accessible and safe walking areas (Greaney et al, 2016). Thoughtful approaches are needed to promote and maintain physical activity in this age group, as older adults may carry a lifetime of habits and attitudes that may inhibit physical activity.

The promotion of active participation in physical fitness activities among retired workers is very important if their physical and psychological wellbeing is to be improved, because many retired workers are oblivious of the negative health consequences of a sedentary lifestyle. It should be noted that despite the wide knowledge and campaign about the positive impacts of physical fitness activities, most retired workers still choose not to participate or participate sparingly, therefore exposing themselves to many of the health declines that stem from inadequate physical activity. Some psychosocial variables such as social support, socio-economic status and fear of injury could be a strong determinant of retired workers' participation in keep fit activities. Hence the need for this study which seeks to investigate the psychosocial variables influencing retired workers participation in keep fit activities in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State. Specifically, the study sought to; determine the impact of social support, gender, socio-economic status, and fear of injury as psychosocial variables on retired workers participation in keep fit activities.

To also add to the body of knowledge and to bridge the gap in literature, this study hereby seeks to investigate the psychosocial variables influencing retired workers participation in keep fit activities in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

Three research questions were generated for this study:

1. How does social support impact retired workers' participation in keep fit activities?

2. How does the socio-economic status of retired workers influence their participation in keep fit activities?
3. Does fear of injury influence retired workers' participation in keep fit activities?

Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were postulated for this study:

1. Retired workers with more social support are more likely to participate in keep fit activities.
2. Retired workers with higher socio-economic status will participate more in keep fit activities than those with lower socioeconomic status.
3. Level of physical activity in retired workers reduces due to fear or injury.

METHODOLOGY

This study was delimited to retired workers in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State. The descriptive research method was adopted for this study. The population for this study consists of all retired workers in Alimosho Local Government of Lagos State. The sample for this study consists of 100 retired workers in Alimosho Local Government who

were selected using the simple random sampling technique. The research instrument for the study was a self-developed structured questionnaire that was tagged Psychosocial Variables Influencing Keep Fit Activities Questionnaire (PVIKFTQ). The instrument was validated by experts through the face and construct validity. Reliability of the instrument was determined through a test-retest reliability method and a r value of 0.88 was obtained. The research instrument was administered to the respondents by the researchers and with the help of a research assistant. The completely filled questionnaire were collected on the spot to avoid loss. Data gathered was coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages and charts to present the variables and inferential statistics of Chi-square to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Hypotheses Testing

Three research hypothesis were tested using the inferential statistics of Chi-Square at a 0.05 alpha level.

Hypothesis 1: Retired workers with more social support are more likely to participate in keep fit activities.

Table 1: Chi-Square Analysis on social support as a factor influencing participation in keep fit activities.

Variable	N	df	L.S.	X ² _{cal}	X ² _{tab}	Remarks
Retired workers with more social support are more likely to participate in keep fit activities.	100	33	0.05	43.325	47.400	Not Significant

Source: Author

From Table 1, the Chi-square value of 43.325 was less than the critical value of 47.400. This implies that the null hypothesis which states that 'Retired workers with more social support are more likely to participate in keep fit activities.' is hereby accepted.

Hypothesis 2: Retired workers with higher socio-economic status will participate more in keep fit activities than those with lower socio-economic status

Table 2: Chi-Square Analysis on Socio-economic as a factor influencing participation in keep fit activities.

Variable	N	Df	L.S.	X^2_{cal}	X^2_{tab}	Remarks
Retired workers with higher socio-economic status will participate more in keep fit activities than those with lower socioeconomic status	100	21	0.05	31.431	32.671	Not Significant

Source: Author

From Table 2, the Chi-square value of 31.431 is less than the critical value of 32.671. This implies that the null hypothesis which states that 'Retired workers with higher socio-economic status will participate more in keep fit activities

than those with lower socioeconomic status' is hereby accepted.

Hypothesis 3: Fear of injury will not influence retired workers participation in keep fit activities.

Table 3: Chi-Square Analysis on fear of injury as a factor influencing participation in keep fit activities.

Variable	N	Df	L.S.	X^2_{cal}	X^2_{tab}	Remarks
Fear of injury will influence retired workers participation in keep fit activities	100	33	0.05	43.325	47.400	Not Significant

Source: Author

From Table 3, the Chi-square value of 43.325 is less than the critical value of 47.400. This implies that the null hypothesis which states that 'fear of injury will influence retired workers participation in keep fit activities' is hereby accepted.

moving into adult care facilities (Victor, et al, 2000).

The second finding of this study stated that retired workers with higher socio-economic status will participate more in keep fit activities than those with lower socioeconomic status. These findings correlate with the study of Barnett, van Sluijs and Ogilvie (2012). that concluded socio-economic status is associated with physical activity in adults, with people from lower SES strata being consistently less physically active. The third finding of this study was that fear of injury will influence retired workers participation in keep fit activities. In general, it was found that people from high levels of socio-economic status score the highest rates of sports participation and sports events attendance and follow-up. To increase people's levels of physical activity and improve both their health and well-being and their sporting opportunities, we need to take account of their economic status. Kamphius et al (2008) suggests that intervention and policy strategies targeted towards lower socio-economic groups would need to intervene on neighborhood, household,

Discussion of findings

The first finding of this study was that retired workers with more social support are more likely to participate in keep fit activities. This is in consonance with the recommendation of WHO (2014) that identified social support as a key determinant of active ageing in view of the importance of strong social ties for life and subjective wellbeing in older adults. It is vital that social interactions are maintained with increasing age, as good social functioning is associated with improved self-efficacy, reduced risk of depression and a reduced risk of all-cause mortality. Older adults have the potential to experience greater levels of loneliness and decreased social support as they encounter significant life events such as retirement, loved ones becoming unwell or passing away, or

and individual factors, to yield a maximal increase in sports participation among lower socio-economic groups and, ultimately, reduce socio-economic inequalities in health

CONCLUSION

Based on findings of this study, it was concluded that: retired workers with more social support are more likely to participate in keep fit activities while retired workers without social support are less likely to participate in keep fit activities. The study also concluded that retired workers with higher socio-economic status will participate more in keep fit activities than those with lower socioeconomic status. Fear of injury will influence retired workers' participation in keep fit activities. Unless preventive measures and solutions are procured, retired workers' participation in keep fit activities will be at a minimum.

Recommendations

1. Instrumental social support (in form of tangible aid and service) is essential to increase participation of retired workers in keep fit activities. Family, friends and the community owe it to them to give this social support to encourage them imbibes the culture of keep fit activities which in turn would improve their health and well-being.
2. Means should be provided for retired workers with low socio-economic status to be able to participate in keep fit activities. They could be introduced to low budget activities such as walking, hiking, swimming and so on. Provision of free community sports centers will also go a long way to ensure they are not left out.
3. At keep fit centers visited by retired workers, proper first aid must be on display as this would reduce the fear of injury. The use of a spotter during keep fit activities will also go a long way in erasing fear of injury. Medical check-ups after keep fit sessions should also be

provided by the community, family members and friends.

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