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Gendered perspectives of leisure patterns and constraints of university students in Ghana

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Leisure researchers have contended that leisure patterns and constraints are significantly influenced by gender. Despite this assertion, little has been done to compare gender differences across leisure patterns and constraints within a single study population beyond the treatment of sex as a variable. The focus of this study was to assess the gendered leisure patterns and constraints of university students in Ghana, Africa. Data were collected from randomly sampled students at the University of Cape Coast and analyzed with a chi square test and a multivariate analysis of variance. Female students recorded low participation in three main domains of leisure, namely socializing, creative, and physical activities, as compared to their male counterparts. Intrapersonal and interpersonal leisure constraints were found to be associated with female students' leisure pursuits. It was therefore concluded that female students are more constrained in their leisure pursuits than their male counterparts.

Keywords: constraints; gender; leisure patterns; participation; university students

Les chercheurs en loisirs soutiennent que le genre exerce une influence significative sur les habitudes et contraintes de loisirs. Malgré cette assertion, on s'est peu attardé à comparer les différences d'habitudes et de contraintes de loisir auxquelles sont confrontés les deux genres au sein d'une même population, au-delà de la considération du sexe comme variable d'étude. Cette étude visait à évaluer les habitudes et contraintes de loisir, selon le sexe, d'étudiants universitaires au Ghana, en Afrique. Les données proviennent d'un échantillon aléatoire tiré de la population étudiante de la University of Cape Coast et elles ont été analysées par des tests du chi carré et des analyses multivariées de la variance. Les étudiantes ont enregistré une faible participation dans trois domaines liés aux loisirs, dont la socialisation et les activités physiques, comparativement à leurs homologues masculins. Il a été trouvé que les contraintes en matière de loisirs intrapersonnels et interpersonnels sont associées aux activités de loisirs pratiquées par les étudiantes. Par conséquent, il est conclu que les étudiantes sont plus contraintes en matière de loisirs que les étudiants.

Mots-clés: contraintes; sexe; habitudes de loisirs; participation; étudiants universitaires

Introduction

Women leisure researchers are of the view that societal structures which are patriarchal in nature have ever defined and dominated the ability of women to participate in leisure activities (Henderson, 1996; Shaw, 1994). It is often argued that women share a common world in their inequality in leisure when compared to their male counterparts who are privileged to find themselves in societies which are built on patriarchal values. Social

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interactions are mostly seen to represent a common point of women's leisure and also women tend to use the home and non-structured activities as the primary means of expressing their leisure (Ekinici, Prokopaki, & Cobanoglu, 2003; Henderson, 1996; Morais & Zillifro, 2003). Women's leisure is further seen to be fragmented and as such many women do not feel entitled to leisure in the first instance.

For several decades, women leisure researchers have begun to construct a body of knowledge about women's leisure participation. The new paradigm of feminine leisure research has moved from just situating gender as a variable in leisure research to making it a theoretical concept and the key focus of discussions. According to Yule (1997), the concern of North Americans and Europeans with regards to the shifting discourse on women's leisure has been the exploration of women's experiences of leisure within the context of their broader lifestyles. Indeed, it is well documented by women leisure researchers (Arab-Moghaddam, Henderson, & Sheikholeslami, 2007; Shaw & Henderson, 2005) that the broader view of women's lifestyles are defined by men dominated social structures. These social structures invariably dictate and limit the freedom with which women in society make decisions regarding all aspects of social life including leisure. Conversely, their male counterparts have the luxury to freely decide on the structure of their lifestyles and to make choices about their leisure which falls readily within the accepted norms of the already patriarchal society. For instance, Wearing (1998) highlights how the meaning of leisure in the everyday lives of mainly middle-class white women differs from that of their male counterparts.

Leisure patterns and participation among women have received attention in the past. Integrative women's leisure reviews by Henderson (1990, 1996), as well as other research on women's leisure patterns, participation, and dynamics (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1996; Henderson, Hodges, & Kivel, 2002; Walker, Deng, & Diesler, 2001) are indications of a growing body of literature on women's leisure. However, there is also an acknowledgement of the lack of knowledge on comparative analysis of male and female leisure experiences across various leisure dimensions and constraints. Despite the growing interests in feminine leisure research and the attendant increase in the volume of literature, empirical studies within which there is a comparative analysis of male and female leisure constraints is minimal. Numerous studies that have attempted highlighting the differences in leisure participation by gender and the patriarchal nature of leisure have mostly done so by studying only women without comparison to males within the same population (Auster, 2001; Hood, 2003; Hurtes, 2002; Shores & Scott, 2005).

Few studies that have attempted empirical research on males' leisure interests and constraints in comparison to females' have only done so by looking at the differences in activities by simply treating gender as a variable while they remained speculative about the plausible constraints (Autry, 2001; Berg, Trost, Schneider, & Allison, 2001; Bryce & Haworth, 2002; Pritchard, Morgan, & Sedgley, 2002). There is a need to understand in empirical terms the activities and constraints of males and females. Shaw and Henderson (2005) advocated that leisure researchers should move beyond treating feminine leisure by just looking at sex and delve deeply into studying the leisure activities and constraints of females in comparison to their male counterparts within the same populations. Consequently, this paper seeks to answer the question of whether there are any differences in the leisure patterns and constraints between female and male university students in Ghana. Ultimately, it is the objective of this paper to examine and compare the leisure patterns of male and female university students and to analyze the leisure constraints among male and female students.

Studies on women's leisure are very critical in adding to both the literature on feminine leisure and also to contributing to practice in order to enhance women's participation in leisure. Thus, the potential contribution of this study lies in its ability to add to existing literature and offer practical steps that may enhance women's leisure participation. In terms of contributing to existing literature, this study will highlight the similarities and/or differences in leisure patterns among males and females in the same study. This will serve as a major addition since most of the studies that sought to highlight the differences in male and female leisure patterns did so by only studying females and by largely focusing on literature to reveal such differences, rather than on novel, empirical research. In this study, however, females and males of the same population are compared.

With regards to practice, this study can inform policy makers about the leisure patterns and constraints of females in universities compared to their male colleagues. Such information may be specifically useful, for instance, for policy makers within the Ghana Social Welfare, the Ministry of Gender, as well as the Ministry of Education. In this regard, policy makers may be able to use the findings of this study as a basis to inform initiatives to enhance females' leisure participation and thereby help to eliminate the inequalities in leisure participation. Furthermore, university authorities in Ghana may also rely on the findings of this study to pursue the development of leisure spaces that are most used by students (females and males) on university campuses. This will have a long term effect of enhancing students' participation in leisure.

Literature review

Feminine leisure researchers (James, Hsu, Redmond, & Hope, 2005; Klitzing, 2003; Santiago & Coyle, 2004; Shores & Scott, 2005) indicate that the patriarchal nature of society has resulted in notable differences in various dimensions of leisure between men and women. It is noted that the patriarchal set-up of societies allow for the domination of men in leisure spaces (Parry, 2005). One basic issue that have dominated the patriarchal nature of leisure has been discussed with regards to leisure meaning. Parry (2005) is of the view that leisure meaning varies between men and women and the definition tends to be carved around patriarchal interests.

Another aspect of observed differences within the leisure literature between males and females lies in the choice of leisure activities. Several differences have been noted in the literature with regards to male and female choice of leisure activities (Brown, Brown, & Powers, 2001; James, 2001). For instance, Bryce and Rutter (2003) and Miller and Brown (2005) acknowledge the differing choices in leisure activities among the working-class in Australia. The pattern of leisure activity choice in terms of gender often has females favouring home-based and less active activities while males tend to lean towards outdoor and very active leisure activities (Henderson et al., 2002).

In her conclusions related to the first integrative review on women's leisure in the 1980s, Henderson (1990) observed that frameworks for understanding women's leisure were emerging based on a variety of methods which focus on empowering women in order to find meaning in leisure. This observation underscores the much-talked-of disparities and differences in not only the meaning of leisure but also the range of leisure activities pursued based on gender. This analysis, Henderson (1990) intimated is an indication that women shared a common world in their inequality regarding opportunities for leisure. Henderson (1990) also noted several other key observations regarding women's leisure compared to men's leisure: women were more concerned with social relationships in leisure; had more fragmented leisure time; found the preponderance of leisure at home

through unstructured activities; and lacked a sense of entitlement to leisure, unlike their male counterparts.

An additional divergence between males and females in their pursuit of leisure has to do with leisure constraints. Leisure researchers who have addressed constraints have established a linkage between gender and leisure constraints (Coble, Selin, & Erickson, 2003; McDermott, 2004). The argument follows that since the nature of leisure activities pursued by gender differs, so too will the constraints that will confront each gender (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey 1991; Samdahl, 2005; Shaw & Henderson, 2005). However, it is worth noting that leisure constraints do not only arise from the context and type of activity, but also from intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural elements (Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Jackson, 2005; Loucks-Atkinson & Mannell, 2007).

Intrapersonal constraints are individual psychological qualities that affect the development of leisure preferences (e.g., shyness). Interpersonal constraints are social factors that affect development of leisure preferences (e.g., lack of companions, social and cultural norms), and structural constraints comprise of factors that intervene between development of leisure preferences and participation (e.g., financial resources). These three dimensions of constraints have usually constrained people's ability to participate in leisure (Crawford et al., 1991; Godbey, Crawford, & Shen, 2010). Feminine leisure researchers (Jackson & Henderson, 1995; Shaw & Henderson, 2005) have contested that all three dimensions of constraints are hugely influenced by the gender orientation of the individual since society and societal structures are already male dominated. Leisure constraints research within the context of gender is one area that has received recent attention with the works of Heuser (2005) and Arab-Moghaddam et al. (2007). This more recent research suggests indications of increasing acknowledgement and significance of gender in constraints research and the general body of leisure research.

Gendered socio-cultural context of leisure in Ghana

Ghana's traditional socio-economic structures and systems of kinship, culture, and politics were carved to foster specific forms of social functioning and positioning, and are explicit in the resulting lifestyles with deep implications for gender. Although the Ghanaian traditional system encompasses diverse social organizations, the general orientation and organization tends to be patriarchal. The patriarchal orientation and organization has profound influence in all aspects of life in Ghana including access to leisure resources and spaces.

In general terms, leisure in Ghana has been shaped by historical, political, economic, and socio-cultural factors. In Ghana, the term leisure usually carries with it a negative connotation (Yankholmes & Lin, 2012). Thus, the idea of free time that is associated with leisure is generally not acceptable within Ghanaian societies as the concept of free time is equated to laziness and wastefulness. The term leisure by itself therefore tend to constrain would be participants as they do not want to be associated with laziness and or wastefulness. To evade the tag of laziness and wastefulness associated with leisure, leisure participants tend to adopt activities that appear to be necessity such as sleep and resting (Abugbire, 2013; Yankholmes & Lin, 2012). Even though, traditionally, Ghanaians have undertaken their own forms of leisure, the idea of free time leisure is alien to Ghanaians. Ghanaian traditional leisure usually occurs intermittently within work hours and sometimes at night before bed. Even in modern times, the admission of free time within which leisure occurs is rare among Ghanaians.

Ghanaian traditional societies are highly patriarchal in nature and this affects consumption of leisure. Women are in general treated as second class citizens in all social environments (Naami, Hayashi, & Liese, 2012) including leisure spaces. Women are traditionally expected to subdue to men in order to fit into the existing socio-cultural systems and thus seen as good wives, mothers, and daughters (Naami et al., 2012). The needs of the boy child and the husband are usually prioritized over that of the girl child or wife. In terms of leisure, women's leisure time use is usually dictated by society which itself is shaped by its patriarchy. Even though, women traditionally have their pastime leisure activities (albeit not admitted to be occurring within "free time") which is substantially different from men, these activities are usually dictated by their gender roles. In Ghana, socio-cultural norms requires that women remain at home to cater for the family while the men go out to work to provide for the sustenance of the family (Dako-Gyeke & Owusu, 2012; Nabila, 2001). As Boateng, Adomako-Ampofo, Flanagan, and Yakah (2006) argue, girls are taught to look up to men and boys as stronger, wiser, and more responsible and boys are socialized to lead and control women. In view of this, girls carry the greater burden of domestic work and boys are permitted more time for play and to be away from home. The assigned male and female roles that are expressed in community norms and values are often used to maintain social control over females (Abu, 1991; Nukunya, 1992).

The behaviour of males in their families is influenced by expectations of their fellow men about what it means to be a man in the community in which they live and conformity with certain norms and practices and these expectations perpetuate masculine tendencies among boys and men. Additionally, in order to ensure that males and females recognize and respect their appropriate gender positions in society, proverbs are often used in daily discourse to explain, describe and reinforce stereotypes about men and women (Adomako Ampofo, 2001). As a result, most of the pastime activities of Ghanaian women take place within the confines of the home while that of men take place outside the home. In most cases, women who tend to participate in pastime activities outside the home are perceived as being social deviants especially in instances when they attempt to undertake such activities with men. Also, the socio-cultural dictates that does not permit women to work, not only vests social power in the man but economic power as well (Dako-Gyeke & Owusu, 2012). This tends to further limit women's leisure consumption options.

Also, socio-cultural norms have also substantially limited the variety of leisure activities that can be undertaken by women. By the social and cultural orientation of Ghanaian societies, certain activities are supposed to be undertaken by men only. For instance, physical activities in general are expected to be undertaken by men since socio-cultural practices allow men to engage in outdoor activities. Also, the social upbringing of women to be "conformers" to social norms rather than shapers of society, tend to make women timid and less adventurous in their leisure seeking behaviour unlike men. For instance, boys are more skewed to adopting technology their female colleagues at school (Yankholmes & Lin, 2012).

Theoretical framework

The hierarchical theory of leisure constraints was chosen as the theoretical framework to underpin this study (Crawford et al., 1991; Godbey et al., 2010). This model maintains that different kinds of constraints in leisure participation are ordered in a hierarchical form and as such are also targeted and met based on this hierarchy. According to this model, individuals seeking to participate in leisure are first confronted with intrapersonal

constraints (which are the psychological and sociological conditions including lack of skills, competence, feelings of social inappropriateness by an individual) that inhibit leisure preferences. If the individual is able to overcome intrapersonal constraints, then interpersonal constraints (influence from peers, cultural and social norms, values, and expectations) will come to the fore. Finally, structural constraints also exist which have a broader influence on the individual's ability to participate in leisure and serve as an intermediate force between intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints. Structural constraints include lack of facilities, time, money, transportation facilities among others and mostly interfere between the individual's leisure interests and actual leisure participation. The successful resolution, or negotiation, of these constraints is likely to enhance leisure participation (Crawford et al., 1991; Godbey et al., 2010).

Method

The study area

The University of Cape Coast (UCC) is one of the rare sea-front universities in the world. It is located about 100 metres from the Atlantic Ocean. It has two main adjoining campuses, namely the North and South campuses. The University was established in 1962 as a University College. It was the third public university to be established in Ghana after the University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. Currently, it is one of the eight public universities in the country. The University currently has a student population of 16,113 comprising 10,813 males and 5300 females.

Today, the University provides an avenue for learning in a myriad of subject areas which are grouped under the faculties of Arts, Social Sciences, Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences, Education, and Business. The University has seven main halls of residence on campus and students upon admission are affiliated to one of these halls. Each of the seven halls has various leisure facilities ranging from a TV room, table tennis facilities, long tennis court, volleyball court, and football pitches. In addition to this, the University has also provided a lot of leisure spaces such as a nature reserve for hiking, and an auditorium for theatre and other in-house entertainment facilities. As part of its calendar, the University has set aside certain dates for sporting and other leisure activities.

Data collection

The study was based on a sample of 1106 students enrolled at the University of Cape Coast in November 2012. A multistage sampling technique was used in selecting the students. The first stage involved the stratification of the students into the six halls of affiliation or residence in the University. At the second stage, a proportionate sample was drawn from each of the halls. The third stage involved a proportional allocation of the sample to each hall by gender. The fourth stage was based on a systematic random sampling which was used to draw specific students from each hall based on the list of students obtained from the data management section of the University. Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the University of Cape Coast Ethical Review Board. Specific ethical issues considered for clearance included, confidentiality, and anonymity of the respondents. To ensure adherence to these ethical considerations, information identify the respondents (such as names, telephone numbers, room numbers) were not captured as

part of data and also the data collected will not be given to any out for any purposes except academic only.

The data were collected through a questionnaire which consisted of three sections. The first section focused on the leisure activity participation of the students. Following Scott and Willits's (1989, 1998) classification of leisure activities of college students, four main domains of leisure activities were captured in this study: socializing activities, creative/artistic activities, sedentary/solitary activities, and physical/sporting activities. Socializing activities are those activities that emphasize peer group recreation in which visiting and being together is paramount (e.g., chatting with friends, going to movies, visiting friends). Creative/artistic activities include activities that allow the individual to develop and showcase his or her creative skills (e.g., playing musical instruments, singing). Sedentary/solitary activities include activities that are inactive in nature and can usually be undertaken alone without necessarily being the midst of others (e.g., sleeping, resting, watching television). Physical/sporting activities focus on athletics and physically demanding activities (e.g., playing of football, jogging playing basketball).

The respondents were asked to rate various leisure activities in terms of frequency of participation (ranging from 1 = "Never," 2 = "Rarely," 3 = "Sometimes," to 4 = "Frequently"). Self-rated leisure activities provides a preferred method of assessing the frequency of engagement in leisure activities for this study as it reflects the importance attached to the activity from the perspective of the leisure participant (Couture, Caron, & Desrosiers, 2009; Sirgy & Cornwell, 2002; Sirgy, Kruger, Lee, & Yu, 2010). The second section measured leisure constraints that served as inhibiting factors to students' leisure participation. The three dimensions of constraints (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural) as posited by Crawford et al. (1991) were used to measure the constraints. Individual items for each constraint type were measured with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "strongly agree," 2 = "agree," 3 = "neutral," 4 = "disagree," to 5 = "strongly disagree." The final section of the instrument covered the socio-demographic characteristics of the students and captured variables such as age, sex, marital status, ethnic origin, year of study and hall of affiliation, and faculty of study.

The questionnaire was pre-tested on a sample of 30 students at the Cape Coast Polytechnic. This institution of study was selected for the pre-test because it is also a post-secondary institution located in the same town as the University and hence students of the polytechnic are likely to be open to the same range of activities as those of the University. Besides being students of a post-secondary institution, students of the Polytechnic have similar characteristics and interests as their counterparts in the University since it is also a post-secondary institution. The pre-test helped assess the reliability of the questions as well as the validity of the results obtained and where appropriate, modifications were made to the questionnaire. The questions were constructed in English since English is the official language and the language of instruction at all levels of education in Ghana.

Data analysis

Two main statistical techniques, namely chi square and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), were used to analyze the data gathered. The chi square test was used to assess the relationship between sex and leisure participation frequency among the students. To achieve this, the scores for the individual activities under each of the domains were summed and divided by the number of items to create composite measure that represented a particular domain of leisure activity. Dividing the sum of the activities in

each domain by the number of activities making up the domain was meant to convert the scores back to the original scale.

MANOVA was used to assess the differences in leisure constraints between male and female students of the university. MANOVA was considered ideal because the dependent variable of interest (leisure constraint) was in three related categories. The suitability of MANOVA for the data was demonstrated by using the null hypothesis to determine whether the means of the three categories of constraints (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural) do not vary based on the students' gender, and is tested based on the Box's test of equality of covariance matrices ($M = 3.98$, $F = 1.43$, $p = 0.683$). The Box's test indicated that the population mean of males and females were different across the various constraints. Further, the Levene's test of equality of error variance (intrapersonal constraint: $F = 2.41$, $p = 0.120$; structural constraint: $F = 1.24$, $p = 0.985$; interpersonal constraint: $F = 3.48$, $p = 0.063$) showed that none of the dependent variables has a significance value of less than 0.05 (Pallant, 2005; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) and hence those data were suitable for MANOVA.

Results

Profile of the sample

The sample was dominated by male students who constituted 65.5% of the sample compared to 34.3% for females. In terms of age distribution, students between the ages 20–25 years were in the majority (59.0%), as opposed to those who were 20 years or less (18.0%), 26 to 30 years (15.2%) and above 30 years (7.8%) as shown in Table 1.

Most of the students were single (54.3%) while almost one-third (29.5%) indicated they were in a relationship with only 16.2% being married. Being in a relationship was conceptualized as having an intimate partner irrespective of the duration of this intimacy. Table 1 indicates that students of *Akan* heritage constituted the majority (52.9%) of the sample. The *Ewe* (17.8%) ethnic group was the next highest followed by *Ga-Adanbge* (17.8%), and *Mole-Dabgani* (8.9%).

Most of the students (57.0%) spent between US \$251 to 550 in a semester while 26% of them spent US \$250 or less. Other students also spent between US \$551 to 850 (8.7%), 851 to US \$1150 (3.9%), and US \$1151 and above (4.3%). There were more students who were in the Education Faculty (22.1%) compared to their counterparts in Physical Science Faculty (17.6%), Arts Faculty (16.3%), School of Business (12.8%), School of Biological Science (12.6%), Social Science Faculty (10.0%), and School of Agriculture (8.7%).

Leisure patterns

The results in Table 2 suggests that female students sometimes participated in sedentary/solitary activities ($M = 3.04$) while rarely participating in socializing ($M = 2.72$) and creative/artistic ($M = 2.06$) activities. In contrast, male students were inclined towards frequent participation in socializing activities ($M = 3.09$) while they rarely participated in sedentary/solitary activities ($M = 2.89$) and creative/artistic activities ($M = 2.47$).

In terms of the specific domains of activities, the popular socializing activities amongst female students included going to movies ($M = 3.84$) and chatting with friends ($M = 3.53$) while the popular socializing leisure activities amongst male students include taking a walk/hike ($M = 3.94$) and going to parties ($M = 3.37$). Within sedentary/solitary leisure activities domain, female students were inclined towards resting ($M = 3.66$), reading of

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of sample.

Characteristic Attribute	<i>n</i>	%
Sex		
Male	303	65.7
Female	158	34.3
Age (years)		
20 years or younger	83	18.0
21 to 25 years	272	59.0
26 to 30 years	70	15.2
31 years of older	36	7.8
Marital status		
Single	250	54.3
In a relationship	136	29.5
Married	75	16.2
Ethnic group		
Akan	244	52.9
Ewe	82	17.8
Ga-Adangbe	59	12.8
Mole-Dabgani	41	8.90
Other northern extracts	35	7.60
Expenditure (US \$) ^a		
250 or less	120	26.0
251 to 550	263	57.0
551 to 850	40	8.7
851 to 1150	18	3.9
Over 1150	20	4.3
Faculty		
Education	102	22.1
Physical Science	81	17.6
Arts	75	16.3
School of Business	59	12.8
Biological Science	58	12.6
Social Science	46	10.0
School of Agriculture	40	8.7

Note: ^aExchange rate = 1.9 Ghana Cedi to 1 US dollar as of September 2013.

novels ($M = 3.65$), and sleeping ($M = 3.56$) while male students were inclined towards watching football ($M = 3.70$) and watching television ($M = 3.66$). With regards to creative/artistic activities, female students preferred singing ($M = 3.07$) while their male counterparts preferred playing free computer games. In the domain of physical/sporting activities, female students were geared towards playing of volleyball even though their participation in this activity was rarely ($M = 1.57$) done while their male colleagues favoured playing of football ($M = 2.84$).

Leisure participation by gender

The results of the chi square test shows that there were significant relationships between the frequency of participation in socializing activities ($\chi^2 = 9.52$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.021$),

Table 2. Leisure activity participation patterns among male and female students.

Activity domain Activity type	Females (<i>n</i> = 426)		Males (<i>n</i> = 640)	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<i>Socializing</i>				
Old school activities	2.49	0.83	2.34	0.96
Going to parties	2.37	1.05	3.37	0.91
Go to movies	3.84	0.85	2.83	1.04
Chatting with friends	3.53	0.87	2.99	0.80
Walk/hike	2.47	1.09	3.94	0.79
<i>Overall</i>	2.72	0.51	3.09	0.50
<i>Sedentary/solitary</i>				
Reading novels	3.65	0.72	1.68	0.78
Watching television	2.66	0.93	3.66	0.80
Listening to music	2.34	1.01	2.64	0.94
Watching football	2.37	0.96	3.70	0.99
Sleeping	3.56	1.03	2.91	1.01
Resting	3.66	0.81	2.77	1.00
<i>Overall</i>	3.04	0.40	2.89	0.44
<i>Creative/artistic</i>				
Computer games	1.57	1.01	3.76	0.83
Singing	3.07	0.94	1.86	0.81
Dancing	1.70	0.92	2.29	0.92
Writing poems/stories	1.90	0.72	1.95	0.97
<i>Overall</i>	2.06	0.57	2.47	0.98
<i>Physical/sports</i>				
Playing football	1.33	1.04	2.84	1.03
Playing basketball	1.38	0.96	1.19	0.98
Playing volleyball	1.57	0.89	1.21	0.95
Playing table tennis	1.49	0.86	1.25	0.93
Playing long tennis	1.40	1.00	1.22	0.94
<i>Overall</i>	1.43	0.88	1.54	0.80

Note: Participation measured on a 4-point scale where 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, and 4 = Frequently.

sedentary/solitary activities ($\chi^2 = 1.09$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.002$), and physical/sporting activities ($\chi^2 = 36.94$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.001$) among female and male students (see Table 3).

A little less than half (44.1%) of the female students indicated they sometimes engaged in socializing activities while about one-quarter (23.6%) of their male counterparts indicated they did so. On the other hand, a little less than half (41.1%) of the male students frequently engaged in socializing activities while less than one-quarter (14.6%) of their female counterparts did so. Also, while about one-quarter (23.9%) of the female students indicated they rarely participated in socializing activities, may fewer (15.5%) of their male counterparts indicated they rarely participated in the same activities.

In the same vein, while almost half (41.3%) of the female students reported that they sometimes participated in sedentary/solitary activities, a little more than one-quarter (26.9%) of their male colleagues indicated that they sometimes participated in sedentary/solitary activities. About half (40.8%) of the male students said they frequently participated in sedentary/solitary activities while only 19.9% of their female counterparts said they did so. Further, about one-fourth (22.5%) of the female students rarely participated in sedentary/solitary activities whereas only 11.1% of their male colleagues engaged themselves in similar activities. However, about one-quarter (21.6%) of male students

Table 3. Leisure participation by gender.

Activity domain	Participation Rate	Females		Males		χ^2	<i>p</i>
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Socializing	Frequently	64	14.6	263	41.1	9.52	0.021
	Sometimes	188	44.1	151	23.6		
	Rarely	102	23.9	99	15.5		
	Never	72	17.1	127	19.8		
Sedentary/ solitary	Frequently	85	19.9	259	40.8	1.09	0.002
	Sometimes	176	41.3	172	26.9		
	Rarely	96	22.5	71	11.1		
	Never	69	16.2	138	21.6		
Creative/artistic	Frequently	22	5.1	38	5.9	3.71	0.201
	Sometimes	111	25.9	211	33.0		
	Rarely	102	24.1	125	19.5		
	Never	191	44.9	266	41.6		
Physical/sports	Frequently	25	28.1	337	52.7	36.94	<0.001
	Sometimes	59	20.6	130	20.3		
	Rarely	83	19.5	125	19.5		
	Never	259	60.8	49	7.6		

have never participated in sedentary/solitary activities while less than one-fourth (16.2%) of the female students said they have never participated in sedentary/solitary activities.

With regards to physical and/or sporting activities, a much higher percentage of male students (52.7%) participated frequently compared to their female colleagues (28.1%). Roughly equivalent percentages of males and females reported participating either sometimes (20.3% and 20.6%, respectively) or rarely (both groups at 19.5%). Almost two-thirds of the female students (60.8%) said they have never participated in physical/sporting activities whereas only 7.6% of male students said they have never participated. In contrast to these participation rates, however, there was no significant difference ($\chi^2 = 3.71$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.201$) in frequency of participation in creative activities between male and female students.

Leisure constraints

Table 4 shows that lack of participation skills ($M = 2.18$), fear of getting injured ($M = 2.15$), fear of getting poor grades ($M = 2.24$), fear of losing focus ($M = 2.27$), and lacking physical abilities to participate in a particular leisure activity ($M = 2.38$) were the intrapersonal constraints faced by the female students. For the male students, they agreed that lack of knowledge about the existence of an activity ($M = 2.44$), fear of losing focus ($M = 2.01$), and lack of participation skills ($M = 2.35$) were the intrapersonal constraints they are faced with.

In terms of interpersonal constraints, the female students indicated that not being allowed to participate ($M = 2.20$), being disrespected ($M = 2.16$), society not expecting them to participate ($M = 2.04$), society making mockery of them (2.10), did constrained their ability to participate in leisure. However, their male colleagues did not agree to have experienced any interpersonal constraints in their leisure quest (see Table 4).

Table 4. Leisure constraints of students.

Constraint category Constraint type	Females (<i>n</i> = 426)		Males (<i>n</i> = 640)	
	Mean ^a	Std. Dev.	Mean ^a	Std. Dev.
Intrapersonal				
Lack of participation skills	2.18	1.13	2.35	1.21
No physical abilities	2.38	1.26	3.69	1.34
Fear of injuries	2.15	1.36	3.44	1.38
Loss of focus	2.27	1.29	2.01	1.31
Health related problems	3.44	1.32	3.52	1.36
Fear of poor academic grades	2.24	1.31	2.97	1.36
Lack of knowledge on existence of activity	3.13	0.90	2.44	1.37
<i>Overall score</i>	3.12	0.80	3.20	0.88
Interpersonal				
Fear of being rejected by friends	3.67	1.20	3.60	1.34
Low levels of interest by other students	3.24	1.25	3.11	1.24
The activity is looked down upon	3.21	1.24	3.12	1.21
Other students will make fun of me	3.24	1.20	3.22	1.30
I will not be allowed to participate	2.20	1.27	3.19	1.27
People will not respect me	2.16	1.29	3.30	1.28
Society do expect me to participate	2.04	1.26	3.14	1.29
Society will mock me	2.10	1.27	3.10	1.31
<i>Overall score</i>	3.62	1.01	3.55	1.09
Structural				
Distance to facility	2.35	1.30	2.93	1.29
Busy academic schedule	2.47	1.27	2.36	1.30
Unavailability of leisure facilities	2.24	1.19	2.91	1.25
<i>Overall score</i>	2.42	0.92	3.00	0.93

Note: ^aScores based on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = "strongly agree" and 5 = "strongly disagree."

With regards to structural constraints, the female students were of the view that distance to the leisure facility ($M = 2.35$), busy academic schedule ($M = 2.47$), and unavailability of leisure facilities of choice ($M = 2.24$) constrained their abilities to participate in leisure activities while their male counterparts did not agree to being constrained by any structural constraints.

Gender differences in leisure constraints

The multivariate analysis of variance was used to assess the differences between the three domains of constraints (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural) across gender (see Table 5). In all, the MANOVA test revealed significant differences between constraints and gender as reflected by the Wilk's Lambda ($F = 1.59$, $p = 0.066$). Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) and Pallant (2005) recommend the Wilk's Lambda as one of the commonly reported multivariate test-fit results for MANOVA. To be considered significant, the value of the Wilk's Lambda should be greater than 0.05 (Pallant, 2005).

The MANOVA test revealed that intrapersonal ($F_{2,1066} = 1.33$, $p = 0.003$) and interpersonal ($F_{2,1066} = 1.28$, $p = 0.001$) constraints were significantly different among female and male students. However, there was no significant differences between males and females encounter of structural constraints ($F_{2,1066} = 1.62$, $p = 0.119$). A review of the mean scores of the intrapersonal constraints indicated that female students agreed

Table 5. Gender differences in students' leisure constraints (MANOVA).

Sex ^a	Constraint ^b	Mean	Std. Dev.	Type III				
				Sum of Squares	df	F	p	Partial Eta ²
Female	Intrapersonal	1.62	0.87	0.86	1	1.21	0.001	0.013
Male		4.04	0.77					
Female	Interpersonal	3.35	1.10	1.02	1	0.88	0.201	0.008
Male		3.45	1.02					
Female	Structural	1.99	0.87	0.48	1	0.62	0.008	0.019
Male		4.34	0.86					

Notes: ^aIndependent; ^bDependent.

Box's $M = 3.98$, $p = 0.683$.

Wilk's Lambda: $F = 1.45$, $p = 0.008$.

($M = 1.66$) to being constrained by intrapersonal constraints while their male counterparts disagreed ($M = 4.16$). Further, female students agreed ($M = 1.99$) to being constrained by interpersonal constraints while their male colleagues disagreed ($M = 4.67$).

Discussion

Inspection of the individual activities making up the domain of socializing activities showed that participation differed across gender. The female students were engaged in indoor based socializing activities whereas the male students were engaged more in outdoor based socializing activities. Within the Ghanaian context, it is expected that a female will be calm and shy of the "public eye" and hence they tend to be brought up to fit this ideal description of the female (Dako-Gyeke & Owusu, 2012). This tends to impact on their social lives and hence females lean towards activities that usually keep them away from the public eye. For their male counterparts, Ghanaian socio-cultural norms dictate that they take up active roles in society and thus they tend to be more expressive which makes the transition easier for them to engage in outdoor based leisure activities (Adomako Ampofo, 2001). Further, social roles of women in Ghana are carved around home where the female is expected to be a "home keeper" which virtually implies that their leisure pursuits are modelled around home based activities. Usually, a man who spends most of his time indoors is seen as being "womanly" in behaviour since he is expected to go out and play with his peers.

The study further shows differing levels of participation in sedentary/solitary activities between female and male students. Perhaps this finding is related to the idea that Ghanaian females are expected to "home keepers" and thus tend to develop liking for home based activities. However, most of these home based activities are either sedentary or solitary in nature since they usually find themselves at home alone while the men are expected to go out to work to feed the family. In fact, the emergence of sleep and resting as popular sedentary/solitary activities among the female students conforms to earlier studies by Yankholmes and Lin (2012) and Abugbire (2013) that found these two activities to be popular among Ghanaian female students and civil servants respectively. In Ghana, leisure has a negative connotation and is often associated with frivolity and wastefulness and thus in order to escape this negative connotation of leisure, people result to such activities (sleep and resting) that serve as a mid-point between necessity and wastefulness (Yankholmes & Lin, 2012). Also, for that fact that these activities are popular among

females than males indicates and reinforces the “home keeping” role of women as against men.

Activity like watching of football being popular among the male students is an indication of yet another patriarchal nature of Ghanaian society. Within the Ghanaian society, football has traditionally been associated with men and as such women are not expected to harbour interest in football and thus not expected to either play or watch. Even though, this traditional view is gradually being eroded, it is nevertheless a popular belief among most Ghanaians that football is a manly activity and watching it should be left to men. The watching of football by the male students is reinforced by the provision of satellite television among all the halls of residence which makes it possible to watch live football matches particularly that of the major European football leagues (English, Spanish, Italian, German leagues and UEFA Champions League). Even though female students are not prohibited from joining their male counterparts in the television (TV) rooms to watch these matches, the usually crowded nature of the TV rooms coupled with their orientation of being indoors (staying in their rooms), it makes it difficult for them to participate in this activity.

Even though there was no significant relationship in the participation of creative activities between female and male students of the university, it is important to note that playing computer games was undertaken differently by female and male students. While the female students only sometimes participated in playing computer games, this was a frequent pastime activity for the male students. Perhaps the male students are more challenged by recent technology than their female counterparts.

The non-participation in physical/sporting activities by the female students reflects common Ghanaian norms with regards to gender and physical activity participation. The patriarchal structure of society, especially Ghanaian societies due to certain cultural norms, further confine females to indoor activities and activities that are less physical in nature (Naami et al., 2012). Ghanaian cultural expectations idealize the woman as “home keeper” who does not work but rather charged with the duty of maintaining the home and family. Subsequently, the ideal Ghanaian woman is expected to be soft and not muscular (Nabila, 2001). A female who engages in physical activities is usually stigmatized and mocked as being a man. In terms of the males’ participation in physical/sporting activities, albeit only on occasion, it was expected especially in the case of football which is considered as the national sport. In fact, there are deliberate attempts and incentives provided by schools including universities to persuade male students to take up playing football.

The significant relationship between female and male students in terms of intrapersonal constraints is an indication of the lack of self-confidence by the female students. Thus, it was obvious from the study that the female students agreed that intrapersonal constraints affected their ability to participate in leisure while the male students disagreed. However, the nature of intrapersonal constraints cited by the female students is more related to their self-confidence (Bryce & Rutter, 2003). Henderson et al. (2002) contend that societies are structured to reflect male dominance and as such females are usually treated as second class members of society to males. This condition has the tendency to derail the confidence (Miller & Brown, 2005) of females and often make them question their abilities in achieving their aims including leisure pursuits. Within the Ghanaian context, it common for the female to be treated as inferior to their male counterparts in most aspects of life (Dako-Gyeke & Owusu, 2012). This stand is rooted in most Ghanaian cultures where the man is regarded as the head of the family and as such is supposed to lead the family in all aspects of life and the final decision in the family is made by the man (Naami et al., 2012).

The study finding that interpersonal constraints inhibited the female students' ability to participate in leisure compared to their male counterparts perhaps reflects the overall influence of society on leisure and particularly women's leisure. Social expectations and rules regarding leisure is what may have resulted in interpersonal constraints being most felt by the female students than their male colleagues. Within most Ghanaian societies, social and cultural expectations tend to generally limit the ability of women to express themselves in all aspects of life including leisure. Women's submission and lack of participation in decision-making originate from the way Ghanaians are socialized (Boateng et al., 2006). For example, girls are socialized to submit to men and the needs of boys are prioritized over girls (Boateng et al., 2006). Women who want to be recognized and viewed as normal people are expected to conform to such social expectations and thus, those women who rebel to these social expectations are considered deviants. These socio-cultural orientations may have accounted for why the female students were constrained by interpersonal constraints more than their male counterparts.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, the popular leisure activities among female students include sedentary/solitary activities followed by socializing activities, creative/artistic activities, and physical/sporting activities. For the male students, the popular leisure activities are socializing activities followed by sedentary/solitary activities, creative/artistic activities, and physical/sporting activities. The study therefore shows that the most preferred leisure activity with highest participation for females is sedentary/solitary activities while that of male students is socializing activities.

The study further concludes that female students encountered more constraints than their male counterparts. The study has indicated that female students were constrained by both intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints while their male colleagues were not constrained any of the three constraints. This finding and conclusion gives credence to other similar conclusions and similar assertions in the literature that women are more constrained in their leisure pursuits than men due to the patriarchal structure of society and leisure spaces (Arab-Moghaddam et al., 2007; Samdahl, 2005; Shaw & Henderson, 2005).

The hierarchical leisure constraints theory that underpinned the study has been useful in providing insights into the constraints of female and male university students. The study has demonstrated that leisure constraints exist in hierarchical nature among the university students (Santiago & Coyle, 2004). Even though the hierarchical leisure constraints theory has been sharply critiqued (Auster, 2001; Gilbert & Hudson, 2000), some studies (Walker, Jackson, & Deng, 2007), including this study, support the hierarchical nature of leisure constraints in understanding students' leisure constraints.

Implications of the study

The female students recorded low participation in socializing, and physical/sporting activities and hence the need for the university authorities to take practical steps to enhance their participation in these activities. The female students can be encouraged through guidance and counselling on the need to participate in these activities. Also, female-only competitions in these activities can be instituted by the university authorities. In terms of physical or sporting activities for instance, inter-hall sporting competitions like football, volleyball, basketball, table and long tennis can be instituted annually for the

female students. These measures will go a long way to enhance the participation of the female students in these activities.

It is clear from the study that female students are more constrained by intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints than their male counterparts. This implies that the entire university community should be educated on the benefits of leisure. This education campaign can be done through a radio program that could be hosted on Atlantic Radio (On-campus local radio station) which is the only official radio station for the University. On this program, experts in sociology and sports sciences can be hosted to enlighten the entire university on leisure and the fact that the benefits of leisure do not apply to only males, but also females. This initiative may help to moderate the social perceptions and intrapersonal constraints encountered by female students and the entire student body.

Future researchers can investigate the reasons why the female students record low participation in the three domains of leisure (socializing, creative, and physical activities). This kind of study will help us to explain further why female students are participating less in these activities. Also, research into the influence of leisure constraints on leisure participation is warranted. Research of this kind will help bridge the gap that exists between leisure constraints and leisure participation especially among women in Ghana and Africa.

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