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Examine challengers and barriers behind decision making of University students' recreation participation: The case from Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to identify the barriers and challenges which affect the recreation participation of university students. In this study, the primary source of data was used to understand the barriers and challenges of recreation participation and the secondary source of data was used to formulate the theoretical framework of this study. The random sampling method was used to collect data from the recipients. Questionnaires which follow the Likert scale method were used to get the perception of university students. The sample size of the study is 450 students. The SPSS.21.0 statistic software was used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistic, KMO and Bartlett's Test were used to analyse the data and test the hypothesis. The results of the study show time, social environment, gender, facilities and income as barriers and challenges for recreation participation. Social environment and income have been recognized as the factors which strongly act as barriers and challenges for the recreation participation. Social environment has especially influenced the recreation participation of female students. Since recreation directly influences the wellbeing of a person, the University governing bodies should be concerned about the recreational opportunities and should provide sufficient recreation facilities for their students. Future researchers can conduct the same research in a different context by using different analysing methods.

Keywords: recreation, barriers and challenge, university students, and decision making

Introduction

Recreation is fun. Recreation can simply be described as a process of developing a quality life and day-to-day life skills towards enhancing one's mental health. Fun can be further identified as a process of breaking free from the monotonous life of the individual and socializing (Tshwete & Recreation, n.d.). The period of protest can be considered as a time period where people are given the chance to set aside for enlightenment and engage in activities which relieve one's body and mind. (Daydreaming, n.d.) Most recreational sports have a formal take on how its process unfolds in a formal way where entertainment with a historical process is intertwined with things such as culture, religion, and craftsmanship (Cushman & Laidler, 1990) [2]. Re-create: to renew through the influence of pleasurable surroundings; to refresh after wearing toil or anxiety, usually by change or diversion; the act of recreating or the state of being recreated: refreshment of strength and spirits after toil; diversion, play; means of getting diversion or entertainment (Veal, 1992) [20]. Some recreational activities can be pointed out as follows; adventure, racing, backpacking, cycling, bird watching, boardsailing, camping, climbing, fly fishing, hiking, hunting, water rafting, running, jogging, sailing, scuba diving, skiing, surfing, telemarking, and wildlife viewing (The Outdoor Foundation, 2017) [18]. The scope of recreation has touched many fields of the human life such as governance, Non-governance, environment, economic, tourism management, education, and Medical. (Edginton *et al.*, 2018) [5].

People can reap many benefits such as health benefits, environmental benefits and educational benefits through recreational events. Recreation mainly has two major benefits namely personal and social benefits. Improving mental and physical health, reducing anxiety and boredom, cultural enrichment and restoration of rest can be considered as the personal benefits

of recreation while social benefits include happiness, positive family and social relationships, strengthening community values and the enhancement of environmental and cultural development (Cushman & Laidler, 1990) ^[2]. Further, recreation can facilitate to improve people's quality of life and make them healthier by providing physical and mental wellbeing (Daydreaming, n.d). It seems that the participation in recreational activities has the potential to promote co-existence, equality, and support among people (Ghimire *et al.*, 2014) ^[6].

Past researches have drowned their attention to identify problems or barriers that people face when participating in recreation activities. According to the empirical evidences, when participating in recreational activities people face barriers and challenges such as scarcity of facilities, social factors and resources (Koloba & Surujlal, 2014) ^[9]; Sprinter Group, 2017 ^[16]). Research has shown that the use of drugs and alcohol by young people during their free time acts as a major barrier which prevents them from participating in meaningful activities (Koloba & Surujlal, 2014) ^[9]. They have further pointed out that this is because the fact of recreational events not having features expected by young people. Accordingly, the lack of satisfaction one has towards the facilities of recreational events can be pointed out as an obstacle in participation in recreation (Koloba & Surujlal, 2014) ^[9]. Further, family and school environments play a major role in discouraging a child's interest towards participating in recreational activities (Department of National Parks Recreation Sport and Racing, 2015) ^[4]. The family has a strong influential power on a child's recreational participation as it depends upon the income of the family, number of members who contribute to the family and awareness of recreational opportunities. The wide scope of subjects in school which make the students occupied with work prevents them from taking part in recreational activities. In addition, barriers which prevent women from participating in recreational activities can be identified as the responsibilities they have in the family, confinements, not being able to engage in activities with men and not having necessary facilities and opportunities. (Department of National Parks Recreation Sport and Racing, 2015) ^[4]. Thus, age, gender, race, religion, income and education can be considered as barriers which prevent one from participating in recreational activities. Recreation has a wide range of activities. There are recreational activities which can only be done by young people and not the old. Also, people with low education and low-income are reluctant to participate in recreational events. Moreover, women are less likely to participate in recreational activities than men. (Scott & Ph, 1998) ^[15]. Such social disparities make people participate less in recreational activities.

University students are young adults who perceive recreation differently from other social groups in the society (Department of National Parks Recreation Sport and Racing, 2015) ^[4]. However, the participation of university students in recreational events is considerably low due to the lack of facilities available which is a major drawback which hinders the participation in recreational events in many developing countries (Mthethwa, 2017) ^[11]. Apart from that, there are other socio-economic factors in the university context which act as barriers for the participation in recreational events. A range of studies have been conducted in order to understand the barriers and challenges faced by the recreation participants. The studies have recognised barriers and challenges faced by the general public, special groups and

tourists in recreational participation. There are researchers who have focused their attention on the barriers and challenges faced by university students when participating in recreational events in the European context. However, in order to validate the past literature, it is important to understand the barriers and challenges faced by Sri Lankan university students in recreational participation. In the Sri Lankan context, there are no empirical evidences on the obstacles faced by university students in recreational participation. Therefore, the current study will bridge the existing gap between university students' recreation participation and the barriers and challenges faced in participation. Present study is to investigate the barriers and challenges faced by university students in participating in recreational activities.

Literature review

Existing literature reveals the barriers and challenges faced when participating in recreational events. People engage in recreational activities with the purpose of gaining feelings of mastery, achievement, exhilaration, acceptance, success, self-worth and pleasure. Recreation reinforces a positive self-image and response towards aesthetic experience, achievement of goals, and positive feedback from others. The response of a person depends upon the independence of the activity, leisure or social acceptance (Veal, 1992) ^[20]. Recreation is a process that enables people to experience and achieve personal desires. Recreation has the power to bring harmony to a society. It also enables people to achieve social goals. Recreation includes a wide range of activities such as sports, art, crafts, outdoor pursuit, hobby and education (Cushman & Laidler, 1990) ^[2]. Recreation creates a critical backdrop to the promotion of public health. Sprinter research group has revealed that there are many physical, social and psychological benefits when engaging in recreational events (Sprinter Group, 2017) ^[16].

Recreation makes people's daily lives meaningful. It helps in enhancing social wellbeing (Ghimire *et al.*, 2014) ^[6]. The General Education of the European Social Fund (2009) states that the students' interest in recreation will enable them to lead a healthy, active life (Kent County, 2009) ^[8]. In 2014, the World Health Organization stated that the physical, mental, and social benefits of recreation participation greatly contribute to the development of future leaders' activism. Henchy's (2011) work reveals that students' participation in recreation has reduced their stress (Mthethwa, 2017) ^[11]. The Rural recreation association has jagged that recreation participation can bring economic benefits such as economic sustainability. They further state that economic sustainability will enable people to make their lives better (Arichard Kidd, 2015). Sport and recreation white paper (1994) has been introduced to developing countries stating that every bill allocated for a recreational event will reduce the 100 medical bills. Further, knowledge of physical education through recreation develops the skills of students and enables them to maintain a high level of scientific performance. They further stated that a child who had taken part in recreation would never be seen in a court of law as a result of the self-esteem they have gained through the participation in recreational activities (Tshwete & Recreation, n.d, 1994). It is thus clear that there are many benefits in participating in recreation including health, economic, social, and cultural benefits. However, despite many such benefits from recreation participation, in 2017, outdoor recreation participation report showed that 8.6 million had low recurrence of recruitment in

2016, and 9.8 million in 2015 (The Outdoor Foundation, 2017) ^[18]. Thus, barriers and challenges have led to a decrease in participation in recreation.

Obstruction to do something can simply be pointed out as a barrier. Ronald (2018) pointed out that it is a challenge to make a statement or to invite someone to make a statement. He further pointed out that a presentation or a statement made, has the potential to be a challenge to the presenter (Ronald, 2018). Accordingly, the factors revealed in the following literature review can be considered as the barriers of recreation participation.

In researching the literature, various research papers have been presented by various researchers on the barriers and challenges that exist. Among them, Texan researchers have pointed out the limitation of time as a barrier in recreation participation, where even though people are willing to participate they are unable to participate due to the lack of time (Scott & Ph, 1998) ^[15]. Research by Robin (1991) has shown that people have too much work to do in a day and do not have enough time left for recreation as the rest of the time is set aside for their essentials. The excess work has made people to have less time. Accordingly, this lack of time has become a recreation barrier and challenge (Scott & Ph, 1998) ^[15]. University students do not have time to participate in recreation due to the excess work and extracurricular activities in the university. (Mthethwa, 2017) ^[11].

Consequently, the following hypothesis was tested;

H₁ = Limited time is considered as a barrier and a challenge for university students' recreation participation.

H₀ = Limited time is not considered as a barrier or a challenge for university student recreation participation.

Low income can be pointed out as the strongest barrier for the participation in recreation (Scott & Ph, 1998) ^[15]. According to the statistics made in the year 2017, people have participated in recreation based on the income factor. People with an annual income of US \$ 25,000 show 14% recreation participation and people with an income between US \$ 25,000 – US \$ 49,000 show 21% participation in recreation. Further, people who earn money more than US \$ 100,000 annually show 32% participation in recreation (The Outdoor Foundation, 2017) ^[18]. This data thus shows the relationship between income and recreation participation. Mthethwa (2017) ^[11] has pointed out that university students spend a considerable amount of money for their education and some get this money from their parents. In such instances, when a family has more than one child parents are unable to spend money for each and every want of their children. Such situations make it unable for university students to take part in recreation. Accordingly, income can be recognized as a barrier and challenge faced in recreation participation (Department of National Parks Recreation Sport and Racing, 2015) ^[4].

Consequently, the following hypothesis was tested;

H₂ = Income is considered as a barrier or a challenge for university students' recreation participation.

H₀ = Income is not considered as a barrier or a challenge for university student recreation participation.

A research conducted by the department of national park (2015) has revealed that although gender remains a barrier to recreation, social environment too prevents young women from participating in recreation. Further, social factors such as ethnicity, religion, and family are critical factors which affect the participation in recreation events. Nationality and ethnicity play vital roles in the participation of recreational events where discriminative ethnic ideologies prevent people

from taking part in recreation (The Outdoor Foundation, 2017) ^[18]. Moreover, for women, their familial commitments and household chores act as barriers and challenges for the participation in recreation (Sprinter Group, 2017) ^[16]. Women are further deprived of the opportunity of participating in recreation due to the fact of only one member earning money for the family (Sprinter Group, 2017) ^[16]. Thus, it can be seen that culture has a decisive influence on women's participation in recreation. Especially in African countries recreation participation is declined due to the existing social inequality (Mwei, 2016) ^[12].

Consequently, the following hypotheses were tested;

H₃ = Social environment is considered a barrier or a challenge for university students' recreation participation.

H₀ = Social environment is not considered a barrier or a challenge for university student recreation participation.

Recreational resources can be identified as barriers and challenges in recreation participation. Especially young adults expect to gain different experiences through recreational events. Past studies reveal that the lack of entertainment and facilities discourage young adults to participate in recreational events (Resolution *et al.*, 2008) ^[13]. Unhealthy habits of the young people (drinking alcohol) too lead them to be discouraged in participating in recreation. Such kind of behavior is reflected from young adults due to the lack of recreational facilities, thus they engage in events which suit their desires. It has become one of the most compelling challenges of recreation participation (Tshwete & Recreation, n.d.). Smith and Waddington (2014) stated that young people are not interested in recreation due to the lack of interest in employment. It has been pointed out that certain social factors in the society affect recreation participation (Koloba & Surujlal, 2014) ^[9]. Swedish (2014) has illustrated that recreation has the ability to reduce the number of young people on the streets. However, the cited author's out-come about recreation benefit which has influenced on young people that cannot be easily accomplished due to the lack of facilities available in recreational events such as unavailability of space in existing parks, less recreational facilities, transport and service facilities. Accordingly, the lack of required recreational facilities has become a challenge for recreational participation (Koloba & Surujlal, 2014) ^[9]. As an example, funding for recreational facilities is very low in Africa. Therefore, the inability to provide necessary facilities for recreational activities can be recognized as a barrier and challenge faced in the participation in recreation (Ghimire *et al.*, 2014) ^[6].

Consequently, the following hypotheses were tested;

H₄ = Facility is considered as a barrier or a challenge for university students' recreation participation.

H₀ = Facility is not considered as a barrier or a challenge for university students' recreation participation.

Gender can be identified as a challenge which affects the participation in recreation. Research conducted by KwaZulu-Natal University found that male (68%) participation in recreation was higher than that of female (32%) (Mthethwa, 2017) ^[11]. The Sprinter Research Group (2017) ^[16] points out that many events are designed for active recreation and no program has been devised to involve women in the event. They have pointed out that women show a lower rate of participation in recreation than men in a global scale. They have further identified factors such as lack of funds, role women play in the house, lack of time, uncertainty in decision making, inability of judging and sensitivity as challenges faced by women in recreation participation (Sprinter Group,

2017) [16].

Consequently, the following hypotheses were tested;
 H_5 = Gender has significant difference when perceived barrier or challenge for participating in recreation.

H_0 = Gender has not significant difference when perceived barrier or challenge for participating in recreation

The previous studies regarding to recreation participation reveal that the aforementioned challenges have led to a decrease in recreation participation of people. Therefore, the current study looks into the barriers and challenges faced by university students in recreation participation.

Method

Participants

The purpose of this study is to confirm the barriers and challenges that affect the recreation participation of university undergraduates. The random sampling method was used to select the 450 respondents for the survey. Research participants were those who study in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities in the University of Kelaniya. Participants of the current study were selected on a voluntary basis. Table 1 present the overview of the participants including gender, faculties, academic years, and civil status.

Table 1: Participants' Characteristics

Variables	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	185	41.11
	Female	265	58.89
Academic Year	First Year	94	20.8
	Second Year	94	20.8
	Third Year	94	20.8
	Fourth Year	168	37.6
Faculties	Social Sciences	270	52.89
	Humanities	130	47.11
Civil Status	Married	79	1.78
	Unmarried	100	98.22

Note: N= 450 (n representing each category as well as the percentage (%))

Materials

As a result of literature review, this study has based on hypothetical experimental method to understand effect of aforementioned factors toward recreation participation. The identified 20 items were generated from a review of literature under five factors namely Time, Income, Social Environment, Facility and Gender with 04 items per each. The five ranking points Likert scale system was used to observe a respond ranking from strongly agree =1 to strongly disagree=5. The test was performed on the data obtained from the first 20 selected responders in order to test the reliability of the questionnaire. In this instance, the Cronbach's alpha value should be greater than 0.7 (>0.7) for the analysis to be successful. The pilot test conducted in this study showed that the Cronbach's alpha value is (0.794).

Data Collection

In this study, the questionnaire method was used to collect data. The data was collected from 450 randomly selected students from the faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities in the University. The students of the aforesaid two faculties were given the questionnaire online through social media networks. The Google form was presented in both Sinhala and English mediums. This questionnaire consisted of two main sections, the first part focused on demographic factors such as gender, academic year, faculty, civil status, district, etc., and the second part was a questionnaire based on the facts. Since

all questions were compulsory questions data was collected aptly.

Data Analysis

The data was entered into the quantitative data analysis software which was the SPSS version 21.0. The raw data collected was sorted, edited, coded, and tabulated for data analysis. In terms of that, descriptive statistics (Frequencies, Means, Standard Deviations, Median and Mode), KMO and Bartlett's Test with Extraction were used to answer the research questions.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the 20 items which were based on the questionnaire for buildup constructs of the study. The challenges and barriers are represented with the five factors including twenty variables. According to the criteria of data scaling, participants' responses were scaled from 1-5 (Strongly Agree = 1, Strongly disagree = 5). All challenges can be considered as important factors since the mean score is less than 3.0. Based on that mean score less than 3.0 indicating that all challenges consider as important factors.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Identified Barriers

	No of Items	M	SD	Median	Mode	Extraction
Time (T)	04	2.52	0.69	2.50	2.00	.18
Income (I)	04	2.64	0.71	2.50	2.25	.34
Social Environment (SE)	04	2.46	0.62	2.50	2.00	.35
Facility (F)	04	2.57	0.79	2.50	2.00	.46
Gender (G)	04	2.45	0.70	2.25	2.00	.38

Note: N= 450; M= Mean; SD= Stranded Deviation

All constructs had a mean score that was lower than the midpoint. The income construct had the highest mean score (M=2.64, SD=0.71) and gender construct had the lowest mean score (M=2.45, SD=0.70). According to the table 02 other constructs such as time (M=2.52, SD=0.69), social environment (M=2.46, SD= 0.62) and facility (M=2.57, SD=0.79) mean and standard deviation were presented.

Existing oppositionality of factors analysis

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.64
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square 134.28
	Df 10
	Sig. .000

The chi-square statistic was significant ($\chi^2 = 134.28$, $p < .001$), which indicates that the hypothesized model had a statistical significance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) value has obtained from the factor loading to precede the data for analysis. The KMO measures the sampling adequacy which should be greater than 0.5 (>0.5) for a satisfactory factor analysis to proceed. If any pair of variables has a value less than this it should be dropped out from the analysis. Kaiser (1974) recommends 0.5 as minimum values to adequacy, values between 0.7- 0.8 as acceptable and values above 0.9 as superb. In this study the KMO measure is 0.64. Consequently, it was more appropriate to proceed with this analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was

significant and therefore the data was normally distributed. The next step in the factor analysis process is to look at the magnitude of the factors. According to the extraction shown in Table 2, time is 18% of the factors and the factor of convenience is shown to be the largest factor with a magnitude of 46%. The percentage of variables that can be applied to each factor that are as; the first factor showing the variance 34%, the second factor shows a magnitude of 35% and the third factor as 38%. It can be identified that other factors should not be considered.

Correlation among the Factors

There is a rule of thumb which says that the minimum factor loading should be greater than 0.5 (Gronemus *et al.*, 2010). As all factor loadings achieved the accepted values, all items can be kept as they are. However, the covariance matrix indicates higher correlations with some errors. Considering all the aspects some modifications need to be done to the initial measurement model. The correlations between the factors are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation among the factors

	Time	Income	Social En:	Facility	Gender
Time	1				
Income	.194**	1			
Social En:	.079	.213**	1		
Facility	.106*	.177**	.270**	1	
Gender	.135**	.174**	.148**	.318**	1

**. $p < 0.01$, *. $p < 0.05$

Hypothesis Testing

Five hypotheses were developed to answer the research questions. The descriptive statistics which were summarized in Table 2 prove the accuracy of the hypothesis. According to these values, the hypothesis testing can be stated as follows.

H₁ = Time limit is considered as a barrier and a challenge for university students' recreation participation.

The data obtained by the 450 respondents show time as a barrier which hinders the participation in recreation. Generally, if the mean is less than 3 (>3), it indicates that the hypothesis made by that factor is acceptable. After removing one item from the factor, the mean value and SD were in the valid level (M= 2.51, SD=0.68). The Median (2.5), and Mode (2.0) can also be identified. Accordingly, as there was insufficient evidence to accept the null hypothesis of this factor, the conclusion which states time as a barrier and challenge for the recreation participation of university students was accepted.

H₂ = Income is considered as a barrier and a challenge for university students' recreation participation.

The data obtained for the factor of income also shows that the mean is less than 3 (>3). While the mean value from this is 2.61, the standard deviation is 0.71 The values for the Median (2.5), and Mode (2.25) are as such. According to that, there was insufficient evidence to accept the null hypothesis of this factor, and therefore, the conclusion which states income as a barrier and challenge for recreation participation of university students was accepted.

H₃ = Social environment is considered a barrier and a challenge for university students' recreation participation.

In the factor of Social Environment, the mean and standard deviation were calculated according to the analysis of data for this factor. The resulting mean value is 2.45 and the standard deviation is 0.617. Median (2.5), mode. (2.0) are presented as such. Accordingly, there were insufficient evidence to accept

the null hypothesis of this study, and therefore, the conclusion was that social environment is a barrier and a challenge for university students' recreation participation.

H₄ = Facility is considered as a barrier and a challenge for university students' recreation participation.

The mean and standard deviations obtained by analyzing the data for the factor of facility shows the mean as 2.56 which is less than 3 (>3), the standard deviation is 0.789. There also Median (2.5), mode (2) is as such. Accordingly, there were insufficient evidence to accept the null hypothesis of this factor, and therefore, the conclusion was that Facility is a barrier and a challenge for university students' recreation participation.

H₅ = Gender has significant influenced as barrier or challenge for participating in recreation.

The mean and standard deviations obtained by analyzing the data for the factor of gender shows the mean as 2.45 which is less than 3 (>3), the standard deviation is 0.703. Median (2.25), mode (2) is as such. Accordingly, there were insufficient evidence to accept the null hypothesis of this factor, and therefore, the conclusion was that Gender is as a barrier or challenge for the participation in recreation.

Looking at all the above hypotheses, it appears that the mean value, median and mode are less than 3 (>3). Therefore, as mentioned in Table 4, due to the fact of there being no interactor correlations above 0.95, all these hypotheses are acceptable. Therefore, correlation co-efficiency was of a Significant level of $p < 0.01$, *. $p < 0.05$ to indicate the discriminant validity.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to explore the barriers and challenges that affect the participation of university students in recreation. The results presented in this study reveal that socio-economic factors influence on university students' recreation participation. Current study has identified several factors (time, income, social environmental, facilities, and genders) through the literature review which influence on the recreation participation of the general public. Present study focuses its attention on how those factors influence on the recreation participation of university students. The data analysis confirms the aforementioned factors as barriers and challenges faced by university students when they intend to participate in recreation. Various researchers have revealed that participation in events such as recreation is now at a global risk due to the world pandemic (Abdelrahman, 2020; McCloskey *et al.*, 2020; Su *et al.*, 2020) [1, 10, 17].

University students perceive time as a barrier for the participation in recreational activities. Scott and Ph (1998) [15] has pointed out that people find it difficult to allocate time for recreational participation as a result of their day-to-day work load. Supporting to current study results Mthethwa (2017) [11] has revealed that it is the university students who face time as a major barrier for the participation in recreation as they have to allocate plenty of time for their educational and extra-curricular activities in order to fulfill their degree programs. Robin (1991) has further pointed out in his research, that as people have a lot of work to be done and daily essentialities to be fulfilled they have no time to allocate for recreation. As per the findings of the current study and previous researches it can be seen that the busy schedules of people avoid them from participating in recreation. Therefore, university authorities should be more concerned in providing necessary environments for the students to engage in recreation as leisure is essential to maintain the wellbeing of people.

According to the current study, income level of the university students is perceived as a barrier or challenge for their recreation participation. The findings show that the family income level of university students directly influences on their recreation participation because most of the students depend on their parents' income, therefore, most of students do not receive extra money to be spent on leisure time activities. The main reason for the above mentioned barrier is the low monthly income of the family which is not sufficient enough to fulfill the daily needs of the family itself. The Outdoor Foundation (2017) ^[18] has revealed similar findings regarding the relationship between recreation and income. It was pointed out that the annual income level of an individual influences on their level of recreation participation, people who have a higher income level show higher level of recreation participation than people who receive a low income annually. Mthethwa (2017) ^[11] has argued that university students spend a considerable amount of money for their education which is covered by their parents. So when there is more than one child in the family, parents find it difficult to provide them with money to fulfill all their needs. The present study confirms that the financial situation of university students influences on their level of recreation participation. Social environment is a significant factor which affects the recreation participation. Religion, ethnicity and family are some key factors which are considered by the society when participating in recreation. The outdoor Foundation (2017) ^[18] has revealed that nationality and ethnicity heavily influence on the recreation participation. Religion is a key factor which heavily influences on the recreation participation of women (Sprinter Group, 2017) ^[16]. The current study reveals that university students perceive social environment as a barrier for the participation in recreation. Furthermore, the current study has found out that the lack of resources too act as a barrier in recreation participation. This means that the universities do not provide necessary facilities to participate in recreational events. Koloba and Surujlal (2014) ^[9] too has identified that lack of required recreational facilities discourage young adults from participating in recreation. Further, similar findings presented by Swedish (2014) in his study illustrate that young adults are not motivated to participate recreational activities due to the dissatisfaction with facilities provided. As recreation is needed for the wellbeing of a person's life, the relevant authorities should take necessary measures to uplift the facilities provided upto the needs and wants of the people. Gender is an ideological concept in society. Researchers and practitioners always conduct research on gender equity and rights. Current study considers gender as a barrier for the university community for recreation participation. The findings have confirmed that gender is barrier for participation in recreation activities. Gender acts as a barrier for recreation participation especially for the female students. Sprinter Research Group (2017) ^[16] has further revealed that women participation in recreation is lower than that of men in a global scale. The main reason for women to participate less in recreation is due to the absence of activities which suit their taste. In addition, social environment too affects the recreation participation of women. Among the social environmental barriers, lack of funds, identity they hold as women, lack of time, uncertainty in decision making, inability to judge, sensitivity are some of the reasons as to why women do not participate in recreation (Sprinter Research Group, 2017) ^[16]. Present study reveals that female students participate less in recreational activities and that both male and female perceive gender as barrier in the participation in recreation.

Conclusion

Recreation is an important thing for human life. It is needed to maintain the psychological and physical wellbeing of a person. Recreation has both direct and indirect impacts on the human society in terms of economy, health and social relation. Present study has investigated the barriers and challengers which influence the university students' recreation participation. It has been found out that there is a significant decrease in the rate of participation in recreational activities among university students. Empirical evidence reveals that lack of time, low-income, low social facilities and gender have negatively impacted the university students' recreation participation. University students should be given more opportunities to participate in recreational activities as it helps in improving one's psychological, physical and social wellbeing. Therefore, since recreation improves the wellbeing of university students, the governing bodies should open up more recreational opportunities by considering the barriers and challenges.

Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

The current research investigates the barriers and challenges which influence on the recreation participation of university students. The study was limited to university students and the sample was selected only from the university of Kelaniya. The future researchers can conduct the same research by covering all the universities in Sri Lanka or by using a different socio-cultural context. The present study is limited to the quantitative research technique and responses of the recipients are limited to close ended questionnaires. Therefore, future studies can conduct research to understand barriers and challenges of recreation participation by using the qualitative research technique. Qualitative research can help to get a deeper understanding of the barriers and challengers that influence recreation participation. Finally, same context of the research can be conducted in different contexts by using different factors that will help to generalize the findings of current research.

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