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Sport, Leisure and Recreation Preferences among Older Persons in Lusaka Urban District: Implications for Adult Education Programmes

By

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Abstract

Population ageing is a global phenomenon which comes with prospects and challenges for countries, communities, families and individuals. This study sought to explore sport, leisure and recreation preferences among older persons (60 years and above) in Lusaka district. The study was guided by activity and continuity theories of ageing. A descriptive research design which was predominantly qualitative was adopted. The sample consisted of 15 purposively selected aged persons in Lusaka urban district. Data was collected using an interview guide. The data was analysed thematically and results presented in descriptions and narrations. Verbatims which were considered relevant to the findings were also included for illustration. The study revealed that older persons in Lusaka district took part in walking, jogging, playing traditional games such as *nsolo*, gardening, reading the bible, newspapers and books and watching football. It also indicated that some older persons did not participate in sport, leisure and recreation due to a number of reasons which included distance to facilities and amenities, lack of resources, absence of facilities, ill-health and a generally negative attitude towards physical and related activities on account of age. The study also revealed that older persons had preferred sport, leisure and recreation activities in mind but which were not readily available to them. They included swimming, badminton, table tennis, golf, bowling, game viewing and age-friendly gymnastic activities. Implications for adult education programmes are that policy makers, adult education professionals and other stakeholders should strive to improve the quality of older people's lives by promoting wellness through appropriate and age-friendly sport, leisure and recreation activities. The study recommended that relevant sport, leisure and recreation facilities and amenities should be provided to older persons in contexts where they could easily access them. It also recommended that sensitisation and awareness campaigns, through adult education programmes, should be undertaken on the importance and benefits of sport, leisure and recreation activities for older persons.

Key words: Sport, leisure, recreation, preferences, older persons, implications, adult education programmes

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Introduction

The global population is ageing and Zambia is not an exception (Mapoma, 2013). Population ageing comes with prospects and challenges for countries, communities, families and individuals. It has implications for nearly all sectors of society, including labour and financial markets, the demand for services such as housing, medical services, transportation, care, social protection, family structures as well as physical activity, sport, leisure and recreation.

As the world's population shifts demographically, more and more people survive to older age. Increasing life expectancy and higher expectations of a good quality of life in old age highlight the importance of maintaining an active life style in later life (Agahi, 2008). Being active throughout the majority of one's lifetime has an important influence on overall health and well-being. Physical activity is one of the ways to keep active. The widely known definition of physical activity is that it is any bodily movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscle that increases energy expenditure above a basal level. Physical activity has been found to check many long-lasting health problems as well as to promote mental health and well-being. Lower mortality rates occur among those who become physically active late in life as compared to those who were active in early life and stopped exercising (Singh & Kuran, 2014). Staying active in life also entails participation in sport, leisure and recreation activities.

Leisure activities are considered part of a healthy life style and many advocates of late-life leisure participation propose that there are health benefits to be gained (Agahi, 2008). The reduction of senile disability, while contributing to the independence in old age, clearly affects the quality of life as does satisfaction in participation in social and professional life or in favourite leisure activities. An example of such an activity, both for the individual or for the collective, may be found in physical recreation, specifically in health training, which can lead to the highest level of sophistication in this area of activity-recreational sports (Nowak, 2014). Therefore, the importance of leisure activities in the lives of older persons cannot be overemphasised.

Furthermore, recreation plays a key role in the well-being of older adults and in enhancing their quality of life. For seniors, as for people of all ages, involvement in recreation activities can satisfy a variety of needs. Among the important benefits of recreation for the senior population is increased health and fitness, as well as opportunities for socialising, for using skills and talents developed throughout their lifetime and for learning new skills. It is important to point out that the senior population is quite varied with a diversity of interests, strengths, and abilities. Some seniors have enjoyed a positive use of recreation throughout their lives and are able to find appropriate activities to suit their changing physical abilities and interests. Other seniors, however, may not be aware of the potential positive values of recreation (Singh & Kuran, 2014), hence the need for awareness programmes.

In Zambia the significance of physical activity, sport and recreation is acknowledged even by the highest office; that of the presidency. For example, on 5 July, 2019 the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Higher Education sent a circular to Vice-Chancellors and

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Directors of the seven public universities in the country on the significance of physical activity and sport by way of policy direction. The circular read:

The Ministry is in receipt of a minute from the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development in which we are being requested to create platforms that can be used by employees to participate in physical activities and sport regularly. As you may be aware, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, has been spearheading morning runs and exercises at various venues every Saturday of the week to promote health and fitness among Zambians. This is in line with the National Sports policy that advocates for mass participation of citizens in physical activity and for health and fitness thereby contributing to reduced non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, cancer and diabetes. The policy further promotes physical activity and sport as a unifying factor and contributor to national development. In view of the foregoing, you are being requested to designate the last Saturday of every month for students and all members of staff of your respective institutions to participate in physical activity and sport to improve their health, fitness and productivity.

Ghambari, Shahboulaghi, Mohammadi & Vahidi (2015) assert that leisure and recreation activities are common among the elderly but that the effect of such activities on their mental health is poorly defined and not underpinned by strong evidence. This is more so in developing countries like Zambia where studies on ageing and specifically physical activity, sport, leisure and recreation are still in their infancy. This study, therefore, sought to explore sport, leisure and recreation preferences among older persons in Lusaka district. The study adopted the United Nations definition of an older person as one who is aged 60 years or over (HelpAge International, 2012). This definition is also in line with the Zambian National Ageing Policy (2015) which defines an aged person as a male or female who is 60 years and older. Furthermore, the terms older persons, the aged, the elderly, elderly persons, older adults and senior citizens were taken to mean the same thing and, therefore, used interchangeably in this study

Statement of the Problem

Keeping active through participation in sport, leisure and recreation activities is important to the wellbeing of older persons. There is growing evidence to suggest that there is a potential risk threshold for health, related to the degree of activity or inactivity (González, Fuentes & Márquez 2017). There is a general belief that older persons are less active and hardly participate in sport, leisure and recreation activities compared to other age groups due to a number of factors. However, literature has indicated that these activities are as significant to older persons as they are to younger people. There was no known study undertaken to establish preferences and participation in sport, leisure and recreation activities by older persons in Lusaka district, hence the relevance and significance of this study.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by activity and continuity theories of ageing. Activity theory proposes that successful ageing occurs when older adults stay active and maintain social interactions. The theory assumes that there is a positive relationship between activity and life satisfaction (Edwards, 2011). Therefore, successful ageing is highly dependent upon maintaining a high

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level of activity. The theory further states that the more activity the aged are engaged in, the more satisfied they are likely to be with life and that what is natural and normal for most ageing individuals is to remain active at levels of activity similar to those they experienced in middle-age for as long as possible (Blackburn & Dulmus, 2007). Activity in this context includes physical activity, sport, leisure and recreation.

Activity theory is particularly central to this study because it emphasises the importance of activity in the lives of the older persons, implying that it promotes healthy and active ageing. Evidence shows that those who maintain their middle life age activities live a more satisfying life (Namakando, 2004). Therefore, older persons do not only need basic necessities of life such as food, shelter and clothing, but also other services and activities such as games, physical exercises, leisure and recreation. This is because in activity theory perspective, there is an assumption that activity is vital to well-being. Emphasis is placed on the importance of older people being dynamic and active participants in the world around them (Wadensten, 2006). Idling and inactivity, are therefore, discouraged by the theory.

Continuity theory, on the other hand, proposes that in making adaptive choices middle-aged and older adults attempt to preserve and maintain existing psychological and social patterns by applying familiar knowledge, skills and strategies (Kelly, 1993). The theory suggests that maturing persons will develop certain habits, preferences and commitments that become part of their personalities. Therefore, when an individual grows older, there will be continuity of that personality. Continuity theory emphasises that the foundation of earlier life experiences such as skills, personality traits and dispositions, creates a repertoire of coping strategies that older individuals can call on to adapt to age-related changing circumstances (Blackburn and Dulmus, 2007). The basic premise of continuity theory is that each individual develops a personality over the course of a lifetime that is a stable feature of their individuality, which affects how they react to events. This implies that individuals attempt to maintain personality continuity as they age (John, 1984). It also implies that the self or personality of an individual basically remains consistent despite life changes.

Continuity theory explains how people adapt to their own ageing. It posits that the elderly people try to preserve and maintain internal and external structures by using strategies that maintain in this way the continuity. In later life, adults tend to use continuity as an adaptive strategy to deal with changes that occur during normal ageing (Drăghia, 2009). This theory is relevant to this study as it reminds us that even as adults face life changes, they still maintain their basic inclinations, interests and aspirations, which in this case, may be sport, leisure and recreation activities. They may not completely abandon these inclinations, interests and aspirations, but possibly modify or replace them with fairly similar activities in line with changing circumstances such as health, physical ability and availability or unavailability of amenities, implying some kind of continuity.

Literature Review

The literature for the study was reviewed under the following themes: physical activity, sport, leisure and recreation for older persons, how older persons could benefit from sport, leisure recreation activities and factors influencing the participation of older persons in sport, leisure and recreation activities.

Physical activity, sport, leisure and recreation for older persons

Physical activity on a daily basis is important for the health and wellbeing of older people. Engaging in regular physical activity is known to provide numerous health benefits, including reducing the risk of chronic disease and disability, improving mental health, promoting social

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contact and prolonging independent living (Smith, de Lacy-Vawdon, Schwarzman & Klein, 2016). Physical activity is a wide-ranging term that comprises a variety of activities which include sports. Recreation activities for seniors also provide long term advantages. Higher fitness levels, improved health and social interactions are some of the benefits of indulging in fun activities. They are therapeutic refreshment for both the mind and body (Singh & Kuran, 2014). Older persons who participate in these activities are, therefore, more likely to have some health advantages over those who do not.

According to Singh & Kuran (2014), one of the best ways of living a long and healthy life is through physical exercise which they say comes in many ways and forms such as walking, housework, gardening and going to shops to buy milk or newspapers. They explain that regular physical activity helps reduce the effects of ageing such as muscle strength, balance, limited mobility and flexibility and that it reduces the risk of osteoporosis and heart problems, as well as keeping older adults in a happy and healthy frame of mind. Singh & Kuran add that one-way older adults are beating the stereotyped "old" image is through remaining socially and physically active.

Novak (2014) states that in Poland a dynamic growth of the number of open sports and recreation events is observed, especially running events and that there are also sports events promoting cross-country skiing, Nordic walking, cycling, swimming and triathlon. Novak explains that these types of events promote and encourage participation by older persons who are motivated by awards for covering a distance (e.g. a commemorative medal, diploma, certificate), awards (e.g. trophies and financial awards) for taking first three places in age category and are often exempt from paying entry fees. Singh & Kuran (2014:24) also postulate that outdoor recreational physical activity, defined as "to be outside in natural or cultural landscapes for well-being and encounters with nature without demands for competition" has been shown to be particularly good for promoting well-being among older persons. They add that physical activity performed outdoors in original settings has been found to have restorative effects on people's health and reduce mental fatigue.

Novak & Vute (2013) indicate that in 2006 a study of leisure time activities of women aged over 65 was carried out in the Kamnik and Domžale of Slovenia. The aim of the study was to determine the preferences of activities of women over sixty-five years of age and to highlight the possibilities of including these women into various social and recreational activities in the local environment. Twenty-six women from Kamnik and six women from Domžale, aged 69.68 yearson average, were included in the study. The study was repeated in 2011. It established that 20 women from the same group still actively participated in the activities four years later, and aged 74.35 years on average, implying continuity. The study revealed that the participants dedicated most of their leisure time to gardening, watching television, reading and meeting relatives and friends. Regarding sports activities, most of the women focused on hiking and going for walks, cycling, mountaineering, swimming, dancing, sleighing, alpine skiing, doing exercises at home and general exercising.

A study by Chen & Fu (2008) titled 'Leisure participation and enjoyment among the elderly: individual characteristics and sociability' established that the most common leisure activity older Taiwanese adults aged 60 years and over engaged in was watching TV/DVDs/videos, with over 80% of them doing it every day. It further established that nearly half of older Taiwanese adults also engaged in physical activities daily. In contrast, only 7% of them read books, and 6.5% socialized with friends daily. The study also revealed that among these four types of leisure activities, however, the nationally representative survey data showed that older Taiwanese adults enjoyed socializing with friends most, followed by engaging in physical activities, watching TV/DVDs/videos and reading books.

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Singh & Kuran (2014) describe a number of recreation activities which they believe are ideal for older persons. The first is walking, which they say is one of the most common exercises for older persons. They assert that it is enjoyable and a social activity that can also be carried on with friends and family members. They add that it helps to reduce depression and lower down the stress, thus maintaining emotional well-being whether one has company or not. They assert that it is perhaps the best form of physical exercise for all age groups. The second activity is bird watching, which they say is a great activity for people who love nature but cannot go for nature walks in the fields or forests because of physical problems or deformities, lack of transport, companions or any other practical problem. The third activity that they suggest is photography. They explain that with the use of a digital camera, older persons could capture whatever is interesting in the environment and nature.

The fourth activity suggested by Singh & Kuran (2014:27) is gardening which they describe as a nice leisure activity for older adults as it helps them to connect with nature. They explain that what is needed is just a small patch of land or a plot that will keep the elderly occupied, or a few pots that can be kept in the balcony or just outside the house. They can also grow vegetables and create a beautiful garden. The fifth activity is sport. Singh & Kuran state that if physical health and doctor permit, sport is a very good physical exercise and recreational activity; be it swimming, badminton, tennis, golf or any other which may be interesting to older adults. They further state that it is also an excellent way to meet other people socially. According to Singh & Kuran exercise is another activity suggested by doctors and health practitioners for all age groups and that senior citizens are not different. They explain that different forms of exercise are now being practiced which are a great form of relaxation apart from helping physical and mental fitness. Cooke (nd.) asserts that the human body responds to exercise, no matter what its age is and that there is a range of physical, psychological and social benefits from it.

The other activity that is suggested for older persons by Singh & Kuran (2014:27) is *Yoga* which they state is aimed at achieving the union with supreme consciousness but helps to achieve physical as well as mental fitness. The other activity is *Tai-Chi*. Singh & Kuran assert that *Tai-Chi* is a Chinese martial art that is getting a lot of recognition, especially for older adults because of its 'soft skills' and health and longevity benefits. They explain that it has long movements, which flow in a slow and graceful manner and that each posture flows into the next without any pause, and just like *Yoga*, is very beneficial for various diseases like osteoporosis, diabetes and arthritis.

Findings of a study by Nova & Vute (2013) titled 'Spending leisure time and activities in the third period of life' showed that spending of leisure time and participation in sports and recreation activities among the female population aged over 65 years were related to the rhythm of activities in the domestic environment. These were dictated by the environment in which they lived, self-motivation and a desire to participate in particular leisure time, sports and recreational activities. Singh & Kuran (2014) advise that it is important to explore the creative side of senior citizens. They explain that since older adults have an inclination towards a particular activity or hobby like photography or dancing, they should be given a boost and motivation to nurture their talents. They add that it is important to keep older persons engaged in various activities for emotional, physical and spiritual well-being. They point out that elderly men and women often need recreational activities to stay better in mental and physical health. Singh & Kuran further point out that there are various recreational activities available to elderly women and men to suit almost any interest. They, however, caution that before starting any physical recreation, elderly women and men should consult a doctor to determine how much activity is appropriate for them.

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How Older Persons Could Benefit from Sport, Leisure Recreation Activities

Ensuring access to activities that can benefit social health is of great importance to older adults. As sport can provide participation opportunities across generations, it can be an ideal physical activity option for this age group (Jenkin, Eime, Westerbeek & van Uffelen, 2018). Encouraging older adults to participation in active leisure and recreation activities would be an effective intervention in mental health improvement. On the other hand, understanding of relationship between type of leisure activities and mental health provides evidence for policy makers and health care planners to offer and facilitate a context in which older adults can improve participation in active leisure and recreation activities (Ghambari, Shahboulaghi, Mohammadi, & Vahidi, 2015). Therefore, policy makers and stakeholders have a crucial role to play in elevating these activities for the interest and benefit of older persons.

Older persons can derive a variety of general health benefits, particularly social health, from playing community club-based sport. Social health is hugely important for older adults, especially for those who are retired and/or living alone. The social health benefits of participating in sport for older adults extend beyond connections with their age cohorts, to younger club participants, particularly their families (Jenkin, Eime, Westerbeek & van Uffelen, 2018). Novak (2014) asserts that active participation of the elderly in physical culture will change due to ongoing commercialisation of the life and culture. He explains that owing to this commercialization, there is both a chance not only to promote health and spread health culture among the elderly, but also to develop healthy attitudes towards physical activity; sports activities in particular. Novak adds that elderly sports are a chance to extend life in full fitness and hence, a chance for a higher quality of life.

Jenkin, Eime, Westerbeek & van Uffelen (2018) posit that as national sport policies generally prioritise participation for younger people and do not specifically address older adults, there is currently a void in specific age-appropriate opportunities for older adults to participate in most sports. They add that a connected point is that society in general perceives sport as a leisure-time physical activity for young people. They explain that many older adults do not see all sports as a viable physical activity option for them. Jenkin, Eime, Westerbeek & van Uffelen, therefore, recommend that sport policy should include a focus on older adults and that sporting opportunities should be developed accordingly. They observe that the promotion of sport as a viable leisure-time physical activity option for older adults may assist in maintaining or improving the health of older adults, particularly their social health.

Old age is a challenge not only for ageing people, but also for the institutions dealing with the elderly. It is also a chance to develop new services and sports and recreation products. The organizers of leisure for the elderly should create an atmosphere for a healthy lifestyle and not a sport competition (Novak, 2014). Additionally, Cooke *et al.* (nd.) posit that there is a wealth of evidence to suggest that it is never too late to become engaged in physical activity and yet for many older people this is something of a challenge.

Factors Influencing the Participation of Older Persons in Sports, Leisure and Recreation Activities

Older people have traditionally had a low uptake of leisure facilities and services and low levels of involvement in physical activity and sport (Cooke *et al.*, nd.). There are many factors influencing whether older people engage in physical activity, sport or recreation. These include the availability and accessibility of opportunities, the appropriateness of activities and the allocation of community and organisational resources. Personal and social factors can also play a role (Smith, de Lacy-Vawdon, Schwarzman & Klein, 2016). Crombie *et al.* (2004)

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assert that regular physical activity has been shown to have many health benefits, but that many older people are physically inactive.

Mohammadi & Etemadzadeh (2016) undertook a study whose purpose was to discuss the challenges and solutions regarding elderly sports in the Western province of Iran. The study population was 750,000 comprising men and women aged over 60 years in 2015, out of which a sample of 2,540 respondents was selected using a Morgan Table. The sampling method was Accessible Method and a questionnaire containing 30 items in the 5 item Likert Scale was used to collect data. The results of the study indicated that lack of sufficient recreational and sports facilities, low levels of education, low levels of income, physical weakness, cultural factors, psychological characteristics, family and proper education played a significant role in the enjoyment of sports and leisure. The study recommended establishment of sports and recreational facilities for the development of elderly sports in the Western province of Iran.

Furthermore, a study by Nimrod & Shrira (2016) titled ‘The paradox of leisure in later life’ sought to explore whether the association between leisure involvement and well-being in later life changes over time. The study indicated that the association between leisure and quality of life increased with time, as non-active respondents displayed a decline in quality of life over time, whereas those with high levels of leisure involvement showed an increase. The study clarified that the findings remained significant after controlling for socio-demographics, health, and cognitive functioning. The study concluded that the significance of leisure to well-being increases throughout the later life course, and that leisure may act as a resource for resilience in old age. They, however, also pointed out a paradoxical situation in which older seniors, who may benefit from leisure involvement more than their younger peers, are precisely the ones who face the greater number of constraints to beneficial use of leisure.

Crombie *et al.* (2004) undertook a study titled ‘Why older people do not participate in leisure time physical activity’ in Dundee, Scotland. The results indicated that levels of knowledge about the specific health benefits of physical activity were high. Almost all participants (95%) believed that physical activity was beneficial and 79% believed that they did enough to keep healthy. However, 36% did not participate in leisure time physical activity and a further 17% did less than 2 hours per week. Regression modelling identified 11 factors that exerted significant independent effects on levels of leisure time physical activity. The most powerful deterrent was lack of interest (OR=7.8). Other factors included lack of daily access to a car, shortness of breath, joint pain, dislike of going out alone or in the evening, perceived lack of fitness, lack of energy, doubting that exercise can lengthen life, not belonging to a group and doubting that meeting new people is beneficial. The study concluded that increasing leisure time physical activities poses major challenges and that beliefs about desirable levels of activity in older people would need to be changed.

A study by Changala, Mbozi & Moonga (2018) revealed that the aged in old people’s homes in Zambia needed physical activity and sport to keep them busy and healthy and to overcome boredom and idleness. The study concluded that despite the benefits associated with physical activity and sport to older persons, there was little or no effort made to provide these in old people’s homes in Zambia. The study recommended that relevant physical activity and sport should be provided to the aged in all old people’s homes in the country. The same recommendation is applicable to non-institutionalised older persons in the country.

According to Cooke *et al.* (nd.) older people believe that exercise is no longer appropriate for them. They highlight some common barriers that prevent older people from participating in physical activity. These are presented in the table below:

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Table 1: Barriers to Physical Activity for Older People

At an individual level	Lack of interest/confidence Myths and perceptions Embarrassment Cost Transport Fear	Loneliness Previous experiences Family advice/commitment Gender influence Time restraints Cultural beliefs
At a community level	Attitudes Community safety Transport	Social support Expertise Cost
At a sports/Leisure organisational level	Lack of facilities/tutors Attitude Priority Expertise Apathy	Safety concerns Sport and recreation policy Access/location Social support Cost
At a statutory level	Priority Cost Attitude	

Source: Cooke *et al.* (nd.)

Methodology

A descriptive research design which was predominantly qualitative was adopted. The study population comprised all the aged in Lusaka urban district. The sample consisted of 15 purposively selected aged persons broken down as follows: 1 bricklayer, 1 carpenter, 1 Shoe repairer, 3 university lecturers, 1 church bishop, 1 voluntary community worker, 2 retired teachers, 2 retired social workers and 3 marketeers. Nine of the respondents were males while 6 were females. The youngest was 60 years old while the oldest was 79 years old. Data was collected using an interview guide. The data was analysed thematically and results presented in descriptions and narrations. Verbatims which were considered relevant to the findings were also included for illustration.

Findings and Discussion

There were four major findings of this study. They are presented under the following themes: Sport, leisure and recreation activities older persons participated in, reasons why older persons did not participate in sport, leisure and recreation activities and sport, leisure and recreation activities older persons wished to participate in.

Sports, Leisure and Recreation Activities Older Persons Participated in

The study revealed that older persons in Lusaka urban district participated in a number of sports, leisure and recreation activities. The most significant activity that majority (9) of older persons were engaged in was walking. They indicated that that walking was an important physical activity because it was almost ‘natural’ and ‘effortless’. Respondent number 9 (76-year-old male) said: “I like walking around in the community in the evening to keep fit.”

Additionally, respondent 5 (65-year-old male) stated:

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I do not do any sports but I walk long distances from home to my office where I do voluntary community work. I walk for two hours every day and in the process, I keep my body active.

The finding is consistent with Singh & Kuran (2014) who posit that walking is one of the most common exercises for older persons and that it is enjoyable and a social activity that can also be carried on with friends and family members. They add that it helps to reduce depression and lower down the stress, thus maintaining emotional well-being whether one has company or not. They assert that it is perhaps the best form of physical exercise for all age groups. The finding is also in line with activity theory which proposes that successful ageing occurs when older persons stay active and maintain social interactions as much as possible. The second activity that older persons stated that they engaged in was jogging. Three of the respondents indicated that they were able to go for jogging sessions, especially in the mornings and evenings as a way of stretching their muscles and exercising their bodies. Respondent 3 (62-year-old male) asserted:

At my age it is very difficult to find what to do in terms of sport. Leisure and recreation are a lot easier as long as the facilities and amenities are available. However, a colleague of mine and I do some jogging in the nearby grounds once in a while to shake our bodies a bit and feel healthier and younger.

Novak (2014) points out that in Poland a dynamic growth of the number of open sports and recreation events is observed, especially running events. He adds that there are also sports events promoting cross-country skiing, Nordic walking, cycling and swimming. This implies that sporting and recreation activities for older persons in Poland are well planned, structured and organised to encourage as many older persons as possible to participate in them, to be in company of peers and socialise with them. This, however, is was not the case for older persons in Lusaka district who only made personal efforts to keep active with no inbuilt incentives for them to do so. Their engagement in sport, leisure and physical activities was mostly spontaneous.

The other activities that older persons indicated that they participated in included playing traditional games such as *nsolo*, gardening, drinking beer, reading the bible, newspapers and books, dancing and watching football (activity theory). Three respondents stated that they played *nsolo* in their spare time. *Nsolo* is a mathematical game sometimes likened to chess. Carved wooden *nsolo* sets are sold in markets but in most cases, holes are dug in the ground or created on a concrete slab. Small stones, nuts or seeds are used as play pieces. There are four rows, with opposing teams sitting opposite each other manning two rows each. Respondent 9 (70-year-old male) said:

I enjoy playing *nsolo* because it is very easy to play but also stimulates the mind. It promotes competition but also cooperation and discipline among players. It is mostly a mental game which does not require strenuous physical movement; good for people of my age.

Respondent 2 (60-year-old male) stated:

I do manual work in the garden. I also slash grass when it overgrows in the house yard and water flowers.

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Furthermore, respondent 3 (62-year-old female) said:

“I like reading newspapers, books and novels during my free time”, while respondent 14 (66-year-old female) lamented:

I rarely have free time but I read the bible. My husband has had a stroke, so most of the time I am nursing him, leaving me with very little time for anything else.

The above findings are in agreement with Singh & Kuran (2014) who state that one of the best ways of living a long and healthy life is through physical exercise which they say comes in many ways and forms such as walking, housework, gardening and going to shops to buy milk or newspapers. They explain that regular physical activity helps reduce the effects of ageing such as muscle strength, balance, limited mobility and flexibility and that it reduces the risk of osteoporosis and heart problems, as well as keeping older adults in a happy and healthy frame of mind. The findings are also consistent with activity theory which advocates an active life for older persons. The significance of sport, leisure and recreation in improving the lives of older persons can, therefore, not be overemphasized.

Reasons Why Older Persons did not Participate in Sports, Leisure and Recreation Activities

The study further sought to establish reasons why some (3) older persons did not participate in sport, leisure and recreation facilities. The study revealed that among the reasons advanced were distance to facilities and amenities, lack of resources absence of facilities and amenities, ill-health a generally negative attitude towards physical, leisure and recreation activities on account of age. For example, respondent 12 (67-year-old male) stated:

I do not belong to any club now but I used to belong to Chilanga golf club in the past; that was before I retired. Now because of distance and lack of resources I no longer go there. I am, therefore, quite inactive.

Respondent 4 (60-year-old male) asserted:

I don't engage in any sporting activities because we do not have any sports or recreation centre nearby. Where I grew up in Kitwe, we had sports and recreation centres, under ZCCM, in nearly all compounds. I used to do some weight lifting and other exercises.

Additionally, respondent 8 (74-year-old female) stated:

No, this time I just sit and watch sport and games on television. And I guess I would not have time anymore to participate in sporting activities. I don't see anything good in participating in any physical activities such as sports at my age because I may fall down. As you can see, my legs are quite weak.

Findings reveal that older persons in Lusaka urban district faced some barriers and challenges in their bid to participate in sport, leisure and recreation activities. Little, if any, investment has been made by relevant authorities in sports, leisure and recreation facilities for an average older person. Jenkin, Eime, Westerbeek & van Uffelen (2018) posit that as national sport

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policies generally prioritise participation for younger people and do not specifically address older adults, there is currently a void in specific age-appropriate opportunities for older adults to participate in most physical activities which include sport. This also seems to be the case in the Lusaka context.

Cooke *et al.* (nd.) point out barriers to physical activity for older people which they state are at three levels. The first is at individual level where factors such as lack of interest, lack of confidence, myths and perceptions, cost and cultural beliefs influence their participation. Coole *et al.* assert, for example, that older people believe that exercise is no longer necessary or appropriate for them. The second is at community level where factors such as attitude, safety, social support and expertise can affect the participation of older people in physical and leisure activities. The third is at sport/leisure organisational level where factors such as lack of facilities, attitude, expertise, safety concerns, access or location, cost and social support can have an impact the participation of older person in physical and leisure activities. The forth is at statutory level where factors such as priority, cost and attitude could hinder the participation of older persons in physical and recreation facilities in their respective locations.

Sports, Leisure and Recreation Activities Older Persons Wished to Participate in

The study further sought to determine sport, leisure and recreation activity preferences among older persons. Therefore, the respondents were asked to indicate sport, leisure and recreation activities which they wished to participate in but which were not readily available to them. They included swimming, badminton, table tennis, golf, bowling and game viewing and age-friendly gymnastic activities. For example, respondent 5 (65-year-old female) said:

I love swimming so much. It is my favourite. Since I cannot take part in it, I just watch on TV sports channels and when there are major competitions such as Olympic Games and others.

Respondent 15 (61-year-old male) also stated:

I would love to take part in badminton and table tennis because they do not sap so much energy. At my age, I do not need strenuous activities.

Furthermore, respondent 7 (60-year-old male) asserted:

I would choose to play golf and bowling because I have always liked them. They would provide me with an opportunity to meet and interact with many old peers and discuss issues as well as reduce stress.

Respondent 7(61-year-old male) remarked:

I would like to do weight lifting because it is the one, I loved so much when I was young. It keeps muscles fit and helps burn some fat. For example, if I continued or if there was a gym nearby, I would be going there and you would not have found me with a pot belly.

In addition, Respondent 8 (74-year-old male) said:

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I would choose to go to game parks to view animals because I love animals. I don't have money to go there and we do not have any nearby place where I can view animals. It becomes difficult. That is why I take walks.

The above findings indicate that older persons, just like other age groups have sport, leisure and recreation preferences and aspirations. Therefore, if their preferences were to become a reality, they would possibly continue participating in them as much as they can and as circumstances such as health and related aspects permit. This is in line with continuity theory which posits maturing persons will develop certain habits, preferences and commitments that become part of their personalities and, therefore, when an individual grows older, there will be continuity of those attributes and inherent personality. A study by Changala, Mbozi & Moonga (2018) revealed that the aged in old people's homes in Zambia were denied physical activity and sport which contributed to their boredom and idleness most of the time.

Implications of Sports, Leisure and Recreation for Older Persons for Adult Education Programmes

Implications for adult education programmes are that policy makers, adult education professionals and other stakeholders should strive to improve the quality of older people's lives by promoting wellness through appropriate and age-friendly sport, leisure and recreation activities. Ghambari, Shahboulaghi, Mohammadi, & Vahidi (2015) assert that how often older adults participate in physical and leisure activities and how much they enjoy such activities vary widely by demographic, socioeconomic, and other individual characteristics. They propose that these characteristics should be fully considered by professionals and other service workers when they are devoted to improving the quality of older adults' later life experiences.

Like other age groups, older persons, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to basic necessities of life, such as food and nutrition, health care, clothing, entertainment, religious and spiritual support, counselling and education, among others. They are also entitled to participation and involvement in sport, leisure and recreation of their choice in order to stay engaged, active and healthy. It is, therefore, the duty of governments, agencies and stakeholders to ensure that all citizens, including older persons, have access to these services and activities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that sport, leisure and recreation activities are as important to older persons as they are to other age groups because they contribute to good health and wellbeing (activity theory). It also concluded that older persons in Lusaka urban district participated in a limited number of sports, leisure and recreation activities when compared to their counterparts in other parts of the world as highlighted by the literature review. The study further concluded that older persons wished to participate in sport, leisure and recreation activities that they had always liked or preferred (continuity theory), but these were not readily available to them due to the earlier highlighted factors.

The study recommended that relevant sport, leisure and recreation facilities should be provided to older persons in contexts where they could easily access them. It also recommended that sensitisation and awareness campaigns, through adult education programmes, should be undertaken on the importance and benefits of sport, leisure and recreation activities for older persons.

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