DETERMINANTS OF LEISURE-TIME PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION
AMONG AFRICAN STUDENTS ATTENDING A CANADIAN UNIVERSITY

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Oluwakayode Tosin Dasylva, candidate for the degree of Master of Science in Kinesiology & Health Studies, has presented a thesis titled, *Determinants of Leisure-Time Physical Activity Participation Among African Students Attending A Canadian University*, in an oral examination held on September 17, 2018. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

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Abstract

A recent report that examined university students across 23 countries found that 4 out of 10 students were physically inactive (Pengpid et al., 2015). Physical inactivity has been linked to certain types of preventable diseases (Myers et al., 2004). This study is an examination of the perceived factors influencing leisure-time physical activity (LTPA) among African students attending the University of Regina (U of R) to understand their experiences with and perceptions of LTPA. The study further explored how LTPA contributes to students’ wellness.

This research was guided by an interpretive inquiry approach because it examines in-depth the meanings and understanding people create of their personal experiences and perceptions (Gephart & Rynes, 2004). Seven students were recruited for the study and semi-structured interviews were conducted during data collection. The transcripts were analyzed by way of inductive analysis, the most common approach for qualitative studies (Thomas, 2006).

The results of the study provided insights into African students’ perceived benefits of LTPA and constraints to participation. This thesis sets out suggestions for improving or maintaining LTPA participation among the students. Finally, it contributes to the body of knowledge on the perceived constraints to physical activity and LTPA participation among international students and provides suggestions for further research.

Keywords: leisure-time physical activity, participation, motivation, constraints
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God, and to my wife, Wuraola, for her selfless love, sacrifices, constant support and encouragement she gave me all through this journey. Without her, this would not have been possible. I am extremely grateful.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. 1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ 2
DEDICATION .......................................................................................................................... 3
TABLE OF CONTENTS ........................................................................................................... 4
Chapter 1: Introduction ......................................................................................................... 7
  1.1 Overview ....................................................................................................................... 7
  1.2 Physical Activity and its Relevance in Society .............................................................. 7
  1.3 Who are International Students? .................................................................................. 11
  1.4 Purpose of the Study .................................................................................................... 12
  1.5 Objectives .................................................................................................................... 12
  1.7 Definitions of Terms ................................................................................................... 12
Chapter 2: Literature Review .................................................................................................. 15
  2.0 Overview ..................................................................................................................... 15
  2.1 Historical Overview of Leisure ..................................................................................... 15
      2.2.1 Work and leisure ..................................................................................................... 17
      2.2.2 Leisure types .......................................................................................................... 19
      2.2.2.1 Serious leisure ................................................................................................... 20
      2.2.2.2 Casual leisure ...................................................................................................... 22
      2.2.2.3 Project-based leisure .......................................................................................... 23
      2.2.3 Leisure satisfaction ................................................................................................. 24
  2.3 Leisure-Time Physical Activity ...................................................................................... 26
      2.3.1 LTPA among young adults ...................................................................................... 26
      2.3.2 Benefits of LTPA .................................................................................................. 29
      2.3.3 Constraints to LTPA ............................................................................................... 30
      2.3.4 Physical inactivity and its implications .................................................................. 32
  2.4 Campus Recreation ...................................................................................................... 36
      2.4.1 Definition and overview of campus recreation ...................................................... 36
      2.4.2 Benefits of campus recreation .............................................................................. 38
      2.4.3 Constraints of Campus Recreation ....................................................................... 41
  2.5 International Students .................................................................................................. 42
      2.5.1 Overview of international students ....................................................................... 42
      2.5.2 Why students choose to study abroad .................................................................... 44
      2.5.3 Experiences of international students ..................................................................... 47
      2.5.4 Leisure and physical activity among international students .................................. 50
Chapter 3: Methodology ........................................................................................................ 53
  3.0 Introduction ................................................................................................................... 53
Chapter 5: Discussion ................................................................................................. 98

5.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................ 98

5.1. Examining Leisure Variations among the Participants ..................................... 98

5.2 Constraints to Leisure Time Physical Activity ................................................. 102

5.2.1 Interpersonal constraints. ............................................................................ 102

5.2.1.1 Lack of social support. ....................................................................... 103

5.2.2 Intrapersonal constraints. ............................................................................ 104

5.2.2.1 Lack of commitment. ............................................................................ 104

5.2.3 Structural constraints .................................................................................... 106

5.2.3.1 Weather conditions. .......................................................................... 107

5.2.3.2 Difficulty accessing facilities. ............................................................... 108

5.2.3.3 Unpleasant environment. .................................................................... 109

5.2.3.4 Time restriction. .................................................................................. 111

5.3 Facilitators of LTPA ......................................................................................... 113

5.3.1 Presence of social support. ....................................................................... 113

5.3.2 Dedication to LTPA. .................................................................................. 114

5.4 Reflexivity ........................................................................................................ 116

5.5 Practical Implications ....................................................................................... 117

5.6 Limitations and Implications for Future Research ........................................... 121

5.7 Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 123

References ............................................................................................................. 125

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INVITATION ............................................................... 158

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM .............................................. 161

APPENDIX C: ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE .......................................... 165

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE ..................................................................... 166

APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM .................................................. 169

APPENDIX F: RECRUITMENT POSTER .............................................................. 170
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

In a study conducted on 23 countries, 40% of university students were reported to be physically inactive (Pengpid et al., 2015). This qualitative study seeks to examine the leisure time physical activity (LTPA) experiences of African students attending the University of Regina (U of R), along with factors influencing their LTPA, and how it contributes to their wellness. Ways to improve their participation levels and enhance their wellness are recommended. In this introductory chapter, I discuss the relevance of physical activity in society. Furthermore, I examine the role of the public and private sectors in encouraging physical activity participation in order to promote wellness. I also highlight the purpose of the study, my research questions and objectives. Finally, key terms such as leisure, physical activity, leisure time physical activity (LTPA), and wellness are defined.

1.2 Physical Activity and its Relevance in Society

Various scholars have discussed the numerous benefits derived from physical activities (Castle, Alman, Kostelnik, & Smith, 2015; Haase, Steptoe, Sallis, & Wardle, 2004; Skowron, Stodolska, & Shinew, 2008). The public and the private sectors attempt to promote physical activities among people by investing in the health and fitness industry through various programs. These include funding recreational programs and enacting policies that are beneficial to all people involved in them (Government of Canada, 2013). One of the policies implemented was making physical activity compulsory in schools. Another example was the establishment of tax incentives in 2007 which allowed for reimbursement on costs for organized recreational programs.
(Tigerstrom, Larre, & Sauder, 2011). The Canadian government also invested $16 million in sport participation for children and youth in 2015 - 2016 to promote physical activities and encourage active sport participation among the youth and children (ParticipACTION, 2016). In addition to investing in the health industry, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), alongside other organizations, raised about $34 million towards increasing physical activity and healthy behaviours since 2013 (ParticipACTION, 2016). Also, between 2013 and 2014, about $7.2 million was disbursed for children and youth participation in sporting activities through programs such as ParticipACTION, Motivate Canada and Physical Health Education Canada (PHE Canada) (Government of Canada, 2017). These are examples of the many efforts of the public sector in promoting physical activity and wellness among children and youth.

The private sector is also involved in health promotion as they have built-in programs, as part of their business practices, to promote physical activity and wellness among children and youth. For example, Active Healthy Kids Canada (AHKC) was founded in 2004 to promote physical activity among children and youth (Gray et al., 2014). The GoodLife Kids Foundation (GLKF) is another program designed for children across Canada from ages five to 17 with the aim of supporting physical activity programs for children with special needs (GLKF, 2015). By 2015, the foundation successfully engaged over 240,000 Canadian children in physical activity (GLKF, 2015). In addition, private sector organizations are known to support health-related programs and disburse funds to create opportunities for children and youth to improve their physical activity participation. An example is the ‘Learn to Play’ project spearheaded by The Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) which awarded approximately $750,000 in support of physical activity
Another example is the ‘Wonder Cares Healthy Active Kids Grant’ program which was supported with the sum of $1.2 million to promote programs that will advance physical activity participation among children and youth (Leisure Information Network (LIN), n.d.). The ‘Canadian Tire Jumpstart program, which was supported with investment worth over $65 million for sports and physical activity promotion is an additional example (Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities (CTJC), 2013). These programs are specifically designed for children and youth to promote their participation in physical activities and enhance their wellness.

Some organizations within the private sector are known to promote and encourage physical activity across all ages. This can be seen with GoodLife Fitness, the largest fitness company in Canada and fifth largest in the world with over 350 fitness outlets and over a million members (Patchell-Evans, 2015). The organization’s primary aim, besides generating revenue for the company, is to promote active and healthy lifestyles among Canadians of all ages. According to the Fitness Industry Council of Canada (FICC), there are about 18 chains of fitness companies with the aim of promoting health and wellness across different age groups (Beer, 2011). These are the various contributions of organizations in the private sector in promoting physical activity across various age groups.

Post-secondary institutions are also advocates of active lifestyles among students and members of their community as they encourage engagement in campus recreation to improve health and overall wellness (Forrester, 2014). For example, the U of R Fitness and Lifestyle Centre offers various planned events and services aimed at developing wellness of both students and members of the university community (URegina, 2017).
Research indicates a moderate participation rate among postsecondary students as 20% take part in regular to moderate activities while 38% take part in intense activities (Kilpatrick, Hebert, & Bartholomew, 2005). Universities offer various recreation programs, ranging from personal training, intramural sports, aquatics, weight training, outdoor activities to wellness programs in order to improve students’ health and overall wellness (Forrester, 2014). Another way that universities encourage physical activity among students is the mandatory recreation and athletic fees included with tuition. This gives students unhindered access to the university’s recreation facilities and may encourage some students to get involved in physical activities (University of Northern Iowa, (UNI), n.d; URegina, 2016). Also, the fees are used to support the university’s intramural programs which are organized to promote wellness among the students and staff (UNI, n.d), and to generate revenue for the university to maintain the facilities (Denhart & Ridpath, 2011; University of Georgia (UGA), 2017).

However, Powell (2017) argued that the mandatory athletic fees and other education-related fees are means for universities to raise revenue for either academic or non-academic purposes. Furthermore, the mandatory athletic fee supports student athletic activities and subsidizes the cost of ticketed events such as intercollegiate sports (Denhart & Ridpath, 2011; UGA, 2017). Those with a strong inclination to be physically active are able to take advantage of the opportunity that the university’s recreation facilities afford them. Forrester (2014) showed that 62% of the participants’ choice of post-secondary institution was influenced by the recreation programs offered by those universities.
1.3 Who are International Students?

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) defines international students as foreign students who are temporarily residing in Canada with a valid study permit issued by the government (CIC, 2007). International students comprise a notable percentage of the student population across many universities around the world (Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao, & Lynch, 2007; Kwon, 2009). Canada is the seventh most desired destination among international students with nearly 50% from Asian countries, especially Japan, South Korea, and China (Kunin, 2009; Kunin, 2016). International students constitute a significant portion of the Canadian post-secondary student population; in 2015, there were about 353,000 international students across all levels of study (Canadian Bureau of International Education, (CBIE), 2016). The U of R is home to international students from several parts of the world (University Regina Economic Impact Study, (UREIS), 2017). In the 2015/16 academic year, 13.7% of students were international (UREIS, 2017).

While international students contribute to the growth of their host country, including economic development, cultural diversity, creation of jobs, and increase in tax revenue (Smith & Khawaja, 2011), they are faced with a number of challenges, such as acculturative stress (Berry, 2005; Cemalcilar & Falbo, 2008) and financial pressures (Bradley, 2000). Acculturative stress is the stress associated with either cultural or psychological change experienced as a result of the meeting of two or more cultures (Berry, 2005; Ward, 1997). This study investigates the challenges faced by international students in their leisure-time physical activity participation.
1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study examines the perceived factors influencing leisure-time physical activity (LTPA) among international students from Africa at the U of R, their experiences with LTPA and how LTPA contributes to the students’ wellness.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are African students’ experiences with LTPA?
2. What are the perceived constraints facing African students’ LTPA participation?
3. What are the health benefits of LTPA as perceived by African students attending the U of R?
4. What are the perceived ways of improving or maintaining LTPA participation among African students attending the U of R?

1.6 Objectives

As noted earlier, the primary objective of this qualitative study is to explore LTPA experiences of African students in order to improve their participation. The study also considers the health benefits of physical activity participation and the associated challenges as perceived by the research participants. The study will assist in promoting awareness of the importance of LTPA so as to improve wellness of young adults. Finally, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the perceived constraints to physical activity and LTPA participation among international students generally and provides suggestions for improving or maintaining participation.

1.7 Definitions of Terms
Scholars have defined leisure in a number of ways. For example, Dumazedier (1974) defined leisure as spare time that is free from work and other commitments, and characterized by a feeling of comparative freedom. Pieper (1952) argued that leisure is one of the foundations of western culture; central to the philosophical and theological conception of self. Voss (1967) stated that “leisure time is discretionary time, and leisure activities are a matter of individual judgments and undirected choices” (p. 101). Leisure was described by Kelly (2012) as the fulfillment obtained from involvement in voluntary activities. While this study uses Kelly’s (2012) definition, I note that leisure occurs when a voluntary activity is chosen based on the fulfillment obtained from doing it.

Physical activity was defined by Whaley and Kaminsky (2001) as the amount of energy spent as a result of the physical movement generated by skeletal muscles. Similarly, Zwiren (2001) defined physical activity as the skeletal movement resulting in an average rise in the amount of expended energy. From both definitions of physical activity, it can be deduced that it involves body movement which results in energy production.

Based on the previous definitions of leisure and physical activity, LTPA can be defined as activity requiring effort that is carried out during one’s free time (DeGrazia, 1962; Kelly, 2012; Kerner & Kurrant, 2003; Szalai, 1973; Veblen, 1953). These activities could be of moderate or vigorous intensity. Moderate intensity activities, such as walking and cycling, provide notable health benefits (WHO, 2017). Walking is an inexpensive and recurrent form of physical activity common among the adult population (Hardman & Morris, 1998). Dancing is another affordable form of physical activity that many people engage in (Akarolo-Anthony & Adebamowo, 2014). Vigorous activities
include cross-country, skiing, jogging, and swimming (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, (CSEP), 2012). Finally, wellness was defined as the deliberate effort through which an individual aims towards achieving an optimum state of health (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993).

The next chapter examines the historical perceptions in order to understand leisure experiences. Concepts and LTPA among young adults as well as benefits of and constraints to participation are examined. The literature review considers campus recreation, its benefits and constraints, and the reasons why international students choose to study abroad.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Overview

This chapter is a review of the history of leisure as well as underlying concepts that describe the attributes and perceptions of leisure. It also examines relevant literature on leisure-types as well as salient concepts that provide a better understanding of leisure time physical activity (LTPA). Furthermore, LTPA among young adults is examined, including its benefits and the constraints to participation. Campus recreation is also examined. Finally, the reasons why international students choose to study abroad are discussed. This chapter seeks to harmonize the existing knowledge and identify gaps in the literature. An understanding of the history of leisure, leisure-types, and relevant concepts will aid as a springboard for this study.

2.1 Historical Overview of Leisure

Various scholars have provided diverse perspectives on the history of leisure. While some believe that leisure can historically be traced to the Greek era which typified play as time spent outside work thus informing how people spent their free time (D’Angour, 2013), other scholars believe that leisure evolved over the years cutting across different generations (Edginton, Jordan, DeGraaf, & Edginton, 2002). From the perspective that leisure was derived from the concept of play, Holmes (2007) noted that the function of play emphasizes that leisure is not a passive occurrence but encourages active behaviour. He explained that children and play are interrelated, that is, they naturally co-exist. In fact, play and children have the same root word in ancient Greek as the word “play” is “paidia” while the word “children” is “paides” (p. 293). D’Angour (2013) observed that the interaction between adults and children contributed to the concept of intellectual play in the ancient Greek tradition and this influenced the manner
in which children grew into adulthood. For example, the upper class gathered during ceremonies to engage in play-like activities such as puzzles, singing, and playing string instruments. While this went on, respected musicians and philosophers engaged the children by sharing their wisdom with them - a form of intellectual play. People derived satisfaction from these forms of play.

For a better understanding of the history of leisure, it is important to examine several definitions and identify the gaps in relevant literature. The definition of leisure has generated some controversies among scholars as they all perceive leisure differently (Kelly, 2012). Thomson (1968) simply described leisure as that period in which work is completed and play begins. Kraus (2011) defined leisure as an activity that is free from labour or work with a focus on discretionary activities. To better understand Kraus’ (2011) perception of leisure, it is imperative to understand labour. Labour is a productive activity that requires effort or strength (Provis, 2009). Arguably, Kraus’ definition of leisure begs the question of whether leisure-time activity can truly be free from labour. For example, cycling during leisure time is a physical activity that involves exertion of energy but the effort required does not stop it from being a leisure activity. In essence, leisure activities sometimes require energy, yet participants are still able to derive satisfaction from them (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Basically, any activity that is voluntary and pleasurable fulfills the requirements of leisure (Kaplan, 1979). I agree with Kaplan’s opinion because the word ‘pleasure’ is relative; therefore, pleasure may differ from person to person. The underlying factor that must be present in every leisure activity is that such activity must be chosen freely and participants should derive fulfillment from it.
Szalai (1973) defined leisure as engaging in activities that have no connection with home maintenance or with employment. An example of home maintenance is grocery shopping. Interestingly, a number of scholars share Szalai’s belief as they record that grocery shopping does not provide an enabling environment for leisure, rather it restricts the enjoyment of leisure (Cockburn-Wootten, Pritchard, Morgan, & Jones, 2008). However, other scholars suggest that grocery shopping provides some sense of satisfaction and enjoyment. They conclude that recreational shoppers enjoy shopping as a form of leisure activity (e.g. Backstrom, 2011; Stone, 1954; Williams, Slama, & Rogers, 1985). Leisure activities contribute to participants’ wellbeing (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003). It is therefore the quality of the experience that makes leisure and not the activity itself. Having examined the definitions of leisure from various scholars, a general overview is provided and this helps to understand leisure from a holistic perspective. For this study, a working definition of leisure is: a voluntary activity selected based on the satisfaction derived from its participation (Kelly, 2012).

2.2 Concepts in Leisure

This section examines the relationship between leisure and work. It further examines the types of leisure namely serious leisure, casual leisure and project-based leisure. It gives insight into how leisure types are categorized. Finally, leisure satisfaction is examined as well as how it is measured or determined.

2.2.1 Work and leisure.

Work and leisure are two critical concepts in the field of leisure studies (De Grazia, 1962). Work is the activity that has to be done, often in exchange for money or recompense while leisure-time activity is the withdrawal from work for an activity that is
done out of one’s volition and without compensation (Wisdom, 2012). According to Kelly (2012), work is described as a consistent activity which requires labour and which humanity needs for its continued survival and to maintain a level of wealth.

According to Edginton et al. (2002), work is a productive activity with an expected result. The word ‘productive’ connotes something valuable or worthwhile (Veblen, 1953). In other words, one can say any activity that yields value can pass for work. Based on this viewpoint, an activity such as child minding is considered work (Kelly & Godbey, 1992). Conversely, leisure is the activity chosen voluntarily based on the fulfillment obtained from its involvement (Kaplan, 1979; Kelly, 2012). Notably, leisure is not carried out under duress, rather, it is voluntary, open, expressive and fulfilling (Kelly, 2012). Weiss (2009) observed that some activities cannot be strictly categorized as work or leisure. For instance, volunteering is a neutral activity that cuts across work and leisure. Leisure may be challenging as it requires discipline but it often provides satisfaction (Kelly, 2012). Having examined the key elements associated with the two concepts, I propose that not all kinds of work are paid but work has to be productive. Some activities (e.g., unpaid babysitting) that are performed out of moral obligation may still qualify as work despite non-payment. The reason people work is to be productive with or without pay (Kelly & Godbey, 1992). Kelly and Godbey (1992) explained that work and leisure are inter-related, and are both considered as dimensions to life.

Kelly (2012) suggested that there is more to work than what people perceive it to be; work is more than “what has to be done”’ and “what we have to do” (p. 120). People work for various reasons beyond just trying to maintain a level of wealth or maintain
their families as some people work as volunteers and not necessarily for financial gain (Kelly & Godbey, 1992). Work from this point of view is comparable to leisure because one is not under an obligation as Toner (1995) emphasized that work can obtain some attributes of leisure to make it enjoyable, fulfilling and meaningful.

Leisure could be influenced by income. Schuler (2013) remarked that in Canada today, sport registration and participation is affected because sport kits are expensive. For example, hockey may pose a financial strain on families who attempt to register their children. Essentially, the type of work determines the level of income, which affects the type of leisure activity that one is able to afford and engage in (Kelly, 2012; Lynd & Lynd, 1950).

Income therefore also influences LTPA participation among university students. Given the high cost of equipment needed for certain sports, low income earners or students may not be able to afford the luxury of these activities thereby limiting the kind of recreation or leisure activity that is available to them. Steenhuis, Nooy, Moes, and Schuit (2009) noted that students are faced with many financial obligations which pose a barrier to their sport or leisure-activity participation. Conclusively, work and leisure are defined by people’s experiences while income influences sport and leisure participation even among students.

2.2.2 Leisure types.

Some scholars (e.g., Kleiber, Larson, & Csikszentmihalyi, 1986; Shin & You, 2013) have tried to classify the types of leisure activities based on their impact on adolescent intellectual and physical development. They argued that the relationship that exists between leisure and adolescents’ wellbeing is attributable to the type of activity
engaged in. The three main types of leisure are identified as serious, casual, and project-based leisure (Stebbins, 2004).

2.2.2.1 Serious leisure.

Kleiber et al. (1986) described serious leisure as an activity that is carried out purposefully and that requires active body movements/exercise. Additionally, Stebbins (1992) defined it “as the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for the participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge” (p. 3). These definitions suggest that serious leisure activities are freely carried out with dedication, for pleasure. There are six major characteristics that distinguish serious leisure from other types of leisure, namely: perseverance, leisure career discovery, vigorous attempt or effort, feelings of achievement, ethos or beliefs, and identity (Stebbins, 2007). The above characteristics are qualities exhibited by a serious leisure participant. However, not all six characteristics must be demonstrated in a serious leisure activity (Green & Jones, 2005). Perseverance is an important quality in serious leisure that helps the participant to endure challenging situations (Stebbins, 2007). For example, humiliation or bullying during a game is a challenging experience but a serious leisure participant is likely to persevere through such situations.

Career discovery is another attribute of serious leisure, which allows the participant to passionately advance his skills in his chosen leisure activity (Stebbins, 2007). Carrier discovery in serious leisure is closely connected to vigorous effort, another distinguishing feature of serious leisure (Stebbins, 2007). In a bid to discover and pursue a career that is borne out of leisure participation, the participant tends to put
in some effort so as to acquire considerable expertise. For example, a golfer may build a career by starting to play at the elementary level such as hitting golf balls at the range before progressing to the course and then to the tournament (Green & Jones, 2005).

Feelings of achievement exist in serious leisure participation because of the effort required and the outcome of such leisure activities. These feelings usually motivate participants to continue to engage in serious leisure activities.

Stebbins (2007) describes ethos as “the spirit of the community of serious leisure participants as manifested in shared attitudes, practices, values, beliefs, goals and so on” (p. 12). Essentially, serious leisure connects its diverse participants who inculcate certain habits by virtue of participating in the same leisure activity.

The sixth characteristic that distinguishes serious leisure from other leisure-types is identity. Identity is derived from the previous characteristics of serious leisure. Serious leisure participants are likely to strongly identify with their leisure goals, community, and pursuits than casual or project-based leisure participants (Stebbins, 2007).

Stebbins (2007) further identified three types of serious leisure. These are “amateur pursuits, hobbyist activities, and career volunteering” (p. 6). Amateur pursuits or nonprofessional activities, on one hand, are a type of serious leisure found in the sciences, arts, sports, and entertainment. These leisure participants are driven by standard of excellence (Stebbins, 1992). Hobbyists are those who participate in relaxing activities of their choice and require minimal exertion of energy. However, some hobbyist activities are demanding and require certain skills and some level of energy exertion. Examples include natural world hobbies such as hunting and fishing (Stebbins, 2007), playing basketball and cycling.
Volunteers comprise the third basic type of serious leisure however, not all volunteer work is serious leisure. Stebbins (2004) defined volunteering as “uncoerced help offered either formally or informally with no or, at most, token pay for the benefit of both other people and the volunteer” (p. 51). The definition provided by Stebbins was created from the underlying features that Cnaan, Handy, and Wadsworth (1996) identified in their review of several definitions. These features include free will, reward, planned recipient, and structure. Volunteering has been shown to cover an extensive scope of career ranging from administrative services, educational services, and sciences to professional and economic development. Examples include provision of assistance to people by solving their personal problems which generally affect their wellbeing (Stebbins, 2004).

2.2.2.2 Casual leisure.

Kleiber et al. (1986) described casual leisure as passive, social or time-out leisure which provides short term satisfaction. Stebbins (2007) defined casual leisure as activities that require no special skills to enjoy them that are instantly and naturally rewarding and with short term satisfaction. Stebbins further identified eight types of casual leisure including: play, relaxation (e.g., sleeping), passive entertainment (e.g., listening to music); active entertainment (e.g., playing games), social conversation (e.g., social chatting), sensory stimulation (e.g., sightseeing), casual volunteering (e.g., distributing flyers), and pleasurable aerobic activity. An additional example of casual leisure is visiting friends (Tiggermann, 2001).

Casual leisure involves activities that do not require much effort and are considered to be less significant when compared to serious leisure (Kleiber et al., 1986).
Gordon and Caltabiano (1996) found that rather than offering satisfaction, casual leisure led to dissatisfaction among adolescents because they got bored. In contrast, Stebbins (2007) argued that all types of casual leisure lead to some level of pleasure. He argued that casual leisure is a way of engaging in activities that are considered innate or naturally occurring. The benefits of participating in casual leisure include innovation, entertainment, building and maintaining relationships which in turn foster cognitive development, and a state of wellbeing or restoration (Stebbins, 2007).

2.2.2.3 Project-based leisure.

Stebbins (2007) pioneered discussions on project-based leisure. He defined it as “a short-term, moderately complicated, either one-shot or occasional, though infrequent, creative undertaking carried out in free time” (p. 43). Unlike serious leisure or casual leisure, project-based leisure requires some significant level of skills or planning and involves short term achievement. Project-based leisure must not be executed under compulsion and it must not be considered serious leisure as it cannot lead to a career (Stebbins, 2005). Project-based leisure does not require long-term dedication, but it produces its own rewards, such as social attraction, self-development, and financial gains which spur participants to continue to engage as it provides a sense of achievement (Stebbins, 2005). Also, project-based leisure promotes communal relationships as people work together to achieve a common goal (Stebbins, 2007).

Project-based leisure is divided into two types namely, one-shot projects and occasional projects (Stebbins, 2005). One-shot projects require existing skills, and, in some instances, may require additional skills or preparation. Examples include do-it-yourself projects (DIY), tourism, and volunteering activities (Stebbins, 2005).
Occasional projects are informed by joint or collective efforts and are activities performed during festivities and holidays. An example of such project-based leisure is the act of decorating during the Christmas holidays (Stebbins, 2005).

Having reviewed the various leisure-types and the serious leisure perspective with emphasis drawn from Stebbins’ work, the foregoing provides insight into leisure-types and aids an understanding of how they can impact behaviours and wellbeing. Based on Stebbins’ (2007) and Kleiber et al.’s (1986) classification of leisure types, serious, casual, and project-based leisure may all be beneficial for young adults. Furthermore, an individual’s personality and mood as well as the availability of facilities for serious leisure will determine the leisure-type adopted. For example, an individual may spend hours on the treadmill on a particular day and may listen to music during his/her leisure-time the next day. Individuals are drawn to the types and sub-types of leisure because of the core activities they find alluring. They respond differently to these activities (Stebbins, 2007). Essentially, what one individual may find appealing, another may find repulsive due to individual differences.

2.2.3 Leisure satisfaction.

Leisure satisfaction is the extent to which people are pleased with their leisure experiences (Chick, Hsu, Yeh, & Hsieh, 2015). Satisfaction is a relative term and a major concept in leisure as scholars have argued that leisure activities are defined by the level of contentment derived from them (Edginton et al., 2002). Satisfaction is very important in leisure and if it is not achieved, leisure may not have occurred (Edginton et al., 2002). Roberts (2006) noted that leisure-time activities give life to individuals who actively make use of their leisure-time. Kelly (2012) remarked that fulfillment and
satisfaction is the crux of every leisure activity. A positive attitude towards leisure activities can strengthen social and psychological well-being which inherently generates satisfaction (Kim, Sung, Park, & Dittmore, 2015). This means that one’s demeanor towards leisure activities influences the level of satisfaction derived from such activities. A positive demeanor will therefore lead to a high likelihood of satisfaction. Therefore, positive attitude and satisfaction are inter-dependent (Kim et al., 2015).

Veblen (1953) argued that leisure is non-productive and Kelly (2012) noted that leisure is undertaken for the fulfillment derived from it. I agree with Kelly’s perspective because the satisfaction derived from leisure qualifies it as a productive venture. An example is when riding a bike down the hill, the cyclist enjoys the ride because little or no effort is required, unlike a ride uphill, which leaves the rider exhausted. However, while reflecting on the ride up the hill, the cyclist is likely to experience more satisfaction when arriving at the hill-top (Cory Kulczycki, personal communication, May 2016). The cyclist’s satisfaction is derived from a sense of achievement because the activity required more effort and strength and completion of such challenging activity provides fulfillment. Satisfaction can therefore be achieved even with a tiring and time-consuming exercise as Kaplan (1979) stated that anything that is discretionary and pleasurable fulfills the requirement of leisure. In essence, Kaplan’s submission in relation to the example above is that even if the ride up the hill was arduous, as long as the rider enjoys it and the activity was carried out voluntarily, then it satisfies the requirement of leisure.

On the contrary, Kraus (1990) argued that leisure should be free from labour before satisfaction can be derived. As was previously stated, any activity that is
discretionary and pleasurable fulfills the requirement of leisure (Kaplan, 1979; Kelly, 2012). One may want to think that deriving satisfaction from leisure should not include activities that are strenuous especially if desired satisfaction must be achieved. However, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) argued that some elements of enjoyment and satisfaction include challenging activities that require skills. Satisfaction is therefore not only about the immediate gratification obtained during leisure activity but the feeling of fulfillment that the participant gets upon completion of such activity while reflecting on the activity.

Kim et al. (2015) corroborated this in a study conducted with 207 undergraduate students, which indicated that leisure attitudes have a positive association with leisure satisfaction. Eventually, students’ positive attitudes or their reflections on leisure activities offered them the perceived satisfaction and enhance their lifestyle (Kim et al., 2015). Given these points, I conclude that leisure satisfaction is based on the quality of the experience (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003), and an optimistic state of mind (Veal, 1992). Also, satisfaction is relative and it varies with individual expectations (Francken & Raaij, 1981).

2.3 Leisure-Time Physical Activity

2.3.1 LTPA among young adults.

As noted in Chapter One, LTPA involves activities requiring energy exertion which are carried out during one’s free time and that provide satisfaction. The importance of physical activity during leisure-time is widely recognized, nonetheless, results have shown that young adults do not meet the recommended physical activity guidelines (Gomez-Lopez, Gallegos, & Extremera, 2010; Kelishadi et al. 2010) thus igniting a global concern (Arzu, Tuzun, & Eker, 2006).
Consistent physical activity during leisure-time has been found to be universally beneficial (Haase, Steptoe, Sallis, & Wardle, 2004). Yet, a 2016 appraisal of children and young adults’ physical activity in Canada reported that young adults failed to meet the recommended physical activity (ParticipACTION, 2016). Similarly, statistics show that about 31.1% of adults globally are physically inactive (Hallal et al., 2012). This figure is said to represent the weighted average of physical inactivity in 122 countries. However, disparity exists as there was no data from about 1/3 of the world’s countries, specifically low and middle-income parts of Central Asia and Africa (Hallal et al., 2012; WHO, 2009). The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines have standard requirements for various age groups based on the degree of activity performed. The guidelines for young adults advocate 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP), 2012). This begs the question of how many postsecondary students follow the physical activity guidelines or are even aware of them.

Following the trend of low participation in physical activity during leisure-time among young adults, their inability to meet the recommended guideline is ongoing (Adeniyi et al., 2016; Akarolo-Anthony, & Adebamowo, 2014; Gomez-Lopez et al., 2010; Gude, 1996; Haase et al., 2004; ParticipACTION, 2016; Pengpid et al., 2015; Peykari, et al., 2015). A report card that examined physical activity levels of young adults of different age groups from 38 countries representing 60% of the world population reported an overall average grade of ‘D’ for sedentary behaviour and overall physical activity (Tremblay et al., 2016). Indicators of physical activity considered within the report include active play, overall physical activity, sedentary behaviour, and
active transportation, among others (Tremblay et al., 2016). Some countries performed
better than others in certain indicators but faltered in others (Tremblay et al., 2016).
Overall, this indicates a poor performance globally.

Studies have shown that young adults are embracing sedentary lifestyles over
physical activity (Harrison & Gilmore, 2012). Examples of sedentary lifestyles include
more time spent on the screen (with electronic devices) and more time spent on
motorized transportation (Panek, 2014; Rose, 2014). In reality, university students are
attached to their electronic devices and this has influenced their lifestyles significantly.
Both positive and negative relationships exist between phone use and academic
performance (Bull & McCormick, 2012). Mobile phones have the capacity to help
students improve their learning and performance (Bull & McCormick, 2012). For
example, quick and compact access to learning and educational materials can be carried
out on mobile phones. However, students who use their mobile phones habitually or who
use them for leisure tend to have lower academic performance, increased insomnia, and
anxiety (Lepp, Barkley, & Karpinski, 2014; Li, Lepp, & Barkley, 2015). Some students
prefer to spend more time on social media platforms than invest their leisure-time on
activities that will contribute to their wellness (Panek, 2014). Studies show that if
postsecondary students can divert the time spent on their mobile phones to more
rewarding activities, then this may afford them a more productive and enhanced leisure
experience (Lepp, Barkley, & Li, 2017). Other sedentary activities include motorized
transportation causing prolonged sitting, working on a computer, playing video games,
or watching television for long hours and being idle for a long period of time
(ParticipACTION, 2016). Inadequate physical activity during leisure-time among young
adults is a global concern and there is the need to address this situation so as to increase their level of participation (Peykari et al., 2015). Importantly, this will help to combat the problems associated with physical inactivity, such as increased risk of mortality and morbidity (Akarolo-Anthony & Adebamowo, 2014).

Scholars argued that physical activity can be routinely engaged in outside of leisure-time (Csizmadi, Siou, Friedenreich, Owen, & Robson, 2011). From this perspective, some researchers do not value LTPA because they believe that activities performed outside leisure time can meet the required recommended physical activity guidelines (Csizmadi et al., 2011). These activities tend to be moderate intensity, and may include active transportation such as walking and cycling, which provide notable health benefits (WHO, 2017). These are inexpensive and recurrent forms of physical activity common among across age groups (Hardman & Morris, 1998).

2.3.2 Benefits of LTPA.

Physical activity has benefits for both physical and mental health (Gude, 1996; ParticipACTION, 2016). Active involvement in regular physical activity provides physical, physiological and psychological benefits (Biddle, 1993; Gomez-Lopez et al., 2010; ParticipACTION, 2016). Regular physical activity enhances cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems, reducing the risk of fractures while improving weight control and vitality (WHO, 2017). Physical activity performs an important role in averting various diseases, including cancers (Gomez-Lopez et al., 2010; Kampert, Blair, Barlow, & Harold, 1996). Other benefits include improved athletic ability, physical strength, and increase in coordination and diminished risk of cancer (Kampert et al., 1996).
In terms of psychological well-being, physical activity can lead to improved self-esteem, increased confidence, feelings of satisfaction, higher concentration level, and stress management (Biddle, 1993; Gomez-Lopez et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2015; ParticipACTION, 2016). Statistics show that Canadians who have a moderately active lifestyle experience lower stress levels, are less prone to obesity and have a lower incidence of hypertension (Statistics Canada, 2010). Regular physical activity may contribute to improvements in academic performance (Forrester, 2014; Reiner, Niemann, Jekauc, & Wall, 2013). In an important study conducted on 33,500 students across 38 different post-secondary institutions in the United States, 68% of the students experienced good academic performance which they associated with physical activity. The extent and type of activities engaged in may be responsible for this result (Forrester, 2014). Conversely, Van Dijk, De Groot, Savelberg, Van Acker, and Kirschner (2014) argued that there was no positive association between the academic performance of students and their participation in physical activities. While they found a positive association among students in Grade 9, this was not the case with students in Grade 7. They concluded that the association between physical activity and academic performance among adolescents is complex because it varies depending on their class level, amount of physical activity, and academic year.

2.3.3 Constraints to LTPA.

Constraints have been defined as factors that hinder a person from achieving something or experiencing certain behavioural choices (McFarland, 2006). In the context of LTPA, constraints are limitations to enjoying or participating in leisure and physical activity. Financial instability is one of the many constraints of LTPA participation.
(Steenhuis et al., 2009). For example, international students are faced with a number of financial demands and increasing tuition has been considered to top the list (Galeazzi, 2013). International students at the U of R, constitute 13.7% of the overall student population (UREIS, 2017), and have many financial demands, such as tuition and housing, which contend for their limited income (Dasylva, 2016). International students are charged higher tuition and related expenses than their domestic counterparts (Galeazzi, 2013). International students in Canada pay an average of $18,474 while their domestic counterparts pay an average of $5,500 (Martin, 2013). According to the U of R, the 2018 winter fee schedule for both international and domestic undergraduate student for three standard classes is $5,975.85 and $2,164.35 respectively (Uregina, 2018a). Similarly, graduate international and domestic students pay $5,004.35 and $2,749.35 respectively for three standard classes (Uregina, 2018a). These figures do not include other mandatory fees such as student union fees, recreation and athletic fees, and health and dental fees. International students are only allowed to work up to 20 hours per week off campus during the school term and full time during summer as long as they remain enrolled with the university (Government of Canada, 2018). Regrettably, there are not enough jobs on campus for all domestic and international students (Dasylva, 2016). To remedy the situation, students resort to getting jobs off campus and some even work extra hours in order to avoid going into debt (Campos, 2015; Sullivan, 2015). Notably, international students do not qualify for student loans (Uregina, 2018b). While working extra hours and combining their academics, fatigue sets in (Dasylva, 2016) and they are also faced with time restrictions which invariably lowers their LTPA participation (Arzu et al., 2006; Gyurcsik et al., 2006; Shifman et al., 2011; Steenhuis et
There is a significant strain on students’ physical activity participation resulting from the pressure of their academic pursuits, increased responsibilities and other social engagements (Gomez-Lopez et al., 2010; Peykary et al., 2015).

In addition to financial constraints, age was also found to be a determinant of LTPA participation among university students. Older students have less zeal to engage in LTPA (Pengpid et al., 2015). Other constraints to LTPA include insufficient time, weather conditions, academic activities, and lack of interest (Arzu et al., 2006). Notably, the greatest challenge to physical activity participation among adolescents and university students is time restriction (Arzu et al., 2006; Gyurcsik, Spink, Bray, Chad, & Kwan, 2006; Shifman, Moss, Andrade, Eichel, & Forrester, 2011; Steenhuis et al., 2009). Time plays a pivotal role in active sport participation (Steenhuis et al., 2009). Steenhuis et al. (2009) found that some students are not used to physical activity from the outset and find it challenging to engage in and sustain LTPA. Similarly, research that explored the factors influencing students LTPA identified lack of social support, low self-efficacy and socio-demographics like low income are some of the challenges affecting students’ LTPA participation (Pengpid & Peltzer, 2013). For example, Chinese students experience constraints such as lack of social support, language barriers, and cultural differences in their leisure engagements (Li & Stodolska, 2007). Given these constraints to LTPA, it is important to gain insight into international students’ experiences towards LTPA and how these contributes to their wellness.

2.3.4 Physical inactivity and its implications.

While examining the benefits of physical activity during leisure-time is important, it is essential to examine the negative effects of physical inactivity as this is
prevalent even among young adults. Physical inactivity and sedentary lifestyles are prevalent among Canadians. Statistics show that over 90% of young adults and 77.8% of adults are not meeting the recommended physical activity guidelines (PHAC, 2017). Physical inactivity is not unique to the Canadian population. A study of LTPA participation among Nigerians reveals that over 80% of urban adults failed to meet the WHO benchmark for physical activity while physical inactivity remains the fourth leading factor for global mortality and morbidity (Akarolo-Anthony & Adebamowo, 2014).

The negative implications of physical inactivity on health are numerous. Studies show a correlation between physical inactivity and obesity (Akarolo-Anthony & Adebamowo, 2014; Nojomi & Najamabadi, 2006). The high obesity rate affecting university students is linked to high intake of calories and physical inactivity making students at risk of other health-related problems (Peltzer et al., 2014). Ben-Bassey, Oduwole, and Ogundipe (2007) explained that adult obesity could emerge from adolescent obesity while adding that overweight people are prone to morbidity and mortality. Physical inactivity has also been associated with coronary heart diseases, several types of cancers, non-communicable diseases like diabetes, and a number of other health related diseases (WHO, 2003). Coronary heart diseases constitute one of the leading causes of death in North America (Kerner et al., 2001). There are many causes of obesity, apart from physical inactivity, such as dietary factors, health conditions, genetics, and social factors (Peltzer et al., 2014).

A report by the World Health Organization in 2008 shows that globally, about 31.1% of adults were physically inactive (WHO, 2017). The rise in obesity and
overweight among children and adolescents in Canada dates back to late 1970 (Shields, 2006). In 2014, about 23.1% of Canadian youths aged 12-17 years were either obese or overweight (Statistics Canada, 2015). Roberts, Shields, Groh, Aziz, and Gilbert (2012) explained that obese youth often become obese adults, if untreated. Roberts et al. (2012) noted that health challenges are not always physically obvious until much later in the individual’s life. However, these health-related problems may be avoidable if a healthy lifestyle, including a healthy diet and an active lifestyle, is embraced early in life (Shield, 2006).

Peltzer et al.’s (2014) research shows an increase in obesity and increased weight among postsecondary students as a result of physical inactivity. In the same study, Nigeria recorded a 10% increase in obesity, Egypt reported an increase from 25.3% to 59.4%; South Africa reported an increase from 10.8% to 24%; and Mexico reported a 31.6% increase in obesity (Peltzer et al., 2014). The researchers attributed this result to physical inactivity and other factors like lack of social support thus increasing the chances of all-cause mortality. In 2007, about 5.3 to 5.7 million deaths were linked to non-communicable diseases worldwide and it was presumed that the death toll would decline if more people were physically active (Kohl et al., 2012). In fact, physical inactivity constituted the fourth most important cause of death globally (Kohl et al., 2012). It was further revealed that there is a great increase in obesity and overweight globally resulting from urbanization and sedentary lifestyles (Haidar & Cosman, 2011). A lifestyle devoid of physical activity has made urban residents vulnerable to many of the health problems discussed earlier.
In addition, in the United States, young adults scored a grade of ‘D’ in achieving the amount of physical activity recommended for their age group (Barnes, 2014). Sallis, Bauman, and Pratt (1998) revealed that physical inactivity is not only rapidly increasing in North America but also affecting other industrialized nations. The 2014 report card on physical activity reported that in Ghana, only about 12% to 34% of the young population met the physical activity recommendations while South African youths recorded a grade of ‘D’ for having insufficient participation in physical activities (Barnes, 2014). Obesity and overweight account for about 16% of diseases globally while physical inactivity predisposes people to other health-related problems such as cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, and various cancers (Haidar & Cosman, 2011). Peltzer et al. (2014) also confirmed high rates of obesity among university students from 23 countries. Their findings included students from all income levels. In their study, the overall rate of obesity among university students was 24.7% for men and 19.3% for women (Peltzer et al., 2014). Similarly, Haase et al. (2004) examined university students from 23 countries and recorded that physical inactivity varies. In western countries, 23% to 39% were inactive. In developing countries, 44% were inactive while 42% of students in pacific Asian countries were inactive.

Physical inactivity, then, among university students is rampant globally (Pengpid et al., 2015). Furthermore, Castle et al. (2015) revealed that the amount of physical activity performed by university students during their leisure-time does not meet the recommended requirement. While CSEP (2012) recommends 150 minutes of moderate to intensive activity per week, Castle et al. (2015) noted that 38% of postsecondary students engaged in repeated intense activities and 20% engaged in repeated moderate
activities. These statistics show a low level of activity among the students generally which could increase their risk of health-related problems.

Physical inactivity can pose a financial burden, particularly the health sector. Wolf and Colditz (1998) noted that obesity contributed to about 6% of the overall health care cost in advanced nations. Likewise, Katzmarzyk and Janssen (2004) found that in 2001, the most costly treatments in Canada were for stroke and related diseases ($765 billion), osteoporosis ($1.5 billion) and ischemic heart disease ($1.7 billion). These diseases, alongside other factors, are caused or aggravated by physical inactivity (Katzmarzyk & Janssen, 2004). The ripple effect of physical inactivity is that costs are incurred for medical treatment as statistics revealed that physical inactivity causing obesity is one of the leading health problems in Canada (Katzmarzyk & Janssen, 2004). This also affects individuals without full health care insurance coverage as they have to make payments for their treatments out of pocket. LTPA is germane in improving the health and total wellness of postsecondary students and should therefore be encouraged so as to avoid the consequences of physical inactivity. Campus recreation is an organized set of recreational activities on campus which aids LTPA participation and is therefore worthy of review.

2.4 Campus Recreation

2.4.1 Definition and overview of campus recreation.

Campus recreation is described as “a major sector of recreation programming designed to meet the needs of older teenagers and young adults” (Kraus, Barber, & Shapiro, 2001, p. 128). It includes intramural sports, leisure activities, and facilities that exist on a university campus for its students (Forrester, 2014; Kozechian, Heidary, Saiah,
& Heidary, 2012). These activities and facilities are usually organized and managed by the university’s student affairs department, or a recreation unit or department (Kraus et al., 2001; National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA), 2008; Warner & Dixon, 2013). For example, Recreation Services at the U of R is connected to the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies. They offer intramural sports, aquatic programs, fitness classes and a host of others for students (Uregina, 2017). The available campus recreation facilities (CRFs) typically determine the array of activities that students can engage in. Examples of indoor CRFs include swimming pools, fitness centers, and basketball courts among others, with activities ranging from group fitness training, sport training, and intramural games (Huesman, Brown, Lee, Kellogg, & Radcliffe, 2009). Other examples of campus recreation activities include group fitness classes, personal training, and cardio-vascular exercises (Forrester, 2014), all of which are available at the U of R through the Fitness and Lifestyle Centre and Recreation Services.

Students’ choice of postsecondary institution is often influenced by the CRFs offered at a particular institution (Agrey & Lampadan, 2014; Forrester, 2015). A study conducted by Forrester (2014) comprising 33,500 students revealed that 68% of the participants selected their postsecondary institution based on the available recreation facilities, while 62% of the participants reported that the recreation activities/programs offered by the institutions influenced their decision. In addition, 74% of the participants reported that the recreation facilities available on campus determined whether they continued their education in their chosen institution. Similarly, 67% of the participants revealed that participating in campus recreation activities influenced their decision to
remain at the institution (Forrester, 2014). In essence, recreational facilities and activities offered by postsecondary institutions influence students’ decisions regarding what school to attend and whether to remain there or leave after a period of time.

Leisure for postsecondary students may include free time outside of studying, classes and other academic obligations, enabling them to unwind, relax, and socialize with friends. Apart from physical activities organized through campus recreation programs, other leisure activities within the university could be social or cultural, such as concerts and movie nights (Kraus et al., 2001). These opportunities correspond with the goals of many postsecondary institutions which include educating students, improving their standard of living, and empowering them for the future (Kozechian et al., 2012). Campus recreation provides numerous benefits (Kraus et al., 2001) which are discussed next.

2.4.2 Benefits of campus recreation.

Campus recreation makes university life more rewarding in a number of ways (Blumenthal, 2009; Kraus et al., 2001). Students have identified benefits such as stress relief, weight loss and maintenance, physical agility, social networking, and fun (Forrester, 2014). Campus recreation provides students with opportunities to engage in physical activities that boost their health and mental agility, increase their creativity, and energize them (Gomez-Lopez et al., 2010; Huesman et al., 2009; Keating, Guan, Pinero, & Bridges, 2005). Campus recreation facilities act as a location to socialize and meet other students, leading to increased social interactions (Huesman et al., 2009; Zizzi, Ayers, Watson, & Keeler, 2004). Students from different fields of study meet at campus
recreation facilities such as the gym and participate in individual or group exercises that foster communication and help them to develop new relationships.

Several studies have shown that students’ engagements in campus recreation help them to thrive academically (Artinger et al., 2006; Blumenthal, 2009; Deere, Pivarnik, McNeil, Mudd, & Renn, 2015; Forrester, 2014; Huesman et al., 2009; Kraus et al., 2001). Accordingly, academic success has been linked to a balanced campus lifestyle (Artinger et al., 2006; Blumenthal, 2009; Deere et al., 2015; Huesman et al., 2009). Research shows that students who are integrated into campus life combine extracurricular activities with their academics and they often succeed academically (Artinger et al., 2006; Blumenthal, 2009; Deere et al., 2015; Huesman et al., 2009). This is the result of the positive use of leisure time and their ability to manage time more effectively (Yarnal, Qian, Hustad, & Sims, 2013). In other words, using leisure in a positive way or engaging in leisure activity can reduce stress, improve skills, and promote academic pursuits (Yarnal et al., 2013). Similarly, research shows that consistent participation in campus recreation improves academic grades and reduces school-related stress (Kozechian et al., 2012). Warner and Dixon (2013) also argued that college sport, a form of recreation, creates a ‘sense of community’ among postsecondary students which in turn enhances their mental wellbeing and academic performance (p. 284). A holistic approach to a balanced campus lifestyle and student success entails good academic performance, campus recreation programs, and other extracurricular activities engaged in by the student (Blumenthal, 2009; NIRSA, 2008).

Despite these positive findings, some scholars argued that campus recreation does not improve students’ academic performance (Hall, D. A., 2005). Others noted that
there is minimal evidence to support the claim (Belch, Gebel, & Maas, 2001). Zizzi et al. (2004) conducted research on 655 students to determine their satisfaction with the university’s student recreation centre. He found no significant difference in the academic performance of students who used the centre and those who did not.

Many postsecondary students engage in campus recreation primarily to have fun (Huesman et al., 2009; Keating et al., 2005). Indeed, students rarely cite health benefits as their reason for engaging in campus recreation. Instead, having fun and appearance are their primary motivation for engaging in these activities (Keating et al., 2005). While male students wanted to build muscles, female students wanted to lose or maintain their weight and build self-esteem (Forrester, 2014; Keating et al., 2005; Zizzi et al., 2004).

In addition to health benefits, students acquire several soft skills by participating in campus recreation programs (Forrester, 2014). These include: “time management skills, respect for others, academic performance, sense of belonging/association, ability to multi-task, ability to develop friendships, group cooperation, communication, multicultural awareness and problem solving skills” (Forrester, 2014, p. 23).

Campus recreation participation has been attributed to long-term desire to stay fit by many students upon graduation (Forrester, 2014; Keating et al., 2005). It has been found to influence students’ zeal to continue a physically active lifestyle in late adulthood (Keating et al., 2005). Essentially, students’ attitudes regarding their physical activities (PA) influence their interests, behaviours, and participation in physical activity when they grow older (Keating et al., 2005; Kraus et al., 2001). An important way to develop physically active and healthy adults is to encourage participation in early years. However, constraints to campus recreation exist.
2.4.3 Constraints of Campus Recreation

There are three types of leisure constraints: intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural (Godbey, Crawford, & Shen, 2010). These constraints may limit students’ participation in campus recreation. Intrapersonal constraints affect an individual’s ability to participate in leisure and differ from person to person (e.g., lack of self-discipline, motivation, shyness). Interpersonal constraints occur when leisure participation is dependent on other people’s support and schedules (e.g., a work-out partner, personal trainer, and family members) (Godbey et al., 2010; Wood & Danylchuk, 2015). Structural constraints are other factors that potentially inhibit a person’s ability to participate in leisure activities such as transportation, leisure facilities, and high cost of leisure activity (Wood & Danylchuk, 2015). Godbey et al. (2010) highlighted factors that influence leisure participation, including an individual’s interest, location of facilities, proximity and accessibility, and circle of friends or influencers. They argued that leisure constraints change as these factors change. For example, if a student transfers from the U of R to another university, the new location may lack certain facilities and this may affect their ability to continually enjoy leisure time. The constraints identified also affect university students and may restrain them from active leisure participation or campus recreation. Campus recreation is a viable way to encourage engagement in LTPA among university students despite the noted constraints.

University students are faced with many challenges including financial expenses (Steenhuis et al., 2009) and social and academic setbacks (Lehto, Park, Fu, & Lee, 2014; Wood & Danylchuk, 2015). These problems often lead to stress and inhibit leisure participation and campus recreation activities (Lehto et al., 2014; Wood & Danylchuk,
Stress may occur when transition to university or to a new class, during examinations, and when managing finances. Combining all of these stressors can be overwhelming (Ben-Bassey et al., 2007; Iwasaki & Schneider, 2003a; Kozechian et al., 2012; Peltzer et al., 2014; Robotham, 2008). In some cases, feelings of dejection and suicidal thoughts among university students have been linked to an increased level of stress (Robotham, 2008). Stress may lead to unhealthy lifestyles or dietary behaviours, such as consumption of drugs and alcohol, smoking, and overindulgence in junk food (Sax, 1997). In addition, Kraus et al. (2001) observed that many students drop out in their first year of post-secondary education because they encounter great difficulty in adapting to the university environment. Since they are new to the post-secondary environment and its overwhelming demands, they often lack the ability to enjoy their leisure-time (Kraus et al., 2001). Stress, therefore, constitutes a major constraint to campus recreation participation among students. The next section focuses on the leisure experiences and constraints of international students.

2.5 International Students

2.5.1 Overview of international students.

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), over 3.3 million international students attended institutions of higher learning globally in 2008 (OECD, 2010). Host countries with significant numbers of international students’ population include the United States (19%), United Kingdom (10%), and Germany (7%) while others include Canada, Russia, Japan, France and Australia (OECD, 2010). Canada has been a host to international students over the years and their numbers continue to increase annually (Chui, 1996). The number of graduating
international students in Canada rose from 30,723 to 53,142 in 2010 and 2014 respectively (Neatby & Yogesh, 2017). A study conducted on international students from 13 countries shows that it costs less to study in Canada when compared to countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Martin, 2013). This is due to the reasonably low cost of living in Canada and the opportunity afforded to international students to work and earn while studying (Martins, 2013). Other reasons include the opportunity to apply for permanent residence after graduation. For example, in 2015, about 59% of international students considered permanent residence (PR) as their major factor in their decision to study in Canada (Neatby & Yogesh, 2017). International students perceive Canada as welcoming because of its immigration laws (CIC, 2007).

International students contribute to the growth of host countries in many ways (Kwon, 2009), including cultural diversity and economic development (Gold, 2016; Kwon, 2009; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). For example, the United States government generated $12 billion from international students’ living expenses, tuition and other associated costs during the 2004/2005 academic year (Poyrazli & Kavanaugh, 2006). In Canada, international students significantly contribute to the country’s economic development in terms of increased tuition, trade boost and job creation (CIC, 2007). According to a report from the Department of Canada Foreign Affairs and International Trade (CFAIT), it was estimated that about 64,940 jobs were created and $4.1 billion generated in the Canadian economy from the international students in the country (Kunin, 2009; Kunin, 2016). Also, Global Affairs Canada (2012) reported that over $8 billion was realized from international students in the year 2010 while 86,000 jobs were created in addition to $445 million raised from tax revenue alone. It can be argued that
the relationship that exists between international students and the host country is mutually beneficial (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). While international students contribute to the host country’s cultural diversity and its economy, the students benefit from the wealth of knowledge offered by the country’s educational system. The international students, depending on their level of study, also enhance knowledge transmission through research and may join the workforce thereby developing the intellectual assets of the host country (Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

**2.5.2 Why students choose to study abroad.**

Students study abroad for various reasons ranging from religious to economic and political (Hall, 2005). Furthermore, scholars explain that motivation may be a contributing factor as to why students choose to study abroad (Berry, 1997; Kim, 2001). Motivation is the drive or the enthusiasm to do something (Chirkov et al., 2007). International students who travel abroad to study because of what they stand to gain from the host country are said to be extrinsically motivated because this is an action that is driven by external rewards such as the ability to earn while studying (Chirkov et al., 2007). For example, extrinsic motivation was said to have influenced Chinese international students’ reasons for studying in Canada and Belgium (Chirkov et al., 2007).

Various disciplines address the issue of international students’ migration from different perspectives. Sociologists describe students’ migration decisions as voluntary or involuntary depending on existing social and governmental factors (Richmond, 1993). Economists perceive students’ migration as international division of labour arising from the demand for labour in host countries (Massey, 1999). Psychologists simply describe
students’ migration decisions as being dependent on the pull and push factors (Bierbrauer & Pedersen, 1996; Richmond, 1993). The pull and push factors encompass the sociologists’ and economists’ perceptions, therefore, they are discussed in detail below.

Push factors are the reasons that spur international students to leave their home counties for another (Bierbrauer & Pederson, 1996; Richmond, 1993). Chirkov et al. (2007) described push factors as “preservation factors” and pull factors as “self-development factors” (p. 199). Essentially, the preservation factors are considered the setbacks experienced in the home country such as perceived threat to life as seen in the cases of international students from Syria migrating to more secure countries as refugees (Rumbaut, 1991; Tamburri, 2015). Self-development factors are considered positive indicators that exist in the host countries such as better education and career opportunities which often occur in cases of voluntary migration (Richmond, 1993).

Pull factors attract international students to host country because of the benefits they derive from studying in the host country (Chirkov et al., 2007), such as good environment, world class facilities, and a strong social network of friends and families in host countries (Richmond, 1993). Additional pull factors include relatively low cost of living, safe and friendly country, and better amenities (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016). These have been recognized as socio-psychological factors that influence migration (Chirkov et al., 2007).

Some scholars argued that economic and social situations in students’ home countries may lead to push factors while the choice of host country is determined by the pull factors (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). For example, the on-going civil war in Syria has
a negative effect on its economic growth causing a push effect on the Syrians to migrate to a secure and peaceful country (Tamburri, 2015).

The three most common reasons students choose to travel to Canada for study purposes are the high standard of education, Canada’s reputation as a secure country and finally, the friendliness and tolerance of Canadian society (CBIE, 2016). World class facilities available in host countries may also influence the choice to travel to Canada as 68% of university students’ choice of post-secondary institution was influenced by the recreational facilities available in such institutions (Forrester, 2014).

From the foregoing, it is not surprising that the percentage of international students studying in Canada increased by 92% between 2008 and 2015 (CBIE, 2016). According to a study conducted on 6,241 parents from 15 countries, 60% reported they will consider a university education abroad for their child because of better job opportunities (Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, (HSBC), 2015). Benefits of studying abroad include available opportunities to gain a wealth of experience, cultural values and ideas, increased self-reliance and confidence, and better earning potential (HSBC, 2015).

As students’ migration for educational pursuits has its benefits, there are also drawbacks. Foreign education places a financial burden on students. For example, living expenses constitute one-third of the entire cost of education (Martin, 2013). Other constraints include long travel-time between home country and host country and the difficulty experienced with exchange rates between countries (HSBC, 2015).
2.5.3 Experiences of international students.

International students face various challenges adapting to a new environment. These cause a strain on their academic pursuits (Chiu, 1995; Kwon, 2009). It is normal to experience certain difficulties like stress associated with acculturation when moving from one place to another and this is a common experience of international students (Bradley, 2000; Chiu, 1995; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Acculturation is a process of either cultural or psychological change that occurs as a result of the meeting of two or more cultures (Berry, 2005). To meet the challenges, the U of R has resources available, such as the UR International Peer advisor program that offers various services that support both international and domestic students’ successful transition into the university. Some of the services offered include orientation, academic advising and provision of valuable information to assist students in navigating the university (UR International, 2018).

Acculturative stress is experienced as a result of change of environment (Ward, 1997). The challenges experienced by international students’ come in various forms such as feeling alienated, depression and loneliness, language barriers, discrimination, and other problems associated with change of environment (Kwon, 2009; Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Walker, Halpenny, & Deng, 2011). These challenges may be associated with anxiety and depression caused as a result of being away from home for a long time. This may ultimately lead to poor academic performance and withdrawal from the university if left unaddressed (Cemalcilar & Falbo, 2008). These challenges may also be associated with lack of social support in host country (Smith & Khawaja, 2011).
Speaking of social support, as previously stated, the U of R had approximately 1,600 international students, about 14% of the entire student population, in 2017 (Huck, 2017). The U of R offers various forms of social support for students’ transition through diverse support programs/groups (Huck, 2017). These programs include the Ambassador program and the UR International peer advisor program. These programs afford students the opportunity to develop friendships with people from other cultural backgrounds to gain a sense of belonging, provide an opportunity to share their experiences and participate in international orientations and workshops that could ease settling in (Huck, 2017). Some scholars reported that the success of the international students’ transitions from their home country to the host country can be determined by the level of psychological relationships they have with host country and their home country (Berry, 2003; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). Essentially, how quickly they are able to adjust to the new environment depends on the pull and push factors discussed earlier (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). A study on international students’ adjustments to a post-secondary institution revealed that the more international students assimilate into the host culture, the fewer challenges they encounter (Glass, 2014). For example, those who have friends and families in host countries will likely find the transition less challenging. Berry (2003) stated that international students with psychological attachment to both host and home country tend to have minimal or no challenge with transition. Other scholars averred that regardless of a strong relationship with host or home country, international students are faced with socio-psychological challenges within the first few months of their transition (Cemalcilar & Falbo, 2008).
Oberg (1960) was the first scholar to introduce the theory of culture shock as the feeling of losing one’s sense of direction, otherwise referred to as disorientation. According to Amundson (2000), culture shock is described as a state of mental confusion experienced by students who leave their home country for a new country and this is one of the major challenges facing international students. Pedersen (1997) identified symptoms of culture shock, including psychic disorientation, feeling of incapability, uneasiness, and failure to identify right behaviours from wrong ones. Oberg (1960) noted that culture shock experiences vary from person to person. Black and Mendenhall (1991) identified the different transition stages of new international students. These include the honeymoon, culture shock, initial adjustment, mental isolation and the acceptance stage.

The honeymoon stage is full of high expectations as international students are happy and optimistic about starting classes and about being in their host country (Glass, 2014). They experience culture shock in the second stage as they are faced with unfamiliar culture and the reality of adjusting to their new environment. At this stage, they experience stress, frustration and confusion (Glass, 2014). In order to overcome these challenges, they come up with new ways of reasoning and interaction, which leads to the third stage. This is the stage of initial adjustment where they begin to adjust gradually with increasing confidence. Next is mental isolation, where they have gained a considerable amount of confidence which makes them to compare their host country to their home country. The final stage is acceptance; it is a stage where they have now developed a positive mindset towards their host country. This stage comes with new experiences where they can connect with people and find happiness (Glass, 2014).
Another problem faced by international students is financial pressure (Bradley, 2000). They pay more in tuition than their domestic counterparts, yet this financial constraint does not prevent their educational pursuits (Galeazzi, 2013). Using the U of R as an example, there has been an increase of 90% in the intake of international students since 2010 (Uregina, 2015). It can thus be presumed that international students are not discouraged from pursuing their academic goals despite the financial obstacles. Galeazzi (2013) noted that international students do not have the same opportunities to access financial aid as their domestic counterparts. In the bid to meet their financial demands, they may work extra hours which can take a great deal of their time and may undermine their academic pursuits (Galeazzi, 2013; Peykari et al., 2015).

Finally, in curbing the problems associated with international students’ transition, Kwon (2009) suggested the following: developing strong support programs and activities to reduce anxiety and providing effective counselling and orientation services. He further suggested that the university and the community should work together to accommodate their needs so as to establish a smooth transition for international students. Smith and Khawaja (2011) noted that a thorough action should be considered which will integrate mental, psychosocial and behavioural elements to improve international students’ transition.

2.5.4 Leisure and physical activity among international students.

It is established that a fit and active lifestyle has many advantages (Yoh, 2009). The benefits of participating in regular physical activity are numerous and they include social, psychological, and physiological gains (Paluska & Schwenk, 2000). Examples include increased strength, reduced anxiety, weight loss management, and prevention of
chronic diseases such as diabetes (Biddle, 1993; Nieman, 2003; Paluska & Schwenk, 2000; Speed, 2007). Research shows that international students rarely participate in regular physical activities despite the known benefits (Peykari et al., 2015). Studies also show that some students do not consider regular physical activity a priority due to the challenges they face while studying abroad (Yoh, 2009). These challenges include cultural and socio-psychological problems including acculturation (Cemalcilar & Falbo, 2008). Other challenges include time constraint as a result of combining their studies with other social engagements (Peykari et al., 2015).

Stack and Iwasaki (2009) observed that leisure helps to accelerate the adaptation of immigrants in host countries. While limited literature exists on international students’ leisure and physical activity with regards to acculturation (Glass, 2014; Stodolska & Walker, 2007), to date, no one has examined African students’ leisure constraints in a Canadian university. Artinger et al. (2006) stated that sport participation among international students does not only speed up their transition process but also helps in improving their capacity to relate and work with other cultural groups in host country. Iwasaki (2002) noted that leisure is a useful technique in curbing and managing the problems associated with students’ transition. Similarly, Coleman and Iso-Ahola (1993) observed that participation in leisure enhances physical and cognitive development and minimizes stress. However, Suminski, Petosa, Utter, and Zhang (2002) remarked that leisure as a means of managing problems associated with students’ transition is not achieved by many international students. International students could participate in leisure or physical activities to manage the problems associated with their transition but
they reported being unable to as a result of time constraints (Gyurcsik et al., 2006) and finances (Galeazzi, 2013).

Leisure allows international students from various cultural backgrounds come together to engage in recreation which builds a stronger sense of community (Glass, 2014). Sport and recreation serve as mechanisms for immigrants to gain knowledge about new patterns of behaviour in host country by socializing with people (Stodolska & Alexandris, 2004). This chapter considered relevant literature on leisure, leisure time physical activity, campus recreation and international students. The next chapter sets out the methodology for this study on African students’ LTPA at the U of R, being a typical Canadian university.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the epistemology guiding this study and the methodology adopted, detailed discussion of the methods, including the participants and the data collection and analysis processes are also included. Finally, trustworthiness is examined alongside reflexivity and ethical considerations.

3.1 Ontology and Epistemology

It is important to understand the epistemology (research paradigm) that informed this research. Paradigm is from the Latin word - ‘paradigma’, which means ‘pattern’; thus, research paradigm is defined as a simple set or pattern of views or opinions that influences an action or guides a research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Willis, 2007). Behind every research study is a philosophical foundation and assumption that a researcher formulates about the world (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Ontology and epistemology form the two important aspects of philosophy called metaphysics (Willis, 2007). Epistemology is from a Greek word (episteme) which literally means knowledge (Krauss, 2005). Therefore, epistemology is the study of knowledge and justified beliefs which act as a foundation upon which research is built (Whaley & Krane, 2011). Epistemology influences methodology. It focuses on the knowledge of reality while methodology refers to the specific procedures used to acquire knowledge (Krauss, 2005).

Whaley and Krane (2011) noted that there is no singular approach to comprehending the phenomenon behind world-views. Similarly, Willis (2007) stated that there are many competing paradigms in the social sciences. These worldviews determine the way the world is perceived, provide the researcher with a sense of direction and guide the research (Creswell, 2014). Willis (2007) identified the three paradigms as
postpositivism, critical theory, and interpretivism, which has been adopted as the foundation for this study. There are several research methodologies available and the researcher has the responsibility to carefully choose the most appropriate design for the study. It is therefore important to possess adequate knowledge and understand the methodology chosen in order to perform a proper research procedure (Groenewald, 2004).

3.2 Methods

Interpretivism is used to make meaning out of people’s lived experiences, using their stories (Gephart & Rynes, 2004; Holt, Tamminen, Tink, & Black, 2009). It examines the deep meanings and understanding people create from their personal experiences and perceptions (Gephart & Rynes, 2004). The researcher’s role is active and entails utilizing probing questions to gather information and understand people’s experiences (Willis, 2007).

I adopted an interpretive approach because it examines how people interpret and make meaning out of their experiences (Lin, 1998; Willis, 2007). These meanings entail participants’ “intentions and actions” which they attribute to different events or phenomena (Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, & Symon, 2006). Interpretive inquiry, therefore, reveals the interpretations planted in interactions or texts (Denzin 2001, p. 52). Furthermore, this approach was adopted based on the argument that without interpretation, the social world cannot be comprehended or understood (Bernstein, 1983).

Interpretivism lends itself to a qualitative research design. Qualitative research involves analyses of data obtained from sources such as in-depth observations and
interviews in a non-statistical manner (Forman, Creswell, Damschroder, Kowalski, & Krein, 2008). Qualitative research, like any other approach, has its strengths and shortcomings. I have selected qualitative methodology for the following reasons:

1. It affords the researcher the opportunity to capture in-depth descriptions of participants’ experiences and events from their own viewpoint (Gephart & Rynes, 2004; Griffin, 2004). A qualitative approach provides the opportunity to examine, describe in detail and interpret personal and social experiences of research participants (Smith, 2003).

2. It looks beyond the number of participants or responses. The data is considered to be of good quality when it gives ‘rich descriptions’ of the social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 10) or an illustrative account of the phenomenon being investigated (Smith, 2003).

3. It entails deriving meanings from pieces of text (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Gephart & Rynes, 2004; Smith, 2003). In other words, the transcripts are read several times so as to get a sense of the texts and derive meanings (Creswell, 2002). Also, to represent or demonstrate what the participants have said, researchers give comprehensible names to phrases and words used by the participants, a process referred to as theming (Austin & Sutton, 2014). These are few of the ways to derive meanings from pieces of texts.

4. It uses a theoretical point of view to guide the study which assists the researchers in knowing their participants (Creswell, 2002). It is also an interactive process which allows participants to respond to inquiries posed by the researcher. It is
interactive because data is collected through in-depth and intimate understanding of participant's experiences.

5. It allows events to be understood because the researcher is able to collect data in the natural setting (Gephart & Rynes, 2004; McLeod, 2008). It is important to study a phenomenon in its natural world because it gives clear understanding and insights into the meaning of the social context studied.

3.2.1 Interpretive approach.

Interpretive research is derived from the word “interpret” which means “to elucidate or bring out meaning, or to explain or understand behaviour” (Williams, 2003, p. 49). This approach, otherwise known as hermeneutics, is a branch of knowledge concerned with interpretation which gives meaning to experience (Denzin, 2001). These meanings are the thoughts of individuals embedded in the narration of their experiences (Denzin, 2001). Denzin further explained that “meaningful interpretations of human experiences can come only from those persons who have thoroughly immersed themselves in the phenomena they wish to interpret and understand” (p. 46).

Consequently, researchers are able to effectively communicate their research only when they fully understand participants’ experiences. Furthermore, Leitch, Hill, and Harrison (2010) noted that “interpretive inquiry attempts to embrace the complex and dynamic quality of the social world and allows the researcher to view a social research problem holistically, get close to participants, enter their realities, and interpret their perceptions as appropriate” (p. 70). Leitch et al.’s description sums up the role interpretive inquiry plays in qualitative research. Therefore, interpretivism is based on producing “thick and rich descriptions” (Leitch et al., 2010, p. 70) of true events as lived in reality which
reveal and maintain the actual meanings that participants attribute to them (Gephart & Rynes, 2004). Also, comprehending the meaning of phenomena would not be possible without such rich descriptions which Denzin (2001) referred to as the “cornerstone of interpretation studies” (p. 54). Denzin added that interpretive inquiry “can offer explanations of how certain conditions came into existence and why they persist” (p. 43).

This approach is said to be developed out of consideration for those in the society who are voiceless and is said to date back to the late 18th century (Erickson, 1985). Essentially, it was developed for groups of people who lacked the power to express their opinions, for example, people who are marginalized in parts of Africa and Asia under the European-colonial control (Erickson, 1985). Interpretivists argue that for human actions to be understood, one has to gain an understanding from the participants’ viewpoint (Denzin, 2001). This means understanding is crucial for effective interpretation (Angen, 2000). All researchers are faced with a hermeneutic situation where they state in advance their own interpretation of the events they are investigating. This helps them to have a clear understanding of the meanings and values that may influence their interpretation and address them accordingly (Denzin, 2001). Interpretivism integrates two important lines of thought—relativism and rationalism. Both originated from Roman and Greek philosophy (Willis, 2007). While relativism is the notion that people’s customs and experiences are shaped by the real life that can be perceived by their senses, rationalism believes that the knowledge acquired from the experiences derived from the senses is not always the most appropriate way to comprehend things (Willis, 2007).

The interpretivist worldview disregards the positivist ideology which holds that the same research techniques can be used in examining the human culture (Willis, 2007).
According to Willis (2007), interpretivists argue that our environment, alongside other factors, shapes or influences our behaviour. He illustrated his point by giving an analogy that what causes a metal to change its form may be as a result of either pressure or heat found in its environment. Similarly, it was argued that knowledge is not presumed to be valid or objective but rather revealed by the interpreted worlds of individuals who communicate it (Denzin, 2001). To obtain a clear understanding of how people interpret the world around them, interpretivists use qualitative methods like interviews, observations, and detailed analysis of people from their point of view (Willis, 2007).

Having carefully considered interpretive worldview, the goal of my research is to examine in detail, the experiences of participants with regard to their LTPA participation through their shared perspectives.

Crotty (1998) expressed that it is important to give a detailed description of the methodology and methods to be applied and a justified reason for the researcher’s choice. He believes this will guide the researcher’s actions. Merriam (1998) and Creswell (2002) proposed that the choice or type of research design to be adopted should be influenced by three things: the researcher’s personal experiences, the research problems, and the target audience. In this light, the research questions influencing this study are geared towards understanding students’ experiences by gathering a wealth of information from a small sample of people - African students at the U of R. The reasons for adopting the interpretative approach for my study are listed below:

1. It captures in-depth, the perspectives, perceptions and ideas of participants to gain a better understanding of their actions. Therefore, it afforded me the
opportunity to fully gather the experiences of African students regarding their LTPA participation through their narratives and personal accounts.

2. Interpretive inquiry can be used to reveal people’s viewpoints and explanations (Holt et al., 2009).

3. This approach utilizes qualitative methods such as observations, personal documents, and interviews to capture in detail participants’ experiences. For the purpose of this research, semi-structured interviews were used.

4. This approach uses qualitative methods because it is believed that individuals are unique and their experiences differ, so they have their own reasons for acting the way they do.

5. It helps the researcher to illustrate and comprehend “participants’ meanings and the implications that divergent meanings hold for social interaction” (Gephart & Rynes, 2004, p. 457).

6. This approach afforded me an opportunity to have a close interaction with participants. This way, I gained an insider’s view of participants’ narration. This is referred to as a first-hand experience (Groenewald, 2004), such that the participants reveal the exact form in which certain events occurred in their lives.

Having examined the concept of interpretative methodology with an enumeration of the reasons for my choice of research method, the next sections will discuss the research samples, the rationale for the sample size and how they were located.

3.3 Participants

Seven participants were recruited for this study through purposive sampling from the University of Regina African Club (URAC). Purposive sampling was described by
Creswell (2002) as a method where the researcher intentionally chooses participants who will assist the researcher in understanding the research questions of a research study. It is a non-random sample chosen based on the characteristics of the population (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 1990; Tongco, 2008), which are of interest to the researcher (Williams, 2003). I had a small sample size so as to have a close connection with participants (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). Also, this small number of participants made it possible for me to competently and effectively work with less- overwhelming data, having considered the resources available to me (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Williams, 2003). The quality of the data obtained fostered an in-depth analysis of participants’ experiences. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) described this as ‘rich descriptions of the social world’ (p. 10). Consequently, revealing the meanings and experiences recounted by participants through description provided the foundation for my interpretation (Denzin, 2001). Therefore, the quality or the accuracy of this interpretive study depended largely upon the depth of the description gathered from participants (Lin, 1998).

I aimed to recruit both males and females between the ages of 18-30 years. I chose participants in this age range because it is believed that persons in this group have the tendency or capacity to be physically-active and studies also reveal that students within this age range have keen interests in physical activities more than older students (Garman, Hayduk, Crider, & Hodel, 2004; Keating et al., 2005; Leslie, Owen, Salmon, Bauman, Sallis, & Lo, 1999).

3.3.1 Recruitment.

A total of seven participants comprising of three men and four women between ages 22 and 27 years were recruited through URAC. One participant was a graduate
student and the other six were undergraduate students. URAC is a club within the U of R which aims to create a sense of community for students of African heritage. The URAC executives assisted in sharing the recruitment materials with their members by putting up a poster on their Facebook wall. This way, all the members could easily access the recruitment information. Interested persons contacted me via the institutional email address provided on the advert which included a brief introductory statement on the purpose of the research. They were then given the interview guide and a consent form containing a letter of introduction (Appendix A: Letter of Invitation) should they decide to participate.

3.3.2 Inclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria included:

1. Full-time international undergraduate or graduate students currently enrolled in any Faculty at the U of R.

2. Migrated from an African country primarily for education purposes.

3. Participants must be between 18 and 30 years of age.

4. Participants must comprehend and speak English language.

3.3.3 Exclusion criteria.

Exclusion criteria included:

1. Permanent residents (PR) or Canadian citizens.

2. Persons who have lived in Canada for more than five years. It is assumed that these persons would have settled down and stabilized to a large extent. They are unlikely to experience the same LTPA challenges as international students who
are new to the country, the Canadian educational system and may have difficulties with acculturation (Chiu, 1995).

3.4 Data Collection

This qualitative study utilized semi-structured interviews as the principal means of data collection (Williams, 2003) with the goal of conducting an in-depth enquiry into the participants’ experiences with LTPA participation. Interviews were conducted individually with the use of an interview guide in each participant’s choice of location within the university, provided that such location was conducive for the purpose of an interview. The interview guide kept the participants on track by managing the interview questions while enabling the participants to communicate their thoughts and perceptions (Davenport & Anderson, 2005). This study is exploratory because, to my knowledge, no one has conducted research on African students’ LTPA experiences in a Canadian university.

A semi-structured interview was appropriate for this research because it allowed me to ask follow-up questions based on the answers provided by the participants (Creswell, 2002). Essentially, these new questions were not contained in the interview guide and they allowed me to gain a better insight into the unique experiences of each of the participants. Semi-structured interviews therefore enabled flexibility with new and relevant ideas during dialogue. During the interview, notes were taken. One reason for this is because, in interpretive research, analysis starts as soon as the research has commenced (Williams, 2003). Each interview took about 25 – 35 minutes depending on the scope of each participant’s experiences. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.
3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a procedure that requires bringing out significant meanings from the data collected (Creswell, 2002). This is a continuing process that entails series of in-depth analyses in order to achieve a profound comprehension of the data. As noted previously, interpretivism was adopted to fully comprehend the complexity surrounding participants’ experiences since this approach involves organization and interpretation skills (Davenport & Anderson, 2005).

The transcripts were subjected to inductive analysis (Thomas, 2006). This is a structured procedure used for analyzing qualitative data where the analysis is governed by clearly identified objectives. While some studies clearly described their approach as inductive analysis (e.g., Backett & Davison, 1995; Kulczycki & Hinch, 2014); others used the approach but did not clearly describe it as such (e.g., Jain & Ogden, 1999; Marshall, 1999). The principal reason for adopting this approach was to “allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data without restraints imposed by structured methodologies” (Thomas, 2006, p. 2). Other reasons are highlighted below:

1. This approach is used for many research purposes because of its efficiency and it is also an appropriate form of analysis for qualitative data.

2. An inductive approach clearly demonstrates connections between the findings and the research purposes obtained from the source data.

3. It creates a short and succinct summary from broad and diverse raw data.

4. It is a systematic procedure because the qualitative data analysis is shaped by a clearly defined purpose.
For the stages of the inductive data analysis for this research study, I adopted Thomas’ (2006) inductive process of coding as well as Creswell’s (2002) generic steps of qualitative research design in the following order:

1. Preparing the raw data: Preliminary analysis (pre-coding) started in the course of the interview where themes were identified. Pre-coding helps to identify the emerging and recurrent themes for easy follow-up. This involves highlighting words or quotes worthy of attention from participants (Boyatzis, 1998). I transcribed the data verbatim which is a form of analysis because notes were taken during this process and these notes included interesting or puzzling things that I observed (Davidsen, 2013). I collated raw data and prepared them for analysis; this is called data cleaning. This included making extra copies and also creating a backup.

2. Familiarization with text: The transcripts were read several times in order to have a general overview of the data (Leitch et al., 2010; Smith, 2003). Repeated reading of the transcript allowed me to observe patterns and categorize accurately; this is known as chunking (Creswell, 2002). Notes were kept at this stage (Mukherjee, 2016). This was necessary, not just to remove irrelevant information gathered in the course of the interview but also to highlight repetition of ideas, differences, similarities, and refutations (Groenewald, 2004; Smith, 2003). It also helped in recording thoughts and observations from the interview experience.

3. Creation of categories: Comprehensive analysis then commenced, beginning with coding. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) defined coding as a process that
allows one to label or tag a pool of text in order to facilitate analysis. The analysis was carried out manually because of the small number of participants under consideration. The coding was carried out by identifying and highlighting common phrases, including re-occurring words used by the participants. These common phrases were moved to small-sized cards for easy comparison and they eventually formed the themes and categories. Categories were named using the true words of the participants. This was also carried out to get a mental understanding of the themes and categories.

4. Overlapping coding and uncoded text: The themes and categories generated from codes were further examined and analyzed. This involved checking for overlapping themes and patterns in order to categorize the identical data which lead to the major findings (Creswell, 2002). These themes were reinforced by direct quotations from the participants to generate a useful structure in connecting ideas.

5. Continuing revision and refinement of category system: The themes were interpreted to include quotations and drawing of some analogies from the participants’ viewpoints. This stage involved data interpretation where a summary was provided while considering the context from which the themes were generated (Moustakas, 1994). Creswell (2002) opined that the findings generated may either corroborate or oppose an earlier study. This final step entailed making meaning of the entire data including generating ideas (Creswell, 2002).
3.6 Trustworthiness

Pilot and Beck (2014) described trustworthiness as the level of credence that obtained data possesses and the procedures involved in ensuring the quality of that study. Trustworthiness is an important criterion for quality in a qualitative study. Trustworthiness addresses credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability of a qualitative study (Shenton, 2004).

Credibility involves ensuring that the results are believable from the participant’s perspective. Therefore to ensure that the study is credible, I adopted Guba’s (1981) credibility guideline that steady observation must be ensured and both participants and researcher must establish adequate or sufficient time together. The idea of spending adequate or sufficient time together is to enable the researcher capture in detail or have sophisticated understanding of individual phenomena during the interview session. This is required also to establish a sense of trust and confidence between the parties and to aid observation. Also, I ensured that participation was made voluntary so that participants could genuinely give their best efforts, which in this context means to be completely open and not withhold any information that may be helpful or relevant.

Dependability investigates the consistency of the processes involved in the research; it is therefore maintained if the processes involved in the study are consistent over time (Pilot & Beck, 2014; Trochim, 2006). In addressing the issue of dependability in qualitative research, I ensured that the enquiry processes were consistent and the entire study is well detailed so that another researcher can carry out a similar research following the same procedure.
Transferability is the degree to which the findings of a study can be used in several ways by other people (Connelly, 2016; Pilot & Beck, 2014). I ensured that transferability can be made possible so that the results from this study can be applied in other contexts or used by other researchers. To achieve this, I provided a comprehensive account of facts as to facilitate comparison and evaluation of findings (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability is the extent to which the results of the study can be authenticated or validated (Golafshani, 2003; Shenton, 2004; Trochim, 2006). Certain strategies were adopted to ensure that confirmability is attained and these included allowing my supervisors to take a critical look at the results. In addition to this, data appraisal, otherwise known as data auditing, can be carried out. This is a method that gives a clear description of the entire research process from start to finish (Trochim, 2006). Also, participants were provided with their interview transcripts for verification purposes. This gave the participants the opportunity to look through the transcribed data to verify that it matched the responses they provided. These steps are important to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of a qualitative study. In light of the above, it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that he provides adequate information on the procedures and conduct of the research for readers to appraise the trustworthiness and the quality of the research process (Leitch et al., 2010). I adhered to these steps in order to achieve trustworthy and credible results.

3.7 Reflexivity

The importance of reflexivity within a qualitative research study cannot be overemphasized. Dowling (2006) explained reflexivity as the systematic attention given to the researcher’s role in a qualitative research. Williams (2003) and Kirby, Greaves,
and Reid (2006) noted that reflexivity is the self-recognition and awareness of a researcher’s standpoint in connection to the participants under study. Also, to be reflexive, a researcher either needs to consider his position as a stranger or as an insider (Williams, 2003). Reflexivity in qualitative research has been shown not to only give credibility to the research (Dowling, 2006) but also to strengthen the confidence the researcher has towards his work (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). It affords the researcher the opportunity to recognize personal perspectives, biases, and suppositions at the start of the study and consider the effect his presence will have on the participants (Creswell, 2002; Hahn, 2006). This is necessary because the researcher is closely involved in the entire process including the findings of the study (Horsburgh, 2003). Summarily, reflexivity is about being aware of my own assumptions and biases before beginning the research and throughout the research process (Creswell, 2002). To ensure that reflexivity is maintained, I kept a journal to express my thoughts, perspectives and experiences. This was important to maintain open-mindedness all through the data collection and analysis phases.

3.7.1 My position.

In order to avoid misconceived meanings and values, a researcher must express in advance the pre-existing interpretations of the events or phenomena under investigation (Denzin, 2001). Again, every researcher brings their interpretations and preconceived ideas to a research problem and they are known to be a strong supporter for one viewpoint or the other (Denzin, 2001). Mine is not an exception. In other words, questioning my rationale for choosing this topic led to a number of preconceived ideas.
My experience as an international student informed this research. I am an international student who actively engaged in physical activity before moving to Canada for my graduate studies. As I grew older, I became more passionate about physical activities. My motivation for considering this research topic was the growing rate of physical inactivity among university students caused by factors such as diet and lack of social support (Pengpid et al., 2015). It is also important to know that out of every ten students, four were physically inactive in a recent study that examined university students across 23 countries (Pengpid et al., 2015). Similarly, LTPA was found among a considerable amount of student to be below the advocated level (Haase et al., 2004). Hence, physical inactivity and high rates of obesity are spreading among young people in North America and becoming a major concern (WHO, 2000).

I conducted a small-scale study with four African students at the U of R. This was a class assignment to examine students’ experiences and the factors that influenced their LTPA participation. The goal of the assignment was to gain knowledge and practice in qualitative research. The results and knowledge derived from the study have developed into this qualitative study – one that examines the factors that influence the LTPA of African students attending the U of R. The findings from the assignment indicated a high physical inactivity among international students, corroborating previous studies that reveal low LTPA participation among postsecondary students (e.g., Arzu et al., 2006; Galeazzi, 2013; Gyurcsik et al., 2006; Peykari et al., 2015; Shifman et al., 2011; Steenhuis et al., 2009). I was able to relate with their struggles and this was because my experiences are similar, being an international student myself. This is not because I dislike participating in physical activities or because I am unaware of the
benefits. However, many personal factors (e.g. lack of time), have affected my LTPA participation in recent times. The four students who participated in the study assignment had positive reaction towards physical activity and they also knew the benefits associated with active participation but had challenges like increasing tuition, financial pressure, weather conditions, and lack of social support. These are just few of the challenges that they are faced with.

From personal experience, I intimately understand the financial struggles and other concerns of international students. International students, by the CIC regulations, are expected to maintain full time status during the duration of their studies. Working multiple jobs as a full time student can limit one’s time to engage in LTPA. Therefore, I acknowledge any perspectives I might bring to the study regarding international students’ physical inactivity lifestyles due to time constraint and increasing financial pressures like high tuition. My personal experiences may not be entirely detached from the research (Genoe & Liechty, 2017).

In conclusion, while reflexivity enhances trustworthiness (Dowling, 2006), this study is trustworthy as I was involved in the entire process at different stages of design, interview, transcriptions, analysis, and the dissemination of the results as the primary investigator. Importantly, I attempted to reproduce the participants’ narratives and analyzed the data within the scope of their accounts.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics was explained by Shamoo and Resnik (2009) as the detailed examination of moral issues that differentiates acceptable from unacceptable conduct in studies with human participants. Somekh and Lewin (2011) noted that ethical standards
and procedures are very important in research and must be duly followed in order to promote the integrity of research findings. Before recruiting participants, ethics approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Board (REB) of the University of Regina to ensure that the safety of the participants involved in the study are not violated.

Participation in this study was voluntary. Participants were duly informed of their rights to withdraw from the study before the analysis began which was four weeks after the date of interview; after that, withdrawal was not possible since transcription and some form of analysis would have occurred, and it would therefore not be possible to withdraw data without significant difficulties. This was to prevent setbacks because it would be difficult to retract the data after analysis. Participants were informed of the procedure guiding the research. None of the participants withdrew from the study.

Participants were given an informed consent form to sign before the interview began. It contained relevant information on participants’ rights, the confidential nature of the interview and data dissemination (See Appendix B: Participant Consent Form). The form provided participants with adequate information to help them make a rational and informed decision on whether they wished to participate in the research. To ensure their confidentiality, participants were described using pseudonyms. The use of pseudonyms prevents participants from being identifiable by the public. Also, revealing information that can easily identify the participants such as personal descriptions were excluded. The interviews were audio-recorded and I personally transcribed the data in order to ensure accuracy and maintain confidentiality.

The issue of power differentiation or coercion of any kind did not arise and non-willingness to participate in the study had no impact on any relationship between the
participants and me. Finally, my research supervisors were granted access to the primary data collected. The data will be stored in a filing cabinet in my supervisor’s office in the Centre for Kinesiology and Health Studies for a period of 6 years after which papers will be shredded and any electronic recordings deleted.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the methodology adopted in conducting this research. The choice of research method, the criteria for selecting the research participants, and ethical considerations were discussed in detail. In the next chapter, I will set out my research findings.
Chapter 4: Findings

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research findings, beginning with a profile of each participant’s demographics including their financial status which entails how they pay their tuition, whether they receive financial support from their family, and the number of hours that they work for per week, if working. This chapter also sets out the emerging themes and sub-themes from the research. There are two major themes. The first theme is titled perspectives of leisure. It explores the types of leisure activities that participants engage in. It has two sub-themes namely: leisure as a relaxant and fitness improvement. The second major theme, factors influencing LTPA, has four sub-themes namely: social support, commitment, environmental factors and time. Under each of these sub-themes, there are different classes which describe the participants’ profound experiences as gleaned from their narration (See Figure 4.1 for a list of themes and their corresponding sub-themes).
Figure 4.1

Themes and corresponding sub-themes
4.1 Participants’ Profiles

4.1.1. Nancy.

Nancy is a 22 year old undergraduate student from East Africa. She is in her final year. She receives significant support from her family in East Africa. In addition, she supports her education by working. Nancy did not disclose the number of hours that she works for per week. She is engaged in leisure activities like walking and belly dancing. Belly dance is a form of dance that involves the complex movement of the torso originating in Egypt. It is an activity that involves core exercise. She is enrolled in a belly dance class and does this regularly during the winter while she explores other forms of moderate activities during the summer like taking walks to the parks in the morning.

4.1.2. Sophie.

Sophie is a 27 year old undergraduate student from Northern Africa. She is solely responsible for financing her education. She works 20 hours per week, the maximum stipulated by the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (“CIC”) rules. Her prospective career motivates her to actively engage in physical activities. She believes that her career path is physically demanding. This is the basis of her belief in the need to prepare both physically and mentally. She visits the gym daily to work out. Sophie rated her physical activity level as 8/10. She engages in cardio, weight lifting and other high intensity activities.

4.1.3. Bab.

Bab is a 24 year old undergraduate student from East Africa. He works 40 hours per week and also receives financial support from his family. His drive for active
engagement in physical activities is influenced by his job as he currently works with kids. A health conference he attended while in high school played a huge role in his life. There, he learnt the importance of maintaining an active lifestyle. He rated his physical activity level as 6/10 in the winter and 9/10 in summer. Bab participates in intensive activities like weight lifting, endurance activities and other activity-groups that build core muscles.

4.1.4. Morris.

Morris is a 23 year old undergraduate student from East Africa. She is in her second year. She works over 20 hours per week and supports herself through university. Morris engages in moderate activities like walking and other forms of casual activities during winter while she engages in more intensive activities during summer such as running and cycling. She used to frequent the gym with her friend but stopped because she did not notice any significant or visible changes in her body. She reported that she was fit while in high school and she is currently not as active as she would like. Morris rated her physical activity level as 6/10.

4.1.5. Prisla.

Prisla is a 23 year old undergraduate student Southern Africa. She supports herself through university. She chose not to disclose the number of hours she works per week. She does not see a need to visit the gym to work out as she believes she is fit and of a healthy weight. She was actively involved in sports and physical activities in Zimbabwe during her high school years but stopped physical activity when she got to Canada. Prisla acknowledged that she currently lives a sedentary lifestyle as she rarely
exercises during her leisure time. She is however fully aware of the benefits of LTPA participation.

4.1.6. Ahmed.

Ahmed is a 27 year old undergraduate student with dual citizenship in both Northeast African and East African countries. He spent most of his early years in Somalia where his family resides. Ahmed indicated that he once had a scholarship but at the time of interview, he was putting himself through university. Ahmed is an ardent user of the gym and he is very passionate about exercise. He finds time to exercise despite his busy schedule. He engages in intensive exercise like weight lifting and other activities that work on core muscle groups. He rated his physical activity level as 10/10. He is self-motivated and he believes that active living and consistent exercise are a gateway to good health.

4.1.7. Yema.

Yema is a 24 year old graduate student in his second year West Africa. He is supporting himself through university by working 20 hours per week. He enjoys playing basketball and soccer whenever he has the opportunity. He also enjoys walking during summer. He rated his physical activity level as 3-4/10. He acknowledged that he is underutilizing his leisure time. Yema felt that his LTPA participatory level is low and he attributed this to his schedule as a graduate student in the department of computer science.

4.2 Perspectives of Leisure

This theme revealed the various ways in which the participants perceived leisure and how they spent their free time. It further revealed the various types of activities they
were engaged in. Under this theme, two sub-themes emerged, namely: leisure as a relaxant and fitness improvement. These two sub-themes are perceived as the diverse ways participants have benefitted or continue to benefit from leisure participation.

**4.2.1. Leisure as a relaxant.**

Participants perceived leisure as a form of relaxation - a way to take time off from their busy schedules. They derived enjoyment and satisfaction from engaging in the activities they adopted. They all recognized leisure activities as a way of unwinding or releasing mental tension through different pursuits ranging from casual to intensive activities. For example, Bab indicated that leisure is an activity that a person is not forced to do. He stated that: “[Leisure has] something to do with extra-curricular activities, something to do with relaxation and fun, something you are not forced into”. Nancy stated that: “I guess leisure to me is a time to relax, when I’m not engaged in study or work activity”. Yema perceived leisure as an activity that alleviates him of built-up stress and pressure from work and academics. He said: “It relieves stress especially the stress from mental work”. Yema also noted that he rests better after working out, even from simple activities like walking. All the participants agreed that leisure-time is often spent in a manner that is free from coercion or pressure. Participants considered the pleasure of having free time, to spend in any manner that they deem fit, as having a relaxing effect on them, as opposed to their scheduled work or study-related activities.

Despite the stress that they experience in their daily lives, participants found ways to engage in leisure activities. While some engage in casual leisure, others engage in what is considered serious leisure. Participants who spend considerable amount of
time on their devices or play video games as a way of entertainment or relaxation are involved in casual leisure. For example, Yema said: “I prefer to watch basketball or watch football to watching other programs on the television”. Nancy also said: “I watch comedies, series, or cartoons; I go to the movies with my sister depending on if she is here with me or I read a book”. In addition to the time Nancy spends on her devices, she noted that her dance class affords her the opportunity to release mental tension:

[Dancing] has helped in de-stressing. I guess that’s a benefit. It’s a way of me de-stressing. When I go for my dance, I am less stressed. That will be the benefit as it reduces the amount of stress that I am under so I’m not as stressed when I get back to my academic activity.

The attributes of Nancy’s dance classes may be considered serious leisure. Nancy’s zeal for improvement and her desire to learn new dance moves keeps her motivated and provides her with a sense of accomplishment. According to Kleiber et al. (1986), serious leisure entails activities carried out purposefully and that require active body movements. As seen from Nancy’s experience, serious leisure can also have a relaxing effect on participants.

Ahmed spends his free time playing video games and does minimal exercise to help his body relax. He noted that leisure activities helped him concentrate and reduced stress each time he was worn out: “Whenever I am stressed, exercising de-stresses me”. In Morris’ opinion, casual leisure activities do not require a lot of effort. As part of her casual leisure activities, Morris plays music and watches Netflix. In addition, Morris rides her bicycle for fun. She said: “When it is not cold, I ride to church”. She also revealed that leisure reduces pressure: “When I’m stressed and I go running on the treadmill, I feel so refreshed when I come back”. Sophie felt that consistent exercise had a way of enhancing the brain activity: “Like working out is a way of releasing stress,
right? And if you are stressed out, there is no way you can study. If you go to the gym and work out and become stressed, you will have fresh mind”.

Remarkably, all the participants had something to say regarding how leisure-time activities, whether casual or serious leisure, made them feel relaxed and rejuvenated. They specifically considered LTPA in their accounts of how leisure serves as a relaxant.

4.2.2. Fitness improvement.

Participants who actively engage in LTPA recounted that it improves their health. Participants reported that engagement in leisure-time physical activities had a positive effect on their overall wellness. For example, Ahmed’s passion for general wellness and consistent exercise afforded him the opportunity to stay in good health: “It makes me fit. I work out not to be overweight, it helps me lose weight”. He believed that coming to Canada exposed him to unhealthy lifestyles like eating junk food while regular exercise keep him fit and healthy. He compared his home country with Canada and expressed that he did not have to consciously engage in LTPA in his home country because his general day-to-day activities engaged him physically. He also did not have to consider shedding weight while in home but since he has been in Canada, this has not been the case. In addition to less rigorous daily activities in Canada, Ahmed’s meal choices, which include junk food, also contribute to his weight gain. He said:

Back then, I was basically walking. I wasn’t doing much exercise but I walked a lot which is quite different in Canada because you gain a lot of weight here and so you need to work out to shed some fat.

Ahmed spends two to three hours each time he visits the gym: “Sometimes I work out, sometimes I run, I lift heavy weights to build my muscle”. He added that: “Sometimes I work on my chest, sometimes I do arms, and sometimes I work out for my abs”.

80
While Ahmed was concerned with losing weight, Bab’s participation in intensive activities is as a result of the demands of his job. Bab works with kids and he considers it necessary to constantly keep fit. He revealed that: “I could go into the gym or go swimming depending on my workload”. Another participant, Sophie, also considered the impact of physical activity on her employment plans. She said: “I do cardio and lift weight because I am preparing myself for my future career which is physically demanding”. She further revealed: “If I’m not in the gym, I am at the university wrestling club”. Sophie noted that her engagement in leisure activities enhanced her physical appearance, increased her tolerance level and also improved her mind and character. She stated: “I look good, I’m healthy, like I said, I can climb stairs without getting out of breath or anything like that; staying healthy as I grow older too…my skin looks good”. It appeared that Sophie’s participation in LTPA improved her resilience such that she was able to undertake intensive activities without tiring out quickly or running out of breath.

Regular physical activities during leisure-time also enhance cardiovascular system. For example, Yema explained that his engagement in leisure activity had a way of improving his heart function; “It makes me more active and physically fit… I think it’s generally helps my heart beats”. In addition, Yema claimed that constant leisure engagement strengthened him and afforded him the opportunity to improve his mastery in the game of basketball. He said: “In one day, I learnt how to better my ball handling in basketball. And I did it in one day and learnt it”. Similarly, Nancy observed that her belly dance sessions increased her strength level: “…physical engagement does a lot for my energy levels so I’m more energized when I’m done working out as opposed to just
sitting every day, sitting around doing nothing”. In summary, participants perceived that leisure engagement, particularly physically active leisure, contributes to their fitness and overall health.

4.3 Factors influencing LTPA.

The factors influencing LTPA formed the second major theme in this study. These factors are perceived as hindering or encouraging LTPA participation among participants. These factors can otherwise be referred to as influencers and they may be positive or negative. While participants identified the benefits accrued from LTPA participation, they also discussed various challenges that limit their participation. The perceived factors that influenced participants’ LTPA are classified into the following sub-themes: social support, commitment, environmental factors and time.

4.3.1 Social support.

Social support is described as the awareness that exists when a person feels he belongs to a community that cares for his needs (Kendler, 1997). Participants’ social support ranged from family support to network of friends and community support. Some participants recognized that LTPA afforded them the opportunity to nurture and maintain relationships which further encouraged them to continue participating in LTPA. Engaging in leisure activities with a strong support system like friends and relatives activates some participants’ interests and helps them improve or maintain their LTPA participation. While some participants perceived that lack of social support limited their LTPA pursuits, others perceived that the presence of a support person ignited their LTPA pursuits. The presence or lack of social support impacted the participants in the
following ways: building and maintaining friendships, feeling unsupported and feeling supported by others.

**4.3.1.2 Building and maintaining friendship.**

Participants reported that building and maintaining friendships was one of the reasons why they were motivated to continue their LTPA participation. They perceived that engaging in LTPA gave them the opportunity to spend time with other students. They considered it an avenue to meet other people from different cultural backgrounds, exchange ideas and learn other cultural norms and values and this made them look forward to their desired leisure-time activities. For example, Prisla recalled that she was actively involved in physical activities while in her home country and she reminisced about the opportunity that she had to relate with other LTPA participants. She remarked: “Benefits [of LTPA] include meeting new people”. Yema also stated that leisure gave him the opportunity to spend and enjoy quality time with his housemates:

I create some time because most of the times, when I am not working, I mean employment or when I am not studying, I just get exhausted and sometimes I just stay at home and play games or gist with my flatmates. Also, meeting people gets my mind off a lot of things.

Although Ahmed sometimes gets discouraged about visiting the gym, he attributed his consistent workouts to the relationships he made each time he visited the gym. He added: “One of the motivating drives in leaving the comfort of my bed for the gym is the new friends I make each time I go to work out”. Nancy also noted that she enjoys having daily walks during summer because of the new friends she makes and the diverse cultures that she is exposed to.
4.3.1.3 Feeling unsupported.

Some of the participants reported that lack of social support limited their LTPA participation. For example, Nancy’s sister occasionally visits from another province, and each time she is around, Nancy is encouraged to work out. She said: “We go for belly dance together each time she [Nancy’s sister] visits during summer”. Nancy observed that she feels unsupported and loses her zeal to participate in LTPA whenever her sister leaves. Similarly, Prisla feels unsupported especially because her friends are not interested in LTPA, she is also not self-motivated. She said: “I wouldn’t say I have a support system because the circle of people I talk to, we have the same mindset. I wouldn’t say they encourage me”. Morris also felt unsupported as she emphasized that if she had a strong support network, she would not have stopped her visits to the gym. Bab noted that lack of support system makes LTPA less exciting. He said:

If it was up to me, in summer time that I have to find activities by myself, I probably will rate 4 or 5 [out of 10] because I will have no interest…. If you go swimming by yourself, it’s definitely not the same experience if you go swimming with 4 or 5 people.

4.3.1.4 Feeling supported by others.

Some participants reported having a strong support system which encouraged their LTPA participation. Among those with strong support system is Sophie, whose friend and sister attend the gym with her. Sophie acknowledged that their presence helps her to achieve her desired LTPA goals. Similarly, Bab felt the same way as he claimed that he is able to maintain his current LTPA status as a result of the influence of the support system he has access to. He revealed that:

Sometimes, I feel I don’t want to go to the gym today, but then if you have a friend or somebody that you are accountable to, they tell you,
let’s get up, let’s go….you kind of feel obligated such that it kind of pushes you.

In addition, Bab said: “I have friends and flat-mates that play basketball, sometimes; I go with them and we even do many things together including grocery shopping”. He also recalled that he met his workout partner who also doubles as his support system in the gym and this partner has been of immense help to him regarding his LTPA participation. In Morris’ case, she once had support system and they visited the gym together. She later decided to quit visiting the gym on the basis that she saw no physical changes to her body. Morris however acknowledged the impact of her support person who assisted her during workouts in operating equipment that she could otherwise not operate. She said:

First of all, I had never been to the gym so I couldn’t just go there, she had been there before, so we used to go together and she knew how to use most of the machines. I only knew how to use the treadmill so she would help me with the cycling thing.

Nancy reported she has a support system, her sister, who visits her during summer. She stated that her sister encourages her and they both attend her dance classes together. She said: “In the summer yes, my sister is my support person…in the winter, no.” Overall, it can be perceived that the presence of a support person promoted participants’ LTPA participation.

4.3.2 Commitment.

Commitment emerged as the second sub-theme under factors influencing LTPA participation among the participants. Commitment can be simply described as the state of being dedicated to a cause. While some participants lacked commitment which limited their LTPA pursuits, others showed a considerable level of dedication that enhanced their LTPA pursuits.
4.3.2.1 Lack of commitment.

Some of the participants who claimed they are under-engaging in physical activities traced their reasons to lack of commitment. For example, Nancy recounted that she has not been physically active in Canada when compared to her time in her home country. She said: “After [leaving home], I did less; I only walk or jog or dance in Canada”. In addition, she noted that: “I became lazier; I used to work out 4 days a week [at home]”. Lack of commitment also played a huge role in Morris’ LTPA participation and because she did not notice any significant improvement in her body, she stopped visiting the gym. When asked about what she thought was responsible for her decision to stop working out, she said: “I think not so much motivation. I stopped going the minute I didn’t notice any change”. Morris however resolved to rekindle her commitment by starting LTPA with what she has easy access to. She said:

I have to make good use of the things that I have. I have a treadmill at home and never go on it because even if I can’t go to the gym, I still can use the treadmill at home; I just have to stay committed to it.

Similarly, Sophie also reported a reduction in her physical activity participation which she attributed to lack of commitment. She claimed to be busy with school and work and revealed that she had gone for months without any form of LTPA. She said: “I have been away for like four months now. Being lazy and I just got back and everything was like… [Sighs], I get tired so fast!” Prisla stated that she once considered joining the university hockey team but was discouraged by the qualifying questions she was asked. She said:

Last time I wanted to join, they were like fill in this and I don’t know what to fill. It’s like difficult because it seems they wanted people who are like pros [professionals] or those who went to high school in Canada. They asked questions like what high school did you finish from? What position did you play? How am I going to fill that out when I didn’t even have my high school
in Canada. I’m not so sure how that contributes to me getting into the team or whatever, but yeah…that kind of discouraged me from pursuing that dream.

Prisla further inferred that going to a gym outside the university requires strong dedication. She said: “I probably will have to work on my commitment. Like I said, I don’t like the gym here in school”. The stress from school-related work caused some participants to reduce their physical activity participation. Yema said that he rated his physical activity level 3 to 4 out of 10 as a result of the stress associated with his graduate program. He however admitted that his lack of commitment was also a contributing factor to his non-participation in LTPA. He said: “Other than the limited walking and basketball I play, I wouldn’t really say I do much”. Remarkably, Yema resolved to work on being better committed to LTPA rather than just his studies and his paid job.

**4.3.2.2 Dedication to LTPA.**

A number of participants acknowledged the importance of commitment and were determined to maintain and improve their LTPA participation despite the challenges associated with being international students with little financial support from their respective families. Sophie’s dedication sprung from what she watched on the television as well as what she observed in her environment. She explained that:

I watch TV show, my 600 pound life. That’s scary, or is it the fast food adverts, I also used to work in a fast food and they said…don’t eat this, don’t eat that…so you need to move around and exercise. Everything basically is just scaring me and motivating me to go to the gym and that’s what keeps me going.

She further explained that while in Sudan, she had an active daily lifestyle,

Back in [home] I don’t think I ever thought of exercise or physical activity but when I came here, I needed to be healthy and keep fit. You don’t want to be overweight. It’s a way of life back there, you see kids
running around, playing games. Active lifestyle for us back home is something you do unconsciously because it is infused into the daily lifestyle. Almost everything here is motorized so this gives you the drive to commit to an active lifestyle.

Ahmed describes himself as self-motivated and he further noted that the desirable outcome derived from participating in LTPA encourages him to remain dedicated. He said: “I think I am doing enough…what keeps me going is the results I see”. He also said: “I decide myself to do it and I have been consistent with my workout”. For Nancy, she was more active in her home country because the environment influenced her positively and the system kept her dedicated. For example, Nancy was actively involved in physical activities in high school because the school had a structured plan for those who enrolled in the school’s boarding facility. She recounted:

I was in boarding school so we used to go running back in [home] and we had that on Wednesday and Saturday then you are free to go to the field and play. We also had physical exercise classes during the week, twice a week. So it was pretty [much] four times a week.

Essentially, participants acknowledged that dedication is important with regards to LTPA participation.

4.3.3 Environmental factors.

In addition to commitment, environmental factors being a structural constraint influenced participation in LTPA. For the purpose of this study, the environmental factors perceived by the participants included extreme weather, lack of proximity and unpleasant environment. These factors influenced LTPA participation in ways discussed below.
4.3.3.1 Extreme weather.

The participants identified a connection between extreme weather, especially winter, and their physical activity participation. Participants expressed that the weather dissipated their zeal to engage in LTPA. It is an extremely rare occurrence to witness snow fall in Africa where all the participants are from. Some participants explained that it took them some time to adjust to the extreme weather conditions while others still continue to struggle as they attempt to adapt to the weather conditions. Regarding how the weather affects LTPA participation, Sophie said:

I’m lazy to go work out early in the morning. I just prefer night work out because I’m lazy to get off bed. I tried to motivate myself to come in the morning because that’s what I used to do. Before, I had a trainer and I wake up early and I enjoy doing that. But now, I keep pushing it to the night because of the extreme temperature.

Similarly, Bab at some point stopped going to the gym and attributed this to extreme weather conditions. He said: “I started gyming again few months ago. September, October, November, December, I wasn’t really active. I was only active through my job. I just started being active because summer is approaching, it’s better outside”. Some participants who practiced walking as a form of physical activity were also faced with some constraints. For example, Nancy said: “I can’t walk in winter so now it’s just dancing”. She added:

In the summer, there is better weather and more activities outdoors and it’s more convenient to engage in physical exercise. For example, jogging is easier in the summer than it is in winter. So that’s one way I encourage myself.

Similarly, other participants who prefer to walk use the public transit system during winter. Yema noted: “In the summer when I come to school, I walk a lot, but in the winter, I use the bus so there is no much physical activity at this period”. Another
participant Ahmed, who claimed to have attained an optimum level of LTPA participation also acknowledged the extreme weather as a barrier to his LTPA goals. Ahmed said: “I never had any problem at the moment except for the weather. Everybody feels cold right but when I work out I feel like warm”. For Morris, she rides her bicycle when the weather is warm: “When it’s not cold, I ride to church”. Majority of the participants experienced limited LTPA participation during extreme weather conditions.

In contrast, Prisla had a contrary point of view that extreme weather conditions inhibit LTPA participation. In her opinion, weather conditions should not limit LTPA participation or serve as an excuse from engaging in physical activities. She noted that there are physical activities that can be performed during winter and summer respectively. She specifically noted that students can engage in indoor activities during winter: “…like most of the sports I mentioned earlier [e.g., indoor basketball and indoor swimming] can be played in-door so I wouldn’t really say weather is a barrier to me if I must engage in any activities during winter”. Summarily, majority of the participants considered extreme weather as a major hindrance to LTPA participation.
4.3.3.2 Lack of proximity.

Lack of proximity as perceived by some of the participants is a structural barrier that limits their LTPA participation. Structural barriers are factors that potentially hinder a person’s ability to participate in leisure activities such as transportation and leisure facilities (Wood & Danylchuk, 2015). Some participants who considered private gyms outside the university experienced structural barriers such as distance to the gym. For example, Morris explained she would have preferred one of the private gyms to the university gyms: “I have contemplated the gyms outside but I take the bus, I don’t drive so…that’s a barrier for me”. Prisla shared her opinion about activities that may not be available for some reasons within the university premises:

Proximity may be a barrier to the nearest available facility especially if the sport is not going to be held at the university and I don’t have access to a car or to go some other place, then, I won’t bother myself to go.

For some participants who live far from the university, even if they would have considered using the university gym, distance to the university constituted a barrier for them. For example, Nancy does not use the school gym and she is rarely on campus. She said:

This semester, I’m doing my internship so I don’t come to the university at all except for seminars so most of the things I’m doing are off campus and so if I must to consider the school gym, distance won’t permit.

Sophie is not affected by proximity issues. She is an ardent user of private gyms and she spends about 10-minutes’ drive to commute from her house to the gym: She said: “I don’t see any problem driving 10 minutes to the gym daily”. From the foregoing, distance appears to be a major determinant of participants’ choice of activities and LTPA facilities.
4.3.3.3 Unpleasant environment.

A number of participants expressed their displeasure regarding the university gym. They reported that it is not encouraging or conducive for them to work out. While some described their experience at the university gym as unpleasant, others had problems with their limited and outmoded equipment. For example, Morris described her experience at the university gym as “unpleasant”. She added that: “Sometimes when you go to the gym and want to use some machines, mostly it is full”. Prisla had a similar experience. She said: “The school gym facility is not the best and is also ill-equipped”. At other times that she considered going to the school gym, she was denied access: “I don’t use the school gym. When I think of the school gym is during summer and they don’t allow you to get access because you are not taking any classes”. Prisla does not consider a visit to the gym as being necessary, but if she has to visit the gym at all, she noted that she would consider a private gym and not the university gym:

Yeah I like gyms outside the school; they are so nice like GoodLife Fitness. It’s really nice. The atmosphere is totally different from the school gym which is small and not lots of equipment. There are other affordable private gyms that could fit student budget.

Some participants had been turned back because the university gym was occupied. For example, Yema reported that a visit to the university recreation facility could be discouraging. He said:

Like sometimes, when me and my flat-mates try to go to the school gym to see if we can play basketball, that’s when they are having events there or they are having some form of sport events or all the gyms are full and that happened most times in the winter and fall.

When asked if he ever considered private gyms, Yema said: “Yeah, I attempted one. I think the gym at Plainsview College just once, I didn’t play. I just went there to watch”.
Regarding the school gym, Ahmed said: “I don’t use the university gym because most times the gym is full, they have few equipment and there are lot of people and all these could be discouraging because you can hardly get a space to work out”. Ahmed thinks the private gyms are better than the university gym: “They have more equipment, more space; some are expensive though but some are affordable still”. Sophie perceived that the university gym is not a befitting facility. She said: “The university gym is of lower standard when compared to the private gym in terms of the size, the services rendered and the equipment available to members”. None of the participants liked the university recreation centre or considered it as a facility that could help them achieve their LTPA goals.

4.3.4 Time.

Based on participants’ experiences, time is perceived as another structural factor that impacted LTPA participation. Time availability or constraint can greatly impact LTPA participation. A number of participants reported having poor time management while others simply had busy schedules and could not fully utilize their leisure time in a desirable manner. These findings are presented below.

4.3.4.1 Feeling time crunched.

Poor time management or time constraint has been considered as the greatest challenge to physical activity participation among adolescents and university students (Arzu, Tuzun, & Eker, 2006). Based on participants’ narratives, a number of them experienced busy schedules. They reported having challenges in finding a balance between their school-related activities and their employment. They noted that it was important for them to work because most of them sponsored themselves through the
university. Five participants pay their tuition by themselves, one has considerable family support but he still has to work to meet his needs, and one participant has full family support but still works. Essentially, they all have paid jobs either within the university and/or off-campus to pay for tuition, accommodation, transportation and other living expenses. For example, Sophie used to work at a fast food restaurant to raise money for school as her family annual income is less than $20,000. Similarly, Bab exclaimed:

“Time constraint! If I work full time and school full time, how many hours do I have left for physical activities? Time is a major factor”. Bab further expressed his concern that apart from commitment, time is a major determinant of LTPA participation. He stated that: “A person may be committed to an exercise but not available”. Some participants had difficulties finding a balance between their studies and work. For example, Nancy said:

I just get too busy between doing my school work and work outside of school. So I have this internship and then I have employment itself, the paid employment. Between those two, I don’t get enough time to engage in other …. I guess activities, yeah.

She further said that as one advances in life, there are more duties, responsibilities and challenges that could compete with one’s time as this was her case. For example:

Back in [home], I did more of physical activities but here in Canada, I don’t do as much as expected. I was in high school so I had fewer responsibilities but now that I am in the university, I have more responsibilities, I guess more workloads which contend with the limited time I have.

In addition to having more responsibilities as one progresses in life, she recognized that she is not often enthused to engage in LTPA due to her busy lifestyle: “It is mostly school and employment for me so I’m very busy. By the time I get home, I’m too tired to work out”. Other participants are caught up with long hours of paid jobs thus not having
enough time to engage in physical activities. Such is Ahmed’s case as he opined that: “I work 40 hours a week and that kind of affects my availability for gym work out sometimes, but each time I have ample time, I do work out more than twice a week”.

Yema also attributed his low participatory level in LTPA to time as he recalled:

> When I was in school back home..., I used to engage in sports in the hostel, I go for sports, I tried to play football, and coming to Canada, it’s majorly school, and work. I mean employment. The problem is I need to catch up with school work and try to work too. I need to see myself through school and take care of myself; I got bills and all these things.

Similarly, Prisla had problems finding a balance between her academics and creating time to engage in physical activities. She believed that being an international student comes with its challenges. For example, she narrated:

> I am an international student and it is hard to find that balance in obviously paying school fees and going to work and coming back home and studying also is a challenge. Other factors like you have to do well because school fees are a lot. That's a lot of pressure.

While Morris stopped visiting the gym mainly because she did see significant changes to her body and because her support person was unavailable, she added that time constraints also influenced her decision. She said: “I think if I have enough time, I can choose the perfect time to go to the gym. And when my friend comes back, I can fully go back to the gym”. As can be seen, majority of the participants struggled with creating time for their LTPA pursuits and they admitted that time was a major challenge which limited their LTPA participation.

4.3.4.2 Managing time well.

None of the participants admitted to managing their time in a manner that fully accommodates their LTPA pursuits. A number of participants who admitted time was a
major challenge for them in their LTPA pursuits resolved to adjust their schedules in order to accommodate, improve and maintain their LTPA participation. Nancy said:

Adjusting my schedule so it can allow me more time to be physically engaged. So let’s say the weekend strictly to physical or mental health rather than just going through the entire weekend without giving it an hour or just giving it more time.

Sophie resolved to stay persistent and dedicate more time towards her LTPA pursuits:
“Like being consistent and try to make time like 45 minutes is enough for a work out even half an hour. That’s the way I can improve myself to reach the optimal level”. She also pointed out that she will develop the habit of working out in the morning: “I will commence going to the gym early instead of working out very late; early in the morning because it’s not full”. Similarly, Bab resolved to adjust his schedule in order to maintain consistent workouts in winter. Morris also confidently stated that she was going to devote her time to exercise as she noted that: “Finding your own best time to exercise or visit the gym is a key towards success”. Overall, the majority of the participants determined to become better at managing their time in order to accommodate their LTPA pursuits, having identified time as a strong barrier in limiting their LTPA participation.

4.4 Summary

The participants in this study were both undergraduate and graduate students of the U of R. From their stories, it is evident that they understand the importance and benefits of engaging in physical activities during leisure time. They know it is crucial to develop and maintain a healthy and active lifestyle but they are faced with certain limitations which impacted their LTPA participation. By using the inductive approach, the following research objectives were achieved: to examine and understand the experiences of African students’ LTPA, their perceived barriers, their perceived health
benefits and their perceived ways of improving or maintaining their LTPA participation. According to the students’ narratives, two themes emerged from the entire data namely: perspectives of leisure and factors influencing LTPA. Under the first theme, two categories emerged, namely: leisure as a relaxant and fitness improvement while under the second theme, four categories emerged, social support, commitment, environmental factors, and time. The next chapter is a discussion of the research findings in greater details while also suggesting recommendations for improving or maintaining LTPA among students.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.0 Introduction

The goal of this qualitative study is to explore factors impacting leisure time physical activity (LTPA) of African students attending the U of R. This is an exploratory study because, to my knowledge, no one has examined the experiences of African students’ LTPA in a Canadian university including the factors, both positive and negative, that influence their participation. This study therefore contributes to the existing but growing body of knowledge on LTPA among young adults, and in this case, international students. The findings of this study provide insight into the perceived factors that impact African students’ LTPA participation, their experiences and how LTPA contributes to their wellness. The seven participants in this study provided information on how they each perceived and experienced leisure as well as the benefits derivable from LTPA participation. In this chapter, I discuss leisure variations among the participants as well as factors that inhibit or encourage participants to engage in LTPA. Factors that inhibit participation include interpersonal constraints, intrapersonal constraints, and structural constraints. Factors that enable participation include social support and dedication. Finally, practical implications of the research, limitations and recommendations for future research are considered.

5.1. Examining Leisure Variations among the Participants

This section is divided into two parts. First, I discuss the various ways leisure is perceived and observed among the participants. In the second section, I discuss the benefits derived from LTPA, as perceived by the participants. As previously stated in chapter three, leisure types can be classified into serious, casual and project-based leisure (Stebbins, 2004). Project-based leisure was not explored by the participants. Participants
largely discussed their leisure experiences in the spheres of casual and serious leisure. While serious leisure entails activities carried out purposefully that require but not limited to active body movements including activities which require strength, casual leisure requires no special skills for enjoyment but provides participants with short term satisfaction (Kleiber et al., 1986; Stebbins, 2007). All the participants engaged in casual and serious leisure-types at different points in their youth.

Participants viewed leisure as occurring when a discretionary activity is carried out based on the satisfaction obtained from doing it. This perspective lends support to both Kelly (2012) and Kraus (2011) who defined leisure as a voluntary activity that is chosen based on the fulfillment obtained from doing it. Many of the participants in the current study engaged in different leisure activities out of their own free will and derived satisfaction from them. For example, each time Morris, Yema, and Ahmed felt tired as a result of academic pressure or workload, they relaxed during their leisure time by playing games or watching their favourite television channel, socializing or spending time on their devices. At other times, they spent their leisure time cycling in summer, going to the gym to exercise, or walking. Examples of their gym activities include endurance exercise, aerobics, cardio, flexibility and balance exercise. These activities carried out by participants during their leisure time are examples of casual leisure and serious leisure respectively. The gym activities are considered serious leisure because the activities fall under hobbyist activities, one of the three types of serious leisure. As previously discussed in chapter two, hobbyist activity is a form of serious leisure that includes relaxing activities that either requires minimal exertion of energy or a demanding activity that requires certain skills (Stebbins, 2007).
Several studies (Forrester, 2014; Myers et al., 2004; Reiner et al., 2013) have reported a number of benefits associated with engaging in leisure activities. These benefits include building and maintaining relationships and entertainment (Stebbins, 2007). Participants in this study experienced benefits that corroborate the aforementioned studies. For example, Prisla enjoys making new friends with other LTPA participants each time she engages in LTPA while Yema enjoys the time he spends with his roommates during his leisure. This form of casual activity relieves physical tension and stress. Yema reported laughing more frequently on those occasions that he spent time with his roommates thus relieving him of accumulated stress. This is in line with studies (Lebowitz, Suh, Diaz, & Emery, 2011; Martin, 2002) that reveal that humor and laughter have beneficial effects on physical health. These studies show that humor and laughter reduce anxiety, stress and depression. Although Yema’s activities with his roommates are not physically engaging, the relief he derives from spending time with his roommates is one of the benefits of leisure time thus confirming the freedom and satisfaction that comes from spending one’s free time in a desirable manner.

Research has shown that there are numerous benefits of engaging in physically active leisure and these benefits are not limited to physical fitness and mental health (Gude, 1996; ParticipACTION, 2016). These benefits cut across physical, psychological, and social benefits and examples include improved fitness, increased confidence, increased concentration, stress management, improved self-esteem, improved social wellness, and building relationships and making new friends (Biddle, 1993; Lee et al., 2015; Stebbins, 2007). A number of participants experienced the afore-mentioned benefits. For example, Yema, Morris, and Sophie reported that they sleep better after
working out and added that LTPA relieves them of mental stress. Similarly, Nancy reported that her dance classes relieve her of mental tension and help her relax. Ahmed also noted that LTPA improves his concentration and reduces stress. As with Biddle (1993) and Lee et al.’s (2015) studies, the majority of the participants in this study felt that active involvement in repeated physical activities reduce mental stress and increase attentiveness. Similarly, while stress among university students is unavoidable, Iwasaki, Zuzanek, and Mannell (2001), who examined the effects of physically active leisure on the relationship between stress and health, revealed that active leisure helps lower stress and helps to maintain good health. Also, they found that employees were able to overcome work related stress after they engaged in physically active leisure. Furthermore, Kim and Iwasaki’s (2016) examination of the role of leisure in immigrants’ acculturation revealed that engagement in active leisure minimized the effect of stress (arising from acculturation) on Korean immigrants. Other studies (Biddle, 1993; Forrester, 2014; Iwasaki & Schneider, 2003b; Lee et al., 2015) found that leisure or physically active leisure relieves stress.

In addition to stress relief, research suggests that physical activities improve self-esteem and confidence (Biddle, 1993; Gomez-Lopez et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2015). For example, Sophie stated that her skin looks good and healthy as a result of her physically active lifestyle and this in turn increased her confidence. From Sophie’s report, it can be inferred that her engagement in physically active leisure not only makes her physically fit but also increases her self-esteem.

Another benefit of physically active leisure includes improved cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems (WHO, 2017). A number of participants could also relate to
this. For example, Yema acknowledged that physically-active leisure improves his heart rate while Nancy claimed it increases her strength. Additional benefits of LTPA include the ability to acquire certain soft skills (Forrester, 2014). For example, LTPA can contribute to one’s ability to build relationships which is a soft skill. Ahmed and Nancy are motivated to attend the gym because they look forward to meeting new people. LTPA thus improves their interpersonal relationship with others. In a similar manner, Yema explained that consistent LTPA helped him to improve his mastery of basketball in one day. Despite being aware of the many benefits of LTPA, participants reported several constraints to their engagement. These will be discussed next.

5.2 Constraints to Leisure Time Physical Activity

Although a number of participants are actively engaged in leisure activities, several factors impact their participation either positively or negatively. For example, lack of social support can be a major deterrent of LTPA participation. Pengpid and Peltzer (2013) stated that lack of social support inhibits students’ LTPA engagement. Other factors include lack of interest and weather conditions. Most notable was insufficient time which appears to be the greatest challenge to LTPA among university students (Arzu et al., 2006; Gyurcsik et al., 2006; Shifman et al., 2011; Steenhuis et al., 2009).

5.2.1 Interpersonal constraints.

Interpersonal constraints occur based on relationships with others or when leisure participation is dependent on other people’s support and schedules (Godbey et al., 2010; Wood & Danylchuk, 2015). In this study, lack of social support is a predominant example from participants’ experiences.
5.2.1.1 Lack of social support.

Lack of social support has been considered as a major setback to LTPA participation. Li and Stodolska (2007) stated that lack of social support affected Chinese students’ participation in leisure-activities. Their study examined the leisure pursuits of Chinese international graduate students attending the University of Illinois and the factors inhibiting their participation. Their results revealed that the students experienced a number of factors restricting their leisure engagement which included, but was not limited to, lack of social support. Other researchers have also identified that lack of social support inhibits leisure activities, including LTPA (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Gomez-Lopez et al., 2010; Peltzer et al., 2014; Pengpid & Peltzer, 2013). The present study reinforces the idea that absence of social support is one of the major factors limiting participants’ LTPA participation. For example, Nancy’s paucity of enthusiasm from exploring other forms of physically active leisure during winter was due to lack of social support. Likewise, Morris’ lack of social support influenced her decision to quit visiting the gym. As observed by Li and Stodolska (2007) and Pengpid and Peltzer (2013) and as seen in both Nancy and Morris’ cases, not having social support is one of the many challenges encountered by students in their LTPA pursuits.

Li and Stodolska (2007), however, argued that lack of social support experienced by international students may be temporary. They revealed that the constraints inhibiting students’ LTPA participation in the host country is likely to diminish when the students return to their home country. This finding corroborates a number of studies that identified the challenges international students face when, such as socio-psychological challenges including lack of social support (Cemalcilar & Falbo, 2008; Kwon, 2009; Smith &
Khawaja, 2011). These studies further demonstrate that the more students assimilate into the new culture, the less their chances of experiencing leisure constraints (Glass, 2014; Li & Stodolska, 2007). The participants in this study have been in Canada for an average of three years and arguably, are not yet fully integrated into the Canadian community. Their lack of social support remains a major LTPA constraint for them.

5.2.2 Intrapersonal constraints.

Intrapersonal constraints are barriers that come from within the individual, such as lack of confidence to carry out an activity or a negative attitude towards it (Hudson, 2000). Intrapersonal barriers affect an individual’s ability to participate in leisure activities and these constraints differ from person to person (Wood & Danylchuk, 2015).

In this study, lack of commitment emerged as an intrapersonal constraint.

5.2.2.1 Lack of commitment.

In spite of all the numerous benefits associated with LTPA which the participants in this study identified, lack of participation can lead to health problems among university students (Kilpatrick et al., 2005). While motivation can be described as the enthusiasm to do something (Chirkov et al., 2007), lack of motivation or commitment is the opposite and can be described as the absence of zeal to stay dedicated to a cause. Studies have shown that lack of motivation can discourage leisure engagement (Arzu et al., 2006; Godbey et al., 2010). In line with these studies, a number of participants experienced reduction in their LTPA due to lack of commitment or decreased motivation. For example, Yema had an unenthusiastic attitude towards LTPA. In addition, it appeared that participants’ lack of commitment to LTPA may be traceable to lack of discipline and/or lack of interest in physical activities (Gomez-Lopez et al., 2010;
Osinike, 2016). Some of the participants revealed that they are not enthused to engage in LTPA because they are faced with a myriad of stress from school-related activities, finances and/or failure to attain their LTPA goals and achieve their desired results. For example, Yema lost interest in LTPA because of the huge responsibilities that a graduate student is saddled with and Morris’ decision to quit attending the gym was fueled by lack of discipline and loss of interest.

The present study also reveals that perceived discrimination triggered a participant’s loss of motivation for LTPA participation. Prisla experienced some degree of systemic discrimination when she perceived that she was being deprived of the opportunity to join the university women’s hockey team because she did not attend high school in Canada. She perceived the experience with the form as discrimination since some international students do play on the University sports teams. This experience discouraged her from exploring other forms of LTPA. The findings of this present study support other studies that documents discrimination as a constraint to leisure engagement (Aizlewood et al., 2005; Scott, Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2006; Livengood & Stodolska, 2004). These studies reported that discrimination, among other deterring factors, inhibits leisure participation. Aizlewood’s study explored the recreational participation of immigrants in Canada and the Netherlands as well as their rate of communal engagement. The study revealed that recreational participation is higher in Canada than in the Netherlands and one of the reasons attributed to this finding is the existence of a lower level of discrimination in Canada than in the Netherlands (Vancouver Centre of Excellence, 2005). It was further revealed that discrimination can lead to loss of interest thereby limiting other forms of leisure activities that could be explored by students (Aizlewood
et al., 2005). Similarly, Scott et al.’s findings on the effect of acculturation and the importance of leisure and recreation among Korean immigrants revealed that certain factors, which included discrimination, were responsible for their leisure constraints (Scott et al., 2006). As can be seen from Prisla’s experience with the university women’s hockey team, she is withdrawn and she may not, in the future, consider engaging in group or team LTPA.

Another distinct area of consideration is change in lifestyle. Studies have shown that a change in lifestyle as a result of access to devices such as cell phones and the internet has negative impact on physical activity engagement and also increases sedentary lifestyles among young adults (Harrison & Gilmore, 2012; Panek, 2014; Rahman, 2017). A number of participants claimed to spend more time on their devices or the television (“screen time”) as a way of relaxation during their leisure time rather than engage or stay committed to activities that will contribute to their wellness. For example, Prisla would rather watch Netflix during her leisure time than engage in physically active leisure. Her screen time therefore contests with her limited time and inhibits her ability to work out. Similarly, Yema spends considerable amount of time on devices playing video games as a way of relaxation.

### 5.2.3 Structural constraints

As previously defined in chapter four, structural constraints are factors that potentially hinder a person’s ability to participate in leisure activities such as leisure facilities and environment (Wood & Danylchuk, 2015). Based on participants’ experiences, these factors include, weather, difficulty accessing facilities, unpleasant environment and time restriction.
5.2.3.1 Weather conditions.

Outdoor activities are entertaining ways that people could engage in LTPA. These activities may however be limited by weather conditions (Wagner, Keusch, Yan, & Clarke, 2016). Weather is considered to be a major environmental factor limiting LTPA participation among the participants in this study. The participants specifically complained of winter in Canada and how it affects their ability to engage in LTPA. For example, Yema and Nancy who enjoy walking as a form of LTPA experienced challenges in continuing such activity during winter. Other participants who engaged in other forms of outdoor activities experienced limitations. For example, Morris stopped cycling while Prisla stopped going to parks. Sophie experienced lack of enthusiasm for physical activity on extremely cold days. Sophie tried to continue her LTPA engagements during winter by visiting the gym at nights instead of early mornings as she was used to. She noted that weather conditions during winter affected her zeal to engage in LTPA, especially in the morning. While some participants eventually adjusted to the cold weather, others continue to struggle. This finding confirms studies that reported that extreme weather limits physical activity participation (Arzu et al., 2006; Chan, Ryan, & Tudor-Locke, 2006; Gomez-Lopez et al., 2010).

Notably, Prisla reported that weather should not limit or reduce LTPA participation because there are other forms of indoor activities to engage in during winter. This is in line with Rahman’s study (2017) which examined the effects of weather on physical activities. Rahman’s findings showed that unfavourable weather conditions are unlikely to limit physical activity engagements because schools have facilities to accommodate both indoor and outdoor activities in relation to students’
leisure pursuits. Uniquely, participants in the present study do not perceive the university gym or fitness centre as a facility conducive for engaging in physical activities due to outdated equipment and an unpleasant environment. This limits their LTPA participation. The perceptions of the participants about the recreation facilities at the U of R are discussed in greater detail below.

Although some of the participants continue to engage in LTPA all year round regardless of the weather, the findings show that, for the most part, weather limited engagement in LTPA as it either led them to abandon it altogether or to consider alternative options in order to fulfil their LTPA pursuits.

5.2.3.2 Difficulty accessing facilities.

In addition to weather conditions, lack of access to leisure resources impeded participants’ engagement in LTPA (Abdullah & Mohamad, 2016). Indeed, location or lack of accessibility to leisure resources is considered one of the structural barriers to leisure participation (Godbey et al., 2010; Gomez-Lopez et al., 2010; Wood & Danylchuk, 2015). Several participants in the current study reported experiencing these constraints in regards to their LTPA participation. For example, Prisla was of the opinion that certain activities, equipment, or facilities (e.g. dry and wet sauna, hydro massage bed, and steam room) may not be available within the university and students may have to consider alternatives. She also noted that in finding an alternative facility, distance may pose a challenge. Prisla used her experience to emphasize this point by noting that she may not consider engaging in an activity outside the university because she does not have a car. This can be said of other students who live far from the university. For
example, Nancy was rarely on campus except to attend seminars. Similarly, Morris acknowledged that not having a car limits her LTPA participation.

While other participants expressed their concern about lack of proximity to an appropriate facility, Sophie had a contrary opinion. Sophie is passionate about her physical activities and prefers to use private gyms for reasons that are discussed in the following section. She did not allow distance to deter her from engaging in LTPA. She reported that it takes her about 10 minutes to drive from her house to her gym. Her attitude contradicts the belief that there has to be proximity to a facility before one can engage in physical activity. Notably, Sophie has a car and a driver’s license and she is thus in control of how and when she gets to the gym. Her opinion could have been different if she had to take the bus before she could use the gym.

5.2.3.3 Unpleasant environment.

An additional constraint identified by participants was distaste for the on campus fitness and recreation facilities. Campus recreation as previously described in chapter two is a “sector of recreation programming designed to meet the needs of young adult” (Kraus et al., 2001, p. 128). Therefore, if the university fitness center is not conducive for students as was perceived by participants in this study, then participation in campus recreation will be deficient. The kind of recreation facilities available at a university typically determine the array of activities that students will engage in (Huesman et al., 2009). For example, in a study conducted on 33,500 students, 68% of participants reported that students’ choice of post-secondary institution was based on the recreation facilities available in such institution (Forrester, 2014). There are other similar studies on
access to campus recreational facilities as one of the determinants of students’ choice of institution (Agrey & Lampadan, 2014; Forrester, 2015). However, studies by Agrey and Lampadan (2014) and Forrester (2014) do not appear to be the case with the participants in this study as they disclosed that the U of R fitness centre does not encourage their participation in campus recreation due to what they perceived as unpleasant environment. All the participants in this study have had unpleasant experiences at the different times that they visited the university fitness centre. For example, each time Morris visited the fitness center, she recalled that it was always full and she could not use the facility. Other participants had similar experiences. They complained about the outdated equipment at the university fitness center and the size of the center which cannot accommodate a significant number of students at the same time. Another complaint was that the facility is always full when compared to private facilities outside the university. The experiences of the participants discouraged them from using the university fitness centre. From participants’ experiences, it can be inferred that majority of them preferred private fitness centers as they thought private gyms are better than the university fitness centre in terms of space, equipment and the services rendered. Abdullah and Mohamad (2016) examined the relationship between service quality of recreational facilities and students physical activity level. They identified the importance of service quality while also noting that without good maintenance and modern equipment among other things, students may prefer to use privately owned facilities instead of the university facilities.

The participants perceived the university fitness centre as unsatisfactory and as a place where they could not achieve their fitness goals. This explains why many of them
explore other available options outside the university. These other options are however fraught with setbacks as well, such as cost of registration and lack of proximity among others.

5.2.3.4 Time restriction.

Poor time management is another important factor that limits LTPA participation among young adults (Arzu et al., 2006; Gyurcsik et al., 2006; Shifman et al., 2011; Steenhuis et al., 2009). Specifically, time constraint has been considered to be one of the greatest challenges to physical activity participation among university students (Arzu et al., 2006; Gomez-Lopez et al., 2010). The findings in the present study support the above research that time constraints negatively impact participants’ LTPA participation. Based on participants’ narratives, many of them struggled to find a balance between academics, employment and creating time for LTPA pursuits. For example, Nancy is currently undergoing her internship which is part of her degree program, and she also has to work to make ends meet. She reported that she rarely has time for other forms of leisure activities apart from her belly dance class. Similarly, Prisla expressed her struggle in finding a balance between her academics and creating time for physical activities. She stated that international students are faced with several forms of pressure which range from paying high tuition to making good grades and securing employment. She, as well as Nancy and Yema, believed that international students lead busy lives that impact their ability to engage in LTPA.

Nancy remarked that as one ages, one is saddled with more responsibilities that contend with one’s time. She recalled that her leisure activity level was high while in her home country compared to her physical activity level here in Canada because she now
has more responsibilities that limit her time. Similarly, Gomez-Lopez et al. (2010) examined the perceived barriers to university students’ physical activities. The findings revealed that increased responsibilities impact students’ physical activities. For example, Ahmed and Babs both work 40 hours per week because of their significant financial responsibilities and they reported that this limits their LTPA participation.

International students pay higher tuition than domestic students (Martin, 2013; URegina, 2018a), and they sometimes have to work long shifts or take multiple jobs to pay for their needs which include paying for tuition, accommodation, feeding and transportation (Sullivan, 2015). Out of the seven participants that were interviewed, only Babs had full family support for his academic related expenses. Even with family support, he still had to work to meet his other basic needs. Other participants lack financial support from their families and were responsible to finance their tuition and other expenses. For example, Sophie has two jobs, at a fast food joint and a clothing store, because she needs an income that will meet her needs.

Participants acknowledged that lack of time is a major challenge for them and this affects their LTPA participation. Similarly, it can be perceived that none of the participants managed time in a way that fully accommodates their LTPA pursuits. During the interviews, they resolved to manage their time to accommodate and improve their LTPA participation, going forward. For example, Sophie resolved to dedicate more time towards her LTPA while Babs noted that he would work on his schedule in order to maintain an active lifestyle.
5.3 Facilitators of LTPA

Facilitators of LTPA are considered as factors that promote participation in LTPA or otherwise, the reasons for continued participation in LTPA (Williams, Smith, & Papathomas, 2014). The facilitators discussed under this section are those identified by some participants in this present study as reasons for their continued LTPA participation. These factors include presence of social support and dedication to LTPA.

5.3.1 Presence of social support.

The presence of social support has been found to positively impact engagement in physical activities (Meenach-Ligrano, 1999; Treiber et al., 1991). A few of the participants with social support believed that it increased their likelihood of participating in LTPA. For example, Sophie and Bab acknowledged that their social supports encourage them to maintain their LTPA. Presence of social support therefore influenced their daily leisure routines, especially LTPA. This encouraged some participants to pursue their LTPA goals regardless of other challenges and responsibilities that they have. For example, the presence of social support allows Nancy to maintain an active lifestyle and engage in physically active leisure during summer.

In this study, participants who were able to maintain their LTPA had other factors that encouraged them besides presence of social support and these factors are somewhat connected (Oliveira et al., 2011). For example, Ahmed, Bab, and Sophie were able to maintain their LTPA as a result of factors such as suitable LTPA environment, commitment, and accessibility to leisure facilities.
5.3.2 Dedication to LTPA.

Chirkov et al. (2007) described motivation as the drive or the enthusiasm to do something. While some participants in this study indicated that they lack the requisite commitment to consistently participate in LTPA, other participants are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to engage in LTPA. Intrinsic motivation is an action or behaviour that is driven by internal rewards while extrinsic motivation is the behaviour that is driven by external rewards (Chirkov et al., 2007). Intrinsic motivation varies from person to person and participants’ physical activity engagement is directly connected to their intrinsic motivation (Kilpatrick et al., 2005). Intrinsic motivation could be borne out of the satisfaction derived from engaging in an activity while extrinsic motivation may be garnered from the results seen or benefits accrued from participating in LTPA (Kilpatrick et al., 2005). Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors are intertwined and they influence every participant’s attitude towards LTPA. For example, Sophie was intrinsically motivated to consistently engage in LTPA and she is further inspired by the results she sees. She is further motivated to lead a physically active lifestyle because of her desire for her future career upon graduating from the university.

In addition, Sophie’s motivation was also borne from the reality television program that she watched: “My 600-lb Life”. The media is indeed a significant tool in helping people achieve their LTPA vis-à-vis health goals. Smith and Bonfiglioli (2015) revealed the role of media in promoting physical activities. Participants in their study reported that the media, despite being a powerful tool, has not given sufficient awareness on the importance of physical activity. The study however affirms that mass-media, including reality entertainment, plays a major role in promoting active lifestyles by
encouraging engagement in physical activities. Other scholars have studied the role of media in promoting physical activity (e.g., Field et al., 1999). Field et al. examined the role of mass media on weight concerns among girls. The results revealed that pictures in print media influenced young girls’ perception of the perfect body shape. Young girls were said to lose weight by developing an exercise plan, an idea that was birthed by an article they saw in the magazine. The two studies examined above clearly indicate the efficacy of mass media, either print or screen, in influencing and or promoting physical activity among young people.

Team LTPA also spurs dedication. For example, Nancy’s participation in organized sports while in high school encouraged her to engage in LTPA. She has continued to participate in leisure-based physical activities since she moved to Canada. Studies by Dollman and Lewis (2010) and Kirby, Levin, and Inchley (2013) reported that schools with organized sports recorded high number of students’ participation in physical activities. This explains Nancy’s drive to continue to participate in physical activities. Conclusively, self-motivation and motivation from others helped some of the participants to manage the stress and setbacks that may have accompanied their LTPA pursuits.
5.4 Reflexivity

As discussed in the methodology chapter, reflexivity is the self-recognition and awareness of a researcher’s standpoint in connection to the participants under study (Williams & Kirby, 2003) or the attention given to the researcher’s role in a qualitative research (Dowling, 2006). According to Hahn (2006) and Creswell (2002), the idea of performing reflexivity in a qualitative study is to identify and question the researcher’s role throughout the research process including the findings of the study (Creswell, 2002).

I kept a personal journal throughout the entire process for self-reflection on what I perceive, have experienced or believe in, that might influence this study.

Before this study was carried out, I had a preconceived idea that increasing financial pressures like high tuition and cost of living was probably the only major constraint to international students’ LTPA participation. In my opinion, financial pressure causes students to take on multiple jobs thus reducing or eliminating the free time for LTPA. This study, however, indicated that beyond high tuition and time, there were other factors that served as deterrents to students’ LTPA participation. The other constraints identified by the participants in this study are lack of social support, lack of commitment, weather conditions, difficulty accessing gym, and the state of the university recreation facilities.

Arguably, an international student or any individual who is determined is likely to experience or maintain a physically active lifestyle despite challenges being faced. An example is Ahmed, one of the participants, who continues to engage in LTPA regardless of the time constraints, weather, and commitment issues among others. However, I can relate with the experiences of other participants who are unable to fully participate in
LTPA. Like Yema, I am also a graduate student and I understand how time-consuming graduate program can be. In addition, having a job and the need to provide for my family and attend to the needs of my toddler are cumulative factors that inhibit my LTPA participation. The research findings therefore made me realize that there are other legitimate individualized reasons affecting LTPA participation, as perceived by the participants. Another constraint that I could identify with was the effect of weather conditions on LTPA. The African climate is significantly different from North America’s. Like some participants in this study, weather conditions during winter pose a challenge to my LTPA engagement.

Performing reflexivity helped me to identify my assumptions and biases while collecting and analyzing the data. From the interview stage, to transcription, analysis, and discussion, I presented the subjective opinions of the participants and discussed them within the context of existing literature. I ensured that I clearly understood what the participants expressed and I did not fill in any gap or make assumptions.

5.5 Practical Implications

The findings from this study reveal that certain perceived factors impact students’ LTPA participation. This study is exploratory as it presents subjective experiences regarding LTPA participation by African students attending a Canadian university. Nevertheless, further research remains to be done. In this section, I summarize some implications of this research from a practical perspective while also calling for strategic intervention by relevant stakeholders in post-secondary institutions such as the university governing boards, administrators, fitness and recreation center
managers and student groups. The following points itemize the practical implications of this research:

1. The data from this research is fairly consistent with results from prior studies (e.g., Arzu et al., 2006; Galeazzi, 2013; Gyurcsik et al., 2006; Peykari et al., 2015; Shifman et al., 2011; Steenhuis et al., 2009) regarding the constraints to students’ leisure, including LTPA participation. Based on the findings of this research and as a way forward, it would be beneficial for campus recreation in higher institutions to make an effort to engage international students in recreational intramural games and sports while providing diverse options. This could attract more students and provide them with greater opportunity to interact with others who attend the university while also increasing their LTPA participation. An initiative as this has many potential advantages namely:

(a) The potential to reduce perceived discrimination, or reduce the likelihood of discrimination against international students. A level playing field for all builds a communal relationship and enhances the spirit of sportsmanship among all (Shifman et al., 2011; Ward, 2015). Although this may not totally eliminate discrimination, campus recreation has the tendency to significantly reduce discrimination (Aizlewood et al., 2005; Ward, 2015)

(b) International and Canadian students alike could subsequently benefit from increased LTPA participatory level.
(c) Students are able to learn soft skills through campus recreation/intramural games and this has a positive effect on their self-perception and improves their interpersonal skills and relationships (Forrester, 2014).

(d) With structured intramural games, students can practice better time management, which was a major challenge identified by participants in this study.

2. Students with strong inclination to be physically active usually take advantage of any opportunity that the university’s recreation facilities afford them (Abdullah & Mohamad, 2016). In the present study, all the participants were displeased with the university’s recreational facilities, particularly the university fitness center, and this inhibited their LTPA. To address this issue, it would be beneficial if the U of R and other affected post-secondary institutions could expand and adequately equip their facilities with modern equipment so as to accommodate more students and promote active lifestyles among students. In addition, recreational facility managers can assist students to identify activities that are enjoyable or advise and modify certain activities to suit students’ individual needs. This will provide a better and more encouraging environment for students, thus increasing their LTPA participation.

3. Based on the findings of this study, barriers such as lack of social support, weather conditions, lack of accessibility and limitation due to time restriction were identified as perceived factors limiting participants’ LTPA participation. An understanding of these barriers to LTPA will assist university administrators and
recreation facility managers to reassess their effort at implementing incentive programs in order to increase students’ overall LTPA participation.

4. To address lack of social support, an understanding of the various sources of social support for international students can assist the university in proactively promoting social support among students (Bhochhibhoya, Dong & Branscum, 2017). For example, collaborations between management of campus recreation and student societies/clubs like the U of R African Club and other similar clubs on campus could assist in meeting diverse range of needs for students such as social support. Programs like fitness boot camps can give the students the necessary support they need. Such collaborations could also lead to additional programs that accommodate the LTPA needs of minority student groups within the U of R.

5. The effect of weather conditions on LTPA, specifically outdoor physical activities, cannot be overemphasized. Admittedly, the weather cannot be changed, but understanding how weather affects physical activity can help post-secondary institution administrators and policy makers adapt recommendations to alleviate its effects. Therefore, it would be beneficial if university programs focus on developing alternative activities in order to avert a downturn in physical activity levels especially when the weather is not favourable for outdoor activities (Rahman, 2017). For example, indoor soccer could encourage engagement of students who are from Africa. Where such programs and activities already exist, then it will be beneficial to actively engage international students and adequately publicize such programs/activities.
6. The current study found that participants did not manage time in a way that fully accommodates their LTPA. With adequate time management strategies, students can increase their participation in intramural sports (Wood & Danylchuk, 2015). It may be helpful to have time management workshops as a mandatory requirement towards completion of students’ degrees. Such workshops have many potential benefits and may promote LTPA participation. Alternatively, the university recreation facilities can open for longer hours or be made accessible to students who do not register for classes during summer for a token fee. The current hours on weekdays are 6am-10pm while on weekends, 8am-8pm and summer hours are, 6am-9pm (Uregina, 2017). These efforts will increase LTPA participation by giving students more flexibility with their time and visits to the university fitness centre/recreational facilities.

5.6 Limitations and Implications for Future Research

While the participants of this study are from diverse African backgrounds, there were a number of limitations. Despite these restrictions, the present study has added further knowledge to existing research investigating determinants of students’ LTPA participation, especially among this select group. This section examines the limitations of the study and highlights areas for future research.

1. While purposive sampling was used to collect data because of the participants’ characteristics which are of interest to the researcher, the purpose of this sampling method was to create a small-sized version of the relevant population (Williams, 2003). However, the sample size of seven in this present study does not truly reflect the African student population in the U of R which is estimated
to be at least 250, based on membership with the URAC. However, in the future, it would be beneficial to increase the sample size in order to provide a more robust perspective.

2. Also, recruiting participants from URAC can be considered a limitation. It is likely that some African students are not members of URAC thereby excluding them from the study. In the future, it would be beneficial to extend recruitment to all African students, regardless of what club they belong to.

3. The present study is limited in scope as the study only considered African students at the U of R. It would be beneficial for future research to explore and include other international students or minority students as a whole. This could broaden the findings.

4. One participant was a graduate student while the other six participants were undergraduate students. In the future, it would be beneficial to strike a balance between the number of undergraduate and graduate students considered for the study to further add to the quality of data as graduate students’ experiences may differ from those of undergraduate students.

5. While the conclusions for this present study are drawn from the U of R only, recruiting from more universities could potentially affect the outcome of the study. If the study involved students from other universities and in other cities, perhaps different perceived barriers to LTPA may have emerged. In the future, it would be beneficial if more than one university is used in a study as this, in order to capture a wider range of students and experiences.
6. Finally, this study helped to shed new light on perceived discrimination experienced in leisure settings. This is an interesting finding that warrants further investigation. Only one participant in this study discussed the topic of perceived discrimination. It may be helpful to include the question of discrimination as one of the leading questions to be asked in future studies in order to determine if perceived discrimination impedes international students’ LTPA participation.

5.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this interpretive research was to explore the lived experiences of African students and the perceived factors influencing their LTPA participation. This study provides an overview of their experiences with regards to factors limiting their LTPA. It has revealed how factors such as lack of social support, lack of commitment, weather conditions, lack of accessibility, unpleasant environment and time restriction intersect and constrain students from participating in LTPA. This study was guided by an interpretive inquiry approach and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Analysis was carried out inductively. Participants in this study engaged in two categories of leisure, casual leisure and serious leisure. On one hand, the casual leisure included activities such as watching television, socializing, listening to music, and leisure reading. In addition to this, all the participants took delight in taking time off for relaxation purposes to engage in choice activities (e.g., screen time) which are also forms of casual leisure. While this type of leisure provides satisfaction and rejuvenation, it is not considered to promote LTPA which is the main focus of the present study (Kleiber et al., 1986). On the other hand, serious leisure activities that participants considered include cardio activities and strength-conditioning activities that are carried out at gyms and
other recreational facilities. While these activities are significant at providing satisfaction, they equally promote active lifestyles and LTPA.

Notably, certain factors undoubtedly limit participants’ LTPA participation. Nevertheless, majority of the participants still found a way to minimally engage in physically active leisure because of its benefits such as improved fitness, opportunity to meet other LTPA participants, relaxed feeling and ability to sleep better after LTPA.

This study is unique because it examines both the positive and the negative perceived factors that influence students’ LTPA participation. While the insight gained from this study provides information on African students’ LTPA experiences, the information provided does not only shed light on international students’ perceived barriers to LTPA but also promotes awareness on the importance of LTPA in improving wellness of young adults. Also, it provides suggestions for improving or maintaining LTPA among students. Further research is needed to explore LTPA experiences from a diverse population and their perceived barriers in order to obtain a holistic perspective and to better understand students’ leisure behaviours.
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APPENDIX A: LETTER OF INVITATION

Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies
Centre for Kinesiology, Health and Sport,
Room 173
3737 Wascana Pkwy, Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0A2

Project Title: Determinants of Leisure-Time Physical Activity Participation among African Students attending a Canadian University

Researcher:
Oluwakayode Dasylva
Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies (Graduate student)
Phone: (306) 527-5409
dasylvao@uregina.ca

Supervisors:
Rebecca Genoe, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies
University of Regina
306-585-4781

Cory Kulczycki, PhD
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies
University of Regina
306-585-4841

This letter of introduction is an invitation to consider participating in a research study I am conducting as part of my Master’s degree program in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Regina. This study is being conducted under the supervision of Professors Rebecca Genoe and Cory Kulczycki.

Briefly, I would like to provide you with more information about what informed this study and what is expected of you if you decide to take part.
Over the years, it has been documented that students’ leisure time physical activity participation (LTPA) has drastically reduced. Similarly, a study revealed that four out of every ten students were physically inactive; therefore this calls for immediate action (Pengpid et al., 2015). Many students are well informed about the benefits of participating in physical activity and living a healthy life; nevertheless, physical inactivity has remained a global problem (Arzu, Tuzun, & Eker, 2006). The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) recommends that the standard requirements for physical activity for adults should not fall below 150 minutes of moderate to intensive activity per week (CSEP, 2012). However, how many university students actually follow the physical activity guidelines?

This study will examine the perceived factors influencing LTPA among African students attending a Canadian university, gain insights into their experiences towards LTPA, and how LTPA contributes to students’ wellness. Participation is strictly voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 30-60 minutes to take place in a location of your choice within the university campus. You may decide to withdraw from this study without explanation or penalty at any time before data analysis, which will begin four weeks after the date of interview. After this period, analysis will begin, and it may therefore not be possible to withdraw your data. To withdraw, please inform the P.I. or his supervisors immediately through the email contacts provided on the consent form. All data pertaining to you will be shredded and erased immediately. Transcripts will be provided to you within one week after the date of interview, (see Attachment D for the transcript release form). Upon receipt, you will have the opportunity to review and return to the P.I. within three weeks. This will give you ample time to add, alter or delete
information from the transcript as you see fit. This is also done to ensure that the transcribed data matches the responses you have provided.

To ensure accuracy and confidentiality, with your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to ease collection of information and later transcribed by the researcher before inductive analysis. Also, information provided will be considered confidential and pseudonyms will be used to preclude participants from being identifiable by the public. There are no known or anticipated risks for participating in this study. Only the researcher (Principal Investigator) and his supervisors will have access to the data collected. Data collected will be stored in a filing cabinet in the supervisors’ office in the Centre for Kinesiology and Health Studies for a period of 6 years after which papers will be shredded and any electronic recordings deleted.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact the Principal Investigator at dasylva@uregina.ca or would like to receive a summary of the findings, kindly notify the Principal Investigator after the interview so that he can note it and send a summary of the result to your email address. This study has been reviewed by the University of Regina Research Ethics Board (March 6, 2018) and received clearance to ensure that the safety of the participants involved in the study is not violated (See appendix C: Ethics Approval Certificate). However, if you have questions regarding your rights as a participants or concerns, you can address it to the committee at (306-585-4775 or research.ethics@uregina.ca). I look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,

Oluwakayode Dasylva, MSc. candidate
APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Project Title:** Determinants of Leisure-Time Physical Activity Participation among African Students attending a Canadian University

**Researcher:** Oluwakayode Dasylva, Graduate student – MSc. Thesis, Department of Kinesiology and Health Studies, University of Regina, 306 527 5409, dasylvao@uregina.ca

**Supervisor:** M. Rebecca Genoe, PhD, Department of Kinesiology and Health Studies, University of Regina, 306 585 4781, rebecca.genoe@uregina.ca

**Co-Supervisor:** Cory Kulczycki, PhD, Department of Kinesiology and Health Studies, University of Regina, 306 585 4841, cory.kulczycki@uregina.ca

**Invitation:**
I invite you to consider taking part in a research study, which is being conducted as part of my Master’s thesis. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw without explanation or penalty from the study at any time before data analysis commences which will begin four weeks after the date of interview. After this period, analysis will begin, and it may therefore not be possible to withdraw data.

**Purpose of the study:**
The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the perceived factors influencing leisure-time physical activity (LTPA) among African students attending a Canadian university, gain insights into their experiences towards LTPA and how LTPA contributes to students’ wellness.

**Objectives of the study:**
The primary objective of this study is to provide information on students’ experiences in order to improve their participation in LTPA. The study will also look into the health benefits of physical activity participation and the associated challenges as perceived by the research participants. The study will assist in promoting awareness on the importance of LTPA so as to improve wellness of young adults. Finally, the study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the perceived barriers to physical activity and LTPA.
participation among international students generally and provide suggestions for improving or maintaining LTPA participation among these students.

**Procedures, risks and benefits:**

- You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that will last between 30-60 minutes (See Appendix D: Interview Guide).
- This interview will be conducted at a location of your choice within the university provided that such location is conducive for the purpose of an interview.
- It is anticipated that 10 African students will be recruited for this study.
- Your thoughts and experiences on how LTPA contributes to your wellness will also be discussed. Questions on what you perceive as the constraints to your LTPA participation will be asked.
- The interview will be audio recorded and personally transcribed by the principal investigator (P.I). You will have the opportunity to read the transcript for verification purposes (See Appendix E: Transcript Release Form). The transcript will be provided to you within one week after the date of interview. Upon receipt, you will have the opportunity to review and return to the P.I. within three weeks. This will give you the opportunity to add, alter or delete information from the transcript as you see fit. This is also done to ensure that the transcribed data matches the responses you provided. Analysis will begin on the fourth week. The interview will be flexible which allows for follow-up questions to guide the interview based on the answers you provide. The P.I. will take notes while the interview is going on for a better understanding of the discussion.
- You are encouraged to only answer those questions that you are comfortable with.
- There is no known or potential risk associated with participating in this study.
- The issue of power differentiation or coercion of any kind will be avoided and non-willingness to participate in the study will have no impact on the relationship that exists between the researcher and the participants if any existed prior to the research.
The direct possible benefits associated with participating in this study include the opportunity to share your experiences and thoughts with others.

Also, the opportunity to create awareness on the importance of LTPA so as to improve wellness of other young adults. However, these benefits are not guaranteed.

Other benefits include significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge on the perceived barriers to physical activity and LTPA participation among international students generally. This study will provide suggestions for improving or maintaining LTPA participation among the students.

Confidentiality and Data Protection:
Efforts will be made to ensure that the research participant’s identity is protected and confidentiality of data is maintained. Also, participants will be described in the researcher’s thesis, notes and published works using pseudonyms to prevent them from being identifiable by the public. Revealing information that can easily identify the participants such as personal descriptions will not be included. For instance, a student who holds or has previously held a student leadership position may be easily identifiable if this fact is included. To protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants who may be identified by email addresses and IP, participants will be reminded that they can delete emails and cookies along with clearing their browser history. Consent forms will be stored separately from the materials used, so that it will not be possible to associate a name with any given set of responses. The data will be stored in a filing cabinet in my supervisor’s office in the Centre for Kinesiology and Health Studies for a period of six years after which papers will be shredded and any electronic recordings deleted. The researchers’ supervisors will have access to the primary data collected. Upon completion of the study, a summary of the research results will be available and emailed to those participants who have indicated interest after the interview.

Right to Withdraw:

- Participation is strictly voluntary and you have the rights to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation or penalty.
• Data analysis begins four weeks after the date of interview. Therefore, the researcher should be notified of your desire to withdraw before the analysis begins.

• Otherwise, withdrawal will not be possible after this stage as analysis will have started, and it may therefore not be possible to withdraw at this point.

• Should you wish to withdraw, kindly inform the researcher or his supervisors though the email addresses provided on the consent form. All data pertaining to you will be shredded and erased immediately.

Questions or Concerns:
• This project has been approved on ethical grounds by the Research Ethics Board (REB) of the University of Regina to ensure that the safety of the participants involved in the study is not violated.

• Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the research ethics committee at (585-4775 or research.ethics@uregina.ca).

Signed Consent:
Kindly sign below and return a copy to the researcher. Your signature below indicates that you:

• Have read and understood the description provided.

• I have had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

• I consent to participate in the research project.

• A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Participant</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oluwakayode Dasylva (Principal Researcher)</td>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
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A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.
APPENDIX C: ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Oluwakayode Dijilva

DEPARTMENT
Kinesiology and Health Studies

REB#
2018-030

SUPERVISOR:
Dr. Rebecca Geneau/Dr. Cory Kulczycki

TITLE: Determinants of Leisure-Time Physical Activity Participation Among African Students Attending a Canadian University

APPROVED ON:
March 6, 2018

RENEWAL DATE:
March 6, 2019

APPROVAL OF:

Full Board Meeting ☐ Delegated Review ☑

The University of Regina Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol, consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed methods, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS
In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: http://www.uregina.ca/research/for-faculty-staff/ethics-compliance/human/forms/ethics-forms.html.

Raven Sinclair, BA, CISW, BISW, MSW, PhD
REB Chair

Please send all correspondence to:
Research Office
University of Regina
Research and Innovation Centre 109
Regina, SK S4S 0A2
Tel: (306) 585-4716
Fax: (306) 585-4863
research.ethics@uregina.ca
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Project Title: Determinants of Leisure-Time Physical Activity Participation among African Students attending a Canadian University

The purpose of the study is to examine and gain understanding of the perceived factors influencing LTPA participation among African students attending a Canadian university. In addition, the study will explore their leisure experiences towards LTPA and how LTPA contributes to students’ wellness.

Kindly note: You may skip any question you choose. If at any time you feel uncomfortable with the interview and wish to discontinue, the recorder will be turned off and no further questions will be asked.

Interviewer: Oluwakayode Dasylva
Participant:
Date of interview:
Gender:
Age:
Field and level of Study:
Place of interview: University of Regina
Country of origin:
Nationality:
How do you pay your tuition expenses? (Check all that apply)
   a). Family support
   b). Self-supported
   c). Scholarship
   d). Employed.

How many hours per week are you working?
Which statement best describes your family’s annual household income
   o  Less than $20,000
   o  $20,000 - $29,000
Introduction: Hi, my name is Oluwakayode (Kay) Dasylva, a graduate student in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies at the University of Regina. Having discussed what the purpose of the study is, my aim is that the study will provide information on students’ experiences so as to improve their LTPA participation. The study will also be examining the health benefits of physical activity and the associated challenges as perceived by you (Research participant). Knowing these will help in promoting awareness on the importance of LTPA so as to improve wellness among young adults.

1. Please tell me what leisure means to you and tell me about your leisure experiences.
   a. What do you like to do during your free time?

2. What does physical activity mean to you?
   a. What physical activities (P.A), if any, do you like to do during your leisure time?
   b. What kind of P.A do you currently engage in?
   c. How do you feel about physical activity?
   d. Describe your experience with P.A before and after you arrived Canada.

3. What are the constraints/barriers, if any, to your P.A and how do you address them?
   a. How has your P.A changed over the past few months/years?
   b. Can you share a challenge that you faced recently as regards to your P.A?
   c. Does being in Canada affect your P.A in any way? Kindly explain with examples.
4. What benefits, if any, do you gain from P.A? Give examples to illustrate your point.
   a. Has P.A contributed to your academic achievement? Kindly explain.
   b. Has P.A contributed to your academic stress? Can you share specific examples?
   c. How has your life changed, if any, as regards to P.A participation?
   d. What positive changes have you experienced? Give examples.

5. How, if at all, do you encourage yourself to make improvement in your exercise?
   a. What support system, if any, do you have for your exercise? Kindly explain.
   b. Give examples of the ways your support system has helped in rendering assistance.
   c. How do you think you can improve upon or maintain your level of exercise?
   d. Can you share an experience, if any, which may help others, learn about how P.A helps cope with stress?
APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM

I, ________________________________, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with the principal researcher. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to be used by the principal researcher in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature of Participant

Signature of Researcher
APPENDIX F: RECRUITMENT POSTER

Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies
University of Regina

STUDENTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH ON
The Determinants of Leisure-Time Physical Activity Participation (LTPA) among African Students Attending a Canadian University

I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study designed to examine the perceived factors that influence LTPA participation across various African cultural backgrounds.

As a participant in this study, relevant information shall be obtained through a one-time in-person interview session that will last approximately for about 30-60 minutes.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

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Oluwakayode (Kay) Dasylvao
Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies
at
dasylvao@uregina.ca

This study has been reviewed and received approval through the Research Ethics Board, University of Regina.