

Recreational activities and their relationship to the work environment among primary school teachers

A field study in institutions in the Maatka district, Tizi Ouzou

النشاطات الترفيهية وعلاقتها ببيئة العمل لدى أساتذة التعليم الابتدائي

دراسة ميدانية بمؤسسات مقاطعة معاتقة. بولاية تيزي وزو

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Abstract :

This study examines the relationship between engagement in leisure activities and the work environment among primary school teachers in the Maâtaca district of Tizi Ouzou province. A correlational descriptive design was employed, utilizing two questionnaires administered to 58 teachers. The first assessed various dimensions of leisure activities (intellectual, recreational, social, artistic, and physical), while the second evaluated the work environment. The study aimed to measure the correlational relationship between leisure activities and professional satisfaction and performance, as well as to identify factors that facilitate or hinder their practice within educational institutions. Findings revealed a weak positive correlation between leisure activities and improved work environment, suggesting that increased engagement in such activities corresponds with higher levels of professional satisfaction. The study recommends establishing dedicated recreational spaces, implementing incentive policies, and enhancing infrastructural support to contribute to teachers' quality of life and the overall improvement of the educational of the work environment

Keywords: Recreational activities, Work environment, Educational institution, Teachers

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل العلاقة بين ممارسة النشاطات الترفيهية وبيئة العمل لدى معلمي التعليم الابتدائي بمقاطعة معاتقة في ولاية تيزي وزو. اعتمدت على المنهج الوصفي الارتباطي، حيث تم استقصاء آراء 58 أستاذاً عبر استبيانين، أحدهما لقياس أبعاد النشاطات الترفيهية (الفكرية، الخلوية، الاجتماعية، الفنية، والرياضية) والثاني لتقييم بيئة العمل. هدفت الدراسة إلى قياس العلاقة الارتباطية بين الأنشطة الترفيهية والرضا الوظيفي والأداء المهني، بالإضافة إلى رصد العوامل التي تساعد أو تعيق ممارستها داخل المدارس. أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة طردية ضعيفة بين الأنشطة الترفيهية وتحسن بيئة العمل، حيث ترتبط زيادة هذه الأنشطة بارتفاع الرضا المهني. توصي الدراسة بإنشاء فضاءات ترفيهية، وتبني سياسات تحفيزية، مع تعزيز البنية التحتية، ما يساهم في تحسين جودة حياة المعلمين وتطوير بيئة العمل داخل المؤسسات التعليمية.

كلمات مفتاحية: النشاطات الترفيهية؛ بيئة العمل؛ المؤسسة التربوية؛ الأساتذة.

Introduction :

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The success of any organization, particularly in the educational sector, hinges primarily on its human resources, as teachers play a central role in ensuring quality education. However, primary school educators face numerous challenges, including heavy workloads, psychological stress, and administrative pressures, all of which negatively impact their performance and well-being. Consequently, fostering a supportive work environment that addresses teachers' psychological and social needs has become crucial.

Recreational activities have emerged as an effective strategy to alleviate stress, enhance teamwork, and boost job satisfaction, ultimately improving professional performance and overall health. This study examines the impact of such activities on primary school teachers, identifies obstacles to their implementation, and proposes actionable recommendations to promote them.

By emphasizing the importance of recreational initiatives, this research aims to enhance teaching quality and educators' well-being, thereby benefiting society as a whole. The study also seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on workplace wellness and educational development, providing valuable insights for policymakers and administrators in the education sector.

This topic was chosen in response to observed high stress levels among primary school teachers and the general lack of structured recreational programs in many schools. Promoting such activities is not a luxury but a necessity for sustaining professional performance and fostering comprehensive growth in educational institutions.

Contemporary workplaces face unprecedented challenges due to rapid technological advancements and evolving organizational demands. Modern institutions now recognize workplace environment as a critical factor influencing employee motivation and performance outcomes. The organizational climate directly impacts workforce productivity and job satisfaction, making its optimization essential for operational excellence.

Recent trends highlight recreational workplace activities as an innovative approach to stress reduction and team cohesion enhancement. This proves particularly valuable in high-stress sectors like education, where primary educators experience significant occupational pressures. Progressive organizations are consequently integrating such initiatives to cultivate positive work environments and sustain peak performance levels.

Main Research Question:

- Is there a statistically significant correlation between recreational activities and work environment among primary school teachers in Matatqa district?

Specific Research Questions:

- Does a statistically significant correlation exist between intellectual leisure activities and work environment for primary educators in Matatqa?

- Is there a significant statistical relationship between cellular (outdoor) recreation and workplace conditions for elementary teachers in Matatqa district?

- What is the nature of association between social recreational activities and occupational environment for primary instructors in Matatqa?

- To what extent do artistic leisure pursuits correlate with work setting parameters among district primary teachers?

- How significantly are athletic recreation activities related to professional environment factors for Matatqa's elementary educators?

Research Hypotheses:

Primary Hypothesis:

- A statistically significant correlation exists between recreational programs and work environment quality for primary school teachers in Matatqa district.

Secondary Hypotheses:

- Intellectual leisure activities demonstrate significant statistical correlation with work environment metrics.

- Outdoor recreational programs show measurable association with workplace conditions.

- Social entertainment activities correlate significantly with occupational environment factors.

- Artistic leisure pursuits maintain statistically verifiable relationships with work setting parameters.

- Sports-based recreation activities exhibit significant correlation with professional environment indicators

Study Objectives:

This study aims to analyze the impact of recreational activities on the work environment of primary school teachers, focusing on their job satisfaction and professional performance. It also examines teachers' perceptions of how these activities enhance morale and promote teamwork. Additionally, the research explores the role of recreational initiatives in reducing stress, improving overall well-being, and fostering social interaction among educators. The study further seeks to support a better work-life balance for teachers, ultimately contributing to improved educational quality.

1..The Concept of Work Environment:

Henry Saval: conceptualizes the work environment as an integrated framework consisting of physical, psychological, and organizational dimensions. The physical aspect encompasses measurable environmental conditions such as lighting, noise levels, and temperature. The psychological component involves interpersonal dynamics, including peer relationships and hierarchical interactions with management. The organizational dimension relates to fundamental job characteristics, including work content, its significance, and inherent nature (Moussa, 2006, p.13).

. Al-Shanwani (1994) offers a comprehensive view of the work environment as the combination of surrounding factors that influence an employee's professional behavior, productivity, and attitudes toward their job, colleagues, and supervisors. This holistic concept includes both tangible and intangible elements, covering physical workplace conditions such as lighting, noise levels, cleanliness, climate control, ventilation, safety measures, and healthcare services, as well as psychosocial

factors like supervisory quality, team cohesion, psychological well-being, and the quality of interpersonal relationships (Al-Shanwani, 1994, p. 205)

2.. The Concept of Recreational Activities:

Ibn Mansour (2009) conceptualizes recreation as purposeful leisure activities designed for enjoyment and relaxation, including various forms such as visiting green spaces or tourist sites, participating in sports, watching films, and similar pastimes (Ibn Mansour, 2009, p.76).

Complementing this perspective, P. Foulquie (1978) defines recreation temporally as discretionary time free from occupational obligations, during which individuals may engage in activities of personal preference (Foulquie, 1978, p.203).

3.. Study Sample:

This refers to the group to which the study was applied and whose findings are generalized to the broader population. We selected it randomly, resulting in a total of (88) teachers.

4.. Research Methodology:

Considering the study's topic, the required data, and research questions about the relationship between the work environment and recreational activities among primary school teachers in the Department of Maâtaqa, the researcher employed a descriptive-correlational method. According to Lamuro (1995), this approach "accurately portrays the phenomenon as it exists in reality and establishes relationships among its elements. It goes beyond mere data collection by analyzing information and revealing interconnections to interpret and draw conclusions that may help improve and develop reality" (Maamari & Ben Zahi, 2014, p. 50).

5.. Study Instruments:

5.1..Work Environment Questionnaire:

To achieve this purpose, we used a ready-made questionnaire to evaluate the work environment, used in the study examining the impact of recreational activities on primary school teachers in Maâtaqa.

It consists of 5 statements within the work environment section. Each is rated on a 3-point Likert scale:

Scored from 1 to 3 points. We adapted certain items to align with our research goals. The scoring scale is:

- No = 1 point – Neutral = 2 points – Yes = 3 points.

A total score of 50 (25×2) serves as the midpoint, distinguishing between a positive and negative work environment.

Table 1

Respondents' Recreational Activities Questionnaire Scores

Options	Yes	Neutral	No
Scores	1	2	3

Source: Researcher's calculations based on SPSS output

5.2.. Recreational Activities Questionnaire:

Similarly, to measure leisure activities, we used a 25-item questionnaire across multiple dimensions for the same target group. Each item used the same three-point Likert scale

with scores from 1 to 3. Some statements were reformulated or removed to match the research objectives. The cutoff score of 50 (25×2) divides low and high levels of recreational engagement.

Table 2

Respondents' Recreational Activities Questionnaire Scores

Options	Yes	Neutral	No
Scores	1	2	3

Source: Researcher's calculations based on SPSS output

6.. Statistical Analysis Methods:

After data collection, responses were entered into SPSS Version 25. The analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including:

- Central tendency measures (mean and standard deviation) for understanding the distribution and organization of responses.
- Pearson's correlation coefficient to assess the relationship between one independent variable and one dependent variable.

7.. Presentation, Interpretation, and Discussion of Study Hypotheses:

7.1.. Presentation, Interpretation, and Discussion of the First Sub-Hypothesis:

The first sub-hypothesis of this study stated: "There is a correlational relationship between intellectual leisure and the work environment among primary school teachers in the M'atqa district." To verify this hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. After statistical processing, the following result was obtained:

Table 3

Relationship Between Intellectual Leisure and Work Environment

Pearson Correlation		Work Environment	Decision
Intellectual Leisure	Correlation Coefficient	0.172	Significant at ($\alpha = 0,05$).
	Significance Level	0.19	
	Sample Size	58	

Source: Researcher's calculations based on SPSS output

The statistical analysis reveals a very weak positive Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.172$) between intellectual leisure activities and the work environment scores. This indicates a minimal linear relationship between these variables in the participant group. The result was statistically non-significant ($p = 0.19$) at the conventional alpha level of 0.05, meaning the observed correlation is not strong enough to be considered reliable in the population.

This weak association may be attributed to several methodological and contextual factors. The unique professional circumstances or cultural background of the study sample might have diminished the perceived impact of intellectual activities. Unmeasured mediating variables, such as organizational pressures or resource constraints, could have influenced the results. Furthermore, the measurement tools employed may have lacked the sensitivity to detect subtle influences of intellectual engagement on workplace dynamics.

While these findings do not invalidate established theoretical frameworks emphasizing cognitive stimulation's role in professional development, they underscore the critical importance of contextual and organizational factors as necessary conditions for achieving desired outcomes. Consequently, this study highlights the need for enhanced institutional support and the development of more comprehensive, tailored intellectual recreation programs that account for practical teaching realities. Future initiatives should consider environmental variables that may potentially enhance or inhibit the effectiveness of such intellectual activities.

7.2.. Presentation, Interpretation, and Discussion of the Second Sub-Hypothesis:

The second sub-hypothesis stated: "There is a correlational relationship between nature-based leisure and the work environment among primary school teachers in the M'atqa district." Pearson's correlation coefficient was used for verification, yielding the following result:

Table 4

Relationship Between Nature-Based Leisure and Work Environment

Pearson Correlation		Work Environment	Decision
	Correlation Coefficient	0.20	Significant at

Nature-Based Leisure	Significance Level	0.123	$(\alpha = 0,05)$.
	Sample Size	58	

Source: Researcher's calculations based on SPSS output

The statistical analysis reveals a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.20 between participants' engagement in nature-based leisure activities and their work environment assessment scores. This indicates a very weak positive relationship between these variables. However, the result demonstrates statistical significance at $\alpha = 0.05$, with a p-value of 0.123, suggesting a statistically detectable association.

The combination of a weak correlation strength with statistical significance suggests that the observed relationship might be influenced by random chance or unaccounted external factors. Several methodological considerations could explain this outcome, including potential limitations in sample size that may reduce the power to detect substantively meaningful effects, or the presence of unmeasured mediating variables such as organizational culture or administrative support that might overshadow the potential impact of nature-oriented activities.

Additionally, the findings may reflect limitations in measurement sensitivity or methodological approach, where the current assessment tools might not adequately capture the subtle influences of natural leisure activities on workplace environment perceptions.

While these results do not completely negate the theoretical value of nature-based recreation, they emphasize the importance of contextual and methodological interpretation. The study highlights the need for more comprehensive and precise future research that develops nature-based leisure programs tailored to organizational contexts, while accounting for mediating variables that could either enhance or diminish the effectiveness of such interventions.

7.3.. Presentation, Interpretation, and Discussion of the Third Sub-Hypothesis:

The third sub-hypothesis stated: "There is a correlational relationship between social leisure and the work environment among primary school teachers in the M'atqa district." Pearson's correlation coefficient was used, producing the following result:

Table 5

Relationship Between Social Leisure and Work Environment

Pearson Correlation		Work Environment	Decision
Social Leisure	Correlation Coefficient	0.085	Significant at ($\alpha = 0.05$).
	Significance Level	0.526	
	Sample Size	58	

Source: Researcher's calculations based on SPSS output

The table reveals that Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.085 between participants' social leisure activities and their work environment assessment scores, suggesting a negligible relationship between these variables. The result was statistically non-significant ($p = 0.526$) at the conventional alpha level of 0.05, confirming the absence of any meaningful association in the current sample.

This outcome may be attributed to multiple methodological and contextual factors. The specific nature of the social activities examined might have been insufficient or inappropriate for the professional context. Alternatively, more influential organizational factors—such as workplace culture, institutional policies, or administrative support—could have overshadowed any potential effects of social leisure. Measurement limitations might also have contributed to this result, as the assessment tools may not have adequately captured the qualitative aspects of social interactions or the complex relationship between social engagement and workplace environment perceptions.

While these findings do not necessarily negate the value of social connectivity in professional settings, they suggest that its direct impact on work environment perceptions may be minimal without supporting mediating factors. Consequently, this study recommends further investigation into more influential variables and examination of how social factors interact with broader organizational elements to create meaningful impacts on the work environment.

7.4.. Presentation, Interpretation, and Discussion of the Fourth Sub-Hypothesis:

The fourth sub-hypothesis stated: "There is a correlational relationship between artistic leisure and the work environment among primary school teachers in the M'atqa district." Pearson's correlation coefficient was used, yielding the following result:

Table 6

Relationship Between Artistic Leisure and Work Environment

Pearson Correlation		Work Environment	Decision
	Correlation Coefficient	0.26	*Significant at

Artistic Leisure	Significance Level	0.04	$(\alpha = 0,05)$.
	Sample Size	58	

Source: Researcher's calculations based on SPSS output

The statistical analysis indicates a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.26 between participants' engagement in artistic leisure activities and their work environment assessment scores, reflecting a weak positive relationship. Despite the modest strength of this association, it demonstrated statistical significance at the conventional alpha level of 0.05 ($p = 0.04$).

This apparent discrepancy between the relationship's weak magnitude and its statistical significance can be explained by several methodological considerations. First, the substantial sample size may have provided sufficient statistical power to detect even subtle associations. Second, these findings suggest that while artistic activities may exert a genuine influence on workplace environment perceptions, this effect likely operates within a complex framework of mediating variables and represents just one component of multiple contributing factors. Third, the measurement instruments might have possessed adequate sensitivity to identify precise, though limited, real-world effects.

These results imply that artistic practices may contribute to workplace environment enhancement, though their impact appears more constrained than theoretical models might anticipate. This underscores the necessity to investigate potential moderating or mediating variables that could amplify this relationship. Furthermore, the study highlights the value of pursuing this research direction across varied organizational contexts utilizing refined methodological approaches to better understand the nuanced role of artistic engagement in professional settings.

7.5.. Presentation, Interpretation, and Discussion of the Fifth Sub-Hypothesis:

The fifth sub-hypothesis stated: "There is a correlational relationship between sports leisure and the work environment among primary school teachers in the M'atqa district." Pearson's correlation coefficient was used, producing the following result:

Table 7

Relationship Between Sports Leisure and Work Environment

Pearson Correlation		Work Environment	Decision
Sports Leisure	Correlation Coefficient	0.057	Significant at $(\alpha = 0,05)$.
	Significance Level	0.676	
	Sample Size	58	

Source: Researcher's calculations based on SPSS output

The statistical analysis reveals a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.057 between participants' engagement in sports activities and their work environment assessment scores, indicating an absence of meaningful correlation between these variables. This non-significant relationship is further supported by the statistical significance value of 0.67, which exceeds the conventional alpha threshold of 0.05.

Several methodological and contextual factors may explain these findings. The specific nature of the sports activities examined might not directly contribute to workplace environment improvement, or other influential factors—such as professional pressures or organizational culture—could have overshadowed any potential effects of physical recreation. Additionally, sample size limitations or measurement instrument constraints might have prevented the detection of indirect influences that sports activities could exert on psychosocial aspects of the work environment.

While these results do not negate the well-established personal health benefits of physical exercise, they suggest that the direct impact of sports activities on workplace environment enhancement may be limited within this specific context. The study consequently recommends investigating potential mediating variables that might strengthen this relationship, as well as examining specific types of team-based athletic activities that could demonstrate stronger connections with professional development and workplace improvement.

7.6.. Presentation, Interpretation, and Discussion of the General Hypothesis:

The general hypothesis stated: "There is a correlational relationship between leisure activities and the work environment among primary school teachers in the M'atqa district." Pearson's correlation coefficient was used, yielding the following result:

Table 8

Relationship Between Leisure Activities and Work Environment

Pearson Correlation		Work Environment	Decision
Activities Leisure	Correlation Coefficient	0.153	Significant at ($\alpha = 0.05$).
	Significance Level	0.42	
	Sample Size	58	

Source: Researcher's calculations based on SPSS output

The statistical analysis indicates a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.15 between participants' leisure activity engagement and their work environment assessment scores, reflecting a very weak positive relationship. This correlation was statistically non-significant ($p = 0.42$) at the conventional alpha level of 0.05, indicating insufficient evidence to support a meaningful association within the current study sample.

Several methodological and contextual considerations may explain these findings. The specific nature of the recreational activities examined might have been insufficiently tailored to the professional context, or more influential organizational factors—such as workplace pressures, institutional culture, or administrative support systems—could have overshadowed any potential benefits of leisure engagement. Additionally, sample size limitations or measurement constraints might have prevented the detection of subtle indirect effects that recreational activities could exert on psychosocial dimensions of the work environment.

While these results do not contradict the well-established benefits of leisure activities for individual psychological and physical wellbeing, they suggest that the direct impact on workplace environment improvement may be limited without supporting contextual factors. The study consequently recommends investigating more influential variables and examining how recreational elements might interact with broader organizational components to create meaningful impacts on the work environment.

Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected, which confirms that there is no weak and statistically insignificant direct correlation between recreational activities and the work environment of primary school teachers in Ma'taka district.

Therefore, institutional strategies should promote leisure activities, such as:

- Organizing diverse programs (sports, arts, cultural events).
- Providing equipped leisure facilities.
- Encouraging teamwork culture.
- Integrating leisure into organizational policies.

These measures create a motivating work environment, enhancing institutional belonging and productivity, ultimately improving educational outcomes.

8..Study Recommendations:

- Enhance Measurement Tools: Develop more sensitive and contextually adapted questionnaires capable of capturing the indirect effects of leisure activities on the work environment, considering local cultural and organizational nuances.
- Expand Sample Diversity: Conduct studies with larger and more demographically varied samples to mitigate statistical power limitations and uncover potential subtle effects.
- Investigate Mediating Variables: Examine intermediate factors such as administrative support, organizational culture, and work-life balance that may strengthen or diminish the impact of leisure activities.
- Customize Program Design: Tailor recreational initiatives to align with specific occupational contexts and employee needs, emphasizing collective activities (e.g., group arts or sports) that promote social cohesion.

- Implement Longitudinal Research: Execute long-term studies to track the sustained effects of leisure activities and elucidate their underlying mechanisms.

9.. Conclusion:

Although this study did not identify a statistically significant strong correlation between certain leisure activities and the work environment, the theoretical and practical value of recreational engagement in professional settings remains relevant. The findings underscore the critical roles of methodological and contextual factors in interpreting such relationships and highlight the need for more specialized and nuanced research. Future efforts should focus on designing integrated programs that account for organizational and individual complexities, potentially yielding tangible benefits for both workplace environments and overall employee well-being.

10..References:

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