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The Level of Recreational Culture and Its Relationship to the Degree of Optimism among Secondary School Students
A Field Study at Houari Boumediene Secondary School – Berhoum

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the relationship between the level of recreational culture and the degree of optimism among a sample of secondary school students. Two questionnaires were administered: one to measure the level of recreational culture, and the other to assess the degree of optimism, followed by calculating the correlation between the two variables.

The study was conducted on a sample of 85 male and female students from the final-year classes at Houari Boumediene Secondary School in Berhoum. The descriptive method was adopted in the study. The results showed that the level of recreational culture was moderate, while the degree of optimism among students was high. A statistically significant correlation was also recorded between the two variables.

Keywords: Recreational culture; optimism; secondary school student.

Article info

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1. Introduction

The secondary stage is one of the most important stages in educational development, where the student's personality crystallizes and their psychological and social orientations are formed. In light of rapid societal changes, there is an urgent need to develop educational approaches that focus on non-academic aspects, the most important of which is recreational culture. This culture is an effective means for shaping personality and achieving emotional balance.

Recreational culture is an essential part of an individual's and society's social and economic life. It includes a set of activities and experiences aimed at enhancing entertainment and relaxation, improving quality of life. Recreational culture encompasses sports, arts, entertainment, and tourism. It contributes to developing social skills and strengthening bonds among individuals. It is a fundamental pillar in building the student's personality within the school environment, especially during the sensitive and influential secondary education stage, which shapes learners' psychological and social identity.

Recreational culture is not limited to leisure but extends to developing life skills, promoting values, and reducing psychological pressures resulting from academic demands (Al-Qarra Gholi, 2019, 45). It involves acceptance of all activities practiced by students during their free time, inside or outside school, aiming at constructive and purposeful recreation. These activities provide students with opportunities for self-expression and social bonding and contribute to intellectual and physical skill development.

This culture is viewed as an educational factor that helps enhance optimism among students, a psychological element that gives individuals the ability to envision a positive future and overcome various difficulties. On the other hand, recreational culture is an effective means to spread cultural awareness and promote national belonging by providing opportunities for self-expression and fostering initiative and creativity, contributing to building a balanced generation capable of positive interaction with their environment (Abu Samak, 2024, 22).

Optimism is a positive psychological trait that contributes to enhancing mental health and social adaptation among students, especially in the school environment which faces many academic and psychological challenges. Optimistic students show greater ability to face academic difficulties and maintain high motivation for learning, positively affecting academic achievement and classroom behavior (Al-Jabri, 2015, 71).

Psychological and educational studies confirm that optimism helps reduce anxiety and stress levels, enhances self-confidence, and contributes to building positive relationships between students and teachers, creating a healthy and motivating educational climate (Al-Sirjani, 2010, 45). Promoting a culture of optimism within the school environment is an essential educational task, as it fosters positive thinking among students and helps them adopt constructive attitudes toward the future, aligning with modern education goals in building balanced and effective personalities in society (Al-Jabri, 2015, 84).

The relationship between recreational culture and optimism among students is integrative, contributing to building a balanced personality capable of adapting to school challenges. Recreational culture, which includes sports, artistic, and cultural activities, provides a stimulating environment that helps students relieve tension and psychological pressures, enhancing mood and developing positive thinking. Optimism is a strong motivator for active participation in recreational activities, as optimistic students show greater readiness to engage and integrate into school life. This interaction contributes to enhancing self-confidence, achieving a sense of accomplishment and belonging, which feed and consolidate optimism.

Many educational and psychological studies have called for integrating recreational activities into school programs due to their impact on students' overall development. Previous studies on the variables of this study include:

Studies on Recreational Culture Variable:

A. **Al-Eid bin Samisha (2021):**

"Recreational Culture and Its Relationship to Optimism Among University Students." This study explored the relationship between recreational culture and optimism among a sample of university students at the University Center of El Bayadh. The sample included 580 third-year bachelor's students. Two questionnaires were prepared on "recreational culture" and "optimism," showing that students' levels of recreational culture and optimism were above the community average, with a statistically significant correlation between them.

B. **Suleiman Malki (2015):**

"The Role of Secondary Schools in Developing Recreational Culture." This study aimed to identify the school's contribution to enhancing recreational culture among secondary school students in Damascus, focusing on social, cultural, scientific, and sports domains. Using a descriptive analytical method and a questionnaire distributed to 635 students during the 2014–2015 academic year, results showed the school plays a significant role in developing recreational culture, with statistically significant differences attributed to gender and school type.

C. **Mahmoud Yaqub Mahmoud Yaqub (2014):**

"Developing Recreational Sports Culture for Basic Education Students in Sudan." This research aimed to explore the possibility of developing recreational sports culture for basic education students in Sudan. The researcher designed a content analysis form for the expressive arts curriculum taught at this stage. Using a descriptive method and statistical analysis, results indicated that the curriculum promotes competitive sports culture and that recreational sports culture can be developed by linking competitive activities with recreational programs. Recommendations included revising the expressive arts curriculum to keep pace with educational innovations in sports recreation culture.

Studies on Optimism Variable:

A. **Makhlouf Belkacem (2021):**

"Problem-Focused Coping Strategies and Their Relationship with Optimism and Pessimism Among Students Preparing for the Baccalaureate in Sports." This descriptive study involved 102 students randomly selected from Madia high schools. Using scales for problem-focused coping, optimism, and pessimism, results showed that psychological stress levels decrease as optimism increases, while they rise with increasing pessimism.

B. **Aynu Abdullah (2019):**

"Measuring the Level of Optimism and Pessimism Among Middle, Secondary School Students, and University Students: A Field Study in Saida." The study involved 333 learners and used a descriptive analytical method. Results indicated optimism prevalence of 75.07%, pessimism 24.93%, with no gender differences in optimism and pessimism but differences related to specialization.

C. **Chibli Brahimi & Ismail Bouamama (2016):**

"Secondary School Students Between Optimism and Pessimism." This research explored life orientation via optimism and pessimism and their relation to students' attitudes, focusing on gender, specialization, and academic levels. The sample included 196 students. Using modified scales suitable for the Algerian environment, results showed teachers play a significant role in guiding students towards optimism and pessimism, with no differences attributable to gender, specialization, or academic level.

2. Research Problem and Questions:

The secondary education stage is a sensitive and crucial period in students' lives, during which their

psychological and social identities are formed. In this stage, students face multiple academic and social pressures, ranging from academic challenges such as exams and assignments to social pressures related to peer relationships and family expectations. These pressures can negatively affect their future outlook and self-confidence, highlighting the need for strategies that support their mental well-being and help them navigate these challenges.

This study aims to reveal the relationship between recreational culture, which includes sports, artistic, and social activities, and the degree of optimism among students. It is believed that recreational culture plays a vital role in enhancing optimism by providing an environment conducive to social interaction and self-expression. Recreational activities not only help alleviate psychological stress but also promote positive emotions and assist students in developing their social and emotional skills.

The need for educational tools that foster positive personality development and ambition among students becomes even more pronounced in light of rapid societal changes. Recreational culture is considered a fundamental pillar of modern education, contributing to the development of a generation capable of facing future challenges with confidence and positivity. Therefore, educational institutions must integrate recreational activities into their curricula, enhancing the overall learning experience and creating a more supportive and encouraging educational environment.

Thus, the research problem is articulated through several key questions:

a. What is the level of recreational culture among secondary school students?
   This question seeks to understand the extent to which students engage in various recreational activities and whether these activities are accessible and appropriate for them.

b. What is the degree of optimism among these students?
   By measuring optimism levels, this question aims to determine how students feel about their future and academic potential.

c. Is there a statistically significant correlation between the level of recreational culture and the degree of optimism?
   This question explores how recreational activities impact students' feelings of optimism and whether these activities contribute to improving their psychological state.

3. Study Hypotheses:

a. Secondary school students enjoy a high level of recreational culture.
b. Students have an optimism degree exceeding the community average.
c. There is a statistically significant correlation between recreational culture level and optimism degree among secondary school students.

4. Study Objectives:

4.1 General Objectives:

- Study the impact of recreational activities on students' psychology and behavior.
- Demonstrate the importance of recreation as an educational approach to building a positive personality.

4.2 Specific Objectives:

- Identify the level of recreational culture in the secondary environment.
- Determine the degree of optimism among secondary students.
- Analyze the statistical relationship between recreational culture and optimism.

5. Study Importance:

5.1 Theoretical Importance:

- Enrich psychological and educational research related to extracurricular activities and their effects.
- Support understanding of psychological dynamics affecting students' emotional growth.

5.2 Practical Importance:

- Provide practical indicators for decision-makers in educational institutions to develop beneficial recreational programs.
- Motivate educational directors and teachers to enhance activities promoting optimism and mental health.

5. Terms and Definitions:

First: Recreational Culture

Recreational culture refers to the total activities' individuals practice for entertainment and constructive use of free time, contributing to psychological balance and skill development (Al-Sadhan, 2010, 112). It is part of the modern educational system reflecting societal progress and concern for individuals' mental and social health. In schools, it manifests in clubs, literary and sports activities, competitions, trips, and workshops. It is not mere entertainment but an educational means to build student personality (Weiskoph, 1992, 1067).

Operational definition: The extent of students' knowledge and practice of recreational activities (sports, artistic, cultural, social), awareness of recreation importance, activity diversity, and integration into daily life.

Classification into four main fields:

- Social: group interactions like lectures and festivals.
- Cultural: knowledge development like reading circles.
- Scientific: research and experiments in science clubs.
- Sports: games and competitions inside and outside school.

Second: Optimism

In psychology, optimism is the expectation of positive outcomes and confidence that the future holds good despite challenges. It is central to mental health, linked to happiness, perseverance, and self-confidence (Peterson et al., 1988, 23). Optimism aids adaptation to academic and social pressures and helps students see failure as temporary and surmountable (Scheier et al., 1999, 132).

Studies show optimistic students engage more in school activities, have healthy social relations, and achieve higher academically (Marshall & Lang, 1990, 78).

Operational definition: A positive psychological orientation toward the future, expecting good results despite challenges, associated with mental health, academic success, and adaptability.

Third: Secondary School Students

Students enrolled in the educational stage following middle school and preceding university, usually aged 15 to 18 years. This stage prepares them scientifically, cognitively, and emotionally for higher education or the labor market and is crucial in personality development and determining interests.

Operational definition: In this study, secondary school students refer to those registered in final-year

classes (third year secondary) at Houari Boumediene Secondary School in Berhoum during the study year, totaling 85 students.

6. Practical Aspect

6.1 Methodology:

a. Research Method:

The descriptive survey method was adopted as the most appropriate to investigate the relationship between psychological and educational variables such as recreational culture and optimism in a natural environment, providing accurate quantitative data about students' trends and practices.

b. Study Population and Sample:

Population: Secondary school students.

Sample: 85 students (male and female) randomly selected from the third-year secondary classes at Houari Boumediene Secondary School in Berhoum, considering gender representation and social background diversity.

c. Research Domains:

- **Human domain:** 85 secondary students.
- **Spatial domain:** Field study at Houari Boumediene Secondary School, Berhoum, Magra District, M'sila Province.
- **Temporal domain:** Conducted during the second semester of 2024/2025 academic year, from 10-01-2025 to 14-03-2025.

6.2 Data Collection Tools:

- **Recreational Culture Questionnaire:** Developed based on previous studies (Al-Sadhan, 2010; Hafiz et al., 1991), consisting of four dimensions: social, cultural, scientific, and sports. Responses on a 5-point Likert scale (Always – Often – Sometimes – Rarely – Never).
- **Optimism Scale:** Adapted from the "Life Orientation Test," tailored to students' context, with educationally phrased statements. Responses on a 5-point Likert scale (Always applies – Applies – Sometimes applies – Does not apply – Does not apply at all).

6.3 Scientific Conditions of Tools:

a.Reliability: Tested via test-retest on a pilot sample of 13 students outside the main sample with a two-week interval.

- Cronbach's alpha for recreational culture questionnaire = 0.81
- Cronbach's alpha for optimism scale = 0.88
- Indicating high reliability.

b.Validity:

Construct validity estimated via the square root of Cronbach's alpha (internal consistency):

Table 1. self-reported validity of the two questionnaires

Questionnaire	Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Validity √α
Recreational Culture	0.81	0.90
Optimism	0.88	0.94

Source: Radhwane, 2025

These results confirm very good validity and appropriateness for the study.

6.4 Statistical Methods:

- Percentages
- Means and standard deviations
- Pearson correlation coefficient to test the relationship between recreational culture and optimism
- Cronbach's alpha for reliability

7. Results, Interpretation, and Discussion:

7.1 Results Regarding Research Questions:

-First Question: What is the level of recreational culture among secondary students?
-Hypothesis 01: Secondary students enjoy a high level of recreational culture.
Mean scores for recreational culture dimensions (Table 2):

Table 2. arithmetic means for each area of recreational culture dimensions

Dimension	Mean	Percentage	Agreement Level	Rank
Social	3.61	72.20%	High	1
Sports	3.44	68.80%	High	2
Scientific	3.18	63.60%	Moderate	3
Cultural	3.01	60.20%	Moderate	4
Overall	3.31	66.20%	Moderate	

Source: Radhwane, 2025

Interpretation:

The social dimension scored highest, reflecting strong interest in social recreational activities like interaction with friends, family, and community, indicating social aspects are key in recreational culture.

The sports dimension came second, indicating good practice of physical activities individually or in groups, a positive indicator of awareness of physical activity's importance. Scientific and cultural dimensions scored lower, possibly due to less guidance or fewer opportunities in the environment.

Overall, the recreational culture level is moderate, showing general interest but not high in all dimensions. These findings align with Badr (1995, p.52), who considered social recreational activities as a means for building relationships and raising youth morale.

-Second Question: What is the level of optimism among secondary students?
-Hypothesis 02 : Students have an optimism degree exceeding the community average.(Table 3):

Table 3. the level of optimism among the studied sample of students

Variable	Sample Size	Mean	Hypothetical Mean	SD	t-value	Significance Level
Optimism	**85**	**75.10**	**72**	**7.80**	**13.97**	**0.01**

Source: Radhwane, 2025

Interpretation:
The actual optimism mean (75.10) is significantly higher than the hypothetical mean (72), with a t-value of 13.97 and p=0.01, indicating a statistically significant difference. The data shows students tend to be notably optimistic beyond expectations, likely due to educational support and directed activities inside schools (Scheier et al., 1999, p.134).

-Third Question: Is there a statistically significant correlation between recreational culture and optimism?
-Hypothesis 03: There is a statistically significant correlation between recreational culture level and optimism. (Table 4):

Table 4. the correlational relationship between recreational culture and optimism

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Sample Size	Degrees of Freedom	Significance Level
Recreational Culture × Optimism	0.74	85	84	0.01

Source: Radhwane, 2025

Interpretation:
A strong positive correlation (r = 0.74) exists between recreational culture and optimism, indicating that students engaged in recreational activities, especially social ones, tend to have higher optimism levels. This supports Peterson et al. (1988, p.28), confirming that active participation in social activities shapes an optimistic outlook.

The results show a medium to high level of recreational culture, particularly in social and sports

aspects, consistent with Suleiman Malki (2015, p.94) emphasizing social activity's role in building recreational awareness. The elevated optimism degree aligns with Abdul Nasser's (2015, p.66) findings on group activity participation fostering positive future perspectives.

Despite the positive correlation, the lower average in the cultural dimension (3.01) reflects a lack of diversity in literary and intellectual activities, suggesting a need to redesign cultural programs to enhance critical thinking, analysis, and creativity (Badr, 1995, p.53). The findings highlight that recreation is more than entertainment; it is an educational process affecting students' psychological state, building confidence, and belonging.

8. Conclusions, Recommendations, and Future Prospects:

8.1 Conclusions:

- Secondary students have a moderate level of recreational culture, high in social and sports dimensions.
- Students exhibit optimism exceeding the hypothetical mean, showing a positive psychological readiness toward their academic and life future.
- There is a statistically significant strong positive correlation between recreational culture and optimism, emphasizing the importance of integrating recreational programs into the educational environment.

8.2 Recommendations:

- School administrations should diversify recreational activities to include cultural and scientific domains alongside sports and social activities.
- Organize workshops aimed at enhancing optimism and positive psychological skills among students.
- Allocate regular fixed times within the school week for directed recreational activities.
- Involve teachers and school guidance counselors in designing recreational programs aligned with educational goals.
- Cooperate with parents to encourage their children's participation in extracurricular programs, promoting psychological and social stability.
- Conduct follow-up studies to assess the impact of recreational activities on students' academic performance and behavior.

8.3 Future Prospects:

- Conduct complementary and expanded studies covering other aspects of the topic to deepen scientific understanding and broaden findings.
- Actively participate in scientific seminars and conferences related to the study topic for exchanging experiences, discussing results, and contributing to the development of educational and social practices.
- Publish the study in an extended scientific book to serve as a reference for researchers and interested parties, enhancing its academic and practical impact.
- Engage decision-makers and relevant parties by presenting the study problem, results, and recommendations to improve related policies and practices.

9. GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study highlighted the vital role that recreational culture plays in shaping psychological and social attitudes among secondary students, particularly emphasizing optimism as a key motivator for academic success and adaptation to the school environment. The findings indicate that recreational activities serve a purpose beyond mere entertainment; they represent an educational approach that has tangible effects on students' psychological health, cognitive development, and future outlook. Engaging in recreational culture fosters a sense of belonging and self-worth, which are critical for navigating the challenges of adolescence.

The study identified a strong correlation between recreational culture and optimism, suggesting that participation in recreational activities can significantly enhance students' outlook on life. This connection underscores the importance of reconsidering and revitalizing strategies that promote such activities within educational institutions. By integrating more recreational opportunities into the curriculum, schools can create a more holistic educational experience that nurtures both academic and emotional growth.

Moreover, the research revealed a disparity in the attention given to various fields of recreational culture, with the cultural dimension ranking the lowest. This finding highlights a significant opportunity to develop this aspect within school programs, thereby enhancing national and intellectual values among students. By incorporating cultural activities—such as art, music, and literature—schools can enrich students' experiences and foster a deeper appreciation for their heritage and the world around them.

Consequently, the recommendations of this study target educators, educational officials, and parents, urging them to collaborate in creating a supportive learning environment. Such an environment is essential for fostering an optimistic and aware generation capable of confidently facing the complexities of future challenges. By prioritizing recreational culture and its diverse dimensions, stakeholders can contribute to the development of well-rounded individuals who are not only academically proficient but also emotionally resilient and socially engaged.

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