

On Profession and Recreation: Reflections from Classroom and Court as a Teacher and Badminton Player

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ABSTRACT

Health is a phenomenon intended to ensure that the person, family, and society are protected to develop their well-being, which is also inclusive of humans' social and professional aspects of their lives (Aksoy, et al., 2017). Hence, developing behaviors that create, secure, and maintain healthy lifestyles should be promoted among humans (Aksoy, et al., 2017). In this sense, engaging in recreational activities becomes essential in maintaining wellness and a healthy work-life balance if we are to promote holistic development of individuals. This paper then aims to survey the literature on recreational activities and relate them to insights gained from the author's experiences both as a teacher, specifically an English language lecturer, and a badminton player who engages in the sport as a recreational activity. The paper then concludes with the recommendation that schools and other institutions should include wellness as part of their employees' professional development programs which should be made accessible and available to all their workers. Programs that encourage sports or other physical activities, artistry and creativity, and other forms of recreation based on personal preferences can be very valuable to educators. In consultation with the experts in the field, time allotment, procedures, and other logistical considerations must be made. It is also further recommended that more studies be conducted on teachers' well-being and job satisfaction in order to promote personal and professional growth and in turn, mitigate cases of burnout for their own and their students' well-being.

KEYWORDS: *well-being, teaching, recreation, badminton*

1 INTRODUCTION

With people facing different challenges, responsibilities, and tasks, among others and finding themselves in various environments, it is more crucial than ever to maintain a healthy lifestyle and a balance between personal and professional life. Given the challenges encountered by employees in the workplace, for instance, rapid technological changes, health concerns, and migration of workers, having workers who are well-driven and skillful with job satisfaction and high productivity is the means by which high quality personnel can be realized by organizations and institutions (Aksoy et al., 2017). Productivity, self-development, and good relationship building reflect the workers' job satisfaction which influences their economic as well as their psychological well-being (Aksoy, et al., 2017), especially considering that Daly and Morton (2011) asserted that stress and anxiety must be tackled since they are deemed to lead to 'burnout'.

Health is a phenomenon intended to ensure that the person, family, and society are protected to develop their well-being which is also inclusive of humans' social and professional aspects of their lives (Aksoy, et al., 2017). An individual's well being in terms of the physical, mental, emotional and social aspects relate to health (Ertuzun et al., 2013), and that "In terms of today's point of view, health includes life quality and life satisfaction" (p. 510). Involvement in recreational activities is considered the most effective means of alleviating stress since "an individual will feel emotions such as relaxation, refreshment, changes and escape from daily life, and will purify his body, spirit and mind" (Bammel & Burrus-Bammel, 1996, as cited in Ertuzun et al., 2013, p. 510).

Hence, developing behaviors that create, secure, and maintain healthy lifestyles should be promoted among humans (Aksoy, et al., 2017). In this regard, the role of recreation in enriching lives cannot be emphasized enough due to its numerous benefits, for example in terms of improving one's physical, social and mental well-being. "Recreation, which means relaxing and pleasant activities that people do voluntarily in their free time, is a concept that provides the physical and psychological renewal of individuals" (Aksoy & Arslan, 2019, p. 569). It also involves activities that are optional and are done out of one's volition whereby such activities are done solely by individuals or by teams during their free time and bring them satisfaction (Basoglu, 2013; Hacıoğlu, et al., 2003, as cited in Güleri & Çolakoğlu, 2020), for example, "to meet...[the] need of resting, entertainment and development...to get away from everyday life's stress" (Ozturk, 2016, p. 114). Moreover, "Recreational activities also can be defined as physical activity, social interaction, and mental relaxation" (Aksoy, et al., 2017, p. 1057). Furthermore, "Recreation is defined as the restoration of the human's ability to function (Alli, 2007, Famayo & Adunbi 2009, as cited in Agbabiaka, et al. 2020, p. 2).

In terms of benefits of physical activity, Zubir et al. (2022) asserted that "The lack of physical exercise is regarded as having far-reaching health, economic, environmental and societal implications" (p. 2076) and that "Physical inactivity is responsible for 9% of all deaths worldwide (Lee et al., 2012, as cited in Zubir, et al., 2022, p. 2076). Moreover, according to Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans (2018), at least 150- 300 minutes per week of moderate-intensity physical activity that adults should do to obtain considerable benefits and that exceeding the 300 minute physical activity that has moderate intensity in a

week provide additional gains for them, health-wise. Moreover, “Regular physical activity (PA) engagement has been associated with important physical, mental, social and affective-emotional benefits” (Cabello-Manrique, et al., 2022, p. 1).

This paper then aims to survey the literature on recreational activities and relate them to insights gained from the author’s experiences both as a teacher, specifically an English language lecturer, and a badminton player who engages in the sport as a recreational activity.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section surveys relevant literature in the fields of profession in relation to recreational activities, with a separate section on studies related to badminton.

2.1 Previous Studies about Recreation in Relation to Profession

A study by Aksoy and Arslan (2019) examined the recreational activities related to sports by 497 male students. They found that with regard to leisure time barriers in relation to Individual Psychology, Service and Transportation, Time, Social Environment, Lack of Friends and Lack of Interest, there were statistically significant differences observed between the participants who were engaged in recreational sports activities and those who were not.

Not only do recreational activities are beneficial to the physical and mental well-being, but they can also play a role in developing leadership behaviors. For instance, Basoglu (2013) examined recreational activities related to sports and their effects on the leadership behaviors of students at the secondary level. There were two modes of leadership considered in the study: transactional and transformational. According to Burns (1978, as cited in Basoglu, 2013), “transactional leader are leaders who exchange tangible rewards for the work and loyalty of followers” while “transformational leaders are leaders who engage with followers, focus on higher order intrinsic needs, and raise consciousness about the significance of specific outcomes and new ways in which those outcomes might be achieved” (p. 102). The results showed that students who participated in sports activities scored higher on both transformational and transactional leadership behaviors than their counterparts. Moreover, those who did not engage in sports activities primarily showed transactional leadership behaviors.

Aksoy et al.’s (2017) study involving 282 male participants from organizations and public institutions in the City of Vezirköprü in Turkey’s Samsun province compared the quality of life and job satisfaction of those who participated in sports and those who did not. It was found that the participants who were involved in sports had higher perceived job satisfaction and general life quality than those who did not participate in sports.

While there are a considerable number of studies (e.g. Aksoy & Arslan, 2019; Basoglu, 2013) that investigated the role of recreational activities among students, the literature in this particular area of study seems scarce when it comes to educators. For instance, Biernat and Roguski (2009) examined the leisure activities of 52 teaching staff from a private university-level in Poland. Based on the results, about 70% of the participants reported engaging in recreational activities. Of those leisure practices, the most frequent were individual activities such as skiing, tennis, swimming and cycling. 80% or more reported short- or long-lasting local trips and about 50% traveled overseas. In Agbabiaka et al.’s

(2020) study, they investigated the recreational activities of the residents of a university staff quarters in Nigeria. They found that while there were available and varied facilities in the area, the residents did not engage in more activities related to recreation as only a few of the respondents engaged in such activities. Factors that influenced the participants' visits to recreational facilities included socioeconomic, facilities, mobility, information, and time.

Another study related to the recreational activities of educators is that of Gunel and Hacicaferoglu (2020) who investigated the hopelessness and assertiveness levels of female teachers working in different branches in state educational institutions in Antalya. They compared the control group who did not engage in sportive recreational activities with the experimental group who were involved in recreational activities. The activities included brisk walking exercises for 60 minutes, including 15-minute warm up and 10 minute cooling off exercises, three days each week for a period of twelve weeks. Significant increased levels in assertiveness and decreased levels in hopelessness were observed in the experimental group. However, the hopelessness level of the control group remained the same in their pre-test and post-test scores while their assertiveness level pre-test and post-test scores did not have a statistically significant effect.

Muthoni's (2015) identified the various factors that influenced the participation in recreation among 291 female teachers from public and private secondary schools in Nairobi. Watching television, followed by walking and then going to the gym were the most preferred leisure and recreation activities by the participants. It was found that teaching workload, as well as the cost of leisure and recreation, and domestic chores, was deemed the most significant factor related to the respondents' participation in leisure and recreation. However, the factors that did not influence their leisure and recreation participation were marital status, the number of children, and education level. Moreover, the factors that were considered unimportant in relation to leisure participation were "Encouragement from significant others, availability and access to facilities, commuting time, gender discrimination and type of class taught" (p. 63).

In Ngeti et al.'s (2018) study, the influence of facilities and equipment in terms of the management of competitive sports by 90 female teachers in secondary schools in Taita Taveta County was examined. Based on the results, the availability of sports equipment and facilities were rated as important by those who participated in sports management; hence, the researchers recommended that sufficient equipment and facilities be made available to engage more female teachers in sports management.

Ozturk (2016) considered the part that sports plays in the recreational habits of 378 kindergarten teachers in Gaziantep province. level. The findings indicated that participating in sports was the primary recreational activity that the participants did, most of whom preferred walking as a sport activity, and identified health as the main reason for their involvement in such activities. Moreover, satisfaction and relaxation were experienced by the participants after doing the recreational activities, gaining them success professionally.

Another study that involved educators in terms of leisure activities is that of Ustun et al. (2017). The limitations in relation to leisure activities considered by 228 teachers of physical education, and music/ arts in Kutahya, in Turkey, were investigated. The results showed that the factor found to be the most important for the participants was 'time' while the least important was 'lack of interest'. Moreover, it was interpersonal factors (e.g., social

relationships) that were deemed more of as constraints by other non-physical education teachers while intrapersonal factors (e.g. self-esteem, motivation,) were seen more of as limitations by the teachers of sports and physical education.

2.2. Previous Studies about Badminton

When people engage in sports in their free time as a non-professional, the activities are considered “recreative” (Ozturk, 2016). Ozturk (2016) asserted that participating in sports-related recreational activities can provide mental and physical well-being, ease anxiety and stress, and be beneficial for an individual’s satisfaction, creativity, and calmness and further stressed the importance of educators being involved in such activities.

Aside from the overall benefits of physical activities as recreational activities, there are numerous benefits of playing badminton, specifically. Badminton, a sport requiring strength, endurance, technical and game skills, coordination and speed is becoming an increasingly popular sport (Genc & Ali, 2019) and is a sport that is deemed as one of the most popular worldwide (Pamungkas, et al. 2022). It also requires moving quickly and changing directions frequently and combines very high and moderate intensity movements and that “From the standpoint of energy systems, badminton is one of the most demanding racket sports” (Jaworksi, et al., 2017, p. 34), as it trains strategy and precision (Pamungkas et al., 2022). Moreover, shoulder and neck stiffness brought about by a sedentary desk job for a long period of time can possibly be eased by badminton (Feng & Wang, 2023).

In terms of health, it has been found that badminton can be beneficial based on a number of studies. For example, a study by Zubir et al. (2022) examined the changes in blood pressure indices and working memory of the elderly who played badminton for recreation. The site of the study was in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. The participants were grouped into three, namely, high-playing time (HPT), low-playing time (LPT) and non-racquet sports playing, which was the control group (CON). It was found that while there were no differences found in the three groups, in terms of working memory, better blood pressure profile was observed among the elderly who belonged to the high weekly badminton group as compared to the participants in the control group. The researchers then concluded that “The elderly who participates in recreational badminton with appropriate playing durations will significantly benefit by enhancing their health” (p. 2080), further highlighting that the “study contributed to providing additional knowledge on how playing recreational badminton positively alters physiological and cognitive health, especially in the ageing population (p. 2080).

Another study that investigated the health benefits of badminton, this time, to students was that of Sutula et al. (2021). The research involved thirteen female students who were studying "Recreational Games" in the second year of the Kharkiv State Academy of Physical Culture (KhSAPC). The students underwent a program for health and recreational badminton done twice per week for a duration of six months. Certain indicators (e.g., body weight, hand muscle strength, height, and vital capacity of the lungs or VC) were taken into account before and after the experiment. Findings showed that the participants’ VC and hand strength improved in the duration of the program while there was nearly no change observed in the weight and height of the participants. The researchers then concluded that the participants’

degree of physical fitness and health and also the functioning state of the cardiovascular and pulmonary systems were all improved by the program.

Moreover, Pamungkas et al.'s (2022) correlational study found a significant relationship between endurance and badminton playing skills, as well as between agility and badminton playing skills. In this study, twenty male students participated in badminton as an extracurricular activity. The activity was done every Saturday for two hours from 12 January to 29 February 2020 and instruments included multistage fitness test for endurance, a shuttle run for agility, and round robin for a badminton skill test.

Genc and Ali (2019)'s study involved 16 female students studying at the School of Physical Education and Sports in a university in Turkey. The participants were divided into experimental and control groups. As part of their pre- and post-tests, various factors (e.g. height, body weight, back strength, leg strength, dominant and non-dominant hand grip strength, vertical jump, long jump tests, flexibility measurement, and 30-meter speed running) were taken into consideration. The control group joined in physical activities and theoretical and practical courses in school while the experimental group underwent a training program in badminton, three times a week of about 80 minutes for a period of 8 weeks. It was found that in terms of the pretest, there was no statistically significant difference found between the two groups. However, the experimental group demonstrated a statistically significant difference in their body weight, body mass index, and body fat percentage in the posttest. Moreover, the differences in the posttest between the two groups when considering their dominant and non-dominant hand strength and their average in 30-minute speed running were significant on the part of the experimental group. Finally, the experimental group exhibited statistically significant differences in their posttest in long and vertical jump tests.

Another study that examined badminton benefits, this time, to coordination motor abilities is that of Jaworski, et al. (2017) where the participants were 30 badminton players and 54 non-athlete peers in Poland. To measure the coordination motor abilities levels, computer tests involving a touch screen laptop were used. The conclusions drawn from the study included that for badminton players, training experience and age played a role in their coordination motor abilities, and that they showed a higher level of coordination abilities in comparison with the non-athletes. Moreover, as regards individual age groups, badminton players and non-athletes demonstrated differences in their coordination motor abilities levels.

With the survey of the studies, it cannot be stressed enough that engaging in badminton provides various benefits that contribute to the overall well-being of individuals. Playing sports as a recreational activity should then be taken seriously in order to maintain a well-balanced lifestyle for educators and other professionals.

3 DISCUSSION

This section includes insights gained from the author's experiences as an educator and as a badminton player who plays the sport recreationally.

As mentioned, Ozturk (2016) asserted that participating in sports-related recreational activities can provide mental and physical well-being, ease anxiety and stress, and be beneficial for an individual's satisfaction, creativity, and calmness and further stressed the importance of educators being involved in such activities. In terms of physical well-being, in my modest observations, I have developed some level of endurance and stamina as a

badminton enthusiast for more than a decade. The physical ability to stay on task and to sustain a certain amount of energy is very helpful especially on tasks that need extra time and energy to complete them. Moreover, as it has been noted, shoulder and neck stiffness brought about by a sedentary desk job for a long period of time can possibly be eased by badminton (Feng & Wang, 2023). Playing badminton provides me the needed break from sitting for a certain amount of time to mark papers or prepare lesson plans in front of the computer.

Personally, playing badminton for recreation provides enjoyment and respite from the workplace. As it has been noted, involvement in recreational activities is considered the most effective means of alleviating stress since “an individual will feel emotions such as relaxation, refreshment, changes and escape from daily life, and will purify his body, spirit and mind” (Bammel & Burrus-Bammel, 1996, as cited in Ertuzun et al., 2013, p. 510). In this way, playing badminton helps me relax and invigorates me again and again to prepare for the workload ahead. Moreover, while it entails expending energy, playing badminton makes me feel refreshed the next day, since exercising can help improve sleep quality (Breus, 2022).

In addition, the quick and varied movements in badminton, along with its unpredictability, elicit excitement and challenge, not only physically, but also mentally since developing strategies are very important in the sport. In terms of teaching, exploring different ways of instruction and designing creative activities can help in developing interest and motivation of the students. Playing badminton involves calculated movements and spontaneity, as well, and these can help anticipate possibilities that can prepare the player, in the same way that teachers can anticipate various scenarios that entail a combination of routines and spontaneity inside the classroom.

Moreover, I believe that badminton cultivates values and traits which are also reflected in the teaching environment. It is a game of 3 P's: *patience*, *persistence*, and *precision*, all of which are developed over time and with discipline and commitment. Time management and setting priorities are also required in making time in the schedule to engage in badminton as a recreational activity. Having been a badminton enthusiast for more than a decade, I can say that my passion for the sport has grown over time, as I always find time and ways to ensure that there is room for the sport in my weekly routine. The skill and the art that it demands continue to fascinate (and at times, baffle) me. After all, it is a game of strategy and precision (Pamungkas et al., 2022) that provides the challenge and excitement for me, especially considering that “From the standpoint of energy systems, badminton is one of the most demanding racket sports” (Jaworksi, et al., 2017, p. 34). Aside from that, resilience is also developed as players are faced with varied levels of difficulty and should be able to recover quickly to bounce back in the game.

In terms of communication and social skills, playing badminton with peers provides a support system bound by common interest. Here, verbal and nonverbal forms of communication are essential, especially when playing doubles in badminton. The teammates must communicate well and be in sync to maximize the play. Peer teaching in a more relaxed and casual environment is also evident as I have benefited especially from the tips and advice of the more advanced players to further hone my skills and strategies. Words of encouragement provide a positive environment that encourages camaraderie and healthy competition. These provide teachable moments as teachers can be or actually students because they keep learning.

Hence, such skills and traits developed from playing badminton are valuable not only in sustaining a balance between the professional and recreational aspects in life but more importantly, are life skills in themselves, necessary in maintaining one's well-being.

4 CONCLUSION

Maintaining a healthy and balanced lifestyle is essential for people's overall well-being and is an important priority. Hence, schools and other institutions should include wellness and interest clubs as part of their employees' professional development programs which should be made accessible and available to all their workers. Programs that encourage sports or other physical activities, artistry and creativity, and other forms of recreation based on personal preferences can be very valuable to educators. Applicable technical and medical support must also be considered. For example, due to its intensity or inadequate preparation, badminton can also have a certain effect on the body (Feng & Wang, 2023). Hence, proper preparation and caution need to be regarded. In this sense, in consultation with the experts in the field, time allotment, procedures, facilities and other logistical considerations must be made. It is also further recommended that more studies be conducted on teachers' well-being and job satisfaction so as to promote personal and professional growth and in turn, mitigate cases of burnout for their own and their students' well-being.

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