

**The influence of recreational sports on reducing stress and improving work-life balance of
secondary school teachers in Egor local government area of Edo state**

Daniella Blessing UDOH

EDU1904489

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY.

MAY, 2024

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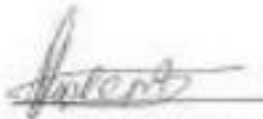
Daniella Blessing UDOH

EDU1904489

A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN KINETICS AND SPORTS SCIENCE, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT OF THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (ED) DEGREE IN HUMAN KINETICS AND SPORTS SCIENCE.

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that this research project was carried out by **Daniella Blessing UDOH** with matriculation number **EDU1904489** in the department of Human Kinetics and Sports Science, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City in partial fulfilment for the award of B.Sc. (Ed) Degree in Human Kinetics.



Dr. V. IGHODARO
Project Supervisor

24/6/24
Date



Dr. R. F. ANI
Project Coordinator

25/6/2024
Date



Dr. G.E. ARAINRU
Head of Department,

24-06-2024
Date



24/06/24

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to God Almighty, the Giver of life and source of all intelligence, for His grace and sufficiency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

First, I would like to say thank you to God who has protected and guided me throughout my journey in school.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents, Mr Patrick Udoh and Mrs Choice Ekpeta, for their unwavering love, support, prayers and encouragement throughout my academic journey. Their contributions played a significant role in my journey.

My sincere appreciation goes to my exceptional supervisor, Dr. Ighodaro Vincent, for his invaluable guidance and mentorship. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions of Dr. Gabriel Arainru, the Head of Department, and all the amazing lecturers who have shaped my academic experience.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my siblings and cousins, Peculiar, Priscilla, Aunty Abigail and Aunty Rebecca, for their love and support throughout my stay in the University of Benin.

I am also deeply grateful to my friends Esohe, Tamara, Peace, Nonso and Etinosa. The various roles you played in my journey in this school are deeply appreciated.

Finally to everyone who has directly or indirectly been there for me, thank you and God bless you

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of recreational activities on stress reduction and work-life harmony for secondary school educators in Edo State's Egor local government area. Three key objectives guided the research: investigating the relationship between participation in recreational sports and stress levels, assessing the influence of recreational sports on teachers' work-life balance, and identifying the perceived benefits and challenges of integrating recreational sports into their lives. The study's target population comprised 100 select secondary school teachers in Egor LGA. It underscores the significance of recreational sports in alleviating stress and enhancing work-life balance for educators, demonstrating a strong correlation between these activities and teachers' overall well-being. Based on the findings, the study provides recommendations to reduce stress and improve work-life balance among teachers through recreational sports.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Secondary school teachers encounter high levels of stress due to their demanding profession, which can negatively impact their work-life balance. This study explores how recreational sports can help mitigate stress and promote work-life balance among these educators. Stress in Secondary School Teachers: Teaching is associated with various stressors, such as heavy workload, student behavior management, administrative duties, and insufficient time for personal activities. Chronic stress can lead to burnout, diminished job satisfaction, and compromised mental and physical health.

Engaging in recreational sports offers numerous physical, psychological, and social benefits that can alleviate the adverse effects of stress. Physical activity triggers the release of endorphins, which have mood-boosting and stress-reducing effects. Exercise also improves cardiovascular health, enhances mood, and boosts self-esteem. Achieving a healthy work-life balance is crucial for the overall well-being of secondary school teachers. They frequently face challenges in finding time for personal pursuits outside of work due to long hours and extensive commitments. Recreational sports offer an avenue for them to disconnect from work, relax, and recharge, promoting a more balanced lifestyle. Research indicates that recreational sports participation is linked to improved work-life balance among various occupational groups. Regular exercise helps individuals manage stress more effectively, resulting in increased energy and productivity. Furthermore, recreational sports foster social connections and community involvement, which can enhance social support networks and reduce feelings of isolation. (Thoits,2011). Integrating extracurricular sports into the lifestyles of high school educators can serve as an effective strategy to mitigate stress and enhance work-life balance. By prioritizing physical pursuits and leisure activities, educators can elevate their overall well-being, leading to heightened job contentment and productivity. Educational administrators and policymakers should acknowledge the significance of facilitating teachers' involvement in recreational sports as an integral component of a holistic approach to fostering employee health and productivity.

1.2 Problem Statement

High school teachers confront significant challenges regarding stress and work-life balance due to the taxing nature of their profession. Despite their critical role in shaping young minds, educators often encounter elevated stress levels stemming from excessive workload pressure, managing student behavior, administrative obligations, and limited personal time. This persistent stress can culminate in burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and detrimental effects on both mental and physical health. Moreover, preserving a healthy work-life balance is paramount for teachers' overall well-being and job performance. However, the constraints of the teaching profession, such as extended work hours and extensive commitments, pose challenges for teachers to prioritize personal activities outside of work. Consequently, this study aims to examine the impact of recreational sports on reducing stress and enhancing work-life balance among secondary school teachers, with the objective of identifying effective strategies to support teachers' well-being and elevate their professional fulfillment.

1.3 Study Objective

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the influence of recreational sports on reducing stress and improving work-life balance among secondary school teachers. Specifically, the study endeavors to:

1. Explore the relationship between engagement in recreational sports and stress levels among secondary school teachers.
2. Assess the impact of participating in recreational sports on the work-life balance of secondary school teachers.
3. Identify the perceived advantages and obstacles associated with incorporating recreational sports into the lives of Secondary school teachers.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What is the correlation between involvement in recreational sports and stress levels among secondary school teachers?

2. What is the impact of participating in recreational sports on the work-life balance of secondary school teachers?

3. What are the perceived benefits and barriers associated with integrating recreational sports into the lives of secondary school teachers?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses are postulated:

H1: There is an absence of a meaningful relationship between engagement in recreational sports and stress levels among secondary school teachers

H2: There is no substantial impact of partaking in recreational sports on the work-life balance of secondary school teachers.

H3: There are no perceived benefits or barriers associated with integrating recreational sports into the lives of secondary school teachers.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study carries significant implications for various stakeholders involved in the education sector and employee well-being initiatives

The findings can inform educational institutions on the importance of supporting teachers' engagement in recreational sports to alleviate stress and promote work-life balance. Institutions can enact policies and programs that encourage and facilitate teachers' participation in physical activities, ultimately fostering a healthier and more productive teaching force.

Secondary school teachers frequently experience high levels of stress, which can adversely affect their mental and physical health. By emphasizing the advantages of recreational sports, this study provides valuable insights into effective stress management strategies for teachers. Teachers can use this information to prioritize self-care and incorporate physical activity into their daily routines, leading to improved overall well-being and job satisfaction.

Teachers' well-being directly influences the quality of education they deliver to students. By reducing stress and enhancing work-life balance, teachers may be better equipped to create supportive learning environments and impart effective instruction. Consequently, students may experience enhanced academic performance, socio-emotional development, and overall educational attainment

Policymakers and educational authorities can leverage the findings of this study to champion systemic reforms that promote teachers' well-being. By acknowledging the role of recreational sports in stress reduction and work-life balance, policymakers can prioritize funding and resources for initiatives aimed at supporting teachers' physical and mental health. This, in turn, may result in improved teacher retention rates and heightened job satisfaction within the education workforce

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Scope: The study's purview encompasses the impact of recreational sports on mitigating stress and enhancing work-life balance for secondary school teachers. The research will focus on select secondary schools within Egor local government area in Edo state.

Limitations:

1. Self-Report Bias: Data gathered, particularly pertaining to participants' stress levels, recreational sports engagement, and perceived work-life balance, may be susceptible to self-report biases. Participants might provide responses influenced by social desirability or inaccurately recollect their behaviors and experiences, potentially introducing measurement errors.

2.Cross-Sectional Design: The study may employ a cross-sectional design, which hinders the establishment of causal connections between involvement in recreational sports and stress reduction or work-life balance improvement. Longitudinal studies are necessary to assess the long-term effects of recreational sports participation on teachers' well-being.

3.Selection Bias: Potential biases may arise in the selection of participants due to factors such as self-selection bias among teachers who choose to engage in recreational sports or volunteer for the study. This could impact the representativeness of the sample and potentially influence the study's outcomes.

4.External Factors: External factors, such as socio-economic status, personal circumstances, and school-specific policies, may influence teachers' experiences of stress and their capacity to participate in recreational sports. These factors might not be fully considered in the study's analysis, potentially leading to confounding variables.

5.Temporal Constraints: The study may be conducted within a limited timeframe, which could restrict the depth and breadth of data collection and analysis. Consequently, certain aspects of teachers' experiences related to stress, work-life balance, and recreational sports participation may not be fully explored or understood.

6.Resource Constraints: The study may face limitations in terms of available resources, such as funding, time, and access to participants. These constraints may impact the scope of the research, sample recruitment efforts, and data collection methods, potentially limiting the study's comprehensiveness and generalizability.

1.8 Definition of Terms

1.Recreational Sports: Recreational sports encompass physical activities or games individuals engage in for leisure, enjoyment, and personal fulfillment, rather than competitive or professional purposes. Examples include jogging, swimming, cycling, hiking, team sports like basketball and soccer, individual sports like tennis and golf, and outdoor pursuits like kayaking and rock climbing.

2.Stress: Stress refers to a physiological and psychological response to external or internal pressures, challenges, or demands that exceed an individual's coping abilities. It can manifest as emotional, cognitive, behavioral, or physiological reactions and may adversely impact mental and physical health if not effectively managed.

3.Work-Life Balance: Work-life balance signifies the equilibrium or harmony between an individual's professional responsibilities (work) and personal life (family, leisure, hobbies, etc.). It involves effectively allocating time and energy to work-related tasks and personal pursuits to achieve overall well-being and satisfaction.

4.Secondary School Teachers: Secondary school teachers are educators who instruct students typically in grades 6 to 12, depending on the educational system. They are responsible for delivering subject-specific instruction, facilitating learning experiences, assessing student progress, and supporting the socio-emotional development of adolescents in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State.

5.Burnout: Burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion resulting from chronic stress, excessive workload, and prolonged exposure to demanding or emotionally taxing situations. It is characterized by feelings of depersonalization, cynicism, reduced personal accomplishment, and a diminished sense of efficacy in one's work role.

6.Well-being: This multifaceted concept encompasses the physical, emotional, social, and psychological dimensions of health and happiness. It involves experiencing positive emotions, satisfaction with life domains, fulfilling relationships, a sense of purpose, and resilience in the face of adversity.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will review existing research and literature on the impact of recreational sports on stress reduction and work-life balance improvement among secondary school teachers. We will delve into various scholarly perspectives, studies and reports to see how teacher's participation in recreational sports can make a difference in their stress levels and work-life balance.

This chapter examines relevant literature organized under the following subheadings:

- Framework for the Study
- Correlation Between Recreational Sports and Stress Management in Secondary School Educators
- Factors Influencing the Correlation Between Recreational Sports and Stress Alleviation Among Educators

- Impact of Recreational Sports on Enhancing the Harmony Between Work and Life for Secondary School Educators
- Effect of Recreational Sports on the Mental, Emotional, and Psychological Health of Educators

2.2 Framework for the Study

2.2.1 Recreational Sports

Recreational sports encompass diverse physical activities primarily undertaken for enjoyment, relaxation, and social interaction, rather than competitive objectives. These activities play a crucial role in fostering physical and mental well-being, establishing social connections, and elevating overall life satisfaction.

Participating in recreational sports contributes to improved fitness and health. Activities such as swimming, cycling, hiking, and team sports like basketball or soccer aid in maintaining a balanced weight, strengthening musculoskeletal structure, and enhancing cardiovascular health. Engaging in recreational sports regularly is associated with a diminished risk of chronic ailments such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease (Coakley, 2009).

Recreational sports have demonstrated positive impacts on mental health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. Physical activities stimulate the release of endorphins, neurotransmitters that induce feelings of happiness and relaxation. Additionally, participating in recreational sports provides a respite from daily routines, allowing individuals to unwind, clear their minds, and rejuvenate their spirits (Eime, et al, 2013).

Recreational sports provide opportunities for social interaction and community building. Whether it's joining a local sports league, participating in group fitness classes, or simply indulging in pick-up games at the park, these activities foster friendships and a sense of belonging. Shared experiences on the field or court forge bonds that transcend the game itself, strengthening social networks and fostering community cohesion (Giuliano & Giuliano, 2012).

Engaging in recreational sports offers avenues for skill development and personal growth. Whether learning a new sport or improving existing skills, individuals can challenge themselves, set goals, and experience a sense of accomplishment as they enhance their abilities over time. Moreover, participating in team sports cultivates essential life skills such as teamwork, communication, leadership, and resilience, which are valuable on and off the field.

Recreational sports provide opportunities for individuals of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to participate. From structured leagues with organized rules to informal activities with minimal equipment and expertise requirements, there are options to accommodate diverse preferences and interests. Inclusive recreational sports programs promote diversity, equity, and accessibility, ensuring that everyone can enjoy the benefits of physical activity and sports participation (Whitley, 2016).

Overall, recreational sports contribute significantly to comprehensive well-being, foster social connections, and enrich quality of life. By encouraging individuals to stay active, connect with others, and pursue activities they find enjoyable, recreational sports contribute to healthier, happier communities.

2.2.2 Stress

Recreational sports, encompassing various physical activities undertaken for leisure and enjoyment, have been widely recognized for their positive effects on mental health and stress reduction. Participation in recreational sports provides individuals with opportunities to engage in pleasurable physical activities, promoting relaxation and stress relief (Coakley, 2009).

Research suggests that regular participation in recreational sports can significantly reduce stress levels. A systematic review by Eime et al. (2013) found that adults who engaged in sports activities experienced lower stress levels and improved psychological well-being compared to non-participants. Furthermore, the social aspects of recreational sports, such as camaraderie and social support from teammates, contribute to stress reduction by fostering a sense of belonging and connection (Giuliano & Giuliano, 2012).

Physical exercise, an integral component of recreational sports, is known to stimulate the release of endorphins, neurotransmitters that act as natural stress reducers and mood enhancers (Whitley, 2016). Moreover, the immersive nature of sports participation helps individuals divert their attention away from stressors, promoting relaxation and mental rejuvenation (Giuliano & Giuliano, 2012).

Regarding secondary school educators facing high work-related stress, participating in recreational activities outside of work hours presents a valuable coping strategy. Engagement in sports enables teachers to de-stress, rejuvenate, and mitigate the physical and psychological impacts of work-related challenges (Coakley, 2009).

The proposed investigation aims to examine the correlation between recreational sports participation and stress reduction among secondary school teachers. By studying the influence of recreational sports on stress levels, the study seeks to augment the expanding body of evidence supporting the therapeutic benefits of sports engagement for mental well-being.

2.2.3 Work-life balance

Work-life balance is a crucial concept representing the equilibrium between professional obligations and personal life areas, including family, leisure activities, and personal fulfillment (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Attaining and preserving a satisfactory work-life balance is imperative for individuals to experience overall well-being and satisfaction both personally and professionally.

The concept of work-life balance has garnered significant attention in recent years due to the changing nature of work, technological advancements, and evolving societal norms (Allen, 2012). For secondary school teachers, who frequently face high work demands and time constraints, achieving a healthy work-life balance is particularly challenging yet vital for their overall job fulfillment and well-being (Naidoo, 2018).

Research indicates that a disparity between work and personal life can result in various negative outcomes, such as heightened stress, burnout, and diminished job satisfaction (Grzywacz & Bass, 2003). Furthermore, work-life imbalance has been linked to adverse effects on mental health and overall quality of life (Shockley et al., 2017).

Factors influencing work-life balance are multifaceted and encompass individual characteristics, organizational policies, and societal norms (Voydanoff, 2005). Flexibility in work arrangements, supportive organizational cultures, and effective time management strategies are among the key determinants of achieving a satisfactory work-life balance (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018).

Within the context of this study, exploring the relationship between recreational sports participation and work-life balance among secondary school teachers is paramount. Involvement in recreational sports activities may serve as a means for educators to unwind, revitalize, and establish boundaries between work and personal life domains. Understanding how participation in recreational sports contributes to work-life balance can inform interventions and policies aimed at enhancing the well-being and job satisfaction of educators.

2.2.4 Work-life Balance and Work-life Imbalance

Delineating the working environment in which individuals spend the majority of their active life presents a complex task (Nekoranec, 2013). Change is an ongoing and ceaseless process within organizational life (Kim, Song, & Lee, 2013; Van de Ven & Sun, 2011). In recent years, working conditions have undergone a distinctive metamorphosis. Among the catalysts for this transformation are the impacts of the volatile business climate on organizations and shifts in employee attitudes towards work (Bieńkowska, 2012). The former pertains to the evolving nature of the environment in which organizations currently operate (Bieńkowska, 2012). A turbulent environment characterized by unpredictability directly affects organizations' profitability and efficiency (Bieńkowska, 2012). The state of uncertainty triggers unanticipated alterations in the conditions of operations, which, in turn, effectively hinder long-term planning (Bieńkowska, 2012). Organizations face relentless competitive pressure to refine their organizational structures to elicit improved performance from employees and managers (Ben-Ner & Lluís, 2011). Possessing a devoted and dedicated workforce constitutes a valuable asset that contributes to organizations' competitive edge (Ansari, 2011). The fiercely competitive landscape of contemporary business organizations emphasizes the significance of cultivating proficient and productive workers in addition to retaining them (Ansari, 2011). American workers often occupy the majority of their waking hours in workplaces, physically separated from their families (Andreassen, Hetland, & Pallesen, 2010);

Treiber & Davis, 2012). Numerous researchers have conceptualized work and family domains as opposing spheres (Ahmad & Muhammad Tahir, 2011; Aiswarya & Ramasundaram, 2012; Baral & Bhargava, 2011; Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Boushey, 2011). From the perspective of the family, work poses challenges, while from the employer's standpoint, family responsibilities hinder productivity (Treiber & Davis, 2012). This work-family conflict can have detrimental consequences for workers' well-being (Innstrand, Lamgballe, Espnes, Aasland, & Falkum, 2010; Severn, Searchfield, & Huggard, 2012; Treiber & Davis, 2012). Chang, McDonald, and Burton (2010) indicated a need for a better understanding of work-life balance because in only 26% of qualitative studies and 9% of quantitative studies researchers investigated work-life issues in comparison to studies on work-family balance. What constitutes the establishment of a work-life balance? The answer to this question generates a series of interconnected questions pertaining to how. These are not mere instrumental inquiries but rather fundamentally philosophical conundrums that transcend conventional discussions about work-life balance attainment (Fouché & Martindale, 2011). Work-life balance is a widely examined phenomenon in organizational literature, where scholars have identified diverse ways in which work and private life exert influence on one another (Mordi & Ojo, 2011). Preserving an equilibrium between work and life is a well-known topic in society as well as a significant concern for individuals and organizations (Aziz, Adkins, Walker, & Wuensch, 2010; Fischlmayr & Kollinger, 2010; Lauzun, Morganson, Major, & Green, 2010; McCarthy, Darcy, & Grady, 2010; Noor, 2011; Ten Brummelhuis & Der Lippe, 2010; Webber, Sarris, & Bessell, 2010). The issue of work-life balance gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s in the United Kingdom, primarily among working mothers (Malik, Saleem, & Ahmad, 2010). However, the issue became a topic of discussion for the United States Department of Labor in the 1980s, which led to recognition by human resource departments worldwide in the 1990s (Malik et al., 2010). Work-life balance (WLB) appears to be an integral aspect of corporate social responsibility today (Bilal, Rehman, & Raza, 2010). Therefore, organizational leaders ought to acknowledge their responsibilities in an effort to ensure that their employees are not working so diligently that it impinges on their personal lives, which can lead to health problems, potentially affecting morale, reducing productivity, and diminishing job satisfaction (Bilal et al., 2010). The debate on the issue of job satisfaction has been an ongoing discourse for years in conjunction with work-life balance, which gained importance in developing countries (Malik et al., 2010). The amalgamation of professional and personal life has progressively become essential due to the evolving nature of modern times (e.g., employed mothers, dual-earner families, employees with elder care responsibilities, etc.) and changing demographics and patterns of work and family (Higgins, Duxbury, & Lyons, 2010; Jansen, Mohren, Van Amelsvoort, Janssen, & Kant, 2010; Nayeem & Tripathy, 2012). These transformations have contributed to an increase in role overload as workers strive to accommodate the diverse demands imposed on them by their professions and personal lives (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Higgins et al., 2010; Kahn et al., 1964). Researchers have found that role overload has numerous stress-related consequences, such as anxiety, burnout, fatigue, and diminished satisfaction with family and work (Ahola, Väänänen, Koskinen, Kouvonen, & Shirom, 2010; Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Shultz, Wang, & Olson, 2010).

2.3 The correlation between involvement in leisure-oriented physical activities and stress reduction among teachers at the secondary level.

Participating in recreational sports has been acknowledged as a possible route for alleviating stress among individuals working in different professions, educators included. In the context of secondary school teachers who frequently experience high levels of stress related to their jobs, understanding the impact of recreational sports on stress reduction is especially relevant.

Multiple studies have emphasized the beneficial effects of engaging in recreational sports activities on stress reduction. For instance, a systematic review by Eime et al. (2013) revealed that participation in sports and physical activities was associated with lower levels of perceived stress among adults. Likewise, research by Penedo and Dahn (2005) demonstrated the effectiveness of regular exercise, encompassing recreational sports, in reducing stress levels and enhancing overall well-being.

Within the specific context of educators, participating in recreational sports may serve as a valuable coping mechanism for managing job-related stressors. The physical exertion and enjoyment derived from sports activities can assist teachers in alleviating tension, clearing their minds, and fostering a sense of relaxation and rejuvenation (Smith & Dishman, 2018). Furthermore, engaging in sports activities with colleagues or peers can provide social support and opportunities for camaraderie, further enhancing stress reduction (Wicker et al., 2013).

Additionally, the benefits of participating in recreational sports extend beyond the physical realm, encompassing psychological and emotional well-being. Regular engagement in sports activities has been associated with improved mood, self-esteem, and resilience, all of which contribute to better stress management (Penedo & Dahn, 2005).

In light of these findings, exploring the correlation between participation in recreational sports and stress reduction among secondary school teachers is essential. By investigating how involvement in sports activities influences teachers' stress levels, this study aims to offer insights into effective strategies for promoting educators' well-being and contentment at work.

2.3.1 Factors influencing the relationship between recreational sports participation and stress reduction among teachers

The extent to which recreational sports can relieve stress is influenced by various factors. Such as:

Individual Factors

1. Physical Fitness Level: Teachers with higher fitness levels tend to experience more pronounced reductions in stress, as their bodies are better equipped to handle physical exertion and recover more quickly (Dishman et al., 2006). Conversely, those with lower fitness levels might initially find physical activity more stressful until their fitness improves.

2. Psychological Disposition: Those with higher resilience and self-efficacy are more likely to perceive recreational sports positively and persist in these activities, leading to greater stress reduction (Smith et al., 2009).

3. Previous Sports Experience: Teachers with positive past experiences are more likely to engage in and enjoy recreational sports, thus experiencing greater stress reduction (Craft & Landers, 1998).

Social Factors

4. Social Support: The level of social support available to teachers plays a critical role. Participation in team sports or group activities can enhance social interactions and provide emotional support, which contributes to stress reduction (Eime et al., 2013).

5. Workplace Culture: Supportive environments that prioritize work-life balance and provide opportunities for physical activity encourage teachers to engage in sports, thereby reducing stress (Sallis et al., 2006).

Environmental Factors

6. Accessibility of Facilities: Schools and communities that provide easily accessible, affordable, and well-maintained facilities encourage higher participation rates, leading to greater stress reduction (Shores et al., 2008)

7. Time Availability: Teachers with demanding schedules and heavy workloads may struggle to find time for recreational sports, limiting their ability to benefit from these activities (O'Donnell et al., 2010).

Psychological and Emotional Factors

8. Enjoyment and Motivation: Activities that are enjoyable and align with personal interests are more likely to be sustained over time, leading to more significant stress relief (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

9. Stress Perception and Coping Mechanisms: Teachers who view sports as a positive outlet for stress and actively use it as a coping strategy experience more substantial benefits (Anshel, 1996)

2.4 The Impact of Recreational Sports on Enhancing the Work-Life Balance of Secondary School Teachers.

Balancing professional and personal life is crucial for the well-being and job satisfaction of secondary school teachers. Participating in recreational sports is a promising strategy for achieving this balance by providing opportunities for relaxation, socialization, and physical activity outside of working hours.

Studies have demonstrated that engaging in sports can enhance work-life balance by enabling individuals to disconnect from work-related pressures and obligations. As noted by Greenhaus and Allen (2011), achieving equilibrium between work and personal domains requires effective boundary management, where individuals maintain clear distinctions between their professional and non-professional roles. Participating in recreational sports offers secondary school teachers designated time and space to focus on their personal interests and well-being, facilitating boundary management and reducing work-life conflict (Naidoo, 2018).

Furthermore, recreational sports provide secondary school teachers with a platform for physical activity, which is associated with numerous health benefits, including stress reduction, mood elevation, and cognitive enhancement (Penedo & Dahn, 2005). By incorporating regular physical activity into their leisure time through sports participation, teachers can improve their overall health and well-being, leading to increased resilience and capacity to cope with job demands (Smith & Dishman, 2018).

Moreover, engaging in recreational sports can foster social connections and support networks outside of the workplace, which are essential components of a healthy work-life balance (Wicker et al., 2013). Participating in sports activities with colleagues or friends allows teachers to build relationships, share common interests, and create a sense of camaraderie, all of which contribute to their overall satisfaction and fulfillment in both personal and professional spheres.

In summary, the impact of recreational sports on enhancing the work-life balance of secondary school teachers stems from its ability to provide opportunities for relaxation, physical activity, and socialization outside of work hours. By facilitating boundary management, reducing stress, and fostering social connections, participation in recreational sports contributes to teachers' overall well-being and job satisfaction.

2.5 The Effect of Recreational Sports on the Emotional, Psychological, and Mental Health of Teachers

The teaching profession is known for its demanding nature, which can significantly impact the emotional, mental, and psychological well-being of educators. Recreational sports have been proposed as a potential intervention to mitigate these negative effects and promote overall well-being. Several research studies highlight the role of recreational sports in reducing stress among teachers. For instance, Cothran et al. (2005) found that teachers who engaged in regular physical activity reported lower stress levels compared to their sedentary counterparts. Physical activity triggers the release of endorphins, which act as natural stress relievers (Salmon, 2001). Recreational sports participation has been shown to effectively reduce stress and anxiety levels in teachers (Harris et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2019).

Participating in recreational sports has been associated with improved mood and reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety. Biddle and Asare (2011) conducted a meta-analysis indicating that physical activity, including recreational sports, is positively correlated with better emotional health outcomes, such as decreased anxiety and enhanced mood.

Recreational sports have been linked to improved mental health in teachers, including reduced symptoms of depression (Brown et al., 2017) and enhanced cognitive function (Hillman et al., 2016). Exercise has also been shown to improve sleep quality, which is vital for mental health (Reid et al., 2017). Participation in recreational sports has been associated with increased self-esteem and body satisfaction among teachers (Campbell et al., 2018).

Regular engagement in physical activity has been linked to enhanced cognitive function. Ratey and Loehr (2011) suggest that aerobic exercise can improve executive functioning, memory, and processing speed, which are critical for teachers who need to manage complex classroom environments and administrative tasks. Recreational sports can play a significant role in preventing burnout among teachers. Studies, such as those by Hakanen et al. (2006), indicate that physical activities serve as a buffer against burnout by providing a necessary break from professional duties, promoting relaxation, and enhancing life satisfaction. Recreational sports often involve social interactions that provide emotional and psychological support. Teachers who engage in team

sports or group activities report higher levels of social support, which contributes to their psychological well-being (Eime et al., 2013).

Exercise has also been found to improve mental resilience, empowering teachers to better handle stress and challenging situations (Wagnild & Young, 1993). Engaging in recreational sports positively impacts the emotional, cognitive, and psychological well-being of educators. Regular physical activity aids in reducing stress and anxiety, enhances mood, improves cognitive functioning, and promotes quality sleep. Exercise also contributes to elevated self-esteem and resilience. Encouraging teachers to participate in recreational sports can lead to a healthier and more adaptable teaching force.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the research methods employed. It includes the following sections:

- Research Design
- Study Population
- Sample Selection and Technique
- Research Instrument
- Instrument Validity
- Instrument Reliability
- Data Collection Method
- Data Analysis Method

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a survey research design. As defined by Nworgu (2006), survey research involves collecting data through structured questionnaires from a representative sample of respondents. Leech & Onwuegbuzie (2018) describe survey research as the gathering of data via respondent answers to a set of questions. This design will be utilized to collect data from teachers in Egor LGA of Edo State to determine the influence of recreational sports on stress reduction and work-life balance for secondary school educators.

3.3 Study Population

The study population refers to the group of individuals or objects that possess certain characteristics relevant to the research's focus (Schutt 2018). It is the wider group from which the sample is drawn. The study's population consists of one hundred (100) secondary school teachers selected from various schools in Egor LGA of Edo State.

3.4 Sample Size and Selection Technique

Stratified sampling was used to ensure that all members had equal chances of being included. The sample was limited to secondary school teachers in Egor LGA of Edo State. The population of secondary school teachers was classified into strata based on the following variables: Teaching Experience: Less than 5 years, 6 to 10 years, 11 to 15 years, and more than 15 years; Gender: Male and female teachers; Age: under 25, 25-35, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65 and over; Department: Arts, Science, Humanities, Physical Education, Others.

These characteristics were chosen because they have the potential to influence teachers' stress levels and work-life balance. By considering these strata, the researcher aims to ensure a well-rounded and representative sample of the larger population.

3.5 Research Instrument

A researcher-designed questionnaire was used as the research instrument. It comprises two sections: Section A and Section B. Section A gathers respondent information (demographic data) such as age, gender, years of teaching experience, department, and educational attainment. Section B includes twenty main questions that correspond to the research questions. The questionnaire's responses will provide data to validate the research questions.

3.6 Research Instrument Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument or method accurately captures the reality of the study (Prince Udoyen: 2019).

The project supervisor and colleagues reviewed and validated the questionnaires. They each received a copy of the questionnaire and provided feedback. The project supervisor then verified and approved the final version.

While respondent responses may be subjective, the questionnaire aims to collect valuable data based on their perspectives. To account for possible bias in responses, a significance level of 1% will be used in data testing. This will mitigate potential errors or biases in the collected data.

3.7 Instrument Reliability

Reliability denotes the consistency of the instrument in measuring the intended construct (Ojo, 2003). Findings suggest that the questionnaire was effectively designed, resulting in reliable data collection. Test-re-test reliability will be employed to assess instrument reliability, using the same instrument to collect measurements from the same sample at different time intervals. A high correlation between the measurements signifies high instrument reliability.

3.8 Data Collection Method

This study employs questionnaires for primary data collection. To ensure systematic data collection and maintain research integrity:

The researcher will develop a questionnaire aligned with the research objectives, with questions accompanied by response options (SA, A, SD, D). All responses will remain anonymous. A letter from the Head of Department will facilitate access to the target population. This official document will request permission from relevant authorities to distribute the questionnaire.

3.9 Data Analysis Method

Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentages, mean, standard deviation) will be utilized to analyze the data gathered from the questionnaire. Hypothesis testing will be conducted using Pearson's correlation at a significance level of 0.05. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be employed for data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data collected during the study. It utilizes mathematical and statistical techniques to assess the research questions.

4.2 Results Presentation

Tables and percentages were employed for data interpretation, with tables aiding in the comprehension of the information. Data analysis considered both positive (strongly agree, agree) and negative (disagree, strongly disagree) responses. The data analysis and interpretation are categorized according to the research questions. One hundred (100) questionnaires were distributed, with all being retrieved and deemed valid for analysis.

4.3 SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Table 1: Gender Distribution

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
MALE	40	60.0
FEMALE	60	40.0
TOTAL	100	100%

The gender distribution indicates that 40% of respondents are male while 60% are female.

Table 2: Age Distribution

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Under 25 years	2	2.0
25-34 years	13	13.0
35-44 years	45	45.0
45-54 years	27	27.0
55-64 years	10	10.0
65years and above	3	3.0
TOTAL	100	100%

The age distribution reveals that 2% are under 25 years, 13% are between 25-34 years, 45% are between 35-44 years, 27% are between 45-54 years, 10% are between 55-64 years, and 3% are 65 years and above.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Years of Teaching Experience

EXPERIENCE YEARS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Below 5 Years	5	5.0
6-10 Years	25	25.0
11-15 Years	40	40.0
Above 15 Years	35	35.0
TOTAL	100	100%

This analysis indicates that 5.0% of respondents have less than 5 years of teaching experience, 25.0% have between 6-10 years, 40.0% have between 11-15 years, and 35.0% have more than 15 years. The majority of respondents (40.0%) have between 11-15 years of experience, while the lowest proportion (5.0%) have less than 5 years of experience.

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Department

DEPARTMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Arts	25	25.0
Sciences	40	40.0
Humanities	15	15.0
Physical Education	5	5.0
Others	15	15.0
TOTAL	100	100%

This analysis shows that 25.0% of respondents are from the Arts department, 40.0% from Sciences, 15.0% from Humanities, 5.0% from Physical Education, and 15.0% from other departments. The highest proportion (40.0%) are from the Sciences department, while the lowest proportion (5.0%) are from Physical Education.

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Educational Attainment

EDUCATION LEVEL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
SSCE/WAEC	0	0.0
Bachelor's Degree	62	62.0
Master's Degree	28	28.0
PhD	10	10
TOTAL	100	100%

This analysis reveals that none of the respondents have SSCE/WAEC qualifications, 62.0% have Bachelor's degrees, 28.0% have Master's degrees, and 10.0% have PhDs. The majority (62.0%) of respondents hold Bachelor's degrees, indicating a high level of undergraduate education completion.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question 1: Relationship between Recreational Sports and Stress Levels among Secondary School Teachers

Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Relationship between Recreational Sports and Stress Level

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
1.	I participate in recreational sports (E.g. running, jogging, cycling, swimming, and others)	3.00	0.492	Agree
2.	I participate in recreational sports regularly (at least once a week)	2.95	0.479	Agree

3.	I feel stressed at work	3.58	0.572	Agree
4.	I believe participating in recreational sports reduces my stress (e.g. makes me more relaxed)	2.99	0.522	Agree
5.	I find it challenging to maintain a good work-life balance	2.54	0.576	Agree
6.	Participating in recreational sports improves my work-life balance (E.g. Job satisfaction, and better personal interaction)	2.93	0.408	Agree
Average mean score = 2.99				
Cut-off mean = 2.5				

In table 6, the respondents agree that they participate in recreational sports e.g. running, jogging, cycling, swimming and others with a mean of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 0.492, Also the respondents agree that they participate in recreational sports regularly at least once a week with a mean of 2.95, and a standard deviation of 0.479, More so, the respondents agree that they feel stressed at work with a mean of 3.58, and a standard deviation of 0.572, the respondents believed that participating in recreational sports reduces their stress and make them more relaxed with a mean of 2.99 and a standard deviation of 0.522, Furthermore, the respondents agree that they find it challenging to maintain a good work-life balance with a mean of 2.54 and a standard deviation of 0.576, Finally, the respondents agree that participating in recreational sports improves their work- life balance e.g. job satisfaction, better personal interaction with a mean of 2.93 and a standard deviation of 0.408.

Conclusively, Since the mean of each item is more than the cut-off mean (2.5) and the average mean score is 2.99 there is a significant relationship between engagement in recreational sports, and stress levels among secondary school teachers.

Research question 2: What is the impact of participating in recreational sports on the work-life balance of secondary school teachers?

Table 7: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the impact of participating in recreational sports on the work-life balance of secondary school teachers.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
7.	Participating in recreational sports helps me relax and disconnect from work	2.57	0.728	Agree
8.	Participating in recreational sports improves my mood	2.58	0.684	Agree
9.	Recreational sports help me socialize with colleagues or other people outside work	3.03	0.413	Agree
10.	Participating in recreational sports helps me stay physically active and contribute to a better work-life balance	3.05	0.435	Agree
11.	Recreational sports reduce my stress levels	3.00	0.471	Agree
12.	Recreational sports provide me with energy and motivation to maintain a balanced personal and professional life	2.95	0.411	Agree
Average mean score = 2.86				
Cut-off mean = 2.5				

In table 7, the respondents agree that participating in recreational sports helps them relax and disconnect from work with a mean of 2.57 and a standard deviation of 0.728, the respondents also agree that participating in recreational sports improves their mood with a mean of 2.58 and a standard deviation of 0.684, furthermore the respondents agree that recreational sports help them socialize with colleagues or other people outside work with a mean of 3.03 and a standard deviation of 0.413, the respondents agree that participating in recreational sports helps them stay physically active and contribute to a better work-life balance with a mean of 3.05 and a standard deviation of 0.435, the respondents also agree that recreational sports reduce their stress levels with a mean of

3.00 and a standard deviation of 0.471, Finally the respondents agree that recreational sports provide them with energy and motivation to maintain a balanced personal and professional life with a mean of 2.95 and a standard deviation of 0.411

Conclusively, Since the mean of each of the items is more than the cut-off mean (2.5) and the average mean score is 2.86 there is a positive impact of participating in recreational sports on the work-life balance of secondary school teachers

Research question 3: What are the perceived benefits and barriers associated with integrating recreational sports into the lives of secondary school teachers?

Table 8: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the perceived benefits and barriers associated with integrating recreational sports into the lives of secondary school teachers

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
13.	Participating in recreational sports improves my physical health	3.15	0.386	Agree
14.	Participating in recreational sports improves my mental health.	3.19	0.443	Agree
15.	Participating in recreational sports helps me build social connections	3.01	0.389	Agree
16.	I don't participate in recreational sports because I don't have enough time	1.80	0.667	Disagree
17.	I don't participate because I can't afford it financially	2.61	0.840	
18.	I don't participate because I lack interest in recreational sports	1.75	0.642	Disagree
19.	I don't participate because I don't have access to suitable facilities and resources	1.71	0.671	Disagree
20.	Lack of support from family or colleagues discourages me from engaging in recreational sports	1.63	0.677	Disagree
Average mean score = 2.36				
Cut-off mean = 2.5				

In table 8, the respondents agree that participating in recreational sports improves their physical health with a mean of 3.15 and a standard deviation of 0.386, the respondents also agree that participating in recreational sports improves their mental health with a mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 0.443, furthermore the respondents agree that participating in recreational sports helps them build social connections with a mean of 3.01 and a standard deviation of 0.389, the respondents disagree that they don't participate in recreational sports because they don't have enough time with a mean of 1.80 and a standard deviation of 0.667, the respondents also agree that they don't participate because they can't afford it financially with a mean of 2.61 and a standard deviation of 0.840, More so, the respondents disagree that they don't participate because they lack interest in recreational sports with a mean of 1.75 and a standard deviation of 0.642, the respondents disagree that they don't participate because they don't have access to suitable facilities and resources with a mean of 1.71 and a standard deviation of 0.671, finally the respondents disagree that Lack of support from family or colleagues discourages them from engaging in recreational sports with a mean of 1.63 and a standard deviation of 0.677

Conclusively, Since the mean of each of the items is less than the cut-off mean (2.5) and the average mean score is 2.36, it can be inferred that the responses on the perceived benefits and barriers associated with integrating recreational sports into the lives of secondary school teachers are generally not favorable.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis one (H₁): There is no significant relationship between engagement in recreational sports and stress levels among secondary school teachers

Correlations

		Engagement in recreational sports	Stress levels
Engagement in recreational sports	Pearson Correlation	1	-.758**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Stress levels	Pearson Correlation	-.758**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), Computed using SPSS.

The above analysis shows;

Pearson Correlation (r): -0.758

Significance (2-tailed) or (p-value): 0.000

Sample Size (N): 100

The Pearson Correlation coefficient of -0.758 indicates a strong negative relationship between engagement in recreational sports and stress levels among secondary school teachers. A negative correlation means that as engagement in recreational sports increases, stress levels tend to decrease, and vice versa, the p-value of 0.000 indicates that this relationship is highly significant. Based on the analysis, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between engagement in recreational sports and stress levels among secondary school teachers. Instead, we accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between engagement in recreational sports and reduced stress levels among secondary school teachers.

Hypothesis two (H₂): There is no significant impact of participating in recreational sports on the work-life balance of secondary school teachers

Correlations

		Engagement in recreational sports	Work-Life balance
Engagement in recreational sports	Pearson Correlation	1	.718**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

	N	100	100
Work-Life balance	Pearson Correlation	.718**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), Computed using SPSS.

The above analysis shows;

Pearson Correlation (r): 0.718

Significance (2-tailed) or (p-value): 0.000

Sample Size (N): 100

The Pearson Correlation coefficient of 0.718 indicates a strong positive correlation between participation in recreational sports and work-life balance among secondary school teachers. This suggests that as participation in recreational sports increases, work-life balance also tends to improve, and vice versa. the p-value of 0.000 indicates that this relationship is highly significant. Based on the analysis, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant impact of participating in recreational sports on the work-life balance of secondary school teachers. Instead, we conclude that there is a strong and statistically significant positive impact of participating in recreational sports on the work-life balance of secondary school teachers.

Hypothesis three (H₃): There are no perceived benefits and barriers associated with integrating recreational sports into the lives of secondary school teachers.

Correlations

		Engagement in recreational sports	Perceived Benefits	Perceived Barriers
Engagement in recreational sports	Pearson Correlation	1	.648**	-.784**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	100	100	100
Perceived Benefits	Pearson Correlation	.648**	1	.780**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	100	100	100
Perceived Barriers	Pearson Correlation	-.784**	-.780**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), Computed using SPSS.

The above analysis shows;

Engagement in recreational sports and perceived benefits

Pearson Correlation (r): 0.648

Significance (2-tailed) or (p-value): 0.000

Sample Size (N): 100

The Pearson Correlation coefficient indicates a strong positive correlation between engagement in recreational sports and perceived benefits. This suggests that as engagement in recreational sports increases, perceived benefits tend to increase and vice versa. The p-value of 0.000 indicates this relationship is statistically significant.

Engagement in recreational sports and perceived barriers

Pearson Correlation (r): - 0.784

Significance (2-tailed) or (p-value): 0.000

Sample Size (N): 100

The Pearson Correlation coefficient indicates a strong negative correlation between engagement in recreational sports and perceived barriers. This suggests that as engagement in recreational sports increases, perceived barriers tend to decrease and vice versa. The p-value of 0.000 indicates this relationship is statistically significant.

Perceived Benefits and Perceived Barriers

Pearson Correlation (r): - 0.780

Significance (2-tailed) or (p-value): 0.000

Sample Size (N): 100

The Pearson correlation of -0.780 indicates a strong negative correlation between perceived benefits and perceived barriers. This suggests that as perceived benefits increase, perceived barriers tend to decrease, and vice versa. The p-value of 0.000 indicates this relationship is statistically significant.

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, we reject the null hypothesis that there are no perceived benefits and barriers associated with integrating recreational sports into the lives of secondary school teachers. Instead, we conclude that there are significant perceived benefits and barriers, and these factors are strongly correlated with engagement in recreational sports.

4.6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The following findings emerged from an analysis of the respondents' responses:

The findings indicated a significant relationship between recreational sports involvement and stress levels among secondary school teachers. This aligns with Coakley's (2009) study, which showed that participating in recreational sports gives individuals chances to engage in pleasurable physical activities that promote relaxation and stress reduction. Additionally, it was discovered that engaging in recreational sports lowers stress and promotes relaxation among secondary school teachers. This finding is supported by the research of Eime et al. (2013), which showed that adults who participated in sports had lower stress levels and improved psychological well-being than those who did not participate.

The results further indicated that engagement in recreational sports positively impacts the work-life integration of secondary educators. This aligns with the research conducted by Naidoo (2018), who found that participation in recreational sports activities provides secondary school teachers with dedicated time and space to focus on their personal interests and well-being, thus enabling boundary management and reducing work-life conflict. Additionally, it was revealed that recreational sports aid secondary school teachers in socializing with colleagues and individuals outside of work. This is supported by the research conducted by Wicker et al. (2013), which found that engaging in recreational sports can foster social connections and support systems outside of the workplace, essential elements of a healthy work-life balance.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that participation in recreational sports improves secondary school teachers' mood. This aligns with the research conducted by Penedo & Dahn (2005), which found that recreational sports offer secondary school teachers an outlet for engaging in physical activity, linked to various health benefits, including stress reduction, improved mood, and enhanced cognitive function.

The results also revealed potential benefits and obstacles associated with integrating recreational sports into the lives of secondary school teachers. This is in line with the research conducted by Coakley (2009), which suggested that regular participation in recreational sports is associated with a reduced risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. It was also revealed that participation in recreational sports helps secondary school teachers build social connections. This finding is supported by Giuliano & Giuliano (2012), who found that shared experiences during sports activities forge bonds that extend beyond the game itself, strengthening social networks and promoting social cohesion within communities. Moreover, it was revealed that most secondary school teachers do not participate in recreational sports due to financial constraints. However, the majority of secondary school teachers also disagree with the notion that they do not have enough time to

participate in recreational sports. This suggests that they have time to participate in recreational sports despite their heavy workload and time pressures. Achieving a healthy work-life balance and general job satisfaction is of utmost importance to them. This is in line with Chimote & Srivastava (2013), who emphasized that the overall message of work-life balance is that an occupation should be beneficial and allow time for individuals to pursue interests outside the workplace.

In conclusion, recreational sports play a significant role in reducing stress and enhancing the work-life balance of secondary school teachers in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. Participation in recreational sports not only provides opportunities for physical activity and stress reduction but also fosters social connections and improves overall well-being.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

It is important to note that the goal of this study was to investigate the influence of recreational sports on reducing stress and improving work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. In the preceding chapter, the relevant data collected for this study were presented, meticulously analyzed, and appropriately interpreted. This chapter will provide recommendations that the researcher believes will be beneficial in addressing the influence of recreational sports on reducing stress and improving work-life balance among secondary school teachers.

5.2 Summary

This study examined the influence of recreational sports on reducing stress and improving work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. Three objectives were established: to examine the relationship between engagement in recreational sports and stress levels among secondary school teachers, to assess the impact of participating in recreational sports on the work-life balance of secondary school teachers, and to identify the perceived benefits and barriers associated with integrating recreational sports into the lives of secondary school teachers. The total population for the study consisted of 100 selected secondary school teachers in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. Questionnaires were used as the data collection instrument. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The collected data were presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentages and frequencies, mean and standard deviation, and the hypotheses were tested using the Pearson's correlation statistical tool.

5.3 Conclusion

Through our investigation, we shed light on the substantial impact of engaging in recreational sports in alleviating stress and improving life balance for secondary school teachers residing in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. Our diligent data analysis and feedback from participants reveal that integrating recreational sports within the lives of teachers offers numerous advantages, such as reduced stress, enhanced physical and mental well-being, strengthened social networks, and improved time management abilities.

Our findings highlight the critical role of prioritizing self-care and leisure pursuits among educators, especially in areas where work-related stressors can be prevalent, as in Egor Local Government Area. By understanding and addressing potential obstacles to participation, such as limitations in time or access to facilities, stakeholders can contribute to the creation of supportive environments that foster the well-being of teachers.

5.4 Recommendations

Informed by our research on the influence of recreational sports on reducing stress and enhancing work-life balance among secondary school teachers in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, we propose these recommendations:

1. Educational leaders and authorities should prioritize developing and implementing well-being initiatives that promote physical activity and work-life balance among teachers. Such programs could include providing access to on-site fitness facilities, offering subsidized gym memberships, or establishing organized recreational sports leagues.

2.Schools should allocate dedicated time for physical activity within teachers' schedules, acknowledging the importance of consistent exercise in managing stress and improving overall well-being. This could involve incorporating brief exercise breaks throughout the school day or planning staff wellness days devoted to recreational sports and leisure activities.

3.Providing workshops and training sessions can help teachers develop effective stress management techniques, time management strategies, and an understanding of the significance of self-care. These professional development opportunities empower teachers to prioritize their own well-being and implement healthier lifestyle practices.

4.Encouraging the formation of sports teams, fitness groups, or recreational clubs among teachers fosters social connections and camaraderie outside of the school environment. Organizing social events and team-building activities can strengthen relationships among colleagues and provide valuable support systems.

Implementing these recommendations will increase teachers' participation in recreational sporting activities, directly or indirectly reducing their stress and improving their work-life balance.

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**APPENDICES
QUESTIONNAIRE**

Participation in recreational sports, stress levels and work-life balance	SA	A	D	SD
1: I participate in recreational sports (E.g running, jogging, cycling, swimming, others)				

2: I participate in recreational sports regularly (at least once a week)				
3: I feel stressed at work				
4: I believe participating in recreational sports reduces my stress (e.g makes me more relaxed)				
5: I find it challenging to maintain a good work-life balance				
6: Participating in recreational sports improves my work-life balance (E.g Job satisfaction, better personal interactions)				

Impact of recreational sports on work-life balance				
7: participating in recreational sports helps me relax and disconnect from work				
8: participating in recreational sports improves my mood				
9: Recreational sports helps me socialize with colleagues or other people outside work				
10: Participating in recreational sports helps me stay physically active and contributes to a better work-life balance				
11: Recreational sports reduces my stress levels				
12: Recreational sports provides me with energy and motivation to maintain a balanced personal and professional life				

Perceived benefits and Barriers				
13: participating in recreational sports improves my physical health				
14: participating in recreational sports improves my mental health				
15: Participating in recreational sports helps me build social connections				
16: I don't participate in recreational sports because I don't have enough time				
17: I don't participate because I can't afford it financially				

18: I don't participate because I lack interest in recreational sports				
19: I don't participate because I don't have access to suitable facilities and resources				
20: Lack of support from family or colleagues discourages me from engaging in recreational sports				