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## Recreational Games and Their Relationship with Psychological Well-being of Preschool Children

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#### **Abstract:**

The quest for happiness has intrigued humanity since ancient times, transcending eras, and garnering interest from thinkers across various civilizations. Recreational games derive significance from the importance of psychological well-being, serving as a human trait through which individuals express their thoughts, emotions, and sensations in diverse forms. The importance of recreational games offered to children during their formative years lies in the development of their mental and psychological processes, such as observation, attention, perception, and generalization. Hence, the current research problem revolves around answering the following question:

What is the level of recreational games provided to kindergarten children, and how does it relate to their psychological well-being?

As this study aims to unveil the relationship between recreational games and psychological well-being among kindergarten children, the researcher adopted a descriptive approach to construct research procedures, deemed most suitable for achieving the research objective.

The research community comprises kindergarten teachers affiliated with the General Directorates of Education in Al-Rusafa (1, 2, 3), totalling 1034 teachers distributed across 102 government kindergartens, with 7 to 14 teachers per kindergarten. A random sample of 60 kindergarten teachers, constituting 6% of the original community, was selected, considering the geographical distribution of directorates in Al-Rusafa (1, 2, 3).

The researcher employed Raff's Psychological Well-being Scale consisting of 31 items distributed across three domains: satisfaction with recreational games, satisfaction with the educational environment, and positive and negative emotions.

For statistical analysis, the researcher used the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software within Microsoft Office Excel 2010.

The research yielded significant findings:

- Recreational games designed for kindergarten children can effectively induce moments of happiness during their engagement.
- The game collection is tailored to suit the physical capabilities of children.
- The games boast colours that attract the attention of kindergarten children.

**Keywords:** Recreational Games, Psychological Well-being.



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### Chapter One Research Problem:

Play constitutes an essential activity engaged in by children, playing a pivotal role in shaping their personalities as a behavioural phenomenon that initiates in childhood. It functions as a significant educational medium contributing to the child's development during this phase, influencing the child's psychological formation. It lays the foundation for activities that govern the child's family life or when transitioning to school (Ayish, 2008, p. 179). Therefore, recreational games play a crucial role in educating kindergarten children in cognitive, emotional, and motor skill domains, stimulating the child's motivation toward engaging in their preferred games and cultivating an emotional response to the aesthetic influences present in the environment conducive to game playing.

Activities specifically designed for kindergarten children can cater to their needs, adapting these activities and their methods to suit the nature of children. Moreover, these games adhere to safety rules when children engage in and move during their use. The kindergarten teacher is responsible for guiding the child's use and movements when playing their favorite games. Thus, children begin to fulfil their needs through recreational games tailored for kindergarteners, exposing them to dimensions of existing social relationships among individuals. The process of engaging in activities necessitates the child's understanding of responsibilities and rights, enabling them to learn through collective play or self-organization in harmony with their peers, coordinating their behaviours through role-playing under the supervision of the kindergarten teacher.

Through play, children begin to recognize and classify things, learn their concepts, and generalize them linguistically. This stage aims to develop the child's linguistic aspect and form their communication skills, in addition to shaping their personality in all its physical, mental, social, educational aspects, and enhancing their perception of the aesthetics of the environment and its observable elements. Therefore, the current research problem lies in answering the following question:

What is the level of recreational games provided to kindergarten children, and how does it relate to their psychological well-being?

### **Significance of the Research:**

The significance of the research is evident in the following aspects:

- Psychological well-being stands as a focal point in numerous scientific studies and research, delving into this variable due to its residence within an individual's subjective experiences.
- This variable aids in the development of the individual's psychological, mental, and cognitive capacities, contributing to problem-solving in their daily life through various methods, aiming to attain happiness or well-being.
- The indicators of psychological well-being, affirmed by many researchers, represent measurable and externally observable indicators linked positively to various variables, such as the need for employment, income, psychological and social support.
- Focusing on security and stability without emphasizing the quality of psychological life creates a positive impression reflected in the positive outlook of kindergarten teachers, enhancing their self-efficacy.



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### **Research Objective:**

To uncover the relationship between recreational games and psychological well-being among kindergarten children.

#### **Research Boundaries:**

The current research is confined as follows:

Objective Boundary: Recreational Games - Psychological Well-being.

Time Boundary: 2022 / 2023

Spatial Boundary: Kindergarten teachers affiliated with the General Directorates of Education in Al-

Rusafa (1, 2, 3).

#### **Definition of Terms:**

Recreational Games: The researcher operationally defines them as:

The list of familiar activities is almost endless; it includes most activities engaged in by humans. Examples include reading, playing or listening to music, watching movies or TV, gardening, fishing, pursuing hobbies and sports, and traveling.

Psychological Well-being: The researcher operationally defines it as:

It is a mental and physical sensation often associated with ease and often accompanied by peace of mind. It represents an internal comfort, psychological satisfaction, and tranquility, frequently described as the absence of distress. Engagement in physical activity is often cited as a reason for its occurrence.

## **Chapter Two / Theoretical Framework Concept of Recreational Games:**

Studies have demonstrated that learning through play is an effective and purposeful method of learning. Through physical games, a lot of negative energy in children, especially those with hyperactivity, tension, or a type of rebellion, can be released. Play and movement serve as therapeutic, guiding, and corrective aspects of a child's behaviour. We highlight (7) ideas for physical games for kindergarten children - recreational activities proposed for the final meeting of kindergarten units. These activities offer practical educational aspects alongside providing safety for the child.

The benefits of group games for children:

- Fostering a child's imagination and fulfilling their psychological needs.
- Encouraging creativity and innovation in children, with the child being the best innovator themselves.
- Providing a channel for children to release negative emotions and transform them into positive feelings.
- Enhancing a child's linguistic richness and expanding their vocabulary.
- Achieving specific educational and developmental goals and fostering the principle of self-learning (Faten, 2002, p. 98).
- The significance of recreational games lies in the importance of psychological comfort as a human characteristic through which one expresses thoughts, emotions, and sensations in various diverse forms. The importance of these recreational games for children is crucial in



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the childhood stage for a society. Through children's engagement in art, they acquire numerous mental and psychological processes like observation, attention, sensation, perception, and generalization. Recreational games serve as a direct means for a child's adaptation. They serve as tools to reveal and assess many personal aspects through children's arts and their free expressions. Many factors revolve around the extent of a child's physical engagement and self-focus. A child who lacks verbal language proficiency often excels in another, simpler language to convey their feelings and thoughts (Al Jarwani, 2013, p. 38).

The range of recreational games directed at kindergarten children includes drawing, musical activities, physical activities, colouring, printing, and handicrafts (Abu Zeid, 2016, p. 35). Recreational games, through expressive arts, are defined by:

- 1- Expression through drawing and handicrafts:
- The origin of the word 'expression,' as mentioned in the philosophical dictionary, is "representing something through signals, words, or images." It traces back to artistic movements in France and Germany in the early 20th century. Expressionists declared the freedom of expression and complete content that deviated from previous concepts. Expression has multiple meanings; it is considered the language of communication between individuals and the world (Mousa, 2001, p. 82).

According to Osman, "Expression is an attempt to convey part of experiences to the outside world, requiring specific symbols that change based on individual emotions" (Osman, 1980, p. 51).

Reed states, "Artistic expression is a mental process, noting that a child begins expressing themselves from birth, starting with certain instinctive desires that need to be communicated to the outside world" (Reed, 1986, p. 101).

According to Shaker, expression is not merely "external expression aimed at communication; it is imagination, representation, beauty, art, and an immediate capture of uniqueness in a specific subject, as well as everything that can be understood through experience" (Shaker, 2001, p. 121).

Expression of psychological comfort may be mere sensory perception, but symbolic expression's primary task is to articulate this perceptual experience and continuously reformulate the conceptual frameworks perceived in symbolic experiences, whether conscious or unconscious (Langer, 1986, p. 62).

Based on the foregoing, expression serves multiple objectives in drawing, sculpture, and other manual crafts:

- Fostering imagination, creativity, and innovation.
- Discovering artistic inclinations and talents and nurturing them.
- Developing artistic taste.
- Developing sensory perception and neuromuscular coordination.
- Providing children with an opportunity to express their emotions and sensations.
- 2- Expressing through playing musical instruments: Childhood is considered the most suitable stage for developing a child's motor skills, and (Al-Nashif) divides artistic activities as methods for a child's self-expression as follows: (Al-Nashif, 2009, p. 165)
  - Verbal expression: Such as speech, poetry, literature, and storytelling.



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- Visual expression: Involves how the child organizes their life, selects clothing, and all forms
  of visual arts.
- 3- Vocal expression: Begins with screaming, laughter, crying, and other sounds emitted by the child, including expression through playing musical instruments (Al-Anani, 2000, p. 76).
- 4- Physical expression: Begins with hand and facial movements and other expressive motor activities for the child (Mohammed et al., 2018, pp. 18-19).

The childhood stage is considered one of the most important stages in an individual's life and the most critical because it is a stage where all of an individual's personal characteristics are formed, determining the dimensions of their behaviour and motivations. Scientists have focused on "studying a child's linguistic development as one of the fundamental aspects largely relied upon in measuring their mental, social, and emotional growth. Early years are a critical period for linguistic development, as it lays the foundation for linguistic growth. If opportunities for vocabulary development are not provided to the child during this period, it leaves a lasting impact on their linguistic ability later on, affecting their ability to communicate and express their feelings and thoughts." (Hermes, 1997, p. 78).

### The Concept of Psychological Well-being:

The question of happiness has engaged humanity since ancient times and was not limited to a specific era but attracted thinkers in various civilizations. It has been explored in ancient Greek and Eastern civilizations. At the same time, it has drawn the attention of scholars and researchers in various fields.

Studies and literature confirm that the interest in this subject is not new. Historically, small cities in the Middle Ages addressed opinions and perspectives related to individuals' contentment and the nature of life suitable for them. The same applies to larger cities, where the goal was not to improve the quality of life as much as it was about exploring environmental resources in an attempt to exploit them, on one hand, and facing social disruptions on the other, confirming the ancient origins of the concept. The terminology used to study the subject varies in different disciplines, using concepts such as psychological well-being, happiness, and the quality of life. (Fraillon, J., 2004, p. 202).

In our current study, we utilize the concept of psychological well-being, understanding that the primary goal of psychology is to help individuals live a natural life where they feel content. However, it is notable that psychologists have long ignored the positive feelings of the individual's personality, focusing more on negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, psychological pressures, and pessimism in their research and studies.

Ryff defines psychological well-being as "a positive sense of well-being that is evidenced by behavioral indicators indicating high levels of satisfaction with oneself and one's life in general, the continuous pursuit of personal goals that are valued and meaningful to them, independence in determining the direction and path of life, and the establishment of positive mutual social relationships with others and their continuation" (Ryff, 2006, p. 75-95).

Additionally, Walid and others described psychological well-being as "a holistic self-state that exists when various emotions, including vitality and enthusiasm for life, self-confidence, honesty and integrity with oneself and others, joy, happiness, tranquillity, interest in others, are balanced within the individual" (Walid et al., 2020, p. 35).



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The concept of well-being includes various types of life satisfaction other than work that an individual enjoys (satisfaction or dissatisfaction with social life, family life, leisure time, spiritual values, etc.), satisfaction with work, general health, which includes a range of mental indicators such as feelings, anxiety, and despair, in addition to material and physiological indicators such as blood pressure, heart disease, and overall physical health (Abadu, 2013, p. 45).

### **Chapter Three / Research Methodology and Procedures**

Since the current research aims to explore recreational games and their relation to the psychological well-being of kindergarten children, the researcher has adopted the descriptive approach to construct the research procedures as it is the most suitable scientific method to achieve the research objective.

### **Research Community:**

The current research community comprises kindergarten teachers affiliated with the General Directorates of Education in Al-Rusafa (1, 2, 3). The total number of teachers is 1034, distributed across 102 government kindergartens, with an average of 7 to 14 teachers in each kindergarten, as illustrated in Table (1).

Table (1) illustrates the research sample of kindergarten teachers

Number of teachers in a kindergarten	Number of Kindergartens	Teachers	General Directorate of Education
14	28	399	(1) Rusafa
9	54	489	(2) Rusafa
7	20	146	(3) Rusafa
	102	1034	Total

### **Sample of the Research:**

A random sample of 60 kindergarten teachers, representing 6% of the original population, was selected. Geographic distribution across the directorates in Al-Rusafa (1, 2, 3) was taken into consideration, as shown in Table (2).

Table (2) outlines the identification of the research sample of kindergarten teachers.

Number of	Number	General
Kindergartens	of	Directorate of
	Teachers	Education
2	18	(1)Rusafa
3	27	(2)Rusafa
2	15	(3)Rusafa
7	60	Total

#### **Research Instrument:**

The researcher adopted Raff's Psychological Well-being Scale, modifying its items to align with the current research objective, which aims to uncover entertainment games tailored for kindergarten



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children, considering the physical, motor, and psychological characteristics inherent in childhood. The scale consists of 31 items distributed across three domains:

- Scale of satisfaction with entertainment games.
- Scale of satisfaction with the educational environment.
- Scale of positive and negative emotions.

Table (3) illustrates the satisfaction scale regarding recreational games.

Standard	Average	Very	То	Very	Sections	
deviation		little	some	•		
			degree			
0.83	2.5	7	16	37	I am satisfied with the	1
					recreational games	
					designed for kindergarten	
					.children	
0.86	2.58	6	13	41	I am satisfied with the	2
					safety measures for the	
					available recreational	
					.games in the kindergarten	
0.73	2،21	14	19	27	I am satisfied with the	3
					level of recreational games	
					in stimulating the	
					motivation of kindergarten	
		_			.children to engage in play	
0.84	2.53	8	12	40	I am satisfied with the	4
					attractive color choices for	
					the recreational games	
0.64	1.93	15	17	28	I feel that the recreational	5
					games have safety	
0.6					.measures in place	
0.86	2.60	9	6	45	I feel that the recreational	6
					games are precisely	
					designed to fit the child's	
0.55	0.01		10	0.0	body I feel that the recreational	
0.77	2.31	11	19	30		7
					games possess movement	
0.86	2.60	1.4	01	0.5	and flexibility I am satisfied with	8
0.00	2.00	14	21	25	the design of the	0
					educational environment	
					for kindergarten children	
					.ioi kiiideigarteii ciiildreii	



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Table (4) illustrates the satisfaction scale regarding the educational environment.

Stand	Avera	Very	To	Ve	Sections	
ard Devia tion	ge	little	some degre e	ry		
0.84	2.51	13	25	22	Enables the child to experience happy times .while playing	9
0.68	2.06	16	24	20	The educational environment designed for kindergarten children is .close to their social reality	10
0.71	2.13	19	14	27	The educational environment for kindergarten children enables them to have everything they need while .playing	11
0.68	2.06	15	26	19	The educational environment achieves the goals of kindergarten and nurtures their imagination .and thinking abilities	12
0.62	1.85	19	28	13	The educational environment designed for kindergarten children contributes to the development of the child's .capabilities	13

Table (5) illustrates the scale of positive and negative emotions.

Standard Deviation	Average	Very little	To some degree	Very	Sections	
0.54	1,46	32	18	10	The child cautiously engages in their recreational games	14
0.33	1.0	60	0	0	The educational environment designated for kindergarten children makes me interact .with it firmly	15



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0.86	2.58	21	30	8	The educational environment makes me attentive to its components in line with the .child's nature	16
0,63	1.90	20	26	14	The educational environment .makes the child more active	17
0.42	1,28	42	17	0	The educational environment makes me more attentive to monitor the child's interests in .the selection process	18
0.58	1.75	26	23	11	The educational environment designed for kindergarten children involves attraction and .engagement	19
0.49	1.48	31	29	0	The vocabulary of the educational environment directed towards kindergarten children contributes to building .their physical abilities	20
0.57	1.71	25	27	8	The educational environment arouses enthusiasm in the kindergarten child to engage in .their favorite games	21
0.60	1.80	21	30	9	I feel comfortable and proud of the available games in the educational environment designated for kindergarten .children	22
0.33	1.0	60	О	O	The educational environment for kindergarten children attempts to discharge emotional tensions the child .may experience	23
0.33	1.0	60	0	0	The educational environment dispels feelings of disappointment when the child engages in their favorite games	24
0.33	1.0	60	0	O	The educational environment dispels the nervousness the child feels before engaging in .play	25



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1.25	45	15	0	The recreational games are	26
				dynamic and not static to	
				engage the kindergarten child.	
1.43	46	14	0	I feel that the educational	27
	-	-		environment designated for	
				kindergarten children can	
				dispel the child's fears.	
1.15	51	9	0	The educational environment	28
				works to prevent the child from	
				feeling constrained while	
				playing recreational games.	
1.20	48	12	0	The educational environment	29
	-			can free the child from sadness	
				and gloominess	
1.28	43	17	0	The educational environment	30
		,		can dispel the child's feelings	
				.behaviors	
1,80	55	5	0	The educational environment	31
-				can dispel the child's panic	_
				when engaging in their favorite	
				recreational games.	
	1.43	1.43 46  1.15 51  1.20 48  1.28 43	1.43     46     14       1.15     51     9       1.20     48     12       1.28     43     17	1.43     46     14     0       1.15     51     9     0       1.20     48     12     0       1.28     43     17     0	dynamic and not static to .engage the kindergarten child  1.43

The statistical methods used in this research included the Social Sciences Statistical Package (SPSS) within the Microsoft Office Excel 2010 program.

- One-sample T-test:
- T-test =  $(X \mu) / (S / \sqrt{n})$

#### **Chapter Four**

#### **Presentation and Discussion of Results**

Based on the results obtained from the researcher's application on the sample of 60 kindergarten teachers, the mean score for their responses on the Children's Entertainment Games Psychological Well-being test was 1.748, with a standard deviation of 0.590, and an assumed mean of 15.5, as illustrated in Table 6.



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Table (6) illustrates the computed and tabulated (T-test) values at a significance level of (0.05)

regarding preschool teachers' responses to the pre-post psychological satisfaction test.

Significa	T value		Hypotheti	Standar	Avera	samp	Experimen
nce Level			cal	d	ge	le	tal Group
0.05	Tabulat	Calculat	Average	deviati			
	ed	ed		on			
Statisticall	1,980	18,094	15,5	0,590	1,748	60	Kindergart
$\mathbf{y}$							en
							Teachers

By looking at the table results (6), it's evident that the calculated value (T) reached (18,094), which is greater than the tabulated value of (1,980) at a significance level of (0.05) and degrees of freedom (59). This result indicates that the kindergarten teachers' agreement regarding recreational games directed towards children might achieve the set objectives.

- Recreational games designed for preschoolers can fulfil their purpose by enabling the child to experience joyful moments while engaging in them.
- The selection of the games has been tailored to match the physical capabilities of the child.
- The set of games features colours that attract the attention of the kindergarten child.

### Recommendations based on the researcher's conclusions:

- Work on selecting recreational games tailored for kindergarten children in line with their physical abilities.
- The process of selecting games should consider their ability to attract the child's attention, their flexibility in movement, and include safety measures to protect them from harm.

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#### **Psychological Well-being Questionnaire:**

This is a questionnaire containing some statements prepared to measure psychological well-being, consisting of (31) items.

Your task is as follows:

Read each statement carefully. Place a checkmark ( $\checkmark$ ) in the section that you find suitable. Do not leave any statement in the questionnaire unanswered or mark more than one section for a single statement.

It is not necessary to write your name; this questionnaire is for scientific research purposes.

Very little	A little	To some degree	Very	Very much	Sections
					I trust in my
					abilities to achieve
					.my ambitions

Standard deviation	Average	Very little	To some degree	Very	Sections	Т
			•		I am satisfied with the recreational games designed for kindergarten .children	1
					I am satisfied with the safety measures for the	2



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	<u> </u>		
		available recreational	
		.games in the kindergarten	
		I am satisfied with the	3
		level of recreational games	
		in stimulating the	
		motivation of kindergarten	
		children to engage in play	
		I am satisfied with the	4
		attractive color choices for	•
		.the recreational games	
		I feel that the recreational	5
		games have safety	5
		.measures in place	
		I feel that the recreational	6
		games are precisely	Ü
		designed to fit the child's	
		.body	
		I feel that the recreational	7
		games possess movement	/
		and flexibility	
		I am satisfied with the	8
		design of the educational	
		environment for	
		.kindergarten children	
		.Kinuci garten ciniuren	

Stand ard devia tion	Avera ge	Very little	To some degre e	Ve ry	Sections	Т
					It allows the child to experience happy times	9
					.while playing	
					The educational	10
					environment designed for	
					kindergarten children is	
					.close to their social reality	
					The educational	11
					environment for	
					kindergarten children	
					enables them to have	
					everything they need while	
					.playing	



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	The educational	12
	environment achieves the	
	goals of kindergarten and	
	nurtures their imagination	
	and thinking abilities	
	The educational	13
	environment designed for	
	kindergarten children	
	contributes to the	
	development of the child's	
	capabilities	

Standard deviation	Average	Very little	To some degree	Very	Sections	T
					The child engages in recreational games .cautiously	14
					The educational environment designated for kindergarten children makes me interact with it .firmly	15
					The educational environment makes me attentive to its components in line with the child's .nature	16
					The educational environment makes the .child more active	17
					The educational environment makes me more attentive to monitor the child's interests in the selection process	18
					The educational environment designed for kindergarten children	19



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	involves attraction and	
	engagement	
	The vocabulary of the	20
	educational environment	
	directed towards	
	kindergarten children	
	contributes to building	
	their physical abilities.	
	The educational	21
	environment arouses	
	enthusiasm in the	
	kindergarten child to	
	engage in their favorite	
	.games	
	I feel comfortable and	22
	proud of the available	
	games in the educational	
	environment designated for	
	.kindergarten children	
	The educational	23
	environment for	Ü
	kindergarten children	
	attempts to discharge	
	emotional tensions the	
	.child may experience	
	The educational	24
	environment dispels	•
	feelings of disappointment	
	when the child engages in	
	.their favorite games	
	The educational	25
	environment dispels the	Ü
	nervousness the child feels	
	.before engaging in play	
	The recreational games are	26
	dynamic and not static to	-
	engage the kindergarten	
	.child	
	I feel that the educational	27
	environment designated for	-/
	kindergarten children can	
	dispel the child's fears	
	.disper the child's rears	



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	The educational	28
	environment works to	
	prevent the child from	
	feeling constrained while	
	.playing recreational games	
	The educational	29
	environment can free the	
	child from sadness and	
	.gloominess	
	The educational	30
	environment can dispel the	
	child's feelings towards	
	engaging in certain	
	.behaviors	
	The educational	31
	environment can dispel the	
	child's panic when engaging	
	in their favorite recreational	
	games	