

Rest Behavior and Restoration: Searching for Patterns through a Textual Analysis

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Abstract : Resting is essentially the physical and mental relaxation. So, can behaviors that go beyond the merely physical relaxation to some extent be understood as a behavior of restoration? Studies on restorative environments emphasize the physical, mental and social benefits that some environments can provide and suggest that activities in natural environments reduce the stress of daily lives, promoting recovery against the daily wear. These studies, though specific in their results, do not unify the different possibilities of restoration. Considering the importance of restorative environments by promoting well-being, this research aims to verify the applicability of the theory on restorative environments in a Brazilian context, inquiring about the environment/behavior of rest. The research sought to achieve its goals by; a) identifying daily ways of how participants interact/connect with nature; b) identifying the resting environments/behavior; c) verifying if rest strategies match the restorative environments suggested by restorative studies; and d) verifying different rest strategies related to time. Workers from different companies in which certain functions require focused attention, and high school students from different schools, participated in this study. An interview was used to collect data and information. The data obtained were compared with studies of attention restoration theory and stress recovery. The collected data were analyzed through the basic descriptive inductive statistics and the use of the software ALCESTE® (Analyse Lexicale par Contexte d'un Ensemble de Segments de Texte). The open questions investigate perception of nature on a daily basis - analysis using ALCESTE; rest periods - daily, weekends and holidays - analysis using ALCESTE with tri-croisé; and resting environments and activities - analysis using a simple descriptive statistics. According to the results, environments with natural characteristics that are compatible with personal desires (physical aspects and distance) and residential environments when they fulfill the characteristics of refuge, safety, and self-expression, characteristics of primary territory, meet the requirements of restoration. Analyses suggest that the perception of nature has a wide range that goes beyond the objects nearby and possible to be touched, as well as observation and contemplation of details. The restoration processes described in the studies of attention restoration theory occur gradually (hierarchically), starting with being away, following compatibility, fascination, and extent. They are also associated with the time that is available for rest. The relation between rest behaviors and the bio-demographic characteristics of the participants are noted. It reinforces, in studies of restoration, the need to insert not only investigations regarding the physical characteristics of the environment but also behavior, social relationship, subjective reactions, distance and time available. The complexity of the theme indicates the necessity for multimethod studies. Practical contributions provide subsidies for developing strategies to promote the welfare of the population.

Keywords : attention restoration theory, environmental psychology, rest behavior, restorative environments

Conference Title : ICEP 2018 : International Conference on Environmental Psychology

Conference Location : Amsterdam, Netherlands

Conference Dates : May 10-11, 2018