

School Physical Activity and Its Role in promoting general Health among Primary School Students

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Abstract:

The main purpose of this study is to determine the role of school physical activity in promoting general health among primary school students. In this study, we used a descriptive approach. The research sample included 33 primary school physical education teachers of Boumerdas. We utilized the School Physical Activity and general Health Scale as the designated scale, comprising 14 items distributed across two axes. The validity and reliability of the instrument were confirmed. After administering the scale to the study sample to obtain their responses, the data were compiled and statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). At the end of the study, the results showed that School physical activity has a positive effect on reducing stress among primary school students, School physical activity contributes to promote general health among primary school students.

Keywords: School physical activity, general health

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1- Introduction:

Sport is a normal physical activity or a skill practiced for the purpose of recreation, enjoyment, excellence, skill development, or strengthening self-confidence or physical fitness. Physical education and sports is a modern system that utilizes the innate instinct play through educational goals in its essence and content, whether cultural, social, physical, or behavioral. Perhaps the primary goal of the physical education and sports system, in its school-based sense, is the socialization of the individual to be virtuous, balanced, healthy, productive, responsible, and of good moral character. In this regard, the scholar Djewey sees education as not merely preparation for life, but life itself and living it. In this context, physical education and sports are viewed as a lifestyle. (Amin Anwar Al-Khoury, 1996, p. 30) School physical activity is the main engine for knowing the progress level in the sports field and is perhaps one of the most important pillars that contribute to the sports movement. Through it, the first and basic steps are taken on the path by which the adolescent student can become a sports champion in national school teams and represent the country in the best possible way in international forums. School sports activities contribute to improving the physical performance of students and their acquisition of basic skills. (Zamouri Belkacem, 2019, p. 138) Health is of paramount importance. A healthy person can accomplish their tasks and achieve their goals in daily life, and it is the foundation of life's continuity.

School sports in any country represent a main engine and indicator of progress in the field of sports. School sports are primarily aimed at primary and secondary school students, laying the foundation for a

child's future as a prominent and renowned athlete. This is the basis for building national teams and representing their country in international, continental, or regional competitions. School sports are considered one of the most important means of contributing to an individual's psychological and social well-being. They instill vitality and agility in the body. Modern scientific trends confirm that the individual is an integrated whole encompassing all physical, mental, psychological, and social aspects. There is an integrated approach to physical development; for example, the mind influences physical exertion. This illustrates the mind-body relationship. And among school sports objectives: liberate the individual from repressed emotions and fill them with joy and happiness. (Abdul Aziz bin Hadiri, Bin Sifi Al-Aroui, 2019, p. 89)

School health is a set of concepts, principles, systems, and services provided to promote the health of school-aged children and to enhance community health through schools at all educational levels. (Abu Zaida, 2006, p. 45)

Physical education, as an educational subject, contributes, in conjunction with other subjects and in its own unique way, to improving students' abilities in many areas, such as motor skills and physical fitness. It offers a wide range of practical activities, both in the socio-emotional sphere, representing the dynamic relationships resulting from organization and interaction between teams, and in the cognitive sphere, thanks to concrete play scenarios that often require quick solutions to complex problems. (Anwar Amin Al-Khouli, 2004, p. 53)

School is from the most important institutions responsible for developing the health of its members and is considered one of the best available channels for promoting health. Researchers in health fields, psychological education, and behavioral science have concluded that the school provides significant awareness to promote community health and prevent many health problems. Especially with the alarming increase in chronic and intractable diseases, there is a pressing need to address the root causes of health problems at an early age. Anyone examining the educational approach in any society will notice that its development is linked to the needs imposed by human progress. It is no longer acceptable to rely on the same traditional educational methods, particularly in physical education and sports. This necessitates a review and renewal of these curricula. (Al-Qass, 2016, p. 1)

The importance of including health topics in school curricula was highlighted by the World Health Organization in 1995, which established an expert committee to raise awareness about health and promote general health. (Muayyad, Abdul Ali Al-Tai, 2019, p. 157)

The main purpose of this study is to determine the role of school physical activity in promoting general health among primary school students by answering the following key questions:

- Does participating school physical activity reduce stress among primary school students?
- Does participating school physical activity promote the general health among primary school students?

2- Research approach:

A methodology is the way in which a person arrives at a practical and logical understanding of reality, or grasping the truth that was previously unknown. It is the path to acquiring certain knowledge. (Abdul Rahman Al-Asawi, 1997, p. 13)

Every study or scientific research has foundations upon which the researcher builds their basic framework for embarking on the research and study process. These methodological foundations serve as a guide adopted by the researcher to ensure the study is characterized by scientific accuracy. The methodology is the practical means that the researcher uses to solve their research problem.

In this study, we noticed that the descriptive approach is the most appropriate for studying our topic: School Physical Activity and Its Role in promoting general Health among Primary School Students

3- Research society:

3-1-Research society:

Grawtz It is defined as a limited or unlimited set of predefined elements based on observations. (Maurice Angers, 2004, p. 298). In this study, our research society consists of all primary school physical education teachers of Boumerdas for the 2023/2024 academic year, totaling 318 teachers.

3-2- research sample:

Mahmoud Qassem states in his book, *Modern Logic and Research Methods*: "The sample is viewed as a part of the whole, or a portion of the whole" (Marwan Abdel-Magid Ibrahim, 2012, p. 151).

Ibrahim Bassiouni observes, "The number of cases encompassed by the whole to which we belong, or included within the whole that contains them, has become so large that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to study all of these cases, that's why the researcher resorts to selecting a limited number from this whole" (Ibrahim Bassiouni Amira, 1974, p. 67). Accordingly, our research sample consisted of 33 primary school physical education teachers of Bordj Menâïel Boumerdès, according to Boumerdès Education Directorate Statistics.

4- Research instruments:

Research instrument is the sole means by which the researcher can solve the problem posed in the study, verify the hypotheses formulated as a research project, and assist in gathering information, data, and facts from the field regarding the study topic. (Muhammad Hassan Alawi & Osama Kamel Rateb, 1999, p. 42)

The process of selecting appropriate measurement instruments is one of the most important steps in any scientific research. These instruments must align with the research objective. The researchers used the following instruments in their study:

4- Scale:

4-1- The Scale:

Is a series of questions, arranged in a specific form or order, through which an opinion or judgment is sought. It divided into data points that vary according to the subject matter. It relates to a specific type of data, measuring one of the research variables. A fundamental requirement for a good question is its close connection to the research

problem and hypothesis, aiming to obtain comprehensive and accurate answers.

We adopted Likert method for answering our questions scale. This method can sometimes be useful in enriching the scale and addressing certain variables as needed.

The scale consists of (14) questions presented to the professors, distributed across two axes:

- Axis One: School Physical Activity and Stress Reduction.
- Axis Two: Physical Activity and general Health.

5- Statistical Tools:

In order to analyze and interpret the results obtained, the statistical package program "SPSS" was used.

6- Results discussion:

6-1- The first hypothesis results:

-School sports physical activity has an effect on reducing stress among primary school students.

Variable	Mean	STD	T. test	Df	Sig	Sig level	Statistical decision
Stress	19.0000	2.53311	37.503	29	0.000	0.05	statistically significant

Table 1: represents statistical significance ratio for the first hypothesis.

We observe from the table above that the arithmetic mean was (19.0000), the standard deviation was (2.53311), the t-test value was (37.503), and the df was (29). Since the p-value was (0.000), which is less than the significance level (0.05), it is statistically significant.

From these results, we see that engaging in school physical activity, which is a set of activities linked to mental processes and the release of some energy, especially for students who suffer from the pressures resulting from their lessons and daily routines, provides them with an outlet for releasing pent-up emotions and energy. It offers a change in their routine and helps them reduce their stress.

Physical activity develops students' motor and cognitive abilities, as well as other educational aspects related to their social, moral, emotional, and behavioral development. Furthermore, participation in sports programs provides opportunities to manage feelings of stress. Physical activity reduces stress and also develops students' social skills, as group sports facilitate interaction and the formation of new knowledge. This helps alleviate depression and psychological pressures among students. Physical activity aids in relaxation and stress reduction, especially aerobic exercises such as brisk walking for 20 minutes, which can be increased to 30 minutes after adjustment. Sports help combat depression and boost vitality, energy, and well-being. When students engage in sports, they release much of the tension and anxiety they may experience. Athletes also learn to manage stress and anxiety during competitions, particularly the anxiety stemming from the fear of defeat. School physical activity differs from other classes. In most of them, students interact with their teachers individually in the classroom, while physical education

provides a social environment characterized by cooperation and healthy competition, preparing students for community life.

From what we have discussed, the first hypothesis is confirmed: that practicing School physical activity has an impact on reducing stress among primary school students.

Our findings align with those of the study conducted by Jaghbala Saif Eddine (2019-2020), which demonstrated that school sports are important for developing certain aspects of the student's personality, from physical education teacher's point of view.

This was further confirmed by the study conducted by Boufligha Mourad, Chawat Sofiane, and Bougrida Bilal (2020-2021), which highlighted the role of physical activities and sports in activating individuals' social relationships, the impact of these activities on adolescents, and the role of physical activities and sports in social life by improving relationships with others and addressing social problems.

Our research also agrees with the study conducted by Achouri Mustafa (2018-2019), which concluded that filling leisure time with sports is important for students, and that school physical activity and sport activities develop physical and psychological qualities and social skills. This is further emphasized by Qassem Hassan Al-Hussein in his definition. Physical activity and sports are considered a field within education in general and physical education in particular. They are an effective element in preparing the individual by providing them with experiences and motor skills that guide their physical, psychological, social, and moral development in a positive direction, serving the individual and, through them, society. (Quraisat Al-Zahra et al., 2012,

p. 7) Undoubtedly, school physical activity and sport are an important element in reducing stress among students, serving as a tool for the individual's psychological and social adaptation.

6-2- The second hypothesis results:

School physical activity has an impact on promoting the general health of primary school students.

Variable	Mean	STD	T. test	Df	Sig	Sig level	Statistical decision
General health	15.3200	4.63429	16.529	29	0.000	0.05	statistically significant

Table 2: represents statistical significance ratio for the second hypothesis.

From the table above, we observe that the arithmetic mean was (15.3200), the standard deviation was (46.3429), t-test value was (16.529), and df was (29). Since the p-value was (0.000), which is less than the significance level of (0.05), it is statistically significant.

From these results, we see that engaging in school physical activity is an actual practice of an activity that constitutes a function. It is specifically defined as a mental or motor process characterized by spontaneity rather than responsiveness, or as a mental or biological process dependent on the use of the organism's energy. It is one of education principles aims to develop the individual's physical, social, psychological, and intellectual abilities. School physical activity improves the efficiency of vital systems, promotes physical fitness,

and achieves the individual's holistic development—physically, mentally. Regarding health, it also helps prevent health problems, promotes a healthy lifestyle, helps prevent chronic diseases, and maximizes health benefits. It has a significant impact on promoting the general health of primary school students, which is essential for their well-being (physical, mental health). This is achieved through engaging in physical activity, including resistance training and competitions.

Based on our findings, the second hypothesis is confirmed: that school physical activity has an impact on promoting the general health of primary school students.

Our study's results align with those of Nahal Hamid (2009), which concluded that educational physical activity helps maintain health, promotes physical and mental development, and alleviates social problems.

This was further confirmed by Boumediene Hadjadj's (2010) study, which found that physical activity plays a positive role in managing high blood pressure. School physical activity also helps regulate cholesterol level of individuals with hypertension.

7- Conclusion:

School physical activity is considered one of the most important factors in maintaining physical health. It is also an excellent way for students to relax and relieve the stress caused by lessons and the routines of their studies. As a fundamental educational subject that contributes to the holistic development of the learner and guides their physical, psychological, social, and moral growth in a positive

direction, benefiting both the individual and, through them, society, it is considered essential in students' education.

When students engage in physical activity at school, it relieves them of depression and psychological stress. Most importantly, physical activity is closely linked to students' overall health, as it helps them gain physical fitness. It is important to understand that physical activities have an impact on the body in general and on vital systems in particular, as well as the changes that occur as a result of this practice. This instills health education values by getting used to the cleanliness of the body and clothing environment. Sport is an education, and through school physical activity, the student's body is able to protect itself from health problems at school age. Physical activity helps bodies to detect health problems, to respond effectively and appropriately to the development of the disease, to promote a healthy life and to help prevent chronic diseases.

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