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The Reality of Physical Exercise Practice in Primary School

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Abstract:

This study aimed to understand the current reality of physical exercise practice during physical education classes in primary education. It found that the practice does not align with the developmental needs and demands of primary school students. This misalignment is due to a lack of facilities and resources dedicated to physical exercise, as well as a significant absence of specialized teachers in this subject. A descriptive method suited to the nature of the study was used on a random sample of teachers from some primary schools (80 teachers).

One of the key findings was the absence of sports equipment and infrastructure, especially when pedagogical lessons are either too short or delayed, consequently depriving children of their fundamental right to play.

Keywords:Physical Exercise Practice; Primary School.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Physical education and sports are integral components of human activities that hold universal significance, regardless of the level of advancement or underdevelopment of a society. These activities contribute significantly to the development of mental and social talents while shaping commendable traits. In physical education and sports, students not only hone their physical abilities but also learn important life skills, such as quick attention, self-control, and courage (Ministry of Education of the Iraqi Republic, 1974, p. 179).

Educational institutions, particularly schools, play a paramount role in the holistic development of a nation, encompassing its economic, social, cultural, and civilizational facets. Schools serve as the primary nurturers and educators of generations, guiding them in alignment with the values and goals of society. However, primary school teachers encounter a multitude of challenges in fulfilling their educational and instructional responsibilities, given the diverse tasks assigned to them and the immense responsibility they bear. Central to their role is the endeavor to lay the foundations for strong and resilient personalities in today's students, who represent the future of the nation.

In the multifaceted landscape of education, primary school teachers are tasked with teaching various subjects that vary in form, content, and nature. Among these subjects, physical education and sports hold a pivotal place and have been officially incorporated into the curriculum. These subjects are instrumental in developing crucial aspects of a student's personality and are indispensable in identifying and addressing specific deficiencies that might hinder normal developmental processes at this educational stage. Additionally, students inherently possess a need for movement, activity, and play, which find fulfillment in physical education and sports classes. These classes offer students a unique opportunity to express their abilities, showcase their skills, and shine a spotlight on their talents—a dimension often constrained in other subjects characterized by monotony and limited spatial exploration (Al-Khouli, 1998, p. 145).

The researcher has diligently collected and synthesized a corpus of prior studies addressing the variables pertinent to this research. Notably, Fatiha Yasser (2007) conducted an analytical and critical examination of the state of school sports in Algeria. Employing a descriptive-analytical methodology and relying on

questionnaires and interviews for data collection, the study unearthed a key finding: the condition of school sports falls short of the required standards and does not contribute effectively to elite sports development. This shortfall was attributed to the non-implementation of agreements between the Ministries of Youth and Sports and National Education, alongside methodological and political issues plaguing school sports.

The decline in the state of school sports in Algeria can be attributed to various factors that have hindered its effectiveness and development. One crucial factor has been the failure to effectively implement agreements between the Ministries of Youth and Sports and National Education. Additionally, school sports have faced significant challenges, particularly in the realms of methodology and politics, which have played pivotal roles in its deterioration. These issues have emerged as fundamental factors contributing to the decline of school sports, which once served as a reservoir for nurturing elite athletes.

Bougrabi's (2004) comprehensive study delved into the landscape of Algerian school sports, highlighting a substantial disparity between the expectations and the reality of this crucial aspect of education. Employing a descriptive research approach, Bougrabi relied on questionnaires and interviews to collect data. The study revealed a glaring deficiency in sports facilities and fields within educational institutions. These spaces, primarily intended for physical education and sports classes, were found to be insufficient and inadequately equipped.

Furthermore, Ben Aqila (2001) conducted a meticulous examination of physical sports activity at the first and second levels of basic education in Algeria. His research focused on understanding how physical education and sports impacted the psychological and educational dimensions of students. Utilizing a descriptive research method and questionnaires, Ben Aqila's findings brought to light a concerning gap between the theoretical models of physical education and sports and their practical implementation at these educational levels. This disparity raised questions about the effectiveness of the curriculum and its alignment with the actual experiences of students.



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Collectively, these studies underscore the urgent need for comprehensive reforms in the field of school sports and physical education in Algeria. Addressing issues related to infrastructure, policy implementation, and the alignment of theory with practice is essential to rejuvenating and enhancing the educational value of physical education and sports in the country.

This study, in light of previous research and visits to primary institutions, underscores the paramount importance of both structural and intrinsic aspects of physical sports activity. Whether present or absent, the state of physical sports activity in primary institutions holds significant implications. It is either limited in form or structure due to the lack of sports facilities or the absence of dedicated trainers and teachers. Even more concerning is the complete dearth of physical sports activity in certain primary institutions, attributed to various reasons, including neglect and indifference. This state of affairs places physical sports activity in the shadow of other subjects such as sciences, languages, and mathematics and falls short of fulfilling the expectations and desires of the vibrant energy present in children. Acknowledging the boundless vitality of primary children, this research highlights the potential to discover talents in this age group for various sports, even those like gymnastics that require early practice.

This prompted a more focused and extensive investigation into the almost complete absence of physical sports activity in primary education. Based on these data, the following general question is addressed in this study:

- Does the current state of physical education and sports in primary schools align with the demands of primary students?

The sub-questions identified for this study are as follows:

- Does the lack of specialized training play a role in the teacher's supervision of the physical education and sports class?
- Are the educational curricula for physical education and sports sufficient for the teacher to carry out this task and achieve the outlined objectives?
- Is the current situation of primary schools, in terms of structures, resources, and spaces, suitable for achieving the objectives of the physical education and sports class?

2. Methods and Tools:

2.1 Study Population and Sample:

The study population comprises all elements intended for research. Extracting a part of the study population is referred to as the sample, and the process is known as sampling (Al-Dhameen, 2007, p. 160).

The research population in this study includes primary school teachers in the districts of Chlef, Umm Al-Drou'a, and El Chattia, represented by 223 primary schools (Chlef with 135 schools, Umm Al-Drou'a with 25 schools, and El Chattia with 36 schools). The study sample was selected randomly from these primary schools, representing 10% of the study population. Surveys were distributed to 5 teachers from each school, making a total sample size of 80 teachers.

2.2 Research Methodology:

The descriptive method was used as it is a form of scientific analysis and structured expression to describe or depict a specific phenomenon or problem quantitatively by collecting standardized data and information about the phenomenon or problem, classifying, analyzing, and subjecting it to precise study (Malhem, 2006, p. 307).

2.3 Pilot Study:

A pilot study was conducted in the schools under study, where 30 questionnaires were distributed among teachers. This was done to measure the validity and reliability of the research tools (questionnaire) and to understand the various conditions surrounding the application process.

2.4 Data Collection Tools:

Questionnaire form: It is a tool for collecting necessary data for hypothesis testing. It is a model that includes a series of questions directed at individuals to obtain information about a problem or a subject (Zarwati, 2002, p.132). The questionnaire form was divided into three main axes: the first axis on the training and supervision of teachers in primary education, including 5 questions; the second axis on the curriculum, including 5 questions; and the third axis on sports facilities and means, including 4 questions.



2.5 Scientific Conditions of the Tool:

2.5.1 Reliability:

The reliability of the study tools was confirmed by calculating the Cronbach's alpha coefficient value, which reached 0.75. Based on this value, the study tool is considered acceptable.

2.5.2 Validity:

To ensure the validity of the test, the researchers relied on expert validity. The scale was presented to a group of professors who all agreed that the scale was appropriate and suitable for the study in terms of content, the appropriateness of the statements to the study, and alignment with the study's objectives.

2.6 Statistical Methods:

The nature of the subject and its purpose require specific statistical methods that help the researcher to reach data and results to interpret and analyze the study subject. Statistical studies provide precise results as they are translated into numbers, and statistical revision was conducted using statistical software programs.

The statistical methods used in our study include:

Percentage Rate :

Percentage Rate % = $\frac{\text{The sum of the number of responses}}{\text{The total number of individuals in the sample}} \times 100$

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for the total of the sample:

$$\alpha = \frac{n \cdot \bar{r}}{1 + (n - 1) \cdot \bar{r}}$$

n: Number of items.

r: Average correlation coefficient of the items.

3. Results:

3.1 Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of the First Hypothesis:

Specialized training plays a role in the teacher's supervision of physical education and sports classes.

⇒ **Results Discussion for the First Axis:**

Question 1: Do you have pedagogical training for teaching physical education and sports?

Table 1: Distribution of sample members with pedagogical training in physical education.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	18.75
No	65	81.25
Total	80	100

analysis of the results:

Based on the results recorded in Table (01), it is evident that the majority of the sample, at 81.25%, did not receive specialized training in physical education during their academic education. This suggests that the quality of their training was general and did not take into consideration what teachers would be required to do in their professional field.

Question 2: Are you capable of teaching physical education and sports?

Table 2: Distribution of sample members based on their ability to teach physical education.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	24	30
No	56	70
Total	80	100

analysis of the results:

Based on the results recorded in Table (02), only 30% of the respondents acknowledged their ability to teach a physical education class. This is a very low percentage. The majority of teachers, at 70%, indicated that they were not capable of delivering a physical education lesson. The inability of teachers to conduct these classes can be attributed to their lack of training, which would enable them to prepare lessons that align with the curriculum and cater to the students' needs.



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This places the teacher in a challenging position, as their students expect them to provide activities that are suitable for their requirements.

Question 3: Are you familiar with the general objectives of physical education and sports?

Table 3: Distribution of sample members based on their familiarity with the general objectives of physical education.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	38	47.5
No	42	52.5
Total	80	100

analysis of the results:

Based on the results recorded in Table (03), it is evident that the majority of teachers, at a rate of 52.5%, lack familiarity with the general objectives of physical education. On the other hand, 47.5% of them believe they are familiar with these objectives. These findings can be explained by the fact that most elementary school teachers face difficulties in understanding the curriculum and its objectives, particularly in applying it to achieve these goals. This can be attributed to the absence of specialized training and the lack of continuous or periodic training throughout the academic year.

Question 4: Have you faced difficulties in preparing a physical education and sports lesson?

Table 4: Distribution of sample members based on difficulties encountered in lesson preparation.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	49	61.25
No	31	38.75
Total	80	100

Result Analysis:

Based on the results recorded in Table (04), these findings reveal that 61.25% of teachers encounter difficulty in comprehending and implementing the curriculum content of physical education. In contrast, 38.75% of them do not face such challenges. It appears that teachers make an effort to work with and apply the curriculum content, but they often struggle in preparing lessons. This struggle

arises from the translation of the content into practical, applied activities in the form of exercises and sports games that align with the age of elementary school students.

This is a clear indication of a lack of specialized training, as the absence of such training puts the teacher in a challenging position when facing students who expect them to provide activities that meet their developmental needs. Additionally, they are required to implement a curriculum without having the necessary tools to decipher its intricacies.

Question 5: Do you think there should be a specialized teacher for physical education and sports in primary schools?

Table 5: Distribution of sample members based on their opinion about having a specialized teacher for physical education in primary schools.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	69	86.25
No	11	13.75
Total	80	100

Result Analysis:

Based on the results recorded in Table (05), it is evident that the majority of the sample, accounting for 86.25%, support the idea of mandatory specialized physical education teachers at the elementary level. Conversely, 13.75% hold a different viewpoint. This high percentage of teachers who advocate for the presence of a specialized teacher can be attributed to the challenging situation faced by generalist teachers who are tasked with teaching all subjects. They find themselves in a difficult position since they often lack specialized training in physical education. This deficiency hampers their ability to keep up with developments and understand its nuances, negatively affecting their performance. Conversely, specialists are well-equipped to handle the subject matter and adept at finding appropriate solutions when preparing and delivering physical education lessons.

This situation necessitates a reconsideration of the teaching of physical education at the elementary level in order to change the current landscape. Such a revision should prioritize the interests of the students in the initial phase and



ensure that all conditions are met to promote their comprehensive personal growth without compromising any aspect of their development. As for the minority who hold a different opinion, it may be attributed to a lack of awareness and a failure to recognize the importance of this specialization.

⇒ **Conclusion:**

The first hypothesis is confirmed by the results from Tables 1 to 5, indicating that specialized training plays a crucial role in teachers' ability to effectively supervise physical education and sports classes. The lack of specialized training among teachers as facilitators has inevitably led to a decline in the quality of physical education and sports classes.

3.2 Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of the Second Hypothesis: The physical education and sports curriculum serves only as an auxiliary factor and is not sufficient on its own to achieve the outlined objectives.

⇒ **Results Discussion for the Second Axis:**

Question 6: Do you think the physical education and sports curriculum is sufficient for teachers to achieve the subject's objectives?

Table 6: Distribution of sample members based on their reliance on the curriculum to achieve the subject's objectives.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	18.75
No	65	81.25
Total	80	100

Result Analysis:

Based on the results recorded in Table (06), it becomes apparent that 85.71% of the teachers believe that the curriculum is insufficient for them to deliver a complete physical education lesson, despite heavily relying on it in the delivery of physical education classes. In contrast, only 14.28% think that the curriculum is adequate for teachers to perform their role as required in physical education classes. These results indicate that elementary school teachers, while depending on the curriculum, still consider it insufficient. It serves as a helpful tool and a guide for content delivery, compensating for the lack of specialized training, as previously mentioned in the first axis.

This indirectly suggests the need for other supportive and complementary factors alongside the curriculum to enable teachers to provide valuable content to students.

Question 7: Do you rely solely on the curriculum to prepare physical education and sports lessons?

Table 7: Distribution of sample members based on their dependence on the curriculum for lesson preparation.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	20	25
No	60	75
Total	80	100

Result Analysis:

Based on the results recorded in Table (07), it appears that 75% of the teachers do not primarily rely on the curriculum as the main means of delivering the structured program, including the defined objectives, based on the needs and age of the students. Instead, they depend on external sources. This suggests that these teachers have a desire to expand their knowledge of physical education and recognize its importance and effectiveness when delivered correctly.

On the other hand, 25% of the teachers answered that they rely solely on the curriculum for preparing physical education lessons without turning to other sources to enrich their physical education classes.

Question 8: Are you able to achieve the curriculum's outlined objectives by the end of the year?

Table 8: Distribution of sample members based on their ability to achieve the curriculum's objectives by the year's end.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	03	3.75
Never	28	35
Rarely	49	61.25
Total	80	100

Result Analysis:



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Based on the results recorded in Table (08), it is clear that 35% of the teachers do not achieve the objectives outlined in the curriculum by the end of the year, and 61.25% rarely achieve these objectives. This is a very high percentage, considering that the curriculum is designed based on sound scientific principles by experts and specialists. It takes into account the age-specific characteristics of elementary school students, and ideally, all the outlined objectives should be met every academic year to have a comprehensive and fully realized curriculum.

However, practical implementation of the curriculum in the field is challenging due to human and material limitations in elementary schools, as well as the time constraints of physical education classes. Only 3.75% of the teachers believe they are capable of achieving the outlined objectives in the physical education curriculum, which A significant portion feels the current lesson duration is insufficient. Only 10% believe the curriculum aligns well with the allocated time.

is an extremely low percentage. This highlights the difficulties faced by the physical education subject in the elementary education system.

Question 9: Does the curriculum content align with the allocated time for the lesson?

Table 9: Distribution of sample members regarding the alignment of curriculum content with lesson time.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	08	10
Never	35	43.75
Rarely	37	46.25
Total	80	100

Result Analysis:

Based on the results presented in Table (09), we can categorize teachers' opinions into two groups. The first group, representing 46.25% of respondents, rarely believes that the current time allocated for the class is sufficient. The second group, accounting for 43.75%, also believes that the time is rarely sufficient. Only 10% of the teachers in the second group see the curriculum content as compatible with the allocated time for the class.

These results can be interpreted as follows: At the beginning of elementary school, students may not possess the same physical abilities as they do when they complete elementary school and transition to middle school. Their play tends to be more skill-oriented as they progress, which may not align with the curriculum content within the time frame allocated for the class. Additionally, when students transition to middle school, the duration of physical education classes typically decreases by half compared to elementary school. Therefore, it would have been advisable to gradually increase the duration of the class towards the end of elementary school to prepare students gradually for the next stage.

Question 10: Do you replace physical education and sports lessons with other subjects?

Table 10: Distribution of sample members based on their replacement of physical education and sports lessons.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	38	47.5
No	42	52.5
Total	80	100

Result Analysis:

Based on the tables recorded in Table (10), it is evident that 52.5% of the teachers do not replace physical education and sports class with another subject. This group believes that physical education and sports hold the same level of importance as other subjects. They appreciate the benefits of physical education and sports for students from psychological, intellectual, and social perspectives. They also recognize it as a tool for addressing issues like violence and deviance.

On the other hand, 47.5% of the teachers choose to substitute the physical education and sports class. This can be attributed to a lack of awareness regarding the importance of physical education and sports for this age group and the role it plays in improving academic achievement. It reflects an outdated perspective that used to prevail, considering physical education and sports as secondary subjects that shouldn't be compared to other academic subjects.

Conclusion:

The results from Tables 6 to 10 confirm the second hypothesis, suggesting that the physical education and sports curriculum is only an auxiliary factor and



not sufficient on its own to achieve the outlined objectives. The deficiency in constructing physical education and sports lessons and teachers' lack of comprehension of the subject, along with disrespect for the allocated lesson duration, contribute to this inadequacy.

3.3 Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of the Third Hypothesis: The current situation of primary schools, in terms of structures, facilities, and spaces, is not suitable for achieving the objectives of physical education and sports classes.

⇒ **Results Discussion for the Third Axis:**

Question 11: Does your school have a playground or a space specifically prepared for sports activities?

Table 11: Distribution of sample members regarding the availability of sports facilities to implement the curriculum.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	45	56.25
No	35	43.75
Total	80	100

Result Analysis:

Based on the results from Table (11), it is clear that 56.25% of the teachers work in institutions that have a playground or a dedicated area for sports activities. This percentage is roughly equivalent to the teachers who responded that there is no playground or dedicated area, representing 43.75%. Additionally, most of the activities that take place are conducted on the institution's premises, which often pose obstacles and limitations due to limited space, proximity to classrooms, or potentially hazardous conditions for students.

Question 12: Does your institution have sports equipment?

Table 12: Distribution of sample members based on the availability of sports equipment in their institutions.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	12	15
No	68	85
Total	80	100

Result Analysis:

The results recorded in Table (12) reflect that 85% of schools suffer from a lack of resources, while only 15% have the current necessary sports resources for elementary schools, including a variety of sports equipment that is considered essential for physical education classes. The availability of such resources is a significant motivating factor for both students and teachers.

Having a diverse range of activities and different sports equipment encourages students and creates a positive atmosphere for interaction and engagement. This, in turn, broadens the students' skill sets and contributes to their comprehensive growth. On the other hand, the absence or scarcity of these resources can be demotivating for both teachers and students. It can lead to a lack of excitement in physical education classes and create an atmosphere of boredom and disinterest.

From the information presented in Tables (11) and (12), it can be concluded that even when institutions have the physical space and playgrounds for sports activities, they often suffer from a lack of sports resources. This is often due to the absence of a dedicated budget for sports equipment and resources.

Question 13: Are the spaces where students engage in sports activities during physical education classes safe and secure?

Table 13: Distribution of sample members based on the safety and security conditions of the spaces used for sports activities.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	03	3.75
No	77	96.25
Total	80	100

Result Analysis:

The results presented in Table (13), through the percentage figures, reflect the teachers' opinions regarding the suitability of spaces and facilities and their availability of safety and security conditions for the students' health. A significant 96.25% of the teachers mentioned that these spaces do not meet the safety conditions. This indicates that teachers often work in uncomfortable conditions when supervising students during physical education classes compared to when students are in the classroom.

This means that students are also constantly exposed to risks during their activities, which often makes teachers overly cautious and limits the students' activities. This, in turn, hinders students from showcasing their skills and expressing their abilities, which can have a psychological impact on them. Only 3.75% of the teachers responded that these spaces meet safety and security conditions, indicating the small percentage of schools that have suitable conditions that keep students away from the dangers that most students in other schools face.

Question 14: Does your institution have a first aid kit?

Table 14: Distribution of sample members based on the availability of a first aid kit in their institutions.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	80	100
No	00	00
Total	80	100

Result Analysis:

Through the results shown in Table (14), it is evident that all sample individuals, with a percentage of 100%, acknowledge the presence of a first aid kit in primary schools. This demonstrates the awareness of school principals and administrators regarding the importance of having a first aid kit during physical education and sports lessons. This measure is essential to ensure the safety of students during the physical activities included in these lessons, which may increase the likelihood of minor injuries.

Conclusion:

The results from Tables 11, 12, 13, and 14 confirm the third hypothesis, suggesting that the current situation of primary schools in terms of structures, facilities, and spaces is not conducive to achieving the objectives of physical education and sports classes. The lack of appropriate facilities and equipment, combined with inadequate safety and security measures, hinders the effective translation of the physical education curriculum from theory into practice.

4. General Discussion

In conclusion, our analysis of the obtained results highlights numerous challenges within the realm of physical education and sports in primary education.

These issues stem from various factors that impede the practical implementation of physical education and sports lessons, a trend consistent with findings from prior research. Our study underscores the significant deficiencies in facilities and equipment, which adversely affect students' ability to participate in sports activities in suitable environments with appropriate tools. Additionally, the absence of adequate security and safety measures poses a notable concern.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that a substantial portion of primary school teachers, responsible not only for other subjects but also for physical education and sports classes, lacks specialized training in this domain. This lack of specialized training leaves them ill-prepared to plan and oversee physical education and sports classes effectively. Additionally, they often struggle with a limited understanding of the subject's overarching objectives. Consequently, primary school educators frequently find themselves ill-equipped to deliver quality physical education and sports instruction, underscoring the pressing need for specialized educators in this specific field.

5. CONCLUSION

Our study, which examines the state of teaching physical education and sports in primary education and analyzes the survey results, reveals a concerning reality. Despite the crucial significance of this subject for children in this age group, there is a clear deficiency in material resources, equipment, and infrastructure that hampers the attainment of desired educational objectives. The absence of specialized teachers further impedes the effective delivery of this subject and its educational value. These obstacles have, in turn, hindered the successful implementation of physical education and sports curricula within primary education. Consequently, physical education and sports have yet to realize the envisioned level of integration and prominence within the educational system.

Based on the findings and to address the existing challenges, the following recommendations are proposed:

- ⇒ The necessity of having specialized teachers for physical education and sports (employing specialists).



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- ⇒ Holding sessions and seminars specifically for physical education and sports to enhance teachers' knowledge of the latest developments in this field at the primary school level.
- ⇒ Providing essential resources in each educational institution to facilitate the effective implementation of lessons.
- ⇒ Ensuring the availability of a playground for physical education and sports, providing a comfortable environment for teachers and students, along with ensuring safety and security conditions.
- ⇒ Allocating a specific budget for physical education and sports.
- ⇒ Educating students about the importance and benefits of physical education and sports.

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