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Special Issue on
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RELATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND FITNESS IN SPORTS STUDENTS- AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Physical education can help the students to develop the knowledge, attitudes, motor and behavior skills, and confidence needed to adopt and maintain physically active lifestyle . The outcomes of a quality physical Activity program are very important to adolescents. Bodily benefits of sports activities, like improved aerobic power, increased muscle strength, and fighting obesity have been demonstrated clearly. Furthermore, athletic participants score higher grades in school and have higher educational aspirations than non-participants have . Participation in sports has also been related to greater satisfaction with body image . Moreover, sports participation has been associated with lower scores on measures of loneliness and anxiety.

Keywords: *Physical activity, academic performance, university students, sports, medical university.*

Introduction

In institutionalized education, the main goal has been developing children's cognitive capacity in the sense of learning knowledge in academic disciplines. This goal dictates a learning environment in which seated learning behavior is considered appropriate and effective and is rewarded. When children and adolescents participate in the recommended level of physical activity—at least 60 minutes daily—multiple health benefits accrue. Most youth, however, do not engage in recommended levels of physical activity. Schools provide a unique venue for youth to meet the activity recommendations, as they serve nearly 56 million youth. At the same time, schools face increasing challenges in allocating time for physical education and physical activity during the school day.

There is a growing body of research focused on the association between school-based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance among school-aged youth. To better understand these connections Physical education as part of education provides the only opportunity for all children to learn about physical movement and engage in physical activity. As noted, its goal and place in institutionalized education have changed from the original focus on teaching hygiene and health to educating children about the many forms and benefits of physical movement, including sports and exercise. With a dramatic expansion of content beyond the original Swedish and German gymnastics programs of the 19th century, physical education has evolved to become a content area with diverse learning goals that facilitate the holistic development of children.

Academic Performance:

Academic performance is used broadly to describe different factors that may influence student success in school. These factors are grouped into three primary areas:

1) Cognitive Skills and Attitudes: Cognitive skills and attitudes include both basic cognitive abilities, such as executive functioning, attention, memory, verbal comprehension, and information processing, as well as attitudes and beliefs that influence academic performance, such as motivation, self-concept, satisfaction, and school connectedness.

2) Academic Behaviors: Academic behaviors include a range of behaviors that may have an impact on students' academic performance. Common indicators include on-task behavior, organization, planning, attendance, scheduling, and impulse control.

3) Academic Achievement: Academic achievement includes standardized test scores in subject areas such as reading, math, and language arts; GPAs; classroom test scores; and other formal assessments.

Factors influencing academic achievement

Individual differences influencing academic performance

Individual differences in academic performance have been linked to differences in intelligence and personality. Students with higher mental ability as demonstrated by IQ tests and those who are higher in conscientiousness (linked to effort and achievement motivation) tend to achieve highly in academic settings. A recent meta-analysis suggested that mental curiosity (as measured by typical intellectual engagement) has an important influence on academic achievement in addition to intelligence and conscientiousness.

Children's semi-structured home learning environment transitions into a more structured learning environment when children start first grade. Early academic achievement enhances later academic achievement.

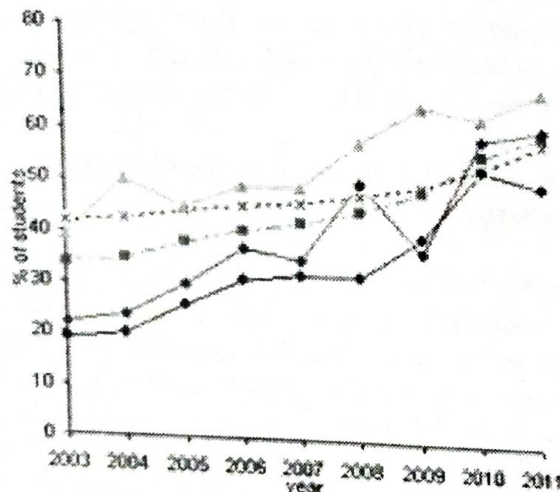


Chart of comparative performance in GCSE results.

Parent's academic socialization is a term describing the way parents influence students' academic achievement by shaping students' skills, behaviors and attitudes towards school. Parents influence students through the environment and discourse parents have with their children. Academic socialization can be influenced by parents' socio-economic status. Highly educated parents tend to have more stimulating learning environments. Further, recent research indicates that the relationship quality with parents will influence the development of academic self-efficacy among adolescent-aged children, which will in turn affect their academic performance. Children's first few years of life are crucial to the development of language and social skills. School preparedness in these areas help students adjust to academic expectancies

Non-cognitive factors

Non-cognitive factors or skills, are a set of "attitudes, behaviors, and strategies" that promotes academic and professional success such as academic self-efficacy, self-control, motivation, expectancy and goal setting theories, emotional intelligence, and determination. The term serves as a distinction of cognitive factors, which are measured by teachers

through tests and quizzes. Non-cognitive skills are increasingly gaining popularity because they provide a better explanation for academic and professional outcomes.

(a). Self-efficacy : Self-efficacy is one of the best predictors of academic success. Self-efficacy is the belief of being able to do something. However, self-efficacy was more indicative of academic performance than personality in all of the analyses. This suggests that parents who want their children to have academic achievement can look to increase their child's sense of self-efficacy at school.

(b). Motivation : Motivation is the reasoning behind an individual's actions. Furthermore, students who are motivated to improve upon their previous or upcoming performance tend to perform better academically than peers with lower motivation. In other words, students with higher need for achievement have greater academic performance. Bad dietary habits can create the disadvantage of a lack of motivation.

(c). Self-control : Self-control, in the academic setting, is related self-discipline, self-regulation, delay of gratification and impulse control. In other words, self-control is the ability to prioritize long-term goals over the temptation of short-term impulses. Self-control is usually measured through self-completed questionnaires.

Implications for Policy

There are a number of policy implications stemming from this review:

- There is substantial evidence that physical activity can help improve academic achievement, including grades and standardized test scores.
- The articles in this review suggest that physical activity can have an impact on cognitive skills and attitudes and academic behavior, all of which are important components of improved academic performance. These include enhanced concentration and attention as well as improved classroom behavior.
- Increasing or maintaining time dedicated to physical education may help, and does not appear to adversely impact, academic performance.

Implications for Schools

The results of this review support several strategies that schools can use to help students meet national physical activity recommendations without detracting from academic performance:

- **School-based physical education:** To maximize the potential benefits of student participation in physical education class, schools and physical education teachers can consider increasing the amount of time students spend in physical education or adding components to increase the quality of physical education class.
- **Recess:** School boards, superintendents, principals, and teachers can feel confident that providing recess to students on a regular basis may benefit academic behaviors, while also facilitating social development and contributing to overall physical activity and its associated health benefits. There was no evidence that time spent in recess had a negative association with cognitive skills, attitudes, or academic behavior.
- **Classroom-based physical activity:** Classroom teachers can incorporate movement activities and physical activity breaks into the classroom setting that may improve student performance and the classroom environment. Most interventions reviewed here used short breaks (5–20 minutes) that required little or no teacher preparation, special equipment, or resources.
- **Extracurricular physical activities:** School administrators and teachers also can encourage after-school organizations, clubs, student groups, and parent groups to incorporate physical activities into their programs and events.

Conclusion

Physical education has traditionally been considered an essential part of curricula to promote a range of benefits including general health, cognitive, development, motor skills and social behavior. The philosophy "Healthy Body, Healthy Mind" was the motive behind

the inclusion of physical education along with the curriculum subjects. Physical education is the systematic education of physical activity to develop a man physically, mentally, emotionally and socially competent through an active medium. Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by voluntary body muscles that require energy expenditure. The term "Physical activity" should not be confused with "exercise". Exercise is a subclass of physical activity that is planned, structured and repetitive for a certain purpose .

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