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RESEARCH ARTICLE 

The Role of School Sports Activities in Promoting Health Education within the Educational Environment: Perspectives of School Health Supervisors in Algeria

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Keywords

School Sports; Sports Activities; Health Education; School Environment; Physical Education; Child Development

Abstract

This study examines the role of school sports activities in promoting health education within the school environment from the perspective of school health supervisors. Health education is recognized as a fundamental pillar in fostering healthy behaviors and ensuring the holistic development of children, encompassing physical, psychological, social, and mental well-being. In this context, school sports represent a strategic educational tool for translating health knowledge into practical, lifelong behaviors. To achieve the objectives of the study, a descriptive research design was adopted. Data were collected through structured interviews conducted with a school health physician in the city of Kherrata. The study focused on exploring the extent to which school sports activities contribute to health education, the role of school health services in encouraging student participation in

sports, and the effectiveness of sports activities in achieving the core objectives of health education. The findings indicate that school sports activities play a significant and multidimensional role in promoting health education. They contribute not only to physical fitness but also to psychological balance, social integration, emotional well-being, and the development of positive health-related behaviors among students. Furthermore, the results highlight that sports activities within schools are an educational and health necessity rather than a recreational luxury. The study concludes by emphasizing the importance of strengthening school sports programs and ensuring continuous institutional support and supervision from the relevant authorities. Early engagement in sports during childhood is shown to be instrumental in shaping healthy individuals who are physically active, mentally resilient, psychologically balanced, and socially responsible members of society.

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1. Introduction:

The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. In other words, an individual's health comprises physical, mental, and social well-being, which they strive to achieve. This well-being does not occur by chance; rather, it is the result of healthy practices and behaviors learned, acquired, and applied from a young age and throughout the various stages of life. The foundation of these positive behaviors and overall well-being cannot be achieved in any society without the contribution of healthcare professionals—doctors, parents, and teachers—who encourage individuals to take steps toward achieving their health. This is accomplished through health education. Health education is an important part of general education. Its mission is not limited to ensuring that individuals live in an environment suitable for modern life, but extends to fostering a better understanding and appreciation of available health services in the community, enabling individuals to make the most of them. It also aims to provide the community with health information and guidance related to their well-being, with the goal of effectively influencing their attitudes and modifying and developing their health behaviors to help them achieve physical, psychological, social, and mental well-being and sufficiency. (Bahaa El-Din Salama, 2011, p. 132)

It is worth noting the importance of sports in contributing to health education. One of the specific objectives of sports in schools is that doctors emphasize its health benefits. The motor skills a child acquires in their early years are essential for their development. Sports also serve and develop a child's physical and psychological capabilities, fostering technical and motor skills. Most importantly, they contribute to the development of the central nervous system, which, through its development, cultivates several abilities and functions, including perception, imagination, and attention. (Akram El-Sayed Mamidouh, 2018, p. 79)

From this perspective, it becomes clear Sound health education is an integrated process involving several key stakeholders, most importantly school health services, the school environment, the family, and the community.

2. Problem Statement:

Research into health education has become crucial for finding mechanisms to implement it and help it achieve its goals. With the growing physical, psychological, and social benefits of sports, as well as its contribution to the healthy upbringing of children, especially within the school environment, by instilling in them numerous values, skills, and behaviors that help them become well-adjusted, positive, and active members of their community, this study aims to answer the following questions to understand the role of sports activities in achieving health education in schools:

General Research Question:

Do sports activities play a role in achieving health education in schools?

Sub-questions:

- Do the health services provided in schools encourage participation in sports activities?
- Do sports activities contribute to health education in schools?
- Do sports activities in schools help health education achieve its goals?

3. Study Hypotheses:

General Hypothesis:

Sports activities play a role in achieving health education in the school environment.

Sub-Hypotheses:

- Health services provided in the school environment encourage participation in sports activities.
- Sports activities contribute to the health education process in the school environment.
- Sports activities in the school environment contribute to achieving the goals of health education.

4. Study Objectives:

These can be summarized as follows:

- To determine whether health services provided in the school environment encourage participation in sports.
- To determine whether sports activities contribute to health education in the school environment.
- To determine whether sports activities in the school environment contribute to achieving the goals of health education from the perspective of school health supervisors.

5. Significance of the Study:

The significance of the study lies in demonstrating the role of sports activities in achieving health education in the school environment from the perspective of school health supervisors, through their contribution to the physical education process and their role in achieving the goals of health education in the school environment.

6. Study Limitations:

- Human Limitations: The school health supervisor.
- Spatial boundaries: Kherrata city.
- Temporal boundaries: From October 6, 2024 to October 23, 2024.

7. Defining the study terms:

.1.7 Sport: This refers to physical exertion or skill practiced according to agreed-upon rules for the purpose of recreation, competition, enjoyment, excellence, or skill development, strengthening self-confidence, and the variety of objectives, whether combined or separate. (Akram El-Sayed Mamdouh, 2018, p. 13)

In this study, sports activities refer to the group of semi-sports games and motor exercises practiced in physical education and sports classes, as well as school sports.

7.2 School sports: These are various organized sports activities, in the form of individual or team competitions at all levels, overseen and managed by the provincial school sports associations within the school sector. These are the sports activities practiced within educational institutions, culminating in local and national championships through which students excel and showcase their skills and talents. (Akram El-Sayed Mamdouh, 2018, p. 69)

7.3 Health Education: This is an educational process that seeks to translate known health facts into sound, healthy behavioral patterns at the individual and community levels, using modern educational methods. (Bahaa El-Din Salama, 2011, p. 132)

8.Theoretical Framework of the Study:

8.1 Types of Sports, Their Importance, and Benefits in the School Environment:

A. Types of Sports:

After defining sports, we will now identify their types in the school environment. They can be classified into two types:

•**Sports for All:** The goal is to activate the largest possible number of students, providing them with athletic training that suits their abilities and their psychological and social needs, and equipping them with knowledge about sports activities throughout the academic year.

•**Elite sports:** Its goal is to select talented students in sports based on their participation in school sports competitions, to participate within the teams representing the national and international school championships. (Akram El-Sayed Mamdouh, 2018, p. 69)

B. The Importance and Benefits of Physical Activity in Childhood (School Stage)

Physical activity is especially important in childhood, as the body is constantly growing at this stage. It needs exercise to ensure that muscles, bones, heart, lungs, and all other vital organs develop naturally and healthily, in addition to building a sound personality. Many studies have indicated that physical games promote healthy physical, mental, and psychological development in children, and increase self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment.

Regular physical activity provides children with physical, psychological, and social benefits, including helping them achieve coordination and healthy bone, muscle, and joint development; controlling body weight and losing excess weight; and improving heart and lung efficiency. Group play, games, and sports activities provide children with opportunities for self-expression, building self-confidence, a sense of accomplishment, and social interaction and integration. Furthermore, engaging in physical activities enhances a student's learning ability through their impact on cognitive skills. Akram El-Sayed states in his book, "School Sports," that several studies indicate students who participate in inter-school sports competitions are less likely to engage in unhealthy habits such as smoking and

drug use, and are more likely to continue their studies, excel academically, and reach the highest academic levels. (Akram El-Sayed Mamdouh, 2018, pp. 75-76)

8.2 Objectives of Sports Activities in the School Environment:

The following objectives are among the most common in the general objectives lists for physical education and sports in some international schools:

A. Organic Development: Sports primarily focus on activating vital human functions through the acquisition of physical fitness and motor skills. These skills adapt the body's systems and enhance their functional efficiency, enabling individuals to fulfill their daily responsibilities.

B. Developing Motor Skills: One of the most important goals of sports, whose programs begin in childhood, is to activate basic movement and develop common patterns. These are divided into: locomotional movements such as walking, running, and jumping; non-locomotional movements such as twisting, turning, and leaning; and manipulative movements such as throwing, pushing, and kicking. Motor skills are thus developed from these patterns; they are learned and acquired skills.

C. Cognitive Development: This goal relates to the mental and cognitive aspects, and how physical education and sports can contribute to developing knowledge, understanding, analysis, and synthesis through the cognitive aspects inherent in physical and sporting activities. Furthermore, teaching motor skills relies, in its initial stages, on cognitive and perceptual aspects.

D. Psychosocial Development: The emotional experiences associated with physical activity contribute to the balanced, comprehensive, and mature development of an individual's personality, aiming for their psychosocial adaptation to their community. The psychological values acquired through participation in sports programs extend beyond the playing field to the wider community, manifesting as acceptable behaviors. These behavioral values include improved self-concept, self-confidence, self-affirmation, fulfillment of psychosocial needs and desires, and the development of aspirations, ambitions, and aspiration for excellence.

E. Aesthetic Development: The aesthetic experiences gained from sports activities provide significant enjoyment and pleasure. They also offer opportunities to appreciate aesthetics and perform distinctive movements in various forms of movement, such as sports, folk arts, and traditional art forms like sculpture, painting, and music.

D. Recreation and Leisure Activities: Recreation is one of the oldest objectives of sports. Most cultures have engaged in physical activity for enjoyment, leisure, and recreational participation, which provides a wealth of experiences and socio-psychological and aesthetic values that enrich an individual's life.

Among the specific goals of sports as an educational tool is its numerous social and intellectual value. These values are not achieved simply by children participating in play, but require specific guidance such as attention, organization, and teamwork. This facilitates the acquisition of physical abilities and motor skills, which benefit children both physically and mentally. Some of the specific goals of physical education include:

A. Health Goals: Here, doctors emphasize the health importance. The motor skills a child acquires in their early years are essential for their development.

B. Social and Educational Goals: Awareness is fostered through feeling, sensation, and strong belief to prevent any disorders. Therefore, a physical education program must be developed that serves the child's potential and works to develop them physically and psychologically, enhances motor skills, and, most importantly, develops the central nervous system. With its development, several abilities and functions grow, including perception, imagination, visualization, and attention. (Akram El-Sayed Mamdouh, 2018, pp. 78-79)

8.3 The Concept of Health Education and its Relationship to Physical Education:

Among the most important definitions provided by health education professionals are the following:

- Health education is the process of changing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to health.
- Health education is the process of providing members of society with the necessary experiences to positively influence their knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding health.
- Health education is an educational process that seeks to translate known health facts into sound, healthy behavioral patterns at the individual and societal levels, using modern educational methods. (Bahaa El-Din Salama, 2011, p. 131) Therefore, we find that health education encompasses the various processes and methods that aim to instill in children and individuals the correct values and behaviors that ensure their physical, mental, psychological, and social well-being, helping them integrate into society and become healthy, productive members of society in the future. Similarly, physical education, a system of education and a branch of general education, works to nurture and prepare the individual through physical activity practiced under the guidance and supervision of specialists. Physical education aims to develop a well-rounded citizen—physically, mentally, psychologically, and socially—so they can become an influential member of society.

As Bahaa El-Din Salama (2011) states in this regard: If physical education teachers are properly trained, work in schools with adequate facilities and sports equipment, and the school principal recognizes the importance of physical education in preparing young people, then the physical education teacher can play a crucial role in spreading health awareness and teaching healthy behaviors through physical education lessons and various sports activities held at the school. This is especially true if the teacher demonstrates healthy behaviors in front of the students.

He adds that if we attempt to accurately and logically translate the relationship between health education and physical education within the school setting, a set of essential conditions must be met as a crucial foundation for building this relationship on sound principles. These conditions include: ensuring that school buildings adhere to health standards during construction; that the curriculum (timetable, course syllabi) also meets health standards, meaning it maintains the necessary balance between daily study hours and periods of play and extracurricular activities, according to the needs of each age group; and that the distribution of tasks and responsibilities is properly implemented, whether in teaching or in supervising students' health and monitoring their well-being.

Health education aims to achieve educational goals and also works to achieve health in its comprehensive sense through sports activities. Physical education teachers have a set of duties and responsibilities that, if fulfilled, contribute to achieving the goals of health education. These include:

- A. Providing students with health information during physical education classes, developing their health-conscious attitudes, and motivating them to adopt healthy behaviors in all matters related to their health.
- B. The teacher should encourage his students to adopt healthy habits in their personal lives, such as cleanliness, sleep, rest, studying, and play, and he should be a role model in following healthy habits in daily life.
- C. He should cultivate in his students a desire to be healthy through sports activities that align with their interests and preferences.
- d. The importance of participating in student health assessments.

Undoubtedly, both physical education and health education strive to achieve physical, psychological, social, and intellectual well-being and adequacy for individuals. This aims to prepare and nurture them in a manner that aligns

with their aspirations and the hopes of the society to which they belong. Therefore, physical education activities can be utilized to transform health information and knowledge from mere information into healthy behavior. This is achieved through engaging in activities that bring happiness, joy, and satisfaction, fulfill desires and inclinations, develop physical fitness, improve general health, and enhance the functions of bodily systems such as the respiratory, digestive, and nervous systems. It also helps eliminate health problems like weight gain. Furthermore, through practicing sports activities, physical education helps in acquiring positive behavioral patterns and diverse experiences related to order, obedience, and commitment. It also fosters the acquisition of virtuous moral qualities and cultivates positive social relationships among groups and individuals. Athletes are also more capable of self-control, curbing anger, and demonstrating the noblest moral qualities in the most challenging situations. All of this contributes to the development of social skills. (Bahaa El-Din Salama, 2011, p. 134)

9. Research Methodology and Field Procedures:

9.1 Study Methodology:

The most suitable methodology for the nature of this study is the descriptive method, as it relies on data collection and analysis and is appropriate for the research topic.

9.2 Study Population and Sample:

The research population consists of those responsible for school health in the schools of El-Azizia city, Medea province. The intended sample was the school health supervisor, Mr. [Name], because he is the authorized individual by virtue of his health specialization and his position in managing the school health unit and promoting health education within the school environment.

9.3 Study Instrument:

The interview instrument was used with the study sample. The interview was divided into three sections, each related to one of the study hypotheses.

10. Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results:

10.1 Presentation and Discussion of the Results of the First Hypothesis: This hypothesis states that the health services provided in the school environment encourage participation in sports activities. To test this hypothesis, the research sample was asked about the health services provided in the school environment and whether these services encourage participation in sports activities.

The responses from the school health supervisor confirmed the existence of a comprehensive range of health services provided by his department. These services include general and specialized medical examinations within the school environment, encompassing general medicine, dentistry, and psychiatry. This is done to identify health problems that hinder students in the school environment (such as infectious diseases, parasitic diseases, speech problems, etc.), to inform educators and relevant authorities about these issues, and to follow up on them. Other health services are also provided, such as vaccinations, medical guidance regarding healthy nutrition, hygiene in the classroom, the school, and the surrounding environment, and the creation of a healthy school environment in cooperation with the school community.

He also stressed that they encourage the practice of sports activities in and outside the school environment, as sports activities are necessary to achieve the integrated physical, mental, psychological and social growth of the student. However, the advice of school health doctors must be taken into account regarding students who suffer from health problems such as heart disease, diabetes and epilepsy. He added that a child who practices sports activities has a greater chance of being an active person who enjoys good health and is positive in the future.

The study results showed that health services are available in schools and emphasized the importance of school sports as a lifestyle choice, given its role in promoting the physical, psychological, social, and mental well-being of students.

This aligns with the study by Houari Ahlem, published in the Al-Qabas Journal of Psychological and Social Studies in 2020, titled: "The Reality of School Health in Primary Schools in Algeria." The study aimed to identify the state of school health through the dimensions of health services, health education and promotion, and the school environment. It concluded that the levels of health services and health education and promotion were high due to the services, efforts, and guidance provided by school health units to achieve school health. However, the school environment was found to be at an average level, attributed to overcrowding in classrooms, a lack of green spaces, and inadequate facilities.

Based on the above, we find that the health services provided in schools encourage participation in sports activities, thus confirming the first hypothesis.

10.2 Presentation and discussion of the results of the second hypothesis: which states that sports activities contribute to health education in schools from the perspective of school health supervisors.

To confirm this hypothesis, the question was posed regarding the role of sports activities in health education within the school environment, and how they can be utilized in this process.

The answer confirmed that sports activities in schools contribute to health education, whether they are individual, team, competitive, or semi-sports activities, provided that the activities are organized (not chaotic) and practiced in a clean, well-ventilated environment with well-equipped fields and halls that ensure proper practice and avoid anything that could harm students' health, such as pollution, hard surfaces, and sewage systems.

Sports activities are heavily utilized in health education. According to the school health physician, sports represent an important part of health education and should be a way of life practiced both inside and outside the school environment, and at all ages. Sports are employed to achieve health education through the physical activities students participate in, which contribute to their healthy mental, physical, psychological, and social development. This is what Mona Abdel Halim addressed in her book, "An Introduction to Mental Health in the Sports Field," where she indicated that practicing sports satisfies an individual's needs to build self-esteem and self-confidence, instills positive educational values accepted by society, and steers them away from harmful habits.

Mohamed Saad Zaghloul also pointed out in his book, "School Sports within the Framework of Total Quality Management," that physical education, with its various activities, represents an important aspect of the educational process in educational institutions. Through it, the learner can achieve complete and balanced development to the fullest extent of their abilities and aptitudes. It is also a fundamental motivator for the learner and is no less important than the curricula of various subjects; in fact, it surpasses them, given that sports activities are a true source of values such as cooperation, responsibility, leadership, self-control, and sportsmanship.

From what has been mentioned, we find that sports activities contribute to the process of health education in the school environment, which confirms the validity of the second hypothesis.

10.3 Presenting and discussing the results of the third hypothesis: which states that sports activities in the school environment contribute to achieving the goals of health education from the perspective of school health supervisors. To test this hypothesis, the question was raised as to whether sports activities contribute to achieving the goals of health education in schools.

The responses indicated that the goals of health education in schools are to raise the level of health awareness, instill healthy behaviors within the school environment, provide students with suitable conditions for preventing infectious diseases, and cultivate well-rounded individuals imbued with values and behaviors that promote physical,

psychological, mental, and social well-being. These goals are significantly aided by organized sports activities practiced in schools, in addition to factors such as medical support, healthy nutrition, and family care.

This aligns with what Hamad Saad Zaghloul stated in his book, "School Sports within the Framework of Total Quality Management," that through participating in sports activities in educational institutions, students acquire a wealth of knowledge, motor skills, and physical attributes. They also acquire social, moral, and aesthetic values (cooperation, responsibility, democracy, leadership, self-control, sportsmanship, and the beauty of performance, etc.). This is also what Akram El-Sayed pointed out in his book "School Sports," where he stated that sports are essential for a child's health and development. They also have educational and social objectives that serve and enhance a child's physical and psychological capabilities, develop their technical and motor skills, and, most importantly, develop the central nervous system. This development fosters several abilities and functions, including perception, imagination, visualization, and attention. One of the most important aspects of practicing sports in childhood is the continuous growth of the body. Physical activity is necessary to ensure that muscles, bones, heart, lungs, and all other vital organs develop naturally and healthily. Furthermore, it contributes to building a sound personality. Organized physical activities promote the healthy physical, mental, and psychological development of children and youth, increasing self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of accomplishment.

From the above, we can see that sports activities help achieve the goals of health education in the school environment, which confirms the validity of the third hypothesis.

11. Study Recommendations:

- Developing health education in the school environment through training for all stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, and students.
- Organizing scientific seminars facilitated by school health units to promote a culture of health education, highlight its importance, and explain how to implement it within families and the community.
- Actively promoting school sports, given their role in achieving health and health education within the school environment.
- Assigning the teaching of physical education and sports in primary schools to teachers specializing in physical education and sports to maximize its effectiveness. This is because sports do not achieve health education simply through children's participation in play, but rather through organization and guidance from specialists in the field of sports.
- Providing schools with the necessary sports facilities, equipment, and supplies to implement physical education and sports classes and achieve their objectives.
- Instilling a culture of sports participation as a way of life for students, not just as a school activity.
- Evaluating the educational program to align with the needs of young learners for sports, play, and other extracurricular activities, taking into account their age. • Parents should encourage their children to participate in sports by taking them to sports facilities, accompanying them, encouraging them, and even participating alongside them.

12. Conclusion:

Based on the saying "Today's child is tomorrow's adult," which underpins a sophisticated and civilized society with sound social values, it is essential to care for and nurture children in a healthy and sound manner—physically, mentally, psychologically, and socially—through a health education system shared by everyone: the family, the school environment, and the community as a whole.

Based on our specialization in the field of sports and the points discussed in this study, we emphasize the role of sports in achieving health education. Sports offer numerous social, psychological, and intellectual values that children acquire through participation in athletic activities. However, these values are not achieved simply by children participating in physical games. They require guidance and recommendations regarding the factors that contribute to the success of sports in fulfilling their health education role, such as organization, teamwork, and healthy nutrition with accompanying medical advice.

Therefore, more attention should be paid to sports in schools, especially at the primary level. This can be achieved by assigning its teaching at the primary level to a teacher specializing in physical education and sports, and by providing educational institutions with sports facilities and equipping them with the equipment and tools that help the teacher achieve his goals for the physical education class and motivate and attract students to participate in sports activities.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with recognized ethical standards for educational and social research. Participation in the interviews was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from the school health supervisor involved in the study. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participant were fully respected, and all collected data were used exclusively for scientific research purposes.

Author Contributions

- **Rahmouni Abdelmadjid:** Conceptualization of the study, data collection, and primary drafting of the manuscript.
- **Tahir Ammar:** Methodological design and data analysis.
- **Belkacem Benlahdjar:** Literature review and theoretical framework development.
- **Tahir Zahir:** Interpretation of results and critical revision of the manuscript.
- **Nacer Fannouche:** Final editing, academic language refinement, and supervision of the research process.

All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

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