


The Role of School Physical Education in Achieving Pupils' Mental Health

Le rôle de l'éducation physique scolaire dans la promotion de la santé mentale des élèves

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the meaning of physical education and the major concepts tackled by scholars and thinkers, its aspects, its objectives in the Algerian schools, and its role in achieving the pupils' psychological health. The study reveals that physical education is crucial for the acquisition of physical abilities, namely: speed, flexibility, endurance, and muscular strength, in order to maintain physical fitness and health, as well as physical and mental abilities. Physical education teaches pupils to become responsible when doing tasks and also in their social relationships. It contributes in promoting sportsmanship between them, respecting rules and instructions, and more importantly, respecting each another, and accepting defeat. Moreover, we conclude that physical education in Algeria has objectives that must be fulfilled in order to align with the necessary requirements of the pupils, preparing them physically and psychologically to participate in various future sports and Olympic competitions and to honor their country.

Keywords: general education - physical education - mental health – pupils

Résumé : L'étude vise à identifier ce qu'est l'éducation physique et les concepts importants que les scientifiques et les penseurs ont élaborés, et ses caractéristiques ; ses objectifs , son rôle dans la promotion de la santé mentale des apprenants. L'étude a révélé que l'éducation physique joue un rôle dans l'acquisition des capacités physiques tels que l'accélération, la souplesse, la résistance et la force musculaire, et le développement des capacités mentales et physiques, ce qui contribue à responsabiliser les apprenants dans les différentes tâches qui leur sont assignées, et dans leurs relations avec les autres et s'efforce d'élever l'esprit sportif. Surtout, les apprenants apprennent à respecter les autres et les instructions. L'étude a conclu que l'éducation physique en Algérie a des objectifs à atteindre pour répondre aux besoins nécessaires des apprenants et les préparer physiquement et psychologiquement à participer aux différentes compétitions sportives et olympiques et à hisser le drapeau national.

Mots-clés : Éducation générale, éducation physique, santé mentale, apprenants.

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Introduction

Children's - or particularly - pupils' psychological health is among the factors influencing their physical, social, and mental health. It is manifested through the way they interact with their society and environment, within their families or friends, and other societal institutions. School is one of the institutions that contribute in the pupils' growth, progress, and focuses on their abilities and competencies, through the sciences, knowledge, and physical and sports activities they learn. According to scholars, sports specialists and psychologists, physical education may widely influence the pupils' psychological health, which is reflected in their scientific, intellectual, psychological, and social performances, because it allows them to invest their latent energy while discovering their physical and intellectual skills and abilities through practicing these (sports) activities. It is also important to mention its entertaining feature which contributes to the pupils' psychotherapy and physical health, manifested through their growth and well-being. The latter is also reflected in their academic achievements, and creating social relationships through practicing sports, forming teams, competing against and cheering each other, as well as learning to accept defeat and respecting their rivals. These are aspects that contribute to their mental and physical growth compared to other classes which instill knowledge. In this respect, our research aims to examine the role of physical education in achieving pupils' psychological health.

1. Objectives of the study

- This study aims to explore the meaning of physical and sports education, as well as, the major concepts tackled by scholars and thinkers.
- Identifying the characteristics of physical and sports education in schools
- Identifying its role in achieving pupils' psychological health
- Identifying its goals in the Algerian school

2. Terminologies

2.1. Definition of General Education

The term "education" is defined as "an act related to all living beings: plants, animals, and humans, given that each one of them has a particular education method. Human education, in fact, begins before birth and ends with their death. In a nutshell, education indicates creating appropriate conditions for the individual's comprehensive growth in the personal, mental, spiritual, physical, and moral aspects. (Rabeh Tourki, 1990, p. 19)

2.2. Physical Education

Butcher defines physical education as an integral part of general education, and it is an empirical field whose purpose is to create a physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially fit citizen, through a variety of physical activities, which were tested for the purpose of performing tasks. It is an educational activity, or what is known as a physical and sports education class, in addition to the educational physical competitive training activity, which is a set of internal and external sports activities that complement each other. (Ismail Saud Al Aoun, Mansour Nizal Al Zaboun, Haitham Mamdouh Al Kadi, 2016, pp. 329 - 340)

2.3. Psychological health

Bloom defines psychological health as a combination between physical and psychological aspects, which is basically founded on health care, genetics, environment, behavior, and lifestyle. It is medium towards comfort, tranquility, psychological welfare, and lack of disorders, especially for those who suffer from psychological issues. Thus, it can be considered an effective resort for good mental health.

2.4. The pupil

Pupils are those who experience the knowledge, skills, and inclinations that the educator and society have selected in order to achieve their growth. Their relationship with the teacher is a hierarchical one. The pupil is a minor passive individual, and a receiver whose mental and performance abilities are limited to storing and reproducing information. Therefore, from the perspective of classical pedagogy in educational evaluation, the pupil is a memorization machine. (Mohamed Awad Bassiouni, Faisal Yassine Al Chatti, 1992, p. 50)

3. Theoretical overview of Physical education

Physical and sports education is part of general education or one of its concerns, given that modern education is also concerned with preserving one's body and health. The concept of physical and sports education is broad, inclusive, and differs from one country to another, since its meaning changes throughout history and across societies. Throughout human history, physical and sports education had been subject to controversy and attentiveness. Modern nations have paid abundant attention to physical and sports education owing to its constructive objectives. The latter is manifested through the comprehensive preparation of an ideal citizen from mental, physical, psychological, and social aspects of the individual's personality. Kopsky and Kozlik claimed that it is wrong to associate physical education and physical and sports education only with bodily strength or sportive skills. It is, actually, an art of general education whose objective is to prepare an ideal citizen in terms of body, mind and, ethics, as well as urging him/her to be productive, and to fulfill his/her duty towards society. The term "physical education" has acquired a new meaning, since the word "physical" which denotes the "body" is often used to refer to various "physical" qualities such as strength, physical growth, and physical appearance. Zeigler, physical education scholar, believes that the meaning of physical and sports education can be expressed from several perspectives. Some believe that its meaning is derived from observing what happens during physical and sports education classes in schools, as well as in stadiums, and sports halls in general. This perspective, however, is very limited, because the meaning of physical and sports education is much deeper than this. Nash defines it as a part of general education that exploits the person's natural activity to achieve physical, harmonious, and emotional growth. Nixon believes that it as a part of general education, which is concerned with national activities, and ensures training the muscular system while performing activities. The French researcher Robert Bobin assumes that physical education is a set of physical movements, selected to match the requirements of the body, and to fulfill the pupils' needs in terms of physical, mental, and psychomotor aspects, in order to achieve the individual's comprehensive growth. Wuest and Butcher defined it as an educational process whose purpose is to improve Human performance through physical exercise. Physical education is an integral part of general education and an empirical field whose goal is to create a

physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially fit citizen through practicing a set of selected physical activities. (Soufian Hamdaoui, 2018, pp. 107-108)

4. The importance of physical education

Physical and sports education have become an autonomous science that combines various sciences. It has become very significant, particularly, in the pupils' lives because it results in their motor and intellectual growth. It contributes to their education, psychological and physical improvement, and their life in general. Physical education is considered part of general education and one of its concerns. It both preserves the pupils' bodies and prepares them to represent their countries in major events and festivals. Education is not limited to the confines of schools only; however, schools are where the most highly organized types of education take place. Schools are where pupils spend a large portion of their time and where attempts to transform pupils into ideal citizens take place. Physical and sports education also has a major role in providing the appropriate environment for growth, to comprehensively prepare youth physically, mentally and psychologically, given its importance in the processes of growth and progress. Physical education has great benefits on the child's life from birth, therefore it is an essential and complementary part of the educational process. (Djabouri Ben Omar 2015, pp. 28, 29, 30)

5. Objectives of physical education

It is considered an educational and recreational subject with lofty goals if it is practiced and applied properly in the school educational system. It is an important school subject which provides pupils with energy and health. The major objectives of physical education will highlighted below:

5.1. Physically

- To develop and improve physical qualities.
- The ability to control and adapt to different situations.
- To determine muscle gain.
- To control energy and its distribution
- The ability to focus and visual identification
- To adapt to different situations.
- To improve physical and motor strength, and the ability to control the body.

5.2. Socially

- To maintain cooperation and respect at work.
- The ability to manage emotions.
- Good leadership.
- To increase sportsmanship among pupils, and abiding by the laws, instructions and guidelines.

5.3. Psychologically

- To spread fun and joy among students.
- To express various acceptable values and emotional experiences.
- To affect the individual's educational framework and to control his/her disruptive behaviors.

- To delve into the depths of the individual behavior of humans in general and the pupil's in particular, given that it is important to take into account the significance of the pupil's body in shaping his/her emotional traits.

5.4. In terms of motor skills

- To develop basic motor skills through concentration.
- To acquire complex motor skills for well-known sports activities.
- To develop the pupil's motor abilities.

5.5. Cognitively

- To know the limits of one's abilities as well as the others'.
- Oral and motor communication skills.
- To know health prevention rules.
- To know the impact of physical activity on fitness and health.
- To know basic motor concepts. (Adel Bazio, Ahmed Laznek, 2015, pp. 53-58)
- To help children to become smart and skilled players.
- To acquire and develop skilled performances in various collective and individual sports activities
- To teach thinking methods and implementing plans according to sports activities and age category. (Mouaffak Asaad Mahmoud Al Haif, 2012, p. 139)

6. Objectives of physical education in Algerian schools

The educational system in Algeria aims to achieve a set of visions in order to improve physical sports in school and make it more effective and useful at the educational level, in order to achieve beneficial results to the student in particular and the nation in general. The objectives of physical education in Algerian schools are as follows:

- **Physically:** to improve physical and psychological competences through acquiring greater physical control and behavioral adjustment with the environment. This can be achieved through facilitating the transformation of physical education into a successful path and organizing it rationally. To improve the individual's physical and psychological health increases his/her ability to resist fatigue, which leads to increased individual and collective productivity in the intellectual and manual labor.
- **Socially and culturally:** through physical education, cultural and moral values can be implanted in children and pupils, which will be the path on which they grow up, and will support in improving the spirit of citizenship. It leads to discipline, tolerance, commitment, and fulfilling duties, and it also maintains human relationships and controls sources of stress, self-control, and mood. Moreover, it aims to make it an effective activity to take advantage of free time, to improve it according to the capacities of educational institutions, and to participate in various sports events to represent the nation. Additionally, it is a source of acquaintance, making friendships, and enriching and exchanging knowledge and experiences (Mourad Khalil, 2012, p. 66)
- **Psychologically:** Everyone agrees about the role of sports, generally, in developing a person's abilities and improving his/her skills, especially if practiced from childhood and in schools. It prepares the child to acquire a psychologically balanced personality, not dominated by aggression or laziness. It is a school subject that stimulates individual resources, invests in spontaneous movements, and contributes to psychological balance, by bringing out children's latent energy and hyperactivity. Besides, it aims to improve behavior

and to benefit from useful movements that can be developed in the future to for the pupils to join sports teams. All of these activities aim to create psychological balance for the pupil. (Nahhal, Hamid, 2009, p. 42)

7. The psychological characteristics of physical activity and its role in the pupil's psychological health:

Below are the major psychological features of physical activity:

- Sports competition, which is a main concern of sports activity.
- The impact of sports physical activity is manifested in how the athlete approaches his/her daily life.
- Sports activity contributes to increasing productivity and work ability.
- It contributes to improving the teenager's mental and emotional abilities.
- Sports activity is closely linked to various emotions, given that it is related to success or failure and the ensuing behavioral manifestations.
- During practicing a sports physical activity, the presence of mental, physical, social, and psychological aspects of the personality is required. (Sadek Chibani, 1999, p. 99)

8. Goals of sports activities within the school

- **Reinforcing the skills which pupils learn within educational institutions** in the field of internal school activities, and allowing everyone to practice activities, by giving every pupil in the opportunity to practice their favorite sports. By doing so, the pupils' sports level improves allowing them to participate in sports activities, and to become members of internal sports teams, instead of becoming mere spectators to those with better sports abilities.

- **Learning through practice:** Through practicing these activities, pupils will learn educational manners in an application, and acquire social skills.

- **Education for free time:** Pupils can benefit from their free time through participating in internal activities which, unlike external activities, do not require great skills.

- **Developing social qualities** by teaching pupils self-discipline, cooperation, respect for others, and good behavior.

- **Developing team spirit:** it is necessary for the pupil to be part of a team in order to participate in internal activities. He/she feels a sense of belonging and invests his/her efforts in improving the performance of his/her team. Hence he/she feels the team spirit while participating in its activities.

- **Maintaining physical health** through correct practice and application of sports activities under adult supervision. The pupil, therefore, benefits from better health, physical strength, and fitness.

- **Learning to be responsible and fulfill one's duties:** pupils' participation in organizing physical activities within the school, such as: preparing playgrounds and equipment, arbitrating matches, supervising them, and monitoring their results, develops their sense of responsibility and trains them to become leaders. (Mohamed Hassan Allaoui, 2004, p. 121)

- Doctors recommend training the child's nervous system especially during infancy. this contributes to reducing stress, excessive anxiety, and regular psychological struggles. It reduces the severity of psychological pressures and anxiety. It also helps gaining self-confidence and achieving physical growth and mental skills. It teaches pupils innovation and

creativity, and it develops children's self-experience and problem-solving skills. (Mourad Khalil, 2012, p. 60)

- Increasing the pupils' physical efficiency.

- Instilling ethical values in pupils such as: cooperation, determination, sacrifice, and courage. (Mourad, Khalil 2012, p. 66)

Findings:

A set of results were concluded based on what was tackled in this study. The following results can be considered as scientific proof to confirm the role of physical education in maintaining the pupils' psychological health:

- Physical education is considered an autonomous science that has contributed to combining several sciences, including psychology, sociology, economics, medicine, and biology, which made it an integral part of the nations' public life. Thanks to physical education an individual can honor his/her country through participating in major events and festivals, hence, it contributes to the progress of societies.

- It is considered part of general education and one of its concerns. It benefits the individuals physically and mentally by upholding their health, cultivating their mind, and refining their thoughts. Education is not limited to the confines of schools only, however, schools are the where the most highly organized forms of education take place.

- Physical and sports education are undeniably important in developing autonomy and teamwork, and in forming a balanced and harmonious personality with its environment. It is an activity that contributes to improving individual resources, transforming spontaneous movement into organized and disciplined movement through its various activities. It helps to raise the pupils' awareness of their body, and teach them the necessity of preserving it and upholding their health. It provides them with the principles of order and discipline through respecting the opponent and the rules of the game, sportsmanship, tolerance, the desire to make efforts, controlling and directing their surplus energy, and express their natural hostility calmly and without violence. This demonstrates how physical education teaches them to accept defeat with a sportsmanship.

- Improving an individual's psychological health increases his ability to resist fatigue, so that human energy can be used wisely leading to an increase in individual and collective productivity.

- It helps in the comprehensive preparation of the ideal citizen from the mental, physical, psychological, or social aspects.

- Physical and sports activities help in improving the pupil's cognitive abilities and tactical thinking especially while playing in teams.

- Pupils acquire physical abilities like speed, flexibility, perseverance, endurance, and muscular strength, in order to maintain their fitness and health, and improve their productivity both in manual and intellectual work.

- It teaches them responsibility in the various tasks assigned to them, and in their relationships with others.

- It aims to spread sportsmanship among pupils, and urge them to respect laws, instructions and guidelines.

-Conclusion

Based on what have been said, we notice that physical and sports education is a set of activities linked to educational sports courses and have educational and pedagogical purposes. Kinetic physical education contributes to the pupils' comprehensive growth and integrated development. It is also deemed a recreational period where pupils engage in activities and movements that contribute to releasing the stress that accumulates throughout the week due to studying complex subjects, unlike sports, which is the pupils' time to rest and have fun. Simultaneously, it helps in strengthening their relationships more compared to when they are in the classroom, since it is generally food for the soul and the body.

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Research Interests:

Sociology of Education, Sociology of Crime, Social Psychology, with a focus on topics related to adolescence and childhood, as well as the influence of physical and sports activities on children and adolescents.