



Analyzing the Perception of the Impact of Sports Practice on Students in School Settings

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Abstract

Objectives. The importance of physical activity is often underestimated, particularly by students, although there is some scientific evidence to support this. There is a lack of data on students' perceptions of sports practice, focusing on the aspect of well-being and the positive benefits of the latter, including in the school environment. The objective is to quantify the impact of sports practice on the well-being of secondary school students in the school setting.

Materials and methods. The sample taken consists of 25 students belonging to the first grades of the State Industrial Technical Institute "G. Cardano" in PAVIA. A questionnaire consisting of 16 questions was developed in order to investigate the relationship between well-being and physical activity among the students. Then, the responses to the questionnaire questions were analyzed, applying chi-squared test analysis to understand any significance among the qualitative variables.

Results. It was found that for the respondents, the relationship with sports is 16% indifferent, 4% not positive and 80% favorable. A first significant relationship was analyzed, between the amount in terms of frequency of sports activity and the students' feelings in the classroom while practicing ($p = 0.001$); and a second significant relationship was found between the amount in terms of frequency of sports activity and the students' feelings during the exercises ($p = 0.003$).

Conclusions. The main conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that sports activity has a positive impact on students' school life, influencing their physical and emotional well-being, enhancing a sense of inclusion and empowerment, and increasing motivation to achieve personal goals.

Keywords: school, wellness, sports, questionnaire, physical activity.

Introduction

In the fast-paced and increasingly competitive environment of modern life, the importance of sports in the school setting emerges as a crucial element in the overall well-being of students (Raiola, 2020). In scientific literature, there is evidence of the effectiveness of sports in developing not only skills and abilities, but also skills applicable to daily life (Raiola, 2019). Sport is not only a form of physical activity, but a powerful educational tool that contributes significantly to the formation of balanced and resilient individuals (D'Elia & D'Isanto, 2021). Sport represents a distinctive educational method that contributes to the formation of people with the ability to face challenges with determination (Ratey, 2008).

Playing sports not only promotes physical health, but also plays an instrumental role in stress management and enhancing cognitive abilities (Hristovski et al, 2012). In addition, it can be regarded as a beneficial component for the brain, providing prevention against brain diseases (Raiola, 2017). Students who engage in sports develop better concentration, learning, and memory, which are key aspects for meeting academic challenges more effectively (D'Elia, 2019b). In addition, sports act as a laboratory for the growth of social and emotional skills. Practice in team sports teaches the value of teamwork, leadership, and managing emotions in high-pressure situations (Altavilla et al, 2018). Active participation in sports provides fertile ground for the development of social skills, including teamwork, leadership, and emotion management (Bailey, 2010). Such skills not only reflect positively in school dynamics, but also become an asset for success in adult life (Invernizzi et al, 2022). The

school environment, therefore, should not only be a place of learning, but also a fertile ground for the integral formation of individuals (Altavilla et al., 2015). Sport is presented as an effective means of promoting health, resilience, and socialization, thus creating a solid foundation for students' overall success, both in their academic careers and in everyday life (D'Elia, 2021). In addition, it has been shown how much sports practice can influence the cognitive aspect of students, both in terms of learning, school performance, and not to be underestimated, emotional development, understood as emotion management (Zourbanos et al., 2014). Regular practice of sports not only improves physical health, but also has a positive impact on cognitive functions, including attention and memory (Hillman et al., 2008). Sports can be an effective tool for promoting equity and inclusion within the school environment (D'Isanto, 2019). Through well-structured sports programs that are accessible to all students, socioeconomic, cultural, and gender barriers can be overcome, providing opportunities for everyone to participate in and benefit from the educational values of sports (Altavilla, 2019). Active participation in sports can help prevent school dropout by providing students with a positive and engaging experience outside the classroom (Vazou et al., 2019). Not to be underestimated, school sporting events can be an opportunity to actively involve families and the local community, creating closer ties between the school and the surrounding area. This involvement can contribute to greater social cohesion and broader support for student education and development (Abarca-Sos et al., 2013). Students involved in sports tend to have a greater motivation and sense of belonging to the school, reducing the risk of disengagement and poor academic performance (Baena-Extremuera et al., 2013). This also enables the development of motivation in students, understood as achieving goals or simply in working to achieve

certain goals (Parish & Treasure, 2003). Despite this, with the development of new technologies tending toward the entertainment of subjects at a young age, sports practice is not always considered of primary importance, taking into consideration more and more sedentary habits. The absence of the data of students' perceptions regarding sports practice was noted, focusing on the aspect of well-being and the positive benefits it brings even in the school environment. Often, the focus is mainly on the psychophysical value of sports in the social context, neglecting its relevance in the educational and school context.

Purpose of the research. The objective of the study is to quantify the impact that sports practice has on secondary school students in terms of well-being and positive influence, in the school setting.

Materials and Methods

Study Participants

The sample taken consists of 25 pupils belonging to the first classes of the State Industrial Technical Institute "G. Cardano" in PAVIA (PV). They are divided into 14 male and 11 female, with an age range of 14 to 16 years.

Study Organization

First, a questionnaire was developed to investigate the relationship between well-being and physical movement in students, containing 16 questions. The questionnaire is divided into three sections: the first contains profiling questions, the second contains questions about sports, and the third section contains group interaction questions. Analytically, the questions were designed to understand the

Table 1. Questionnaire to investigate the relationship between well-being and physical movement in students

Questions:	Answer	Answer	Answer
1. Gender of the interviewee:	Male	Female	
2. Age of the interviewee:	Open answer		
3. To which class the interviewee belongs?	Open answer		
4. What sports activities does the person engage in?	Open answer		
5. Sports activities are carried out:	Once/twice a week	Two/three times a week	None
6. For the interviewee, sport is:	Fun	Well-being	Relationship
7. What relationship does the respondent have with sports:	indifferent	Not positive	Favorable
8. In the classroom, the student feels:	valued	included	hindered
9. During sports, does the subject feel?	valued	included	hindered
10. Does sports make you feel better?	YES	NO	Other (please specify)
11. Does sport change your relationship with your teammates?	YES	NO	Other (please specify)
12. With sports, do you feel motivated to achieve your goals?	YES	NO	Other (please specify)
13. With sports do you interact with the group with interest and attention?	YES	NO	Other (please specify)
14. Are you attentive and participatory during sports activities?	YES	NO	Other (please specify)
15. Do you feel a sense of well-being after exercising?	YES	NO	Other (please specify)
16. Is it possible to say that thanks to sports the class is satisfied?	YES	NO	Other (please specify)

basic characteristics of the respondents, to understand the respondent's orientations in relation to sport, group, and the topic of well-being and motivation. The questionnaire, of structured type and processed through Google Forms, was submitted aiming at the independent variables that cannot be influenced with respect to the individual person's behaviors and are already guided in the choice of a predefined response in relation to the Likert scale, the most used type among the predefined response possibilities. The questionnaire is represented in Table 1.

Statistical Analysis

Once the questionnaire was administered, a survey and analysis of the results was conducted, with the application of the ChiQuadro statistical tool to note any significant relationships between the qualitative variables. This was performed with the statistical analysis software "JASP".

Results

With the administration of the questionnaire, the following process was the processing of the latter Table 2. Shows the results of the responses to the questions.

Table 2. Results of the questionnaire

Questions					
1.	Gender of the interviewee:	Male	Female		
	Percentage	56,00%	44,00%		
	Frequency	14	11		
2.	Age of the interviewee:	14 years old	15 years old	16 years old	
	Percentage	15	9	1	
	Frequency	58,00%	35,00%	4,00%	
3.	What grade does the respondent belong to?	First	Second	Third	
	Percentage	25	0	0	
	Frequency	100%	0	0	
4.	What sports activities does the subject engage in?	Football	Volleyball	Fitness	Tennis No activity
	Percentage	24,00%	16,00%	40,00%	12,00% 8,00%
	Frequency	6	4	10	3 2
5.	Sports activities are carried out:	the activity once/twice a week	two/three times a week	Not once	
	Percentage	76%	20%	4%	
	Frequency	19	5	1	
6.	For the interviewee, sport is:	fun	wellness	relationship	
	Percentage	80%	16%	4%	
	Frequency	20	4	1	
7.	What relationship does the respondent have with sports:	Favoreble	Indifferent	not positive	
	Percentage	80%	16%	4%	
	Frequency	20	4	1	
8.	In the classroom the student feels:	hindered	enhanced	included	

Following the administration of the questionnaire, the data were analyzed. With question number 1 'Gender of the interviewee' it turns out 56% male and 44%. With question number 2 'Age of the interviewee,' it turns out that the age of the sample is between 14 and 16 years old, with 58% turned out to be 14 years old, 35% turned out to be 15 years old, and the remaining 4% turned out to be 16 years old. With the question 'What grade does the respondent belong to?' it turns out that 100% are attending the first grade of secondary school. Next with the question 'What sports activities does the subject engage in?' The following activities result with different percentages: Soccer for 24%, Volleyball for 16%, Fitness for 40% (understood as activities carried out to physical well-being in the gymnasium), Tennis for 12% and No activity for 8%. With question 5 'Sports activities are carried out' it appears that 76% carry out the activity once/twice a week, 20% two/three times a week and the remaining 4% responded with 'other'. To the question 'For the interviewee, sport is' for 80% it is fun, for 16% it is well-being and for the remaining 4% it is relationship. With respect to question number 7 'What relationship does the respondent have with sports,' it turns out that for the respondents the relationship with sports is for 16% Indifferent, for 4% not positive and for 80% Favorable. Next to question number 8 'In the classroom the student feels' it turns out that 20 % of

Questions			
	Percentage	20%	8%
	Frequency	5	2
9. During sports the subject feels?	hindered	enhanced	included
	Percentage	8%	32%
	Frequency	2	8
10. Does sports make you feel better?	YES	NO	
	Percentage	92%	8%
	Frequency	23	2
11. Does sport change the relationship with peers?	YES	NO	
	Percentage	92%	8%
	Frequency	23	2
12. With sports, do you feel motivated to achieve your goals?	YES	NO	
	Percentage	72%	28%
	Frequency	18	7
13. With sports do you interact with the group with interest and attention?	YES	NO	
	Percentage	72%	28%
	Frequency	18	7
14. Are you attentive and participatory during sports activities?	YES	NO	
	Percentage	92%	8%
	Frequency	23	2
15. Do you feel a sense of well-being after exercising?	YES	NO	
	Percentage	92%	8%
	Frequency	23	2
16. Is it possible to say that thanks to sports the class is satisfied?	YES	NO	
	Percentage	76%	24%
	Frequency	19	6

the students feel hindered, 8 % valued and 72 % included. While on question 9, namely 'During sports the subject feels' it turns out that 32% feel valued, 60% included and the remaining 8% hindered. With question 10 'Does sport make you feel better?' 92 % of the students answered yes, while 8 % answered no. Continuing with question 11 'Does sport change your relationship with peers?' 92 % answered yes, while 8 % answered no. In question 12 'With sports do you feel motivated to achieve your goals?' 72 % of the sample answered yes, while 28 % answered no. In question 13 'With sports do you interact with the group with interest and attention?' 72% answered yes and the remaining 28% answered no. Continuing with question 14 'Are you attentive and participatory during sports activities?' 92 percent of students answered yes, while 8 percent answered no. Next to question 15 Do you feel a sense of well-being after exercising?' 92% answered yes and the remaining 8 answered no. To conclude with question 16 'Is it possible to say that

thanks to sports the class is satisfied?', it turns out that 76 % of the students answered yes, while 24 % answered no. Then with Chi-Quadro analysis, two significant relationships were

Table 3. Table of contingency between question 5 and question 8

Contingency Tables				
5. Sports activities are carried out:	8. In the classroom the student feels:			
	hindered	enhanced	included	Total
Not once	0	1	0	1
two/three times a week	4	1	0	5
the activity once/ twice a week	1	0	18	19
Total	5	2	18	25

Table 4. Chi-Quadro result between question 5 and question 8

Chi-Squared Tests	Value	df	p
χ^2	29.947	4	<0.001

detected. Taking question 5 into consideration, the first relationship was detected between it and question 8, with a $p=0.001$, as is shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

A second significant relationship was found between question 5 and question 9, with a $p=0.003$, as is shown in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5. Table of contingency between question 5 and question 9

Contingency Tables				
5. Sports activities are carried out:	9. During sports the subject feels?			
	hindered	enhanced	included	Total
Not once	0	1	0	1
two/three times a week	2	3	0	5
the activity once/ twice a week	0	4	15	19
Total	2	8	15	25

Table 6. Chi-Quadro result between question 5 and question 9

Chi-Squared Tests	Value	df	p
χ^2	16.118	4	0.003

Discussion

In analyzing the responses, it was found that on average, sports activities are carried out by the most between once and twice a week, nevertheless, a good 20% play sports $\frac{2}{3}$ times a week. The responses showed that for most students, sports is fun but for a good percentage it is also a source of well-being; it was also found that for the students surveyed, the relationship with sports is in 80% of cases favorable and positive, small percentages report that there is a relationship of indifference or lack of positivity. The class manifested that they feel valued and included by sports. It was found that enhancement, inclusion and the absence of obstacles are more significant during sports hours than during face-to-face teaching times. In addition, it was found that movement and sports activity increase students' perceived percentages of feeling included and valued. Most students, a good 92 percent of the cases, feel better during sports time, feel they have a better chance of achieving their goals, and say they are involved and attentive during sports activities. Question number 16 manifested that thanks to sports, the class feels satisfied and motivated. It emerged that in the school, sports play a significant role, representing a free time for the children, without prejudice and preconceptions. A substantially positive situation emerges from the study with respect to sports that makes the subjects feel welcomed and valued. Sport initially helps students feel valued and included from the very environment in which they practice (Gould, 2006). A significant relationship, dictated by the

chi-square analysis, between the frequency of sports activity and the student's feelings about sports is inferred, with $p=0.003$, which allows us to understand the positive influence that sports activity has from the very beginning on the practitioners. As shown in the questionnaire and in what is reported in this paper, the presence of sports in school has found positive results from various points of view: sports increase children's sense of well-being and inclusion, and stimulate them to give their best according to skills, knowledge and potential. It is important to understand how there is significance dictated by the ChiQuadro, which makes the overview of the study even more complete. As can be seen from the results, there is a significant relationship between the amount in terms of the frequency of sports activity practiced by students and how the student feels in the classroom, with a $p \frac{2}{3}= 0.001$. This means that even with the support of sports activity, the student in the classroom feels more valued as well as included, minimizing negative perceptions in the school environment (Pesce et al., 2013). Sports aims at sharing values, reinforcing self-esteem and promoting a climate of trust and well-being in the classroom (D'Isanto et al., 2019). Thus, a situation prevails in which children are able to grasp the importance of teamwork, the stimulation of motivation and the pre-eminence of confrontation and communication.

Conclusion

The present study focused on the importance of sports in the school setting, aiming to quantify the impact that sports practice has on students in terms of well-being and positive influence. The main conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that sports have a positive impact on students' school life, influencing their physical and emotional well-being, enhancing a sense of inclusion and empowerment, and increasing motivation toward personal goals. The class, in general, says they are satisfied and motivated because of the presence of sports. In view of these findings, the need to recognize and promote the importance of sports in the school setting, not only as a physical activity, but as an effective educational tool for the integral formation of individuals is highlighted. The integration of sports programs into the school routine can contribute significantly to the creation of balanced, resilient and motivated students, preparing them not only for future challenges (work, educational, social), but also by hardening "life and soft skills" useful for everyday life. Precisely because life and soft skills are recognized as important skills for the individual. The study has a methodological limitation, namely the survey sample, as it is limited in size and stringent inclusion criteria.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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Аналіз сприйняття впливу занять спортом на учнів у шкільному середовищі

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Реферат. Стаття: 7 с., 6 табл., 23 джерела.

Мета дослідження. Важливість фізичної активності часто недооцінюється, особливо учнями, навіть попри те, що існують певні наукові докази, що підтверджують цей факт. Також бракує даних щодо сприйняття учнями спортивних практик з точки зору їхнього самопочуття та отримання позитивних результатів під час занять спортом, у тому числі в шкільному середовищі. Метою дослідження є кількісна оцінка впливу занять спортом на стан здоров'я учнів середніх шкіл у навчальному середовищі.

Матеріали та методи. Вибірку досліджуваних склали 25 студентів перших курсів Державного індустріального технічного інституту «Г. Кардано» у м. Павія. Для дослідження взаємозв'язку між станом здоров'я та фізичною активністю учнів було розроблено анкетування, що складалося з 16 питань. Потім відповіді на запитання анкети були проаналізовані із застосуванням критерію хі-квадрат з метою виявлення будь-якої значущості між якісними змінними.

Результати. Встановлено, що для респондентів ставлення до спорту є індивідуальним серед 16%, не має позитивного сприйняття для 4% і є сприятливим для 80% опитаних. Аналіз показав, що існує перший значущий зв'язок між частотою занять спортом та самопочуттям студентів в аудиторії під час занять ($p = 0,001$), а також другий суттєвий зв'язок між частотою занять спортом та самопочуттям студентів при виконанні фізичної активності ($p = 0,003$).

Висновки. Основний висновок, який можна зробити з цього дослідження, полягає в тому, що спортивна активність позитивно впливає на шкільне життя учнів, сприяючи їхньому фізичному та емоційному благополуччю, посилюючи почуття інклюзивності та розширення можливостей, а також підвищуючи мотивацію до досягнення особистих цілей.

Ключові слова: школа, оздоровлення, спорт, анкетування, фізична активність.

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