



PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' SPORTS PARTICIPATION IN KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

According to national and local official reports, the health status and physical fitness of Karnataka students are indeed worsening. In an attempt to promote better physical fitness and health, the Karnataka government has taken a package of measures to improve school-based physical education. However, we cannot ignore the important role of family members in developing children's healthy behaviors. The central objective of this study was to investigate parental influence on secondary school students' sports participation in Karnataka in more detail. To do this, questionnaires (including student version and teacher version) and semi-structured interviews were conducted in different regions of The results of this study reflect that students do little physical exercise at home and parental influence on students' sports participation (including parents' perception and attitude towards their children's health and sports participation; parents' role model of sports participation; parents' support and encouragement of sports participation; and communication about students' physical education between school and family) is unrealized. These results are important when considering designing more effective interventions to improve students' physical activity levels and to influence them to foster life-long habits of physical exercise.

KEYWORDS: students' sports participation, parental influence, family-based physical education .

INTRODUCTION

In Karnataka, students' physical fitness and health issues have drawn much attention in recent years. The health of young students relates not only to personal development and wellbeing, but also to the health of the entire nation, according to *Advice on Strengthening Adolescent's Physical Education and Enhancement of Adolescent's Physical Fitness* (Central Committee and the State Council, 2007). However, due to the heavy academic burdens in Karnataka's exam-oriented education system, students spend most of the day on studying. They do not have enough time to maintain the needed exercise, which leads to a decline in overall student health status and physical fitness level. According to the reports data of the physical fitness and health surveillance of Karnataka school students, jointly conducted by the General Administration of Sport, the Ministry of Education, the Health Ministry, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, and the Ministry of Science and Technology every five years since 1985, the general level of student fitness has shown signs of improvement after a 25-year decline. However, some

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In an attempt to improve the worsening health status of school students, the Karnataka government has taken a package of measures to improve physical education in schools. For example, a nationwide "Sunlight Sport" campaign was adopted by the central government,



which guarantees that school students spend at least one hour per day on sports (Ministry of Education, General Administration of Sport, and Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, 2006). In addition, annual fitness monitoring for registered children has been carried out nationally from 2013. The Ministry of Education also announced that students' physical education performance would be related to their admission assessments and the performance evaluation of school officials. It means that local government and school leaders who fail to implement annual fitness tests or ensure enough exercise for students will be criticized publicly and removed from promotion and awards lists

METHOD

This survey is the subtopic of research on students' physical fitness influences. Data collection occurred in two phases. Phase one served two purposes: (a) to gain students' fundamental information, such as age, weight, height, eyesight, and the results of physical tests; and (b) to measure students' physical fitness. In phase one, a random sample ($N = 1,827$) of student population and also a random sample ($N = 485$) of teacher population at both rural and urban secondary schools in the Eastern, Middle, and Western of Karnataka, including 5 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities, completed a two-page survey respectively. The survey consisted of a questionnaire (including student version and teacher version) measuring students' physical fitness influences in four dimensions: the student, the school, the family, and the community. Data collection for phase two mainly involved semi-structured interviews for the students, the parents, the teachers, and the headmasters randomly selected from phase one. The survey was conducted by college students who had received training for this purpose. Statistical analyses were carried out at Southwest University by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16.0. Descriptive statistics were used to examine students' physical fitness level and other problems concerning sports activities, such as duration, facilities, and training partners. There was no additional statistical analysis performed on the data from phase one of the study. Therefore, the interviews in phase two played a vital role in supplementing data in this study. The recordings of the interviews were transcribed into text with the notes taken by the assistants.

RESULTS

Students' Sports Participation at Home

According to the survey, about 38.50% of the students only spent less than half an hour on physical exercise after school on weekdays, and 37.12% of them reported that they failed to take any exercise due to heavy academic burdens. According to our interviews, most of the students stated that they had to do their homework after school and had no spare time for exercise. Some of them complained that they were often banned from leaving home after school to play or do exercise with friends. As for their weekly activities in this survey, learning and doing homework (78.11%), watching TV and surfing the Internet (60.2%), as well as reading (37.8%) are the most popular activities. Only 32.1% of the participants chose to take part in physical activity, which came to the fourth.

Parental Influence on Their Children's Sports Participation

Parents' perception and attitude towards their children's health and sports participation.

All of the parents noted that they cared about their children's physical fitness. When they were asked about how to improve their children's health and fitness, they paid more attention to correcting their unhealthy habits, such as sleeping late and unbalanced diet instead of enhancing their physical activity. Just as they said in the interviews, "If he frees from illness and has a good appetite and enough sleep, he will be in good health. That is what we can do", and "There are physical teachers and physical activity in the school and my children have enough time to do exercise at school". Regarding how to balance the time between their children's academic work and exercise, as we had expected, exercise took a back seat to academic work for most parents. "Both of them are important, but if there is a conflict between academic work and

exercise, studying is more important. Without good academic scores, he cannot get a decent job in the future”.

Parents' role model of sports participation.

The survey indicated that only 7.9% of the students reflected that their parents had physical exercise frequently, while 21.2% of them took exercise rarely and 29.1% of them never do any exercise (Zhang & Li, 2014). This also has been proven in the interviews. Most parents stated that because of heavy work and lack of interest in sports, they seldom took exercise. “It is hard for me to do any exercise after a whole-day work”, as one father said.

Parents' support and encouragement of sports participation.

According to the results of the questionnaires, 57.9% of the students claimed that their parents encouraged them to engage in sports. Only 18.8% of the students chose their parents as their exercise partners. When talking about the sports facilities, 58.57% of the students complained that there was few sporting equipment at home, which was far from enough to meet their needs. As for support, most parents stated that they seldom did exercise with their children, and they noted that “My son/daughter prefers to play with their peers”. Beside, lack of sports facilities in their local community has become a constraint, as 47.3% of the students mentioned that “Sometimes, there is nowhere to do exercise”. As a father interviewed reflected, “Once, I want to play badminton with my child, but there is no free court, and it is expensive to go the indoor stadium which charge 30 to 80 RS per hour every week for me”. Furthermore, according to the survey, compared with rural students, urban students had more easy access to sports facilities.

Communication about students' physical status between school and family.

There is an assessment of students' physical status in middle schools annually, as an executive order issued by the Ministry of Education. Almost all the schools in the research have put the program into effect, but 40.7% of the teachers

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Reflected that they never feed back the test results to the parents. Similarly, most parents stated that they did not know the physical performance of their children in school.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results from this study reflect that students do little physical exercise at home. There are two main reasons: 1. Students have to do the homework and go to kinds of remedial classes arranged by their parents, they do not have enough time for exercise; and 2. Students are interested in watching TV and reading at home instead of going out for sports, they do not build the exercise habit yet. This represents that physical activity may not be considered as the priority by the parents and students, and there is a serious lack of knowledge and perceptions of the importance of physical education among the parents. Physical education, as an important part of all education (Ma, 2010), is not only the responsibility of school education, but also the responsibility of family education. Parents are important in influencing the way their child thinks and behaves. It is the parents who decide to push their child to study at home or do exercise outside. It is also the parents who guide their child to a sedentary lifestyle (such as staying indoors and watching TV) or a healthy lifestyle. All these choices are decided by parents' behaviors and beliefs.

The results of this study reflected that parents' perception and attitude towards their children's health and sports participation have certain limitations. Although they were concerned with their children's health and fitness, they equated good health with the mere absence of disease, and they pay more attention to provide them with a good diet. These opinions of “kitchen physic” are common among parents and grandparents in Karnatka. That is also why overweight and obese students can be seen popularly in schools.

Although most of the parents know the significance of physical activity, good academic performance and decent jobs in the future are more important. As a result, the current family education in Karnataka is more concerned about intellectual education, and tries to transfer the responsibility of physical education to the school. This represents a serious lack of awareness of parents' responsibility in their children's physical education. It is obvious that the current philosophy of "exam results override all" has influenced them deeply. Parents have not realized either the importance of physical education or their potential capabilities of increasing physical activity levels of their children.

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