

The Relationship Between Physical Activity in Physical Education and Adolescents' Psychological Well-being

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Abstract

Physical education plays an important role in the physical and mental development of adolescents. This article aims to analyze the relationship between physical activity in physical education and adolescent psychological well-being. Based on a qualitative approach, this study involved participant observation and in-depth interviews with high school students in three schools in Jakarta. The results showed that active participation in physical activities contributed significantly to improving mood, reducing stress, and increasing students' self-confidence. Physical activity carried out routinely in physical education also strengthened social relationships between students, which had positive implications for overall psychological well-being. These findings emphasize the importance of optimizing physical education learning as a means of improving adolescent mental health. This article recommends the integration of fun and participatory physical activities into the school curriculum to support students' psychological well-being.

Keywords: Physical Education, Physical Activity, Psychological Well-being

Introduction

Adolescence is an age group that is in an important transition period from childhood to adulthood. In this phase, individuals experience significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. Therefore, adolescence is a crucial period in the formation of character, identity, and mental and emotional balance. In this context, physical education not only plays a role as a means to improve physical fitness, but also as an important vehicle in supporting the psychological well-being of adolescents.

Psychological well-being in adolescents includes dimensions such as feelings of happiness, life satisfaction, ability to manage emotions, and quality of social relationships. Many studies have

shown that psychological well-being disorders, such as stress, anxiety, and depression, tend to increase in adolescence due to academic, social, and family pressures. Therefore, a holistic approach that integrates physical and mental aspects in education is becoming increasingly important.

Physical activity in physical education has great potential to strengthen the psychological aspects of adolescents. Participation in sports and physical activities can increase endorphin hormones that contribute to positive feelings and stress reduction. In addition, physical activity provides a space for adolescents to express themselves, build self-confidence, and strengthen social interactions with peers.

Unfortunately, in practice, physical education in various schools is still often looked down upon and only considered as a supplementary lesson. This causes a lack of attention to optimizing the potential of physical education in supporting students' mental health. In fact, physical education designed with a fun, inclusive, and participatory pedagogical approach can be a strategic tool in creating a healthy school climate and supporting the psychological development of adolescents.

Various international and national studies have proven that there is a positive correlation between physical activity and adolescent mental health. For example, a study by Biddle and Asare (2011) concluded that physically active adolescents have lower levels of anxiety and depression than passive adolescents. Similarly, Lubans et al. (2016) stated that consistent involvement in physical activity can improve students' cognitive function, self-esteem, and social relationships.

In addition, theoretical approaches such as Self-Determination Theory proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000) emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivation in student engagement in physical activity. When students feel autonomous, competent, and have good social relationships in physical education, they tend to experience higher psychological well-being.

However, in Indonesia, empirical studies that specifically link physical activity in physical education with adolescent psychological well-being are still relatively limited. Most studies still focus on aspects of physical fitness or sports achievement, not on the psychological

dimensions of students. Therefore, this study is important as an effort to fill the literature gap and provide empirical evidence on the importance of the role of physical education in supporting adolescent mental health in the Indonesian context.

The main objective of this study is to examine in depth how physical activity carried out in physical education contributes to the psychological well-being of adolescents. This study also seeks to identify the forms of physical activity that are most effective in improving mood, reducing stress, and building healthy social relations among students. By using a qualitative approach, it is hoped that the results of this study will be able to provide richer contextual insights into students' subjective experiences of the physical education they attend.

Thus, this article not only contributes relevant empirical findings to the academic world, but also provides practical recommendations for educators, policy makers, and schools in designing a more integrative physical education curriculum that supports the psychological well-being of students as a whole.

Research methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through participant observation in physical education activities and in-depth interviews with 15 high school students in grades X and XI in three high schools in Jakarta. Purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who actively participated in physical education. Data analysis was carried out by data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

Discussion

The discussion in this study focuses on an in-depth analysis of how physical activity in physical education impacts adolescents' psychological well-being. Based on the results of interviews and observations in three high schools in Jakarta, it was found that participation in physical education provides three main contributions to students' psychological well-being: improved mood, reduced stress, and strengthened social relationships.

First, the mood improvement is felt by students who are actively involved in physical activities such as ball games, gymnastics, and running. These activities trigger the release of endorphins

known as the happiness hormone, giving a positive effect on students' feelings of happiness and enthusiasm after the lesson. Students also stated that physical activities provide a refreshing break from the daily academic pressures.

Second, physical activity has been shown to reduce students' stress levels. Many students said that by being active, they can channel negative emotions such as anger, disappointment, or anxiety in a healthy way. Physical education teachers also noted changes in students' behavior that were more stable and positive after participating in sports activities regularly.

Third, the social interaction that is built during physical education is one of the aspects that is most felt to be beneficial. In group games, students learn to work together, communicate, and build empathy. This process strengthens relationships between students and creates a more inclusive and supportive classroom atmosphere.

In addition, the teacher's approach in delivering physical education is also very important. Teachers who prioritize a participatory approach, give students the freedom to choose activities, and create a pressure-free environment, encourage more active and positive student involvement. This is in line with Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes the importance of a sense of autonomy, competence, and connectedness in increasing motivation and well-being.

However, several challenges were also found, such as limited facilities, inconsistent lesson schedules, and lack of understanding from schools regarding the importance of physical education as a means of supporting mental health. This needs to be a concern in the formulation of educational policies so that physical education is not only seen from the fitness side, but also from the psychological aspect.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that appropriately designed physical education can be a strategic intervention in improving adolescent psychological well-being. Support from all parties, from teachers, schools, to educational policy makers, is essential to ensure quality physical activity that has a positive impact on adolescent development.

Conclusion

Physical activity in physical education plays an important role in supporting adolescents' psychological well-being. Students' active participation in physical activities not only improves physical condition but also has a positive impact on mood, self-confidence, and healthy social interactions. Therefore, it is important for schools to continue to develop a fun, participatory, and inclusive physical learning approach to support students' mental health.

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