
CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE PROMOTION OF SPORT IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract:

Promoting sport in the school environment represents an important direction of modern education, considering the role of physical activity in maintaining health and developing a balanced lifestyle. In the current context, characterized by increasing levels of sedentary behavior, intensive use of digital technology, and reduced time allocated to physical activity, integrating sport into schools has become an important challenge for the education system. This paper analyzes the main challenges and perspectives regarding the development of school sports, highlighting the factors that influence students' participation and the effectiveness of physical activity programs. Among the main challenges identified are the decreasing interest in sports activities, the lack or insufficient modernization of sports facilities, differences between educational institutions regarding access to resources, and the need to adapt physical activities to students' needs and individual characteristics. Another important aspect is the creation of an inclusive sports environment that provides all students with the opportunity to participate, regardless of their level of physical ability or social background. Regarding development perspectives, school sports can benefit from diversifying the proposed activities, introducing modern forms of physical exercise, using digital technologies to encourage participation, and continuously developing the skills of physical education teachers. At the same time, cooperation between schools, families, and the community represents an essential factor in creating a supportive framework for promoting physical activity. The analysis highlights that the future of school sports depends on the ability of the education system to address these challenges through solutions adapted to current realities. Through investments in infrastructure, diversification of sports programs, and the promotion of an active lifestyle, sport can become a fundamental element of health education and the development of active generations.

Keywords: *physical education, sedentary lifestyle, health education, sports infrastructure, inclusion.*

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INTRODUCTION

Physical education represents an important component of the educational process, playing an essential role in the harmonious development of students and in promoting a healthy lifestyle. In today's society, changes in the lifestyle of children and adolescents, the increasing amount of time spent in front of digital devices, and the reduction of physical activity levels have led to greater attention being given to the importance of movement in the school environment. (Bailey, 2006)

School represents one of the main environments where students can regularly participate in organized physical activities. Through physical education classes and extracurricular sports activities, students can develop their motor skills, team spirit, discipline, and behaviors associated with an active lifestyle. However, the effective implementation of physical activities in schools faces several challenges, such as insufficiently developed infrastructure, limited resources, reduced interest in physical activity among some students, and the need to adapt teaching methods to the needs of current generations.

At the same time, there are numerous ways through which physical education can be developed and better valued within schools. Diversifying activities, using modern methods to motivate students, providing continuous professional development for physical education teachers, and strengthening cooperation between schools, families, and communities can contribute to creating a more active and healthier educational environment. (Sallis, McKenzie, Beets, Beighle, Erwin, & Lee, 2012)

This paper aims to analyze the main challenges and perspectives regarding the role of physical education in the school environment, highlighting the importance of identifying solutions adapted to current realities in order to increase students' participation in physical activities and to strengthen the position of physical education as a fundamental component of modern education.

1. The main challenges of school sports: student sedentary behavior and sports infrastructure

Physical education and sports activities carried out in schools currently face a number of challenges influenced by the social, technological, and educational changes of recent decades. Among the most significant issues are the decrease in students' level of physical activity and the conditions available for conducting sports activities in educational institutions. These aspects influence both children's and adolescents' interest in physical activity and schools' ability to organize diverse and attractive programs. (Biddle, Ciacconi, Thomas, Vergeer, 2019)

One of the main difficulties faced by physical education in the school environment is the reduction of the time students dedicate to physical activities. The development of technology and the increasingly widespread access to digital devices have changed the way children and adolescents spend their free time. Activities that involve movement, such as outdoor games or practicing a sport, are increasingly replaced by the use of smartphones, computers, and online platforms.

A daily routine characterized by long periods of sitting, attending classes, completing homework, and using electronic devices can lead to a significant decrease in the level of physical activity. Over time, this behavior may have negative effects on students' harmonious development.

Lack of movement can contribute to the occurrence of problems such as weight gain, reduced physical capacity, lower endurance, or postural disorders. During childhood and adolescence, physical activity plays an important role in the development of the body, and maintaining an appropriate level of movement is necessary for overall health.

Physical activity also has positive effects on students' psychological well-being. Participation in exercise and sports activities can help reduce stress, improve concentration, and increase feelings



of well-being. Therefore, reducing the time dedicated to movement can affect not only physical development but also students' involvement in school activities.

In the context of increasing sedentary behavior, schools have an important role in developing healthy habits and encouraging students to participate in physical activities. For many students, physical education classes represent the main organized form of exercise, and the way these classes are conducted can influence their attitude toward physical activity. (World Health Organization, 2020)

Modern physical education does not focus only on developing motor abilities, but also on building a positive attitude toward movement and maintaining an active lifestyle in the long term. To achieve this, activities need to be adapted to students' level of preparation, age, and interests. (Sallis, McKenzie, Beets, Beighle, Erwin, & Lee, 2012)

Extracurricular sports activities, interschool competitions, and projects dedicated to promoting physical activity can represent effective ways of encouraging students to become involved in sports. By creating an enjoyable and accessible environment, schools can contribute to developing students' interest in physical activity and maintaining their health.

Another factor that influences the organization of sports activities in schools is the available infrastructure. The existence of appropriate facilities and the necessary equipment has a direct impact on the quality of physical education lessons and on the possibilities for diversifying activities. (UNESCO, 2015)

In many educational institutions, the lack of suitable sports halls, the deterioration of sports fields, or insufficient sports equipment limits the organization of varied activities. In such situations, physical education teachers must find alternative solutions and continuously adapt lessons to the existing conditions.

An important issue is also represented by the differences between urban and rural schools. Some educational institutions benefit from modern sports facilities and sufficient resources, while others face difficulties related to available spaces and equipment. These differences can affect students' access to quality physical activities.

The development of physical education in schools also requires improving the existing material conditions. Modernizing sports halls, arranging sports fields, and providing the necessary equipment can contribute to increasing students' interest in physical activity. (World Health Organization, 2020)

Well-organized sports infrastructure provides opportunities for carrying out a wide range of activities and allows teachers to use more attractive teaching methods. In addition, sports facilities can also be used for extracurricular activities or events involving the entire community.

Even when resources are limited, physical education teachers can identify ways to keep activities engaging and accessible. Creativity in lesson organization and adapting exercises to the available conditions are important aspects for maintaining students' interest.

Student sedentary behavior and issues related to sports infrastructure represent two of the main challenges faced by physical education in today's school environment. Overcoming these difficulties requires both encouraging students' participation in physical activities and improving the conditions provided by educational institutions. (Sallis, McKenzie, Beets, Beighle, Erwin, & Lee, 2012)

Through the development of adapted sports programs, investments in infrastructure, and cooperation between schools, families, and communities, physical education can play a more significant role in shaping active and healthy generations.



2. Challenges regarding students' involvement in physical education activities: motivation, inclusion, and adaptation of physical exercises

Student participation in physical education activities represents an important aspect in developing an active and healthy lifestyle. However, their constant involvement in physical activities can be influenced by numerous factors, both personal and educational. The level of motivation, self-confidence, previous experiences related to sports, as well as the way lessons are organized can determine students' attitudes toward physical activity. (Deci & Ryan, 2000)

Physical education should not be viewed only as a subject aimed at developing motor skills or achieving sports performance, but as an educational process through which students are encouraged to adopt healthy behaviors and understand the importance of physical activity. To achieve this, it is necessary to create an environment in which every student feels accepted, supported, and motivated to participate, regardless of their level of preparation. (Sallis, McKenzie, Beets, Beighle, Erwin, & Lee, 2012)

The main difficulties regarding students' involvement in physical education activities are related to maintaining motivation, ensuring the participation of all students, and adapting exercises to the specific characteristics of each group.

Motivation is one of the factors that most strongly influences students' participation in physical education classes. Students who are interested in physical activity participate more actively, make greater efforts, and are more willing to improve their own abilities. In contrast, a lack of interest or negative past experiences can lead to a passive attitude and avoidance of participation.

Students' motivation is influenced by several factors, such as the relationship with the teacher, the atmosphere during lessons, the assessment methods, the difficulty of exercises, and the opportunity to observe personal progress. When activities are accessible, varied, and adapted to students' abilities, they are more likely to participate and develop a positive attitude toward physical activity.

A frequently encountered difficulty is the comparison of students based on physical performance. Within a class, there are significant differences regarding physical preparation, sports experience, and motor abilities. Students who achieve lower results may feel inferior or avoid participation in order to prevent criticism.

Fear of making mistakes and fear of negative evaluation can also represent barriers to students' involvement. In these situations, the teacher plays an important role in creating an environment based on encouragement, cooperation, and appreciation of individual progress.

The physical education teacher has an important contribution to shaping students' attitudes toward physical activity. The way lessons are organized, communication with students, and the feedback provided can influence their level of interest and involvement. (Sallis, McKenzie, Beets, Beighle, Erwin, & Lee, 2012)

An important role of the teacher is to pay attention to all students, not only those with developed sports abilities. Placing exclusive emphasis on performance can discourage students with a lower level of preparation.

Setting objectives adapted to each student represents an effective way of increasing motivation. Personal progress should be valued because each student has a different starting point and can develop at their own pace.

Diversifying activities represents another important strategy for increasing participation. Sports games, cooperative exercises, recreational activities, and modern forms of physical activity can contribute to maintaining students' interest. (Dudley, Cairney, Wainwright, Kriellaars, & Mitchell, 2017)



One objective of modern physical education is the development of internal motivation, so that students practice physical activity not only for grades or assessments, but also because of the benefits it provides for health and overall well-being.

An important challenge of physical education is ensuring the participation of all students, regardless of their level of preparation, abilities, or possible individual difficulties. Student groups are diverse, and activities must be organized in a way that allows every participant to be involved.

Inclusive physical education involves adapting activities to students' abilities and moving away from the idea that everyone must achieve the same level of performance. The main goal is active participation and personal development, not only achieving sports results.

To respond to the diversity within a class, the teacher can use differentiated exercises, group activities, or modifications to the rules of sports games. These methods allow the involvement of as many students as possible and contribute to creating a positive environment.

In the case of students with special educational needs, adapting activities is necessary to facilitate participation. This may involve modifying exercises, adjusting the level of difficulty, or using appropriate methods and materials. It is important that the student is integrated into the group and actively participates in the educational process.

Physical activities also have an important social dimension. Team games and cooperation-based exercises contribute to developing mutual respect, communication, and a spirit of support among students.

The adaptation of exercises represents a necessary condition for the effective implementation of physical education activities. Differences among students require the use of flexible methods that allow everyone to participate.

An exercise should be adapted according to students' age, level of physical development, sports experience, and individual characteristics. Modifying the intensity, duration, or rules can make the activity more accessible and engaging.

In the case of sports games, the teacher can adjust the size of the playing area, the number of participants, or the complexity of tasks in order to allow the involvement of the entire group. Such modifications contribute to creating a balance between challenge and accessibility.

Exercises that are too difficult can lead to frustration and reduced interest, while activities that are too easy can become unattractive. Identifying an appropriate level of difficulty represents one of the important responsibilities of the physical education teacher.

Students' involvement in physical education activities is influenced by factors such as personal motivation, the organization of lessons, and the ability to adapt to group diversity. Increasing student participation depends not only on the existence of sports activities, but also on the quality of the experience provided to them. (UNESCO, 2015)

By creating a positive environment, diversifying activities, and adapting exercises to the needs of each student, physical education can become a space where all students are encouraged to participate and discover the benefits of an active lifestyle.

3. Directions for development and strategies for promoting physical education in the current school environment

Physical education in schools must constantly adapt to the changes occurring in society, especially those related to students' lifestyles and the influence of technology on daily activities. The increasing amount of time spent in front of digital devices and the reduction of outdoor activities highlight the need to promote active behaviors and healthy habits from the school years. (Sallis, McKenzie, Beets, Beighle, Erwin, Lee, 2012)



The role of physical education is not limited to developing motor skills and physical abilities, but also includes the formation of a positive attitude toward movement, encouraging students to take responsibility for their own health, and developing behaviors that can be maintained in the long term.

In order for physical education to meet the current needs of students, it is necessary to use modern methods of organizing activities, diversify exercises, strengthen cooperation between schools and communities, and adapt educational content to students' interests and abilities.

One of the important directions for the development of physical education is the diversification of activities offered to students. In some cases, low participation in physical education classes or extracurricular sports activities is determined by the fact that these activities do not always meet the preferences or preparation levels of all students.

Introducing a variety of activities alongside traditional sports can contribute to increasing students' interest in physical activity. Cooperative games, recreational activities, outdoor exercises, alternative sports, and other forms of physical activity can transform physical education lessons into a more engaging experience. (Dudley, Cairney, Wainwright, Kriellaars, & Mitchell, 2017)

These activities must be adapted according to students' age, level of preparation, and the conditions available in each school. The main objective should not be only achieving sports performance, but also encouraging broad participation and developing a positive relationship with physical activity.

Extracurricular activities also play an important role in promoting movement. Organizing school competitions, sports clubs, thematic projects, or activities dedicated to health can stimulate students' involvement and contribute to developing a sports culture within the school.

An important direction for the development of physical education is connecting physical activity with health education. Students need to understand that movement is not only an activity carried out within a school subject, but an important component of a balanced lifestyle.

Health education involves developing knowledge about the benefits of physical activity, the negative effects of sedentary behavior, the importance of balanced nutrition, and the need to maintain a balance between effort, rest, and daily activities.

Addressing these topics in collaboration with other subjects can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between movement and health. Knowledge about the functioning of the human body, the prevention of health problems, and the importance of an active lifestyle can be integrated into the educational process in order to develop responsible behaviors. (Kohl, Cook, 2013)

Although excessive use of technology is one of the causes of reduced physical activity, digital tools can also be used as a means of promoting movement. Physical activity monitoring applications, educational platforms, and smart devices can contribute to increasing students' interest in their own progress.

Monitoring the number of steps, the time dedicated to exercise, or personal progress can transform physical activity into a more interactive and motivating process. For students who are accustomed to the digital environment, the responsible use of technology can represent a way of connecting their interests with participation in physical activities.

However, technology should be used as a supporting tool and not as a replacement for physical activity. The teacher's role is essential in guiding students and making effective use of these resources to develop real experiences related to movement.

The physical education teacher plays an important role in modernizing sports activities within schools. Changes in students' interests and behaviors require the continuous adaptation of teaching methods and the development of professional skills.



Participation in continuous training programs can help teachers use more effective teaching strategies, motivate students, and adapt activities to the different levels of preparation present within a class.

The promotion of physical education does not depend only on the activities carried out during lessons, but also on the cooperation between schools, families, and communities. The involvement of local institutions, sports organizations, and other partners can contribute to the development of infrastructure, the organization of additional activities, and the creation of more diverse opportunities for students. (Ha, Ng, Lonsdale, Lubans, & Ng, 2019)

The development of physical education in the current school environment requires adapting activities to social changes and students' needs. Diversifying exercises, promoting health education, using technology in a balanced way, providing continuous teacher training, and developing cooperation with the community are elements that can contribute to increasing the importance of physical activity in schools.

By implementing adapted strategies and creating an attractive environment for physical activity, physical education can contribute to developing students who are more active, healthier, and more aware of the importance of a balanced lifestyle.

CONCLUSION

Promoting sports in schools involves overcoming complex challenges generated by lifestyle changes, infrastructure limitations, the low motivation level of some students, and the need to ensure educational inclusion. However, these difficulties can be transformed into opportunities through coherent educational policies, investments in sports infrastructure, cooperation between schools, families, and communities, as well as the use of modern teaching methods. From the perspective of developing education focused on competencies and well-being, sport should be viewed not only as a school subject, but also as a strategic investment in the health, character, and future of new generations. (Ha, Ng, Lonsdale, Lubans, & Ng, 2019)

Physical education represents an important element in the harmonious development of students and in forming habits that support an active and healthy lifestyle. The analysis carried out shows that among the main current challenges are the increase in sedentary behavior, the low interest of some students in physical activity, the different conditions in which lessons are conducted, and the need to adapt exercises to the level and specific characteristics of each student. (World Health Organization, 2018)

To increase participation in physical activities, it is necessary to use attractive teaching methods, diversify exercises, and create an environment in which every student feels involved and supported. The role of the teacher, family, and community is essential in promoting movement and developing a positive attitude toward physical activity.

Improving the conditions in which physical education classes are conducted, adapting activities to students' current needs, and using modern strategies can contribute to strengthening the role of this subject in education. Through the constant promotion of movement, schools can support the development of students who are more active, healthier, and more aware of the importance of maintaining a balanced lifestyle.

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