

Comparative Study Of Readiness & Support For Physical Activity Among Children's Based On Type Of School

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ABSTRACT

The Purpose of this study is to compare the differences in physical activity readiness and the level of family and friend support for physical activity among children's studding in co.ed and single gender school. For this descriptive comparative method was administered. Total 120 single-gender school children (60 Boys and 60 Girls) and 120 co-ed school children (60 Boys and 60 Girls) from Goa were selected as sample. Physical activity readiness was determined using stages of transtheoretical model and Family and friends support for physical activity was measured using modified version of Social support for Exercise Scale by Kaczynski (2007). The collected data was statistically analysed using SPSS software. Based on the data analysis it can be seen that only 22.08% children are regularly active as they are at maintenance stage and 20% children are not active as they are at contemplation stage and below. But 57.92% is majority of the students are at preparation and action stage who need advancement to reach in maintenance stage. For family and friends support for participation in physical activity. It can be said that the support children are getting is of average level. On comparing the score of family support on basis of school type shows no significant difference between co.ed and single gender school boys and girls. Also on comparing the score of friends support for boys between co.ed and single gender school shows no significant different but on comparing girls score between co.ed and single gender school it shows significant different at 0.05 level of significance ($p= 0.000$).

Keywords : Physical activity, Family support, Friends support

Introduction

Physical activity is essential for the overall development and well-being of students, contributing to their physical, mental, and social health. Regular engagement in

physical activities such as sports, exercise, and outdoor play reduces the risk of chronic diseases, enhances cognitive function, and improves emotional well-being. According to Janssen and LeBlanc (2010), physical activity helps in preventing obesity, improving cardiovascular health, and strengthening muscles and bones during adolescence. Moreover, regular participation in physical activity boosts academic performance by improving concentration, memory, and problem-solving skills (Hillman, Erickson, & Kramer, 2008).

Despite these benefits, there has been a noticeable decline in physical activity levels among students in recent years due to increased screen time, sedentary lifestyles, and academic pressures. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2024) reports that more than 80% of adolescents worldwide do not meet the recommended 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day. This lack of physical activity among students can lead to long-term health consequences, including obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and poor mental health (Twenge, Spitzberg, & Campbell, 2019).

The school environment plays a significant role in determining the level of physical activity among children, with differences observed between co-educational (co-ed) and single-gender schools. Co-ed schools provide a mixed-gender environment where boys and girls participate together in various physical activities, fostering social interaction and promoting inclusivity. This setting may encourage healthy competition and increase motivation to participate in physical activities (Smith, 2003). On the other hand, single-gender schools offer an environment where boys and girls engage in physical activity separately, which may reduce gender-related barriers and allow students to feel more comfortable and confident while participating in sports and other physical activities (Pomerantz, Altermatt, & Saxon, 2002).

Physical activity readiness refers to the degree to which children are prepared, both physically and psychologically, to engage in structured physical activities. It involves assessing factors such as current fitness levels, potential health risks, and the child's motivation to participate in physical activity. In addition to individual readiness for physical activity, support from family and friends plays a critical role in promoting and maintaining an active lifestyle. Trost et al. (2002) highlight that emotional, instrumental, informational, and companionship support from family and peers significantly increases participation in physical activities. Emotional support involves encouragement and motivation, while instrumental support includes providing resources such as transportation or equipment. Informational support focuses on enhancing knowledge about the benefits of physical activity, whereas companionship support involves engaging in activities together, fostering a sense of accountability and enjoyment (Duncan, Duncan, & Strycker, 2005).

However, the influence of family and peer support may vary between co-educational (co-ed) and single-gender school environments. In co-ed schools, the presence of both boys and girls can foster a competitive environment that promotes increased participation in physical activities. Conversely, single-gender schools may provide an environment where children feel less pressure and are more comfortable engaging in physical activities, although support dynamics may differ. Studies suggest that the type of school environment can influence participation rates, self-confidence, and the type of support children receive from peers and family (Smith, 2003).

Understanding the impact of school type on physical activity participation is essential for designing effective physical education programs that address the unique needs of children in different school environments. Hence the purpose of this study is to compare the differences in physical activity readiness and family and friends support for physical activity among children in co-educational and single-gender schools.

Materials and Method:

Method: Descriptive Comparative method was conducted to Compare the school wise (co.ed school & single gender school) differences in physical activity readiness and Support for participation in Physical Activity among School Children's from Goa.

Participants: Total 120 single-gender school children (60 Boys and 60 Girls) and 120 co-ed school children (60 Boys and 60 Girls) from Goa were selected as sample

Instruments: Physical activity readiness was determined using stages of transtheoretical model and Family and friends support for physical activity was measured using modified version of Social support for Exercise Scale. The original scale was developed by Sallis et al. (1987) which was modified by Kaczynski (2007), 12 items were rated on a scale ranging from "Never" (1) to "Very often" (7). Score ranged between 12 to 84 where higher score means more support for physical activity.

Results and Discussion:

Classification of student based on their Physical activity readiness stage

Table 1 : Physical activity Readiness Stage

School Type	Gender	Stage				
		Pre-contemplation	Contemplation	Preparation	Action	Maintenance
Co.ed School	Boys	2	3	24	9	22
	Girls	1	5	46	2	6
Single- Gender	Boys	4	13	23	5	15
	Girls	6	14	27	3	10

From table no. 1 it is observed that only 22.08% children's are regularly active as they are at maintenance stage in which co.ed school children's are more in number than single gender school children's and 20% children's are not active as they are at contemplation stage and below. But 57.92% is majority of the students are at preparation and action stage who need advancement to reach in maintenance stage.

Table 2 : Analysis of family and friends support for participation in physical activity among co. ed and single gender school children's

Variable	School type	Gender	Mean	S.D.	S.E.M.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Family Support	Co.ed School	Boys	44.72	12.044	1.555	-1.807	118	.073
	Single Gender	Boys	49.23	15.162	1.957			
	Co.ed School	Girls	49.85	1.638	1.503	-.438	118	.662
	Single Gender	Girls	50.93	15.208	1.963			
Friends Support	Co.ed School	Boys	52.05	11.399	1.472	.432	118	.666
	Single Gender	Boys	51.08	13.035	1.683			
	Co.ed School	Girls	51.97	10.115	1.306	3.599	118	.000
	Single Gender	Girls	44.03	13.758	1.776			

Table no. 2 shows the statistics for family and friends support for participation in physical activity. It can be stated that the support children are getting is of moderate level. On comparing the score of family support on basis of school type shows no significant difference between co.ed and single gender school boys and girls. Also on comparing the score of friends support for boys between co.ed and single gender school shows no significant different but on comparing girls score between co.ed and single gender school it shows significant different at 0.05 level of significance ($p=0.000$).

Many studies have found the significant association between social support (family & friends) and physical activity (Edina Maria de Camargo et al. 2023). Being overweight is also an obstacle that prevents children from participating in physical activity. A study on peer effect on physical activity (S.J. Salvy, J.C. Bowker, J.N. Romero, P.J. Stadler & L.H. Epstein, 2009) demonstrated that Friendships may promote greater physical activity in non-overweight and overweight youth. For student's physical activity participation family and friend support needs to be increased so that they reach maintenance stage (Pethkar, V.U. 2017). In present study 57.92% students are in preparation & action stage if they receive increased support from either family or friends, they are more likely to advance in maintenance stage. Adopting an active lifestyle during adolescence greatly increases the chances of maintaining physical activity in adulthood. For physical activity participation boys get more friends support and girls get more family support (Pethkar, V.U. 2017). Also, in present study boys are getting more support from friends and girls from family. Along with this school physical education program should actively promote students' interest in physical activity, ensuring that a greater number of students reach and sustain the maintenance stage of regular participation.

Conclusions:

The type of school, whether co-educational or single gender, does not significantly affect family and friend support for boys in physical activity participation. However, for girls, while family support remains unaffected, friend support is influenced by the type of school. This suggests that peer interaction in different school environments play a crucial role in shaping girl's participation in physical activities. Also, the support students are getting needs to be increased so that maximum number of students successfully reach the maintenance stage.

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