Recreational sport activities: Psychological well-being of children in Government and Private Schools

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Abstract

We all know that psychological well-being is not possible without physical well-being, both aspects are interrelated. Recreational sport activity is crucial to health, fitness and well-being. It builds strength, maintains mobility, and challenges body and mind. Thus, the present study was designed to examine the role of recreational sport activities on the psychological well-being of children. The study was carried out with 200 children (100 government and 100 private schools) by using psychological well-being scale and an intervention program. With respect to assess the role of recreational sport activity on the psychological well-being, the sample was divided into two groups (control and experimental). Intervention program was designed to the experimental groups only. Result indicated that recreational sport activity has a facilitating role in promoting psychological well-being of children in both private and government schools.

KEYWORDS: recreational sport activity, psychological well-being, children, government and private schools.

INTRODUCTION

Recreational sport activities involvement has a prominent role in the enhancement of psychological well-being through participation in sports, recreation and specific exercises. Research (Biddle and Mutrie, 1991) has been reported that the mental benefits of exercise depend on the concerned person, the activity and the degree of involvement. The importance of physical activity, exercise, recreation and sport for the promotion of physical and mental health has been emphasized (Fox, 2000a; Edwards, 2003). Since about 1980, there seems to have been less emphasis on international dominating types of competitive physical activity and more recognition given to recreational sport activities (Stelter, 2003).

Recreational sports activities are defined in juxtaposition to competitive sports. Individuals participating in a variety of informal recreational sports and circumstances engage in a range of exercise levels from modest to vigorous on either a regular or an inconsistent basis, which do not require systematic training or the pursuit of excellence and are without the same pressure to excel against others that characterizes competitive sports (Maron & Mitchell 1994). Psychological well-being represents a relatively stable positive state of life expressed in terms of happiness, self satisfaction and life satisfaction in harmony with reduced negative mood and depression (Taylor, Sallis & Needle, 1985).
A large body of research has been found that a regular physical activity leads to improve psychological well-being (Taylor, Sallis & Needle, 1985; Bano & Tripathi, 2010). It is as effective as psychotherapy and antidepressant in treating emotional disorders (Nicoloff & Schwenk, 1995). Regular physical activity is important in reducing the risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease and stroke, obesity, diabetes and some forms of cancer (WHO, 2006). Researchers have been observed that physical activity enhances feelings of psychological well-being by reducing anxiety and depression (Landers, 1999; Landers & Arent, 2001). Social benefits often attributed to participation in sport and recreation. These benefits include increased community cohesion, identity and pride, reduced school absenteeism and youth crime, and improved personal health and labour productivity (Dalziel, 2011; SPARC, 2011). A healthy lifestyle supports physical, social and emotional well-being and underpins successful learning.

According to NASPE (National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 2003), a high quality physical education program enhance the physical, mental, social and emotional development of every child and incorporate fitness education and assessment to help children understand, improve and maintain their physical and psychological well-being.

School programmes are not normally sufficient to sustain healthy and active lifestyles. Generally, pupils need to take part in energetic physical activity more frequently than is possible in their curricular programme. It was recommended that children engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. It is reasonable for them to get at least 30 minutes of that time in school (Pate, Davis, Robinson, Stone, McKenzie, Young, 2006).

Unfortunately, Recreational sport activities are not taken seriously by most of the schools. There is a misconception about recreational sport activities that it is just the time spent on the class. There is dire need to extend opportunities to be physically active to all populations of people. Children are in particular need because it is at a young age that exercise behaviour for a lifetime are established (Cox, 2000). Although researchers have acknowledged the importance of recreational sport activities to the psychological well-being of children, very little research has been done to assess the relationship between recreational sport activities and the psychological well-being of children particular in our context. Thus, the present study was designed to assess the role of recreational sport activities on the psychological well-being of children.

**Sample**

The study was conducted with children (aged 8 to 12 years) belonging to private and government schools. The sample was contain 200 children — one hundred drawn from the private school and one hundred from the government school. The children were selected randomly from various schools of Varanasi city. In order to assess the impact of recreational sport activities on the psychological well-being of children, subjects belonging to both government and private schools have been divided into control and experimental groups. Intervention program was introduced to the experimental groups only. The sample distribution is given below:
Tools

Psychological well-being scale

The psychological well-being scale was developed by the investigators. It consists of 20 items including positive affect (e.g., feelings of optimism, cheerfulness, and relaxation), satisfying interpersonal relationships and positive functioning (e.g., energy, clear thinking, self acceptance, competence, autonomy). The subjects were asked individually to rate their answers on a 5-point scale. The reliability of the scale was .72 by test and retest method. Higher scores indicated positive psychological well-being and lower scores showed negative psychological well-being.

Intervention programme

This programme was developed by investigators to examine the role of physical education on the development of psychological well-being of children. The intervention programme was designed for eight weeks, four days in a week and one hour daily. It consists of various physical activities in the following sequence:

- Fifteen minutes warm-up exercise (e.g., running)
- Five minutes body part exercise from top to bottom (e.g., head rotation, leg stretching)
- Thirty minutes recreational activities
  - Lead-up activity for 8-10 year old children (e.g., ball throwing, ball catching)
  - Major activity participation for the 10-12 year olds (e.g., football, basketball)
• Ten minutes cooling down activities (relaxation exercise)

Result and Discussion

The present study was aimed to assess the role of physical education on the psychological well-being of children in governmental and private schools. The results were analysed by using mean, standard deviation and t-test.

Table: 1 mean score, standard deviation and significance of difference (t-test) between control and experimental groups of government and private schools on the measure of Psychological well-being.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>t - value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Mean 54.86</td>
<td>74.36</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 5.73</td>
<td>6.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Mean 58.38</td>
<td>79.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 6.79</td>
<td>8.37</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

p<.01**

Table: 1 presents mean, standard deviation and significance of difference between control and experimental groups of government and private schools. It has been indicated significant difference (16.27, p<01) between control and experimental groups of government school as well as private (13.76, p<01) school. It was further suggested that intervention program has positive role on the psychological well-being of children belonging to both government and private schools.
Graph: 1 shows the mean score of control and experimental groups of government and private schools on the measure of psychological well-being. It explored the significant difference between mean score of control and experimental groups of government and private schools. It was further suggested that intervention program (recreational sport activities) has a positive effect on the psychological well-being of children.

Overall, result revealed that recreational sport activity has a facilitating role in promoting psychological well-being of children in both private and government schools. It was supported by other studies that a regular physical and recreational activity leads to improved psychological well-being (Taylor, Sallis & Needle, 1985; Bano & Tripathi, 2010). High quality physical education programs enhance the physical and psychological well-being of every child (National Association for Sport and Physical Education, NASPE, 2003). The present study has several implications for understanding and improving the psychological well-being of children through recreational sport activities.
References