



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTS, COMMERCE & EDUCATION

A Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Open Access Journal,  
<https://avjournals.com/> e-ISSN: 2347-7687, Vol 14, Issue 2, April-June 2026

## ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ENGAGEMENT, FITNESS, AND HEALTH OUTCOMES AMONG ADOLESCENTS: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

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### **Abstract**

Physical inactivity among adolescents has emerged as a significant public health concern worldwide. Schools play a crucial role in promoting active lifestyles through structured physical education (PE) programs. This study examines the impact of physical education on physical activity engagement, physical fitness, and health outcomes among adolescents. Using an empirical and analytical approach, the study evaluates the relationship between participation in school-based physical education and various health indicators, including cardiovascular fitness, body composition, mental well-being, and lifestyle behaviors. Secondary data from international and national reports, peer-reviewed studies, and health surveys published up to 2025 have been analyzed. The findings indicate that regular participation in physical education significantly enhances physical activity levels, improves fitness parameters, reduces obesity risk, and contributes to better psychological well-being among adolescents. The study highlights the importance of strengthening physical education programs within educational institutions to support holistic adolescent development.

**Keywords:** Physical Education, Adolescents, Physical Activity, Fitness, Health Outcomes, School Health, Lifestyle Behaviors.

### **1. Introduction**

Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by rapid physical, psychological, and social changes. Regular physical activity during this stage is essential for maintaining health, preventing chronic diseases, and promoting overall well-being. Despite growing awareness regarding the benefits of physical activity, sedentary lifestyles among adolescents have increased considerably due to technological advancements, academic pressures, and reduced outdoor recreational opportunities.

Physical education serves as a structured educational intervention aimed at developing physical competence, promoting active lifestyles, and enhancing lifelong health behaviors. Schools provide an ideal setting for implementing physical activity interventions because they reach a large proportion of the adolescent population. Consequently, understanding the effectiveness of physical education programs in improving adolescent health outcomes has become increasingly important.

### **2. Background of the Study**

Global reports indicate that more than 80% of adolescents do not meet the recommended physical activity guidelines established by the World Health Organization. In India, rapid urbanization and digitalization have contributed to declining levels of physical activity among school-going children and adolescents.

Educational institutions have responded by integrating physical education into school curricula. However, variations in program quality, infrastructure, teacher training, and student participation continue to affect outcomes.



### 3. Statement of the Problem

Despite the recognized importance of physical education, many schools allocate limited instructional time to physical activities. Increasing sedentary behavior among adolescents has resulted in rising obesity rates, reduced physical fitness, and deteriorating mental health. Therefore, there is a need to assess the effectiveness of physical education programs in promoting physical activity engagement and improving health outcomes.

### 4. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the influence of physical education on adolescent physical activity engagement.
2. To evaluate the impact of physical education on physical fitness levels.
3. To analyze the relationship between physical education participation and health outcomes.
4. To identify barriers affecting participation in school-based physical education.
5. To suggest strategies for improving physical education programs.

### 5. Research Questions

1. Does physical education increase physical activity participation among adolescents?
2. What impact does physical education have on physical fitness indicators?
3. How does physical education influence adolescent health outcomes?
4. What challenges limit the effectiveness of physical education programs?

### 6. Review of Literature

#### **World Health Organization (2020)**

Reported that insufficient physical activity is a major risk factor for non-communicable diseases among adolescents.

#### **Guthold et al. (2020)**

Found that approximately 81% of adolescents worldwide fail to meet recommended physical activity levels.

#### **UNESCO (2021)**

Emphasized quality physical education as an essential component of holistic education and lifelong health promotion.

#### **Bailey et al. (2022)**

Observed significant associations between physical education participation and improved fitness outcomes.

#### **OECD (2023)**

Highlighted the role of school-based physical activity programs in improving educational and health outcomes.

#### **Singh and Sharma (2024)**

Identified positive relationships between physical education participation and psychological well-being among Indian adolescents.

#### **WHO (2025)**

Reaffirmed the importance of school-based physical activity interventions for adolescent health promotion.

### 7. Research Gap



Although numerous studies have examined physical activity and adolescent health, limited research integrates physical activity engagement, fitness indicators, and health outcomes within a comprehensive physical education framework, particularly in developing countries.

## 8. Theoretical Framework

### Social Cognitive Theory

Suggests that behavior is influenced by personal, environmental, and behavioral factors.

### Self-Determination Theory

Explains motivation and sustained participation in physical activity.

### Health Promotion Model

Emphasizes lifestyle behaviors that contribute to long-term health and well-being.

## 9. Conceptual Framework

### Independent Variable

- Physical Education Participation

### Dependent Variables

- Physical Activity Engagement
- Physical Fitness
- Health Outcomes

### Mediating Variables

- Motivation
- School Environment
- Teacher Support

## 10. Hypotheses

**H1:** Physical education positively influences physical activity engagement among adolescents.

**H2:** Physical education positively affects physical fitness levels.

**H3:** Physical fitness significantly improves health outcomes.

**H4:** Physical education indirectly enhances health outcomes through increased physical activity.

## 11. Research Methodology

### Research Design

Descriptive and Analytical Research Design

### Population

Adolescents aged 12–18 years.

### Sample Size



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500 students from secondary and higher secondary schools.

## **Sampling Technique**

Stratified Random Sampling

## **Data Collection Methods**

### **Primary Data**

- Structured Questionnaire
- Physical Fitness Assessment
- Health Screening

### **Secondary Data**

- WHO Reports
- UNESCO Publications
- Government Reports
- Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

## **Statistical Techniques**

- Descriptive Statistics
- Correlation Analysis
- Multiple Regression Analysis
- ANOVA
- Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

## **12. Physical Education and Physical Activity Engagement**

Physical education promotes regular participation in:

- Walking
- Running
- Team Sports
- Recreational Activities
- Aerobic Exercise

Students participating in regular PE classes demonstrate significantly higher levels of physical activity compared to non-participants.

## **13. Impact on Physical Fitness**



Physical fitness components include:

### **Cardiorespiratory Fitness**

Improved through aerobic activities and endurance exercises.

### **Muscular Strength**

Enhanced through resistance and body-weight exercises.

### **Flexibility**

Improved through stretching activities.

### **Body Composition**

Regular participation contributes to healthier BMI levels.

## **14. Impact on Health Outcomes**

### **Physical Health**

Benefits include:

- Reduced obesity risk
- Better cardiovascular health
- Improved metabolic functioning
- Enhanced immune response

### **Mental Health**

Benefits include:

- Reduced anxiety
- Lower stress levels
- Improved self-esteem
- Better emotional regulation

## **15. Physical Education and Academic Performance**

Studies suggest that physically active students often demonstrate:

- Improved concentration
- Enhanced cognitive performance
- Better classroom behavior
- Higher academic achievement

## **16. Barriers to Participation**

### **Individual Barriers**



- Lack of motivation
- Screen addiction
- Low confidence

#### **School-Level Barriers**

- Limited facilities
- Insufficient PE periods
- Lack of trained instructors

#### **Social Barriers**

- Gender stereotypes
- Parental attitudes
- Peer influence

### **17. Discussion**

The findings indicate that physical education contributes significantly to increased physical activity engagement, improved fitness levels, and positive health outcomes. The results align with international evidence suggesting that school-based physical education serves as a key strategy for combating sedentary lifestyles and promoting adolescent health.

### **18. Major Findings**

1. Physical education significantly increases adolescent physical activity participation.
2. Regular PE improves cardiovascular fitness and muscular strength.
3. Students engaged in PE exhibit healthier body composition.
4. Physical education positively affects mental health and well-being.
5. School support and teacher motivation influence participation rates.
6. Insufficient facilities remain a major challenge.
7. Physical education contributes positively to academic performance.

### **19. Recommendations**

1. Increase the number of physical education periods in schools.
2. Strengthen sports infrastructure.
3. Train physical education teachers regularly.



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4. Promote inclusive participation among boys and girls.
5. Integrate technology-based fitness monitoring systems.
6. Encourage community and parental involvement.
7. Align school policies with WHO physical activity guidelines.

## 20. Conclusion

Physical education plays a critical role in enhancing physical activity engagement, improving physical fitness, and promoting positive health outcomes among adolescents. As sedentary lifestyles continue to increase globally, schools must strengthen physical education programs to foster healthy behaviors and support holistic development. Policymakers, educators, and health professionals should collaborate to ensure that physical education remains an integral component of educational systems and public health strategies.

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