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# The Relationship Between Personal Attitudes Towards Exercise and Youth Participation in After-school Sports

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**Abstract:** The survey data of this study showed that most of the students failed to achieve at least 60 minutes of exercise per day, especially the proportion of 1-2 times per week and 1-2 times per month was high. In addition, the intensity of exercise of most students was low and the time of exercise was insufficient. In addition, sports participation was positively correlated with personal attitude towards exercise.

**Keywords:** Adolescents; After-school sports participation; Personal exercise attitude

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the physical health of young people has been a focus of social concern, and according to statistics, in 2019, the physical health pass rate of Chinese young people was only 23.8%, the proportion of overweight and obesity was nearly 20 %, and the proportion of myopia was as high as 52.7 %. Insufficient physical activity has been pointed out as one of the main reasons for the decline in physical fitness, obesity, myopia and other health problems among adolescents. Studies at home and abroad have shown that the reduction in physical activity directly leads to a decline in physical fitness among children and adolescents, especially in the level of cardiorespiratory endurance. Physical activity is believed to have a positive impact on academic performance, social skills and mental health.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour suggests that a person's behaviour is influenced by three factors: their attitudes towards behaviour, their perception of social expectations (subjective norms) and their perception of control over their behaviour (perceived behavioural control), which means that adolescents' attitudes towards physical activity, their expectations of others (e.g., parents and friends) to participate in physical activity, and their perceived ability to engage in these activities are all participation in physical activities.

By understanding the current situation of youth after-school sports participation in China, and further understanding the relationship between personal factors and youth after-school sports participation, it is of positive significance to improve the physical health of adolescents and promote the overall

## 2. Research Objective and Methodology:

### 2.1 Subjects of the study

Adolescents (11-14 years old) in Duazhou District of Zhaoqing City were the subjects of the study

### 2.2 Research method

In this study, literature, questionnaires, mathematical statistics and interviews will be used to investigate the participation of adolescents in after-school sports.

## 3. Analysis of results

### 3.1 Analysis of the current situation of youth sports participation

The evaluation of after-school sports participation of adolescents in Zhaoqing City was generally at the medium exercise level (23.59±24.51), but there were significant differences in terms of gender participation. Overall, most adolescents (56.10%) participated in small-volume sports activities, with the proportion of girls (64.30%) significantly higher than that of boys (47.40%). In medium-volume sports activities, the proportions of boys' and girls' participation were relatively close to each other, at 24.60 % and 23.30 %, respectively. However, the participation percentage of boys (28.10%) was significantly higher than that of girls (12.40%) in physical activities with a high amount of exercise. This suggests that the overall amount of physical activity participated in after-school sports by adolescents in Zhaoqing is insufficient and needs to be strengthened at different levels by families, schools and relevant departments.

#### 3.1.1 Analysis of exercise intensity of after-school sports participation

After-school Physical Activity Participation Intensity Analysis The statistical results showed that most participants (n=225) participated

in physical activity by doing light exercise (29.6%) after school. This was followed by rapid breathing exercise (23.4%), moderate-intensity exercise (22.7%), light-intensity exercise (14.2%), and finally high-intensity exercise (10.1%). The results showed that the intensity of after-school physical activity of primary and secondary school students was generally low, indicating that it was necessary to further strengthen physical education guidance, improve physical education teaching facilities, and enhance students' physical fitness. In order to increase the interest of students, encourage more students to participate in high-intensity and moderate-intensity physical activities, so as to achieve the purpose of physical fitness and health promotion.

### **3.1.2 Analysis of the duration of participation in after-school sports**

The results showed that in terms of the time spent participating in each after-school physical activity, the majority of students said they completed the after-school physical activity within 21 to 30 minutes (27.6%). The rest said they spent 11-20 minutes (19.2%), 31-59 minutes (18.8%), less than 10 minutes (17.5%) and more than 60 minutes (17%). It can be seen that the time of after-school physical activity of adolescents is generally short, and there are large individual differences in the length of exercise. Therefore, it is necessary to further optimize the after-school schedule, provide more support and guidance, and encourage students to extend their exercise time to achieve the purpose of strengthening their body and improving their health.

### **3.1.3 Frequency analysis of after-school sports participation**

The results of the survey showed that the majority of participants participated in after-school physical activities 3-5 times a week (34.6%), 29% 1-2 times a week, 20.2% once a day, 11.8% 2-3 times a month, and 4.3% less than once a month. While schools are already reducing the burden on students and increasing the amount of time spent on extracurricular activities, the impact is polarizing, with some students regularly participating in physical activities while others rarely participating in physical activities. To increase overall engagement, there needs to be a personalized approach that targets students who don't engage regularly, understands why they don't, and provides support and incentives. Relevant education departments and schools should improve sports facilities, strengthen family and social support, stimulate students' interest, and develop good sports habits.

## **3.2 Relationship between personal exercise attitude and adolescents' after-school sports participation**

Personal exercise attitudes include three aspects: personal behavioural attitudes, personal behavioural cognition, and personal behavioural habits, and the results showed that the correlation coefficients between personal exercise attitudes and sport participation were  $r=0.217$ , behavioural attitudes  $r=.208$ , behavioural cognition  $r=0.147$ , and behavioural habits  $r=0.253$ , with all the correlations being significant ( $p$ -values of 0.000 for all). This suggests that overall positive exercise attitudes, specific behavioural attitudes, higher levels of cognition and good exercise habits all contribute significantly to sport participation, with good exercise habits (with the highest correlation coefficient of  $r=0.253$ ) in particular having the greatest impact on sport participation.

### **3.2.1 Personal behavioural attitudes towards exercise and sport participation**

Personal behavioural attitudes include adolescents' interests, emotional responses and subjective evaluations of physical activity. Positive attitudes stimulate intrinsic motivation and promote active participation; negative attitudes may hinder participation. Interest is a key factor, enhancing concentration and stimulating a desire for sustained participation. If young people are interested in a physical activity, they will be more engaged and enjoy it. Emotional experiences, such as pleasure, satisfaction and achievement, directly influence willingness to participate. Subjective evaluations, i.e. their value judgements about the activity, also influence participation behaviour. Adolescents will be more willing to invest time and energy in physical activity if they perceive it to be valuable and meaningful. Conversely, if the activity is perceived to be a waste of time or meaningless, motivation to participate will be greatly reduced.

### **3.2.2 Perceived Personal Exercise Behaviour and Sport Participation**

Personal behavioural perceptions of exercise refer to adolescents' understanding, knowledge level and attitudes towards exercise. Positive behavioural perceptions can significantly influence adolescents' sport participation, increase their awareness of the importance of exercise and motivation to participate, and help form healthy habits. When adolescents understand the physiological, psychological and social benefits of physical activity, they are better able to see the value of exercise and consciously incorporate it into their daily lives. Adolescents who believe that exercise has a positive impact on them are significantly more willing to participate. In addition, positive exercise experiences, such as pleasure, satisfaction and achievement, as well as social enjoyment and teamwork when participating with peers, also increased their desire to continue to participate. However, if adolescents had misconceptions or insufficient knowledge about exercise, such as the belief that exercise was boring, a waste of time, or not beneficial to their health, their sports participation would be inhibited.

### **3.2.3 Personal Exercise Behaviour Habits and Sports Participation**

## 4. Conclusion

Through an in-depth analysis of the current situation of adolescents' after-school sports participation, the key data such as exercise amount, exercise intensity, duration and frequency of adolescents were understood, and the important influence of individual sports attitudes on sports participation was revealed.

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