

A Comparative Study of Difference in Enjoyment between High-Skilled and Low-Skilled Children

Rajarshi Kar¹, Pardeep Kumar²

¹Research Scholar, Center for advanced studies, LNUPE, Gwalior (M.P.), India

²Research Scholar, Center for advanced studies, LNUPE, Gwalior (M.P.), India

Abstract: *The aim of the study was to investigate the enjoyment in physical activity and how it is related to perceived physical activity competence, of students participating in Schools March Past and Mass display program of LNUPE, Gwalior. The participants of the study were 184 students from Grade 6th, 7th, 8th, aged between 11 to 14 years. Out of them, 131 were successfully participating in regular exercises but 53 discontinued because their perceived physical activity competence was evaluated as low by the subjective judgment of LNUPE student teachers. Physical activity enjoyment was assessed by self-report questionnaire. T-test revealed that the students who discontinued the program enjoyed less (93.11 ± 22.04) than the rest (106.41 ± 11.00). Results also show that the children with low skill level who were engaged in some way or encouraged to participate by the student teacher, enjoy more (102.2 ± 11.98) than other low skilled children (88.97 ± 17.16) of the same category. The results indicated that high skill level in physical activity involved maximum enjoyment. Children may enjoy less when skill level is low. But this effect of skill on enjoyment was reduced up to an extent while children were involved directly/indirectly to participate.*

Keywords: Enjoyment, physical activity, skilled, unskilled

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INTRODUCTION

Physical activity participation provides physical and mental health benefits to young people (Bouchard, Blair, and Haskell 2007); (Malina, Bouchard, and Bar, 2004). Many authors have underscored the importance of regular physical activity throughout an individual's lifespan. An appropriate amount (quantity, quality, and intensity) of exercise has been found to lead to relevant physiological and psychological benefits (Biddle, Gorely, & Stensel, 2004). There is, however, concern over the participation levels of young people and the links with the rise in obesity rates in particular (Samdal, 2007).

Several nations are making efforts in promoting regular physical activity to improve health and behavioral outcomes of young people and adults. Different national and cross-national programs, such as "Healthy People 2010" (U.S., 2000) in the USA, acknowledged that physical activity is a major concern. In Italy, a national survey (ISTAT, 2003) showed a dramatic decrease in frequency of sport and physical activity participation across childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, followed by an increase in sedentary behavior. In India, young people are also demonstrating higher levels of

exercise passivity. Studies have indicated that childhood and adolescence are important periods for adopting physically active lifestyle later in adulthood (Telama et al. 1997).

One of the main causes of the decreasing amount of participation in sport and physical activity is low levels of motivation. Therefore, a number of authors have emphasized the need for early interventions to promote a positive attitude toward physical activity (DiLorenzo, Stucky-Ropp, Vander Wal, & Gotham, 1998; Telama, Laakso, Yang, & Viikari, 1997).

Research has also shown that physical activity levels decline markedly after the age of 12 in both frequency of physical activity engagement and actual participation time in sport (Telama and Yang 2000). We can then argue that the transition period from elementary school to secondary school is an important time for the development of later activity patterns. There is a need, therefore, to study physical activity and enjoyment level at the secondary school level.

According to Scanlan and Simons (1992) enjoyment is an important factor in participation in sport that may lead to greater involvement in the activity. Wallhead and

Buckworth (2004) found that enjoyment in school physical education was related to the motivational factors associated with the adoption of a physically active lifestyle outside school hours. Additionally, enjoyment has been linked with physical activity engagement in physical education (Kremer, Trew, and Ogle 1997; Wallhead and Buckworth 2004).

Perceived physical competence reflects the perception a person has of their abilities resulting from cumulative interactions with the environment (Harter 1978). According to Fox (1997) perceived competence can be seen as “the statement of personal ability that generalises across a domain such as sport, scholarship, or work” (Fox 1997, p. xii.). According to Harter’s (1978) competence motivation theory, highly competent individuals will persist longer in certain activities compared with individuals of low perceived competence. Harter (1978) assumed that in achievement situations individuals seek activities that provide feelings of competence and avoid those with a probability of failure.

The purpose of the study was to compare the difference in enjoyment between highly skilled and low skilled children. Further it was intended to see whether the low skilled children enjoy equally as the high skilled children or not.

METHODS

The participants of the study were 184 students from Grade 6th, 7th, 8th aged between 11 to 14 years. Out of them 131 were successfully participating in regular exercises but 53 discontinued because their Perceived physical activity competence was evaluated as low. Physical Activity Enjoyment Scale (PACES, an 18-item, self-administered scale developed by Kendzierski and DeCarlo), was used to assess enjoyment toward physical activity. Respondents were asked to rate their current feelings about physical activity using a seven-point semantic differential approach. As done in the original development of the scale, the scale was analyzed as a Likert scale. A total scale score was computed by summing responses to all items after recoding some items so that a high score indicated high enjoyment, whereas a low score indicated little enjoyment.

RESULTS

The data were collected and analyzed in order to draw a conclusion on the physical activity enjoyment level of children, and the scores are given below.

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation of enjoyment for High-Skilled and Low-skilled children in physical activity

	Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Paces	Low-skilled	53	93.11	22.041
	High-Skilled	131	106.41	11.001

The mean and SD of the two groups of High-Skilled and Low-skilled children has been presented in Table 1. The mean and standard deviation of the physical activity enjoyment level of High-Skilled and Low-skilled children were 106.41 ± 11.00 and 93.11 ± 22.04 respectively. Among 184 subjects 53 subjects were Low-skilled and 131 were High-Skilled children. The mean scores of the High-Skilled and low-skilled children’s level of enjoyment in physical activity has been represented graphically in figure no 1.

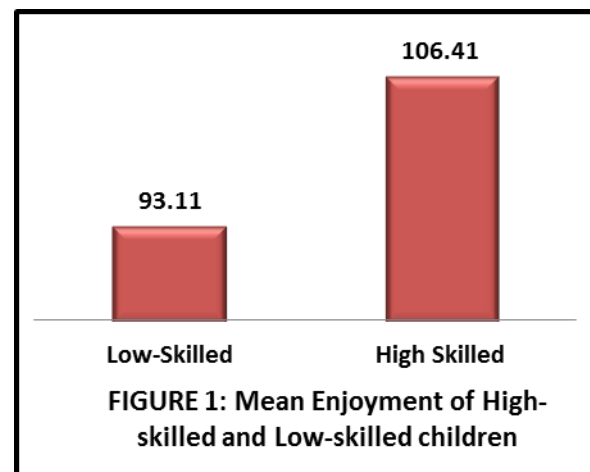


Table 2: Independent Samples T-Test for the means of enjoyment for High-skilled and Low-skilled children in Physical Activity

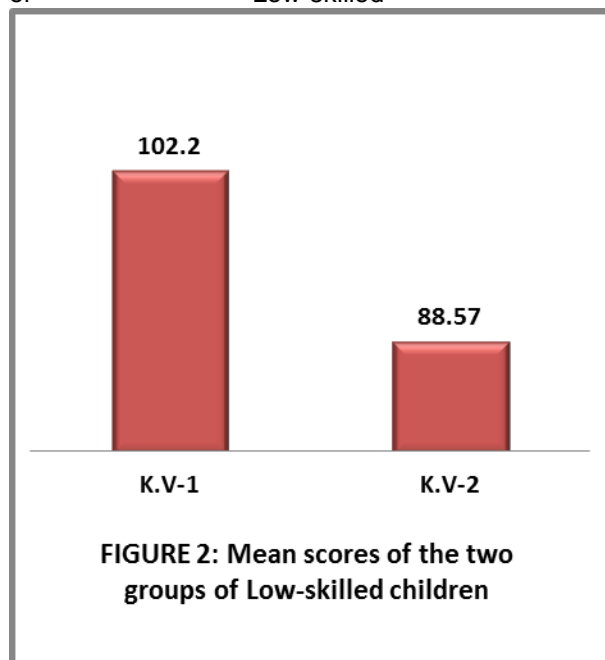
t-test for Equality of Means				
	t	df	Sig.	Mean Difference

Equal variances assumed	-5.44*	182	.000	-13.29
Equal variances not assumed	-4.18	62.75	.000	-13.29

Independent samples t-tests was applied for the means of enjoyment scores of High-Skilled and Low-skilled children in physical activity. Results have been shown in Table 2. The independent t test has shown a significant difference in the physical activity enjoyment level between the High-Skilled and Low-skilled children, as the calculated t value (5.44, at 182 df) is greater than the tabulated t value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance.

Among the Low-skilled students, one group of children in K.V-1 were engaged in some way or positively motivated by the student teachers. But children in K.V-2 school were not included in the regular exercises.

The mean and standard deviation of the physical activity enjoyment level of K.V- 1 and K.V-2 school children (Low-skilled) were 102.2+11.98 and 88.97+17.16 respectively. Figure 2 demonstrates the mean score of the physical enjoyment level of K.V- 1 and K.V-2 children of Low-skilled group.



DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether the low skilled children enjoy equally as the high skilled

children or not. Because of the low skilled children does not enjoy participating, they may have a tendency to quit from physical activity at this age (Telama and Yang 2000). Physical education is an important way to promote physical activity because of its potential to reach young people. It should never have a bias toward the high skilled people. A desired outcome of physical education is the development of lifelong participation in active lifestyles (Andersen, 2006, Biddle, Sallis, and Cavill, 1998).

Siedentop (2002) voiced concern not only with the tendency to disassociate fun and competence but also the implication that striving for competence somehow ruled out having fun. He stated, "Having fun in physical education, for too many students, has come to mean doing something that is typically momentary and trivial". Siedentop (2002) advocated that the experience rather than the outcome sustains individuals' sport enjoyment and that the experience of total involvement is a key to developing sport participation lifestyle habits.

To achieve the aim of lifelong participation, physical education teachers need to positively influence students' motivation to continue in physical activity outside the school (Weiss, 2000). A major motive (reason) young people give for participating in sport and physical activity is fun and enjoyment. By providing fun and enjoyable physical education, we may positively enhance young people's attitudes toward physical education and, ultimately, physical activity participation.

The study targeted children from the age group of 12-14. This is the age when there is an increasing burden of studies on the children in Indian scenario. If in this age, the low skilled children do not enjoy participating, they may have a tendency to quit from physical activity (Telama and Yang 2000). This research has practical significance to those training the children, mainly secondary schools. It should increase exercise adherence, resulting in improved health, fitness and quality of life of the school children.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that there is a relation of enjoyment in physical activity with the skill level of the children. The results also illustrate that active participation in physical activity involves maximum enjoyment. The children with low skill level can also enjoy almost equally if they are given a chance to participate in any other way and motivated by the teacher. And the children may enjoy less if their skill level is low or not motivated by the activity leader/teacher.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The same study can be done by taking a large group.
2. The same study can be done on the other age groups of children.
3. The same type of study can also be done on the adults and aged people.

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