



**Original Article**

**THE ROLE OF SPORTS IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS**

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**Abstract:**

*Research has proven that there is a link between sports and academic performance. Moreover, they directly correlate positively: the more time a student gets to play a sport, the better he performs at school. Sport is a great way to manage stress. Exercise and physical activities help your body to release endorphins. This is the chemical found in your brain that is responsible for relieving pain and stress. The stress hormones, adrenaline, and cortisol are also controlled. Studies claim that a 20-30 minute exercise session every day can make people feel more at peace and calmer. Doing so in the early morning is even more beneficial. For students, sports can help improve their short-term health and have long-term mental health effects. Engaging in any kind of sports you love can help improve your mood, help you concentrate better, and even sleep better at night. Long-term benefits include helping in fighting different types of addictions, preventing depression, and improving self-esteem levels.*

**Keywords:** Pain and Stress, Stress Harmones, Depression, Physical Activities, Extracurricular Activities, Oxytocin, Self Esteem.

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**Introduction:**

In the international literature, discussion of the impact of physical

activities is mainly focused on improvements in quality of life, particularly in terms of health. However, sports can have



other positive effects on individuals that may contribute to improving their academic performance. In schools, the importance of physical education and extracurricular activities is sometimes overlooked in favor of more conceptual subjects that have a direct effect on university entrance exam results. This is even though the international literature indicates that physical education is important to student. This is because PA and sports increase the flow of blood to the brain, increasing alertness and oxytocin secretion levels and improving self-esteem. Other authors mention that physical activity has a positive influence on concentration, memory, and classroom behaviour, showing a positive relationship between PA and intellectual performance. However, other studies have found only an insignificant association between PA and cognitive skills or have concluded that the relationship between PA and academic achievement has not been demonstrated.

There is a belief that “a sound body equals a sound mind” and that physical activity can support skill development among children. However, although parents accept that physical education and sports activities have a place in child development, they do not want sports to interfere with academic activities in the curriculum, based on the belief that such activities will lead to better academic results. Additionally, worldwide, there is growing concern about the effects of little PA or participation in sports. National organizations responsible for protecting public health are alarmed by the impacts of minimal physical activity and social consequences in terms of physical

well-being. Additionally, psychological studies have recognized that good self-esteem to achieve other important personal results. Therefore, it is considered that self-esteem and self-concept have direct and indirect effects on academic outcomes. Note that there are studies that indicate that the effect of self-esteem on school performance depends on how you measure it. Therefore, it is important to consider the effect of this factor on academic performance. Overall, considering the effects indicated in the literature, sports could also be expected to contribute to academic performance, without overlooking the fact that academic performance is determined by diverse factors such as parental characteristics, teacher-student relationship, school, infrastructure, socioeconomic strata, and individual student characteristics, among others. Therefore, this study considers the relevant variables to explain school performance based on the exposed literature.

The following are the benefits for the school students who involve in sports activities.

### **1. Sports Improve Focus:**

Whether it is one of those days or just the post-lunch slump, it is very normal for one to struggle to concentrate on studies. However, exercise is one solution that is provided in this situation that can help boost your focus. Research shows that a student who plays more sports has been observed to show higher levels of concentration in the classroom as compared to the non-sporty ones. How does that make sense, you ask? Your blood flow to the brain tends to improve with vigorous



exercise. This enhances intellectual functions like decision-making, information retention, and makes you more alert. In addition, high school student-athletes show a higher chance of getting a higher degree than their counterparts. Integrating physical activities and sport into students' schedules has demonstrated an increase in their abilities to learn new knowledge, experience it, and apply memory and inhibitory skills practically. It fosters positive cognitive development in youth by improving levels of endorphins and norepinephrine. It aids in the creation of new nerve cells that support synaptic plasticity.

## **2. Social Interaction:**

Students who participate in sports and other physical activities get the opportunity to engage and interact with one another. It promotes strong bonding and healthy relationships among students, which is beneficial for making the classroom a positive space for growth and learning. Students who are active in extracurricular physical activities have shown higher levels of commitment to studies and an enhanced desire to engage in school life. Students can overcome divides while playing team-based sports as a sense of fellowship and identity is instilled in them. Trust and reliance on each other are increased, which makes the overall school experience more enjoyable. Moreover, schools often offer intentionally designed sports programs. These have clear and predetermined development goals and can be utilised as a promotional tool for improving learning in many areas, like eradicating gender stereotypes. Gender-diverse role

models can be produced through sports that can help empower young females underrepresented in the physical education and sports department at school. These specially designed programs sometimes also cater to students who have special needs. They also feel included, their self-esteem rises, and they get to feel more comfortable in educational places, improving their learning process.

## **3. It Boosts Health And Strength:**

How do sports affect students? Getting involved in sports helps students manage many different types of health-related issues. An individual who is physically active from a young age is less likely to develop serious health problems. The main benefits of sports on health are highlighted below.

- Improved blood circulation
- Weight control
- Fewer chances of cardiovascular risks
- Lower hypertension
- Helps fight addictions
- Better blood circulation
- Strengthening of muscles and bones
- Stronger immunity
- Lower cholesterol levels

## **4. Improves Attendance and Gap's:**

A study conducted in the Los Angeles Unified School District, composed of 35,000 athletic students, confirmed a positive correlation between sports and their GPA as well as attendance. Studies demonstrated that athlete students were present for around three weeks more than the non-athlete students. Students who actively participate in extracurricular activities and enjoy them are usually more content with



showing up at school and making new friends. Another reason that boosts their attendance compared to their counterparts is that these students engage in physical activities more regularly, which keeps them healthy and less prone to health-related issues. The healthy competition among the players can also be seen in classrooms where these students like to perform better in every aspect of their academic lives. Some people argue that sports affecting grades can also be disadvantageous, as these students are more focused on athletics; however, the benefits it has brought to the students cannot be denied.

#### **5. Increases Self-Esteem:**

Self-esteem improves when an individual starts accepting who he or she is, despite all the insufficiencies they might have and still chooses to like themselves. This grows with successful interactions and through positive reinforcements. Self-esteem also has a significant influence on a student's academic performance. Low self-esteem reduces the desire to learn among students, whereas high-esteemed students are more likely to enjoy this learning process, make friends, and take failure more lightly. Such students are less likely to fall victim to psychological disorders like anxiety and depression and are more resilient in any situation of hardship. The real challenge arises when academic institutions try to restore the belief of low-esteemed students by making them feel important. This is where the role of sports comes in. Although it is not entirely possible to change how students feel about themselves, they can be nurtured so that their improved self-esteem allows them to

preserve in the face of academic-related challenges. Furthermore, through sports, students can be shown a continual process of support and appreciation which encourages them to do better. The next time you get worried thinking getting involved in a sport might compromise your academic performance, recall all the wonderful benefits mentioned above. In reality, sports improve grades and help you shine on the field as well as in the classroom. So there should be nothing holding you back now.

#### **Conclusion:**

The main descriptive statistical findings provide evidence that students recognize that playing sports, self-esteem and engaging in physical activity generate benefits related to health and socialization. In other words, on average the student's self-report a positive perception of the benefits of PA. What is most important, given the objective of this study, is that the econometric estimation, correcting the statistical problem of selection bias, demonstrated a positive causal relationship between academic performance, self-esteem and sports activities, which are statistically significant. However, while spending time engaging in sports improves academic performance, as the hours spent on sports increases, the increase in benefits in terms of grades diminishes. That is, an increase in hours of PA increases academic performance at decreasing rates. Therefore, the relationship between PA and academic performance is not always positive. Thus, the results suggest that the national policy to increase physical education hours



in schools will lead to an improvement in academic results.

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