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Pitch Presentations

Characteristics of Emotional Wellbeing and Physical Activity in Primary School Pupils

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Background: Children's emotional wellbeing and physical activity are closely linked to their learning achievements, social integration, and long-term health. Studies show that physical activity improves psychological wellbeing, reduces anxiety, and strengthens self-regulation (Demetriou et al., 2019; Kang et al., 2020). However, the World Health Organization emphasises that 81% of children and adolescents are still physically inactive (WHO, 2021), which increases the risk of obesity and cardiovascular disease (Walker et al., 2021). Schools, as the primary educational environment, play a key role in promoting physical activity and providing psychological support, but few studies have examined how different school environments can affect children's emotional wellbeing and activity levels. The aim of this study was to determine the impact of gender and school type on the emotional wellbeing and physical activity of primary school students and to analyse the possible relationships between these factors.
Material and Methods: The study was conducted in November 2024 in three different types of schools (public rural, public urban, and private). There were 166 primary school students (aged 6–10; 53.6% boys, 46.4% girls) participating in this study. Emotional state was assessed using the Wellbeing, Activity, and Mood (WAM) Scale (Malinauskas, 2003b; Райгородский, 2000), consisting of 30 statements that were adapted by the authors to the age of the children and supplemented with visual images to help understand the questions. Physical activity levels were determined using a short version of the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ-LT) (Lekečinskaitė, 2009), which was also adapted by the authors for primary school children – the questions were simplified and presented with examples and visual elements that children could understand. Physical activity was classified into three levels: low (<600 MET-min/week), moderate (600–3,000 MET-min/week), and high (>3,000 MET-min/week). The study was anonymous, conducted in accordance with ethical requirements, and data collection was carried out under the same conditions in all schools.
Results and Conclusions: The analysis showed that boys' wellbeing and mood were slightly higher, while girls showed slightly higher physical activity, but these differences were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), thus gender did not have a significant impact on emotional state or activity. Meanwhile, the type of school had a significant effect: private school students rated their wellbeing and mood lower than rural and urban students ($p < 0.001$), while rural school students showed significantly higher physical activity than urban students ($p < 0.001$). Correlation analysis revealed strong links between wellbeing, mood, and subjective activity ($r = 0.70$, $p < 0.001$), but objectively measured physical activity (IPAQ-LT) had no significant link to emotional state. This suggests that the school environment has a greater influence on children's wellbeing than gender, and that subjective emotional factors are more closely related to wellbeing than objective activity levels.
Keywords: School-age children, physical activity, psychological wellbeing

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