



RESTRICTION AND FREEDOM: TO EVALUATE THE LONG-TERM IMPACT OF PLAYTIME ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS ON STUDENT HEALTH AND LEARNING EFFICIENCY

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Abstract :

This research critically examines the prohibition on primary school kids during playtime and its potentially harmful impact on student development. The theoretical backdrop and literature analysis emphasised the importance of playtime activities in improving kids' physical and mental health, social skills, and cognitive development. According to the study, limiting playtime activities may overlook pupils' basic requirements, affecting their overall development. The paper examines the problem of prohibition through the lenses of pedagogy, psychology, physiological health, and human development and makes recommendations for increasing the diversity of activities and encouraging students to participate in decision-making to improve students' health and learning efficiency.

Keywords: primary school students, playtime activities, crucial development

1. Introduction

Primary school students view playtime activities as an integral part of their daily learning experiences. It not only gives children the rest they need, but it also improves their physical and mental health and helps them develop social skills. However, in recent years, several schools have enacted restrictions that prohibit elementary school students from leaving class for safety and discipline reasons. This practice has aroused extensive debate, with many education professionals and psychologists raising concerns about the potential negative impact of such tight policies on elementary kids' physical and mental health, as well as their learning efficiency. The purpose of this study is to critically analyse the regulation limiting playtime outdoor activities and investigate its overall influence

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on primary school kids in order to make scientific and reasonable recommendations for educational policymaking.

2. Literature Review

Playtime activities are vital in primary school because they not only allow kids to rest and relax, but also improve their physical and mental health, social skills, and cognitive development. Children learn and develop through contact with their environment and social relationships with peers, according to Piaget's theory of cognitive development and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. As a result, playtime activities provide children with opportunities for connection and conversation, making them a vital tool for fostering cognitive and social development.

Pawlowski *et al.* (2022) found that by prohibiting children aged 10 to 14 from using smartphones during playtime, children's physical activity levels improved significantly, particularly moderate-intensity physical activity, implying that limiting the use of smartphones can effectively improve children's physical activity during breaks ^[1]. Carriedo and Cecchini (2022) conducted a natural experiment to investigate the impact of limiting or completely cancelling playtime activities on children's physical activity and sedentary behaviour and discovered that limiting playtime activities significantly reduced children's physical activity level while increasing their sedentary time, emphasising the importance of maintaining regular playtime activities to promote children's health ^[2]. Machado Suga *et al.* (2021) conducted a systematic review of interventions aimed at promoting physical activity during school playtime and discovered that children's physical activity could be effectively increased by improving the school environment, such as by increasing amusement facilities, dividing activity areas, and providing sports equipment. These interventions have proven to be cost-effective and simple to implement ^[3]. Nagano *et al.* (2020) studied the association between playtime activity time and children's physical and exercise abilities in Japan. Research confirms the positive impact of playtime exercise on children's physical development, with longer playtime periods leading to greater levels of physical ability ^[4].

These studies suggest that playtime activities improve elementary students' physical and mental health, as well as their learning efficiency. Playtime activities can not only increase children's physical activity but also minimise sedentary behaviour and enhance social connection, all of which contribute to their overall development.

3. Material and Methods

3.1 Pedagogical Perspective

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasises that learning takes place through social interaction. These activities allow students to socially interact with their peers, which promotes the development of social skills and cognitive improvement. The limitation on playtime expeditions restricts such opportunities for social engagement and may result

in missed opportunities to build social skills and problem-solving abilities in informal learning situations, harming overall development.

3.2 Psychological Perspective

According to self-determination theory, three essential psychological demands drive human motivation and behaviour: autonomy, competence, and belonging. Playtime activities can help address these psychological demands, particularly those for autonomy and a sense of belonging. Students can choose their own activities and establish a connection with their peers. Classes between playtime may deprive students of the opportunity to meet their basic psychological requirements, reducing intrinsic motivation and leading to emotional and behavioural issues.

3.3 Physical Health Perspective

According to biopsychosocial models, individual health results from the combination of biological, psychological, and social components. Playtime activities are essential for students' physical well-being. It not only helps to increase their physical activity and avoid obesity and other health issues, but it also improves their mental health by lowering psychological stress. Banning stepping outside between courses may result in insufficient physical activity, an increase in the risk of linked health problems, and a negative impact on mental health due to a lack of opportunities to relieve stress.

3.4 Human Development Perspective

Playtime activities are critical for the development of students' creativity and problem-solving skills, according to human development theory, particularly innovation theory. According to innovation theory, the development of creativity capacity requires an open and free atmosphere that stimulates individual curiosity and an exploratory spirit. These activities create an environment in which students can freely explore, interact with peers, and attempt new things, encouraging the development of inventive thinking. The prohibition on playtime expeditions may limit pupils' opportunity to explore freely, impeding the development of their innovative skills and limiting their ability to deal with future issues.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Safety Considerations

Worries about student safety often motivate schools to limit playtime activities. As social security issues gain prominence, school administrators are becoming increasingly concerned about the safety threats that students may face on and off campus, such as road accidents, encounters with strangers, and physical fights among students. To mitigate these concerns, schools may choose to limit the range of activities available during playtime or even prohibit children from going out at all.

4.2 Change in Educational Philosophy

The change in educational philosophy is also a contributing factor to the restriction of playtime activities. Traditional educational concepts consider academic learning as the foundation of school education, while they often view physical activities and games as secondary or interfering with learning. As a result, in order to boost academic achievement, some schools may restrict playtime and exercise time to supplement classroom instruction or offer academic tutoring.

4.3 Limitations on Resources and Facilities

Schools restrict activities between classes for a variety of reasons, including limited resources and facilities. In schools with limited resources, there may not be enough outdoor space or sports facilities to provide playtime activities for all students. Furthermore, schools may be unable to offer enough sports equipment or maintain existing sports facilities due to financial restrictions. In certain circumstances, schools may choose to limit playtime activities to prevent misuse and facility damage.

4.4 Challenges in Management and Supervision

Management and supervision issues are also major reasons why schools limit playtime activities. As the student population grows, it becomes more difficult to maintain everyone's safety during playtime activities. Furthermore, effective supervision of large numbers of children necessitates a significant number of instructors and personnel, which is a challenge for understaffed institutions. To simplify management and decrease the supervision burden, schools may choose to restrict or regulate playtime activities.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Provide a Safe Activity Environment

The school should ensure the safety of the playtime activity area and reduce the risk of injury to students participating in the activities by establishing safe amusement facilities, properly planning the activity area, and providing the necessary safety equipment and supervision.

5.2 Increase Playtime Activity Diversity

Schools should offer a variety of playtime activity options, such as sports games, easy outdoor strolling, art, and manual activities, to match the interests and needs of diverse students.

5.3. Encourage Student Participation in Activity Decision-making

The school can let students help organise and make decisions on playtime activities through the student union or other student organisations, which will increase their interest and participation in the activities.

5.4. Provide Adequate Supervision and Guidance

The school should guarantee that there are enough teachers and staff to oversee playtime activities, as well as provide suitable direction to assist students in carrying out their activities safely.

5.5 Policy Review and Adjustment

Schools should routinely analyze the impact of playtime activity rules and adapt them in response to student comments and needs to ensure that the policies successfully promote students' overall development.

6. Conclusion

This study used critical analysis to uncover the harmful influence of forbidden recess outdoor activities on their physical and mental development, emphasizing the importance of recess activities in enhancing kids' health, social skills, and cognitive development. According to research, recess activities address children's basic physical and psychological needs while also providing the required space for social connection and independent discovery, making them a vital aspect of comprehensive education. As a result, educational policymakers and school administrators should recognize the value of recess activities and take steps to ensure and expand children's recess experiences in order to promote their overall and healthy development.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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