



The Role of Sports Participation on Social Skill Development in Early Childhood and Adolescence

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Abstract. Sports education plays an important role in developing social skills in children and adolescents. Participation in sports activities has been shown to enhance values such as cooperation, communication, leadership and empathy. However, sports education in an institution is often considered less important and even neglected, especially in the run-up to final exams. Therefore, this study aims to find out in depth how participation in sports activities can make a significant contribution to the development of social skills in early childhood and adolescence. The research method used is literature review using google scholar, Taylor and Francis, Elsevier, Eric, and Sage data bases. The data extraction process in this literature review uses the PRISMA flow chart. The articles analyzed were published from 2020 to 2024, using inclusion criteria, namely research articles from national and international journals, and the population/sample/subject of research is early childhood and adolescence. The articles reviewed totaled 12 articles from international and national journals. The results of the 12 articles reviewed showed that participation in sports can help develop social skills, such as cooperation, communication, leadership, and empathy. In addition, involvement in sports can also improve emotions, self-esteem, social networks, and a sense of belonging in children and adolescents. These findings confirm the importance of sports facilities in building positive character traits and universal values of sport in young people. Participation in sport activities was shown to contribute significantly to the development of social skills in early childhood and adolescence. The results of this study provide a foundation for the development of more effective school sport education strategies in the future

Keywords: Sport, Physical Education, Social Skill, Positive Youth Development

Introduction

Sports education or commonly referred to as physical education is an educational process that uses physical activity to create comprehensive changes in personal quality, both physical, mental, and emotional [32]. Physical education is a process to achieve educational or training goals through adaptation to physical activity through organ, neuromuscular, intellectual, social, cultural, emotional and ethical [17]. Physical education also aims to improve health and physical fitness, mental development, social development, and intellectual development [3]. Sport can provide an environment where adolescents have the opportunity to learn life skills and other positive attributes

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that will help them develop outside of sport [9]. Sport provides a foundation for young people to learn about themselves and develop skills that will be useful later in life [34].

Unfortunately, physical education and sports in educational institutions have not been able to position themselves in a strategic place in the world of education, and are still often ignored; for example, in the days leading up to the final exam of an educational level. So Physical Education and Sports are abolished on the grounds that students in their studies to face the final exam are "not disturbed". Therefore, Physical Education and Sports in Schools not only require repositioning, but also need reorientation, reactualization and revitalization in their thinking and management to get a respectable place.

Meanwhile, in reality the role of sport is one of the important aspects to encourage positive youth development (PYD), thus because sport is also an outdoor activity, sport is recognized as an environment that encourages the active development of young people [15]. Several studies have also shown that participating in sports can help develop social skills and teamwork skills [40]. Sport is no longer just a physical activity, but has become an effective platform for character building and interpersonal skills [22]. In the context of social skills, participation in sports teaches values such as cooperation, communication, leadership, and empathy [13]. Some studies such as those conducted [24] show findings that students feel they have developed life skills through sport experiences. Sport involvement has the potential to help students develop better emotions and self-esteem, expanded social networks, better self-image, increased sense of belonging and decreased levels of depression and emotional distress [7]. Adolescents actively involved in sports have also demonstrated higher levels of psychosocial skills such as behavior, perceived self-efficacy, personal responsibility and social responsibility [8]. The importance of facilities in helping to build positive character and universal sports values in the younger generation is because adolescence is an important transition period [30]. As part of positive youth development, it is very important for sports activities to generate social skills, especially for early childhood and adolescent development through sports activities [18].

Although there are many studies that show the results that the role of sport has an effect on the development of social skills has been widely recognized [1],[31],[43] research using the literature review model is important considering that there have been various findings that show interventions. research with this model can collect different examinations for significant findings and combine them into one representative conclusion. Likewise, the results of this review can be used as a perspective for readers in relation to the role of sports participation in improving social skills. This research aims to find out in depth how participation in sports activities can make a significant contribution in the development of social skills. As such, this research will not only provide a better understanding of the relationship between sport and social skills, but may also provide a foundation for the development of more effective school sport education strategies in the future.

2 **Method**

The method used was literature review. Data sources of peer-reviewed articles were identified through several databases including: Google scholar, Taylor and Francis, Elsevier, Eric, and Sage. An online search was conducted to identify relevant literature. The researcher used the PICO method, to determine the keywords used in searching for published articles that match the novelty. The first stage in searching for international articles used the keywords "Sports Participation and Social Skill Development in Early Childhood and Adolescence" and national articles used the following keywords "Sports Participation and Social Skill Development in Early Childhood and Adolescence". The review was limited to articles reporting original article findings and published from 2020 to 2024. The inclusion criteria used were research articles from national and international journals, and the population/sample/subject of the study was early childhood and adolescence. Studies that do not fall within the specified criteria will be screened out. Due to the diversity of research methods in this domain, reviewers did not limit studies to a specific design, but each article was reviewed for the following methodological criteria: (1) the objectives and/or research questions are clearly described, (2) the sample and/or study population are described, (3) the methods are clearly described, (4) the measurement instruments used are valid, (5) the results can be defined in detail, (6) the analysis of findings is clear and appropriate.

2.1 **Data Extraction**

In conducting data extraction, the first step was the identification process. The authors excluded articles that did not address interventions on sports participation and social skill development in early childhood and adolescence. A total of 158 articles were identified by title through Google scholar, Taylor and Frances, Elsevier, Eric, and Sage databases. Articles that contained duplication were excluded in the next stage. Then entering the screening stage, 49 articles were found that presented empirical data identified from the title and abstract. Then 37 articles were excluded because the articles did not discuss social skill interventions specifically and the research subjects were not early childhood or adolescence. Following the eligibility stage, 12 articles were identified with clear methodological information. The 12 original articles included in the review consisted of 4 qualitative studies, and 8 quantitative studies. The data extraction and identification strategy used the PRISMA flow chart.

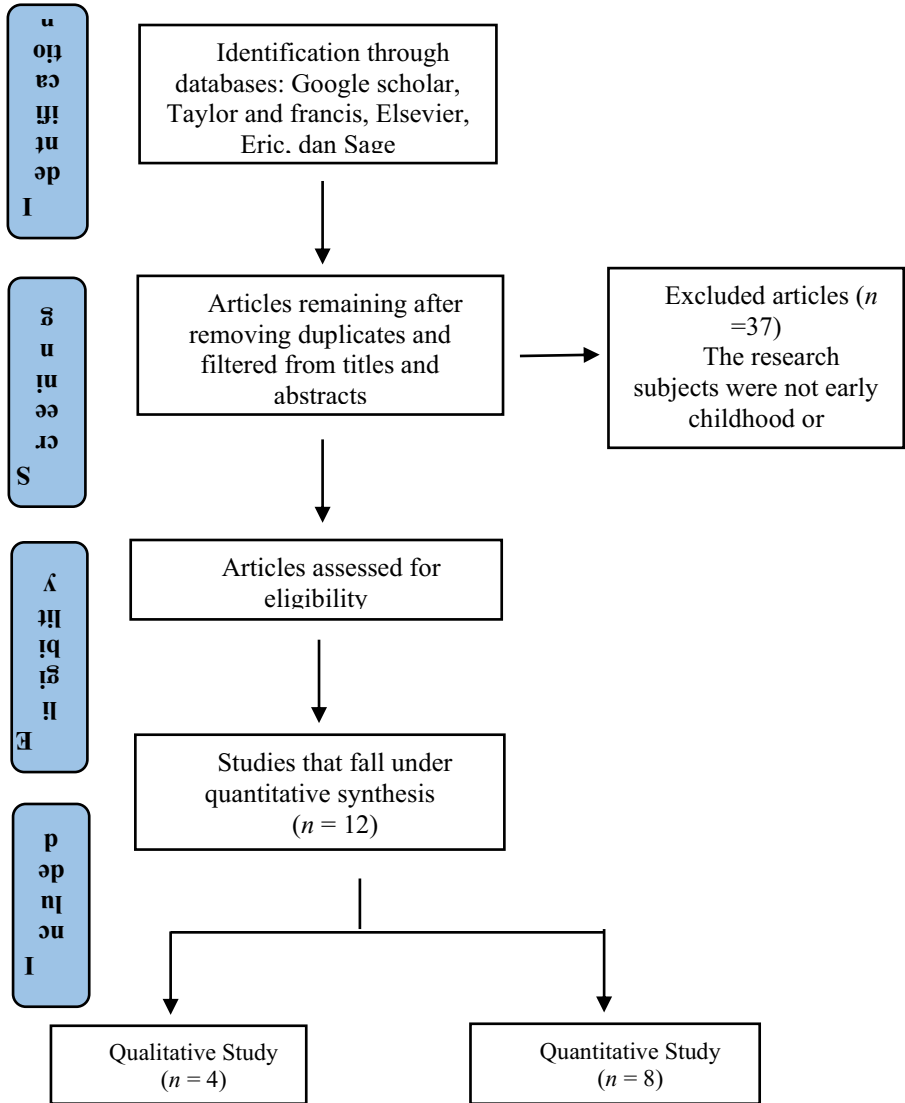


Fig. 1. PRISMA Flowchart for Systematic Search and Data Extraction

Table 1. Reviewed article

No	Author, Year	Total Respondents	Age of Respondents	Research Method	Research Instruments	Research Objectives	Research Findings
1	(Allen et al., 2021)	3600 children, 3463 adolescents, and 12,280 adults	Children: 10 years old, Adolescents 14 years, Adults 18-49 years	Cross-sectional	Questionnaire	Examined whether sports participation is related to the development of extroversion at three life stages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There was a small decrease in extroversion levels during childhood and adulthood, and a large decrease during adolescence. ● Sports participation was associated with higher levels of extroversion across all three samples. ● Children and adolescents who stopped participating in sports showed a greater decline in extroversion than those who continued to

							<p>participate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport participation was associated with greater individual stability in extroversion for children, adolescents and adults. • There were no significant moderating effects of gender for changes in mean levels or individual stability.
2	(Jalilinasab et al., 2022)	84 children	9-10 years old	Experimental	Test of Gross Motor Development - Third Edition (TGMD-3) to measure basic motor skills, Matson Evaluation of Social Skills with Youngste	Tested the effects of Brain Gym exercises on the development of children's basic motor skills and social skills.	The Brain Gym group showed better improvement than the control group at the post-test and follow-up stages for all measured variables. So it can be concluded that Brain

					rs (MESSY) to measure social skills	Gym exercises are effective in improving basic motor skills and social skills in children.
3	(Tersi & Matsouka, 2020)	70 children	4-6 years old	Experimental	Preschool and Kindergarten Behavior Scale	<p>Examined the effects of a structured play activity program on the social skill development of preschool-aged children (4-6 years old) during recess in a kindergarten schoolyard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both groups showed significant improvements in the social behaviors studied. • However, the intervention group children showed more significant improvements in externalizing problems than the control group. • These findings emphasize the importance of early detection of

							developing behavioral problems and the positive effects of a structured play activity program in the schoolyard during recess on preschool children's social skill development
4	(Bedard et al., 2020)	2,278 children	13-14 years old	Cross-sectional	Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Children Participation Questionnaire	Evaluated the relationship between sports participation and self-perception of social competence over 4 years of early adolescence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were significant associations between sports participation at baseline (b = .06, 95% CI: .04-.08) and changes in sports participation over time (b = .01, 95% CI: .003-.017) with self-perceptio

						ns of social competence for both boys and girls.
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to not participating in sport, participation in any sport category (in school, out of school, or both) was positively associated with self-perceptions of social competence.
5	(Greco & De Ronzi, 2020)	28 children	8-11 years old	Quasi-experimental	Social Skills Improvement System Rating Scale and Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function	<p>Examined the effects of 12 weeks of karate training on the social-emotional skills and executive functions of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were improvements in social-emotional competencies such as better communication, cooperation, and engagement. • Improved executive function

6	(Luna et al., 2020)	106 adolescents	12-15 years old	Experimental	Adolescent Multidimensional Social Competence Questionnaire	Evaluate the impact of a sport education intervention on social competence and social acceptance among adolescents.	<p>skills such as cognitive flexibility, inhibitory control and better working memory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decreased aggressiveness, sadness, anxiety, and hyperactivity compared to the control group (p<0.01; large effect size). ● A Model of Sport Education (SEM)-based intervention in the experimental group showed more significant improvements in several indicators of social competence and social acceptan
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						<p>ce among peers than a control group implementing the Traditional Model of Direct Instruction (TM-DI).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Results showed similar intervention impacts among male and female adolescents. ● The results of this study suggest the potential of the Sports Education Model in adolescents.
7	(Hoffmann et al., 2022)	11,235 children and adolescents	9-13 years old	Cross-sectional	Child Behavior Checklist	<p>Explores the relationship between participation in organized sports and a range of mental health difficulties among</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation in team sports was associated with lower scores on a range of mental health difficulties such as

US children and adolescents anxiety/d epression , withdraw al/depres sion, social problems , thought problems , and attention problems .

- Participat ion in individua l sports was associate d with higher scores on a range of mental health difficulti es such as anxiety/d epression , withdraw al/depres sion, social problems , and attention problems .

- Participat ion in team and individua l sports was associate d with lower rule-breaking

						behavior scores in females.
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overall, results suggest that participation in team sports is associated with fewer mental health difficulties, while participation in individual sports is associated with more mental health difficulties in children and adolescents
8	(Sansi et al., 2021)	45 students	6-11 years old	Experimental	-	<p>Investigated the effects of an inclusive physical activity program on the motor skills, social skills, and attitudes of students with and without</p> <p>The inclusive physical activity program improved the motor and social skills of students with ASD, improved the motor skills of TD students, and affected TD</p>

9	(Nelson et al., 2022)	-	-	Literature Review	PRISMA	<p>Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)</p> <p>To examine the existing literature on the emotional and social benefits, as well as barriers and facilitators to sports participation for children from low-income neighborhoods.</p>	<p>students' positive attitudes towards students with ASD.</p> <p>Overall, 13 studies showed positive emotional and social benefits of sports participation, although there was one study that found a decrease in mental health and one study that found no significant findings. Facilitators such as psychological safety and social support are needed to encourage sports participation, as significant barriers to sports participation still exist for children from low-income neighborhoods.</p>
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10	(Opstoel et al., 2020)	-	Children and adolescents aged 6-18 years..	Literature review	PRISMA	Provides a comprehensive overview of the existing literature related to children and young people's personal and social development in the context of physical education and sport.	Concepts related to personal and social development were grouped into 11 themes: work ethic, control and management, goal setting, decision making, problem solving, responsibility, leadership, cooperation, meeting people and making friends, communication, and prosocial behavior. The review found that physical education and sport support 11 concepts related to personal and social development.
11	(Harlow et al., 2020)	-	Children aged 2-5 years	Scoping Review	PRISMA	To identify the physical, psychological, social and intellectual	There is evidence that early sport participation can improve social skills, prosocial

						<p>develop behavior, ment and self-associate regulation. d with However toddler er, and negative preschool and inconclusi l-aged ve children's participat ion in were also organize found. Most sport. Most previous studies have relied on parent and teacher ratings or reports. Few studies have focused on organized sport participati on in toddler and preschool-aged children specificall y, although sport programs for these ages are increasing ly available.</p>
12	(Bruner et al., 2023)	-	10-18 years	A systematic review and meta-analysi s	PRISMA	<p>The purpose of this article was to evaluate the overall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The results of the meta-analysis showed small to moderate effects of

effects of exercise-based interventions on positive youth development outcomes

sport interventions and positive youth development outcomes including competence, confidence, and life skills.

- No significant overall effects were found for outcomes related to character, connections, positive youth development climate, and health.

3 Discussion

Physical education and sports play an important role in early childhood and adolescent development. Physical education and sports can develop various aspects of child development, such as organic, neuromuscular, perceptual, cognitive, social, and emotional aspects [39]. This is in line with previous studies showing that physical activity and sports can improve brain, cognitive, and academic functions in children [6]. study conducted by [49] showed that exercise-based interventions consistently improved academic achievement, cognitive function and motor development in children. In addition, longitudinal studies have also confirmed that participation in physical activity during childhood is associated with improved executive function, problem-solving ability and academic achievement later in life [2]. Physical activity has also been shown to have positive effects on children's mental health, such as reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety [45]. Recent studies have shown that children who are more active in sports have lower levels of depression and anxiety, as

well as higher psychological well-being [37]. This is because exercise can increase the production of neurotransmitters, such as serotonin and dopamine, which play a role in mood and emotion regulation [10].

Children who are more active in sports perform better on tasks involving executive functions, such as planning, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility [43]. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that physical activity and exercise can improve executive function in children [4],[17]. This is because exercise can increase blood flow and brain oxygenation, and stimulate the formation of new neurons and synapses that support the development of executive function [20]. Research by [14] showed that participation in sports that require coordination and strategy, such as soccer or basketball, can improve executive function in children. This study suggests that sports help children learn to control impulses, think about next steps, and adapt to changing situations, all of which are important aspects of executive function.

Beyond motor and cognitive enhancement, sports participation also intervenes with the development of extroversion in children and adolescents. Study results showed a small decrease in extroversion levels during childhood and a large decrease during adolescence in individuals who were active in sports [1]. These findings reinforce the results of previous research showing that participation in physical activity and sports can influence personality development in children and adolescents [44]. This is because sports can improve social skills, self-confidence, and emotional regulation that can affect personality development [11], [35]. According to [38] children who are more active in sports have better social competence and emotion regulation. This is because exercise can improve social interactions, the development of positive relationships, and the ability to manage emotions that arise during activities [20]. Research by Hiremath, [21] found that children involved in team sports showed significant improvements in social skills and self-confidence. In addition, this study suggests that sports can help children develop positive relationships with peers and adults that are important for their social and emotional development. It was in line with the results of a study conducted by [27] that participation in team sports helps children develop communication and cooperation skills, which are important for healthy social interactions. In addition, this study showed that children who participated in sports were better able to manage stress and negative emotions, which contributed to their emotional well-being.

Sports participation also has an effect on the mental health of children and adolescents, which is reinforced by the results of research showing that children who are more active in sports have a lower risk of experiencing mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety [42]. This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that physical activity and exercise can improve mental well-being and reduce symptoms of mental disorders in children [28]. This is because exercise can increase neurotransmitter production, reduce stress, and increase self-esteem and life satisfaction. Research by [12] showed that participation in sports can improve psychological well-being by increasing endorphin production and reducing stress hormones. In addition, this study showed that physically active children tend to have a more positive outlook on life and feel more satisfied with themselves and their social environment

4 Conclusion

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that participation in physical education and sport has a significant positive impact on various aspects of early childhood and adolescent development, especially social skills. These findings emphasize the importance of integrating physical education and sport comprehensively in the education system to support the holistic development of children and adolescents. The importance of physical education and sport in schools is not only limited to physical and social aspects, but also contributes greatly to neuromuscular, perceptual, cognitive and emotional development

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