

The Comparison of Socio-economic Status of Families and Social Support of Parents for the Physical Exercises of Their Children

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ABSTRACT: Objective: The present study was conducted to compare the relationship between physical activity and economic and social status of families in Tehran. This research is of applied type and based on the data of descriptive-correlation type and is current in terms of time. The statistical population of this study consisted of students in districts 1 to 5 in Tehran. The sample of 300 people was considered random. In the present study, the physical activity of the family is a variable and the social and economic status of the family are the predictor variables. The measurement tool included a researcher-made questionnaire whose validity and reliability were confirmed to be 0.88. T-test was used to analyze the data. Findings showed that there is a significant difference between parents' social support for physical activity in the north and south of Tehran.

Keywords: Students, Physical activity, Socio-economic status, Support.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, special attention paid to the quality of life and people healthiness (Bahraini, 2008). Physical activity (PA) as a phenomenon that affected by both the environmental and biological factors has a significant role in improving people's quality of life and increasing longevity. Physical activity has been associated with a wide range of beneficial health outcomes related to growth and development, bone health, cardiovascular disease, selected cancers, weight status, and psychological emotional outcomes. A lot of researches reported the effects of physical activity on adults' health (Patnode & et al, 2010). Physical inactivity and high sedentariness have been associated with negative health outcome for both adults (Bauman, 2004), and children (Department of Health and Physical Activity, 2004). This notion that childhood and adolescence is stirring for all people (Hoefler & et al, 2001 ; Kazemi, 2010), led to less researches on this group of society. There is a broad range of social, psychological and environmental factors identified as correlates of youth physical activity (Kristjansdottir & Vilhjalmsson, 2001). To develop effective physical activity interventions in youth, determinants of activity levels need to be better understand.

There is substantial literature based on examining factors associated with PA among youth (Mota & Silva, 1999; Raudsepp, 2006). Such factors can be organized according to different models which suggest that an individual's personal beliefs and cognitions, social influences such as social support from parents and physical environment including children's home and neighborhoods, are crucial to consider when attempting to understand health behavior. Family as the smallest social institution has an important role in children's participation in physical activity. Numerous demographic, psychological, social and physical environmental variables correlate with youth physical activity (Wright & et al, 2010). Family Socio-economic status (SES) and social support of parents have a significant role on the amount of participation of children in physical activities. Parents as fundamental basis of families, in addition to the pattern of physical exercises, play a central role in organizing and financing the participation of children play sports. The amount of physical activity of children can be considered as a function of SES of parents and family (Bois & et al, 2005), consequently. In fact, families spending money and encourage their children to participate in sport and physical activity in order to develop their skills and becoming more social.

There have been several review articles in the past decade describing the correlates of PA among adolescents and students (Brodersen & et al 2005, Van der Horst & et al, 2007). Although higher income and educational levels of parents have been shown to coincide with children’s physical activities, this relationship has not been well quantified. So, the purpose of this study was the comparison of SES families and social support of parents for physical exercise of their children at Northern and Southern zones of Tehran city.

Materials and Methods:

This study was descriptive-comparative and applied. The statistical population was all the students in Tehran city, and for sampling we selected 2 areas based on cluster random method. These were 18th (at South) and 5th (at North) areas. We selected 6 schools among these areas, and finally 272 out of 300 distributed questionnaires were utilized. Research instruments were questionnaires: Socio-Economic Status (SES) questionnaire that its validity determined by experts and its reliability was ($\alpha=0.81$), and the research made questionnaire of parental support of children physical exercise questionnaire that its validity determined by experts and reliability was $\alpha=0.87$. Kolmogorov Smirnov (K-S) test was used to determine the parametric statistical situation. In order to analyze data, descriptive and inferential statistics such as mean, frequencies and independent t-test were utilized; the data analysis was done by SPSS 15.

Results:

The results of this study indicated that there were significant difference between parental support of physical activity at North & South of Tehran ($t= 5.803$, sig = 0.0001)(Table4). According to Table1, 50 percents of Northern family had an income more than 800 Thousand Toomans. The other information about the families’ income showed at table 1:

Table 1. The comparison of families’ income at Northern and Southern zones of Tehran

	Under 200*		200-300		300-400		400-500		500-600		600-700		700-800		More than 800	
	NO.	per	NO.	per	NO.	per	NO.	per	NO.	per	NO.	per	NO.	per	NO.	per
South	12	8.3	36	25	30	20.8	20	13.8	24	16.6	16	11.1	6	4.1	0	0
North	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	9.3	18	14	12	9.3	22	17.1	64	50

*Thousand Toomans

Table 2 indicated the educational grade of students. As it shown in table2, 104 (38.2 %) of subjects were female and 168 (61.7 %) of them were male. The freshman students were the most, while the senior students were the least.

Table 2. The demographic situation of students

	Female		Male		
	Per %	No.	Per %	No.	
36.5	38	38.0	64	Freshman	
20.1	21	26.7	45	Sophomore	
29.8	31	20.8	35	Junior	
13.4	14	14.2	24	Senior	
104		168		Total	

Table 3 is related to the status of parents’ literacy. According to presented information in this table, there was no PhD parent for the students who live in Southern of Tehran city and all the Northern fathers have at least Diploma.

Table 3. The literacy situation of parents at Northern and Southern zones of Tehran city

	South		North		
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	
21	16	6	0	Under Dip.	
105	74	18	4	Dip.	
17	51	81	87	BA	
1	3	21	31	M.Sc.	
0	0	2	6	PhD	

Table 4. t-Test Results

	Mean	SD	df	t	P Value
North	23	3.244			
South	16.8	4.25			

Discussion:

Adolescence is a period of life consistency associated with declining physical exercise level. Low SES students often do not have the same access to convenient facilities for physical exercise, compared to those from higher income facilities (Dollman & Lewis, 2009), and may be less likely to receive parental support (Sallis, & et al, 1996). Interventions to address inequities in physical exercise opportunities need to assist low SES parents to provide both instrumental and emotional support for their children.

This study examined the comparison of SES of the families and social support of parents from physical exercise of their children. The research findings indicated a significant difference between the amount of social support of the parents for physical exercise of students in the Northern and Southern zones of Tehran city. The comparison of findings with the previous studies in this area suggests that family SES has a great effect on the level of children's physical exercises. Almost, all previous studies have shown a strong and positive relationship between family support and the level of children's exercises (Dollman, & et al, 2007). The previous studies indicated some factors such as parental participation in physical exercises, encouragement of activity (Vilhjalmsson & Thorlindsson, 1998), and the provision of transportation to sporting events can increase the amount of physical activities. Such these studies identified inverse associations among SES and screen-based leisure time in South Australian youth, while the same trend has also been reported from various European countries (Veerecken, & et al, 2006). The results of this study were similar to Raudsepp (2006), Veigh et al (2004), Lennart (2006) and Santos (2004). Humbert found the Canadian youth from both high and low SES schools expressed the overwhelming importance of enjoyment as an attractant to physical activity (Humbert, & et al, 2006). Difference at the status of income and the level of parents' literacy seem to be the reasons that can be invoked to explain the present results. In fact, understanding the effective factors on adoption of appropriate physical exercise patterns in literate parents are more than low-literate and illiterate. In other words, children from low income families that go into society and school have less support for their physical activities. On the other hand, some studies reported overweight and motor poverty among the children with appropriate SES that were against our results (Florentino, & et al, 2003). This is perhaps due to prevalence of electronic games among children and the kind of culture in the examined countries. It's clear that the parents with high education levels are more aware of the benefits of physical activities and give a special attention to their children's participation in sports. It seems that improving welfare and economic situation of people will increase the demands for sport and physical activities that confirm the results of this study.

As the increasing prevalence of motor poverty among the students and adolescents, importance of physical exercise and avoid sedentary life-style should be the main goals of policy makers in health and education. Meanwhile, Educational officials should equip schools with different sporting equipments, safety standards in the school yard and employ the physical education experts to encourage students to have more productive sport class.

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