

**MANAGING STRESS AND STRENGTHENING STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL
WELL-BEING THROUGH PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES**

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Abstract. This article highlights the pedagogical significance of physical education activities in managing stress and strengthening students' psychological well-being. Psychological tension, emotional instability, and stress situations that arise in the educational process and their negative impact on students' development are analyzed, and the role of physical activity as an effective means of overcoming these challenges is substantiated. The article examines ways of organizing physical education classes with a focus on supporting psychological health, including the use of relaxation exercises, team sports games, and an individual approach. The research findings indicate that physical education activities have significant pedagogical potential in developing emotional stability, increasing stress resistance, and creating a healthy psychological environment among students.

Keywords: physical education, stress management, psychological well-being, emotional stability, healthy lifestyle, student health, physical activity.

In the context of globalization and the rapid development of information technologies, maintaining not only students' intellectual development but also their psychological well-being has become one of the priority tasks of the education system. High academic demands, pressure from assessment systems, social relationships, a competitive environment, and personal factors contribute to the emergence of stress among students. In turn, stress can lead to decreased concentration, reduced learning motivation, psychological strain, and various health-related problems.

From this perspective, physical education activities serve as an important pedagogical tool for developing students' stress management skills and strengthening their psychological well-being. Physical activity not only activates physiological processes in the body but also promotes positive emotional states, strengthens the nervous system, and helps maintain psychological balance. During sports activities, students develop essential qualities such as self-control, emotional stability, stress resilience, and social adaptation. At the same time, there is a growing need to organize physical education classes not only with a focus on physical development but also as a means of supporting psychological health. Therefore, this article examines the role of physical education activities in the process of managing stress among students, as well as their pedagogical potential and effective approaches to strengthening students' psychological well-being.

The issue of managing stress and developing healthy psychological well-being among students has been widely studied within the framework of global pedagogy, sports psychology, and healthy lifestyle concepts. This problem has particularly attracted the attention of many scholars from the perspective of the impact of physical education and sports activities on an individual's psychological stability. The scientific foundations of stress theory were developed in the twentieth century by the Canadian scientist Hans Selye, who interpreted stress as the body's adaptive response to external and internal factors. In his research, Selye emphasized the important role of physical activity in reducing stress and facilitating adaptation processes. This

theoretical approach later served as a methodological basis for research in the fields of sports and pedagogy.

In the field of sports psychology, Rainer Martens scientifically substantiated that emotional tension decreases, self-confidence increases, and stress resistance develops during the performance of physical exercises. His studies recognize regular physical training as an effective means of developing psychological stability in students. Within pedagogical psychology, Lev Vygotsky's views on personality development are also directly related to this topic. Based on the principle of the unity of education and activity, Vygotsky scientifically justified that physical activity has a positive impact on students' psychological development, particularly by strengthening their social and emotional state through group activities. Modern foreign studies conducted in the United States, Japan, South Korea, and European countries have empirically examined issues of stress management, prevention of depressive states, and ensuring psychological well-being among school and college students through physical education classes. Research findings indicate that physical training organized at least two to three times a week stabilizes students' psychological state, reduces anxiety levels, and has a positive impact on learning activities. Studies conducted by Uzbek scholars also emphasize the role of physical education in personal development. In particular, national pedagogical research has revealed the educational, health-promoting, and psychological protective functions of physical education activities. These studies substantiate that enriching physical education lessons with relaxation exercises, breathing techniques, and sports games contributes to the development of students' stress management skills. Moreover, recent studies based on a competency-based approach highlight the need to organize physical education not only as a means of physical development but also as a tool for creating a healthy psychological environment. Within this approach, physical education activities are considered to contribute to the development of competencies related to emotional regulation, stress adaptation, and psychological stability.

Overall, the analyzed studies demonstrate that physical education activities possess significant pedagogical and psychological potential in managing stress and strengthening students' psychological well-being. However, the analysis of existing scientific works confirms that the issue of organizing this process in educational institutions on a systematic and methodological basis remains highly relevant.

The issue of managing stress and ensuring healthy psychological well-being among students is a complex process that requires the integration of pedagogy, psychology, and physical education. The theoretical foundations of this process are explained through several important scientific approaches and concepts. In modern psychology, stress is interpreted not only as a negative response to external influences but also as a manageable psychological process. Stress management theory is directly related to an individual's ability to recognize their emotional state, control it, and choose appropriate coping strategies. According to this approach, when a student encounters a stressful situation, they should not respond passively but instead activate active adaptation mechanisms. In this regard, the cognitive approach explains stress through how an individual evaluates a situation. If a student perceives a problem as a situation that can be overcome, the level of stress decreases. Physical education activities create an environment that fosters such positive cognitive appraisal. In physical education theory, physical activity is considered a factor that exerts a comprehensive effect on the human body. Motor activity stimulates the central nervous system, reduces emotional tension, and helps restore psychological balance. Therefore, physical exercises are interpreted as a natural mechanism for reducing stress. From a pedagogical perspective, physical education activities develop students' ability to understand their bodies, manage their internal states, and regulate emotions. This process is regarded as an essential condition for strengthening psychological health.

According to activity theory, personal development is realized through activity. Physical education classes present students as active subjects and foster qualities such as goal orientation, willpower, perseverance, and self-regulation. These qualities are considered key factors in ensuring psychological stability in stressful situations. In addition, group physical activities contribute to the improvement of the socio-psychological environment by enhancing mutual support, cooperation, and social adaptation among students. This, in turn, helps reduce the social factors of stress.

Within the framework of social learning theory, physical education activities are regarded as a means of learning through modeling. As emphasized by the founder of this approach, Albert Bandura, individuals acquire new forms of behavior by observing and imitating the actions of others. In the process of physical education, teachers and active students demonstrate how to respond to stressful situations, which in turn contributes to the formation of positive psychological reactions in other learners. In pedagogical theory, healthy psychological well-being is defined by a student's emotional stability, positive mood, self-confidence, and intrinsic motivation toward learning activities. Physical education classes create a supportive pedagogical environment that fosters these qualities and promotes the holistic development of students as individuals. Therefore, from a theoretical perspective, physical education activities can be interpreted as an integrated pedagogical system aimed at managing stress, ensuring emotional stability, and maintaining psychological health.

In the modern educational process, students' psychological stability and stress resilience are among the key factors determining their overall development and academic performance. From this standpoint, organizing physical education classes with a focus on stress management and strengthening psychological well-being is of great pedagogical significance. First of all, it is important to enrich the content of physical education classes with exercises that promote psychological relaxation. Active movements, rhythmic exercises, and free physical activity help reduce internal tension and induce emotional release among students. Such activities contribute to calming the nervous system, eliminating negative emotions, and restoring psychological balance. The use of breathing and relaxation exercises is also an effective way to manage stress. Applying deep and rhythmic breathing techniques during physical education classes stabilizes students' emotional states and reduces levels of anxiety and excitement. In particular, relaxation exercises performed at the end of a lesson have a positive effect on students' psychological condition.

The use of team sports games is considered an important pedagogical approach to stress management. Exercises and games performed in a group strengthen students' sense of social support and reduce feelings of loneliness and internal pressure. Through such activities, students gain opportunities to freely express their emotions, communicate with others, and experience positive emotions, which contributes to the formation of a healthy psychological environment.

In addition, applying an individual approach in physical education classes plays a significant role in managing stress. Selecting exercises while taking into account each student's physical and psychological capacities and organizing them gradually without excessive strain helps strengthen students' self-confidence. A student who understands their own abilities and experiences a sense of success demonstrates greater resilience to stressful situations. Creating a motivational environment is also an effective way to reduce stress through physical education. Encouragement, positive feedback, and recognition of students' small achievements have a positive impact on their emotional state. Such an approach increases students' interest in physical education classes and reduces psychological pressure. Furthermore, organizing physical

education classes on a regular and systematic basis plays a crucial role in stress management. Continuous physical activity enhances students' adaptability to stress, ensures psychological stability, and fosters a positive attitude toward a healthy lifestyle.

In conclusion, managing stress and strengthening healthy psychological well-being through physical education activities can be effectively achieved by properly planning lesson content, using relaxation and team-based exercises, ensuring an individual approach, and creating a positive pedagogical environment. This process contributes not only to students' physical development but also to their psychological well-being.

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