KMANPUB Health Nexus Vol. 4 No. 1 (2026)

Article history:
Received 02 May 2022
Revised 12 Jul 2022
Accepted 27 Aug 2022
Initial Published 03 Oct 2022
Final Publication 01 January 2026

Sports Activity Level and Behavioral Maladjustment Among Male Secondary School Students in Tehran Province, Iran: A Cross-Sectional Survey

Reza Omidi Ghanbari[1*], Moud Bonyadifard[2], Morteza Soleimani[3]

[1] PhD in Exercise Physiology, General Department of Education of Tehran Province Counties, Tehran, Iran
[2] PhD in Sport Management, General Department of Education, Tehran City, Tehran, Iran
[3] Student Organization Expert, General Department of Education of Tehran Province Counties; Education Office, District 1, Baharestan, Iran

*** Corresponding author email address**:

Editor	Reviewers
Luis Felipe Reynoso-Sánchez Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, Autonomous University of Occident, Los Mochis, Sinaloa, Mexico felipe.reynoso@uadeo.mx	Reviewer 1: Ali Hemmati Afif Associate Professor of Sport Sciences, Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin, Iran. Email: Hemmatiafif@soc.ikiu.ac.ir Reviewer 2: Elahe Arabameri Department of Motor Behavior, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. Email: a.abooei@tea.sau.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1 Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

While the study effectively utilizes a one-way ANOVA to compare behavioral maladjustment across different physical activity levels, it fails to account for potential confounding variables. Factors such as socioeconomic status, family dynamics, academic performance, and peer influence could heavily impact behavioral outcomes; thus, incorporating a multivariate regression model to control for these variables would substantially strengthen the validity of the findings.

Information regarding formal ethical approval and informed consent is noticeably absent from the manuscript. It is a strict prerequisite for human subjects research that the authors state the name of the institutional review board or ethics committee that approved the study, provide the specific ethical approval code, and explicitly confirm that informed consent was obtained from both the minor participants and their parents or legal guardians.

The sample is exclusively restricted to male secondary school students from specific counties in Tehran Province, which severely limits the external validity of the study. The authors must expand the “Limitations” section to thoroughly discuss

how these findings might differ for female students or youth residing in other geographic, rural, or cultural settings within Iran, and caution against overgeneralizing the results.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the updated document.

1.2 Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The reliance on a cross-sectional design is a major limitation that restricts the ability to draw causal conclusions, and this should be emphasized more critically in the discussion. It is highly plausible that reverse causality is at play, meaning that students who already possess lower levels of behavioral maladjustment are naturally more inclined or permitted to participate in high-level sports, rather than the sports participation directly reducing their maladjustment.

The "Behavioral maladjustment" questionnaire is introduced as a researcher-made instrument, and while it reports an acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.81$), it lacks sufficient details regarding its development and validation. The authors need to provide a clearer description of the specific items, subscales, and the statistical methods used to establish construct validity, such as exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis.

The statistical reporting of the ANOVA and Tukey post-hoc tests is incomplete because it omits standardized effect sizes. Simply stating that there is a "large" significant difference between the high and low activity groups is insufficient; the authors must report exact effect size metrics (such as $\eta^2$for the ANOVA and Cohen's $d$for pairwise comparisons) to demonstrate the practical, rather than just statistical, significance of the findings.

The categorization criteria for the sports activity levels (e.g., defining "High activity" as more than 5 days and more than 5 hours per week) appear somewhat arbitrary and lack formal justification. The authors should explicitly cite relevant international guidelines, such as those from the World Health Organization (WHO), or prior validated physical activity metrics to justify why these specific cut-off points were chosen for adolescent males.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the updated document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.

Health Nexus
E-ISSN: 2981-2569