



Comparing the Effectiveness of Two Pedagogical Approaches to Enhance Motivation and the Adoption of an Active Lifestyle in Higher Education

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Abstract

Background: Quebec students enrolled in postsecondary institutions (CEGEPs) are not immune to the widespread decline in physical activity participation (PAP) (Caputo et al., 2024; WHO, 2024). At this level of education, three 30-hour physical education (PE) courses are mandatory for graduation. This quasi-experimental study aimed to compare the effectiveness of two pedagogical approaches on out-of-class PAP and student motivation over a 15-week period. In the traditional approach, the PE teacher required all students to plan and achieve 150 minutes of weekly PAP, in line with WHO recommendations. In the innovative approach, teachers asked students to plan and achieve an increase of 30 minutes relative to their current PAP level, regardless of the 150-minute guideline.

Methods: A pre–post quasi-experimental design was conducted with 455 students (mean age = 18.1 years, SD = 2.2) across 19 groups (10 control, 9 experimental). Data were collected using the French version of the Global Physical Activity Questionnaire (WHO, 2006) and the Sport Motivation Scale II (Pelletier et al., 2019). Given the non-normal distribution of variables, Wilcoxon signed-rank tests for paired samples were performed.

Results: Results showed no significant differences between the two approaches regarding PAP and sedentary behavior, although both groups slightly reduced the proportion of highly inactive individuals. Both approaches led to significant increases in self-determined forms of motivation, with a stronger effect observed in the traditional approach, while amotivation remained stable. These findings highlight the complexity of translating motivational gains into sustained behavioral changes and underscore the need for more targeted interventions aimed at the least active students.

Keywords: Physical activity participation; Student motivation; Pedagogical approaches; Higher education; Sedentary behavior



References

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