

Exploration of College Students' Motivation to Participate in Physical Education Classes

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Abstract: Physical education classes, as a vital component of university education, play a significant role in the physical and mental health and comprehensive development of college students. However, there is a general lack of motivation among college students to participate in physical education classes, which affects the teaching effectiveness of these courses. This paper analyzes the current status of college students' motivation to participate in physical education classes, explores the factors influencing motivation, and proposes practical strategies to positively impact the participation levels in college physical education classes.

Keywords: College Students; Physical Education Classes; Participation Motivation

With the increasing awareness of health, physical education is playing an increasingly important role in the comprehensive development of college students. However, the participation level in college physical education classes is less than satisfactory, necessitating an in-depth investigation into the motivational factors behind it. Researching the current status and influencing factors of college students' motivation to participate in physical education classes, and exploring strategies to enhance this motivation, is of great significance for improving the enthusiasm of college students to participate in physical education classes and for increasing classroom effectiveness.

1. Analysis of the Current Status of College Students' Motivation to Participate in Physical Education Classes

1.1 Types and Characteristics of Motivation to Participate in Physical Education Classes

The types of motivation to participate in physical education classes can generally be divided into two main categories: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to the drive of students to participate in physical education classes due to interest in the activity itself, enjoyment, or the fulfillment of personal needs, and this type of motivation is usually closely related to personal emotions, interests, and self-actualization. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, refers to the drive to participate in physical education classes due to external factors such as grade requirements, social expectations, and reward mechanisms. The characteristics of these two types of motivation are exhibited in varying degrees among different students. Students driven by intrinsic motivation tend to be more active and willing to participate, whereas those driven by extrinsic motivation may be more influenced by external conditions, and their attitude towards participation may not be consistently stable.^[1]

1.2 Comparative Analysis of Motivation to Participate in Physical Education Classes Among Different Types of College Students

There are significant differences in the motivation to participate in physical education classes among different types of college students. For instance, students majoring in physical education may be more driven by intrinsic motivation due to their deeper interest in sports and higher professional requirements. In contrast, non-physical education majors may be influenced to a greater extent by extrinsic motivation, such as to fulfill credit requirements or to pursue external recognition. Additionally, students of different genders,

academic years, and cultural backgrounds may also vary in their types of motivation and levels of participation. By analyzing these differences, educators can better understand the needs of their students and thus take targeted measures to stimulate their motivation to participate.

1.3 Main Factors Affecting Motivation to Participate in Physical Education Classes

The factors affecting college students' motivation to participate in physical education classes are multifaceted, encompassing both personal factors, such as students' personality, interests, health status, and past sports experiences, and environmental factors, such as the attractiveness of course content, teaching methods of instructors, peer influence, and the sports facilities and resources provided by the school. In addition, family and socio-cultural backgrounds also influence students' motivation to participate in physical education classes. For example, a family background that values physical exercise and a healthy lifestyle may encourage students to actively participate in physical education classes. Understanding these factors can assist educators and policymakers in taking more effective measures to enhance participation in college physical education classes and improve the overall quality of physical activities.

2. Exploration of Factors Influencing College Students' Motivation to Participate in Physical Education Classes

2.1 Individual Factors: Gender, Academic Year, Interest in Sports, etc.

Individual factors have a direct and profound impact on college students' motivation to participate in physical education classes. Gender differences may lead to variations in preferences and participation levels between male and female students, with males possibly favoring sports that are more competitive and team-oriented, while females may prefer activities with a strong sense of rhythm and high social interaction. The academic year can also affect motivation; as students progress through their academic career, their autonomy increases, and they tend to make choices about physical activities based on personal interest. Additionally, students' interest in sports and previous sports experience are key factors; students who love sports are more likely to actively participate in physical education classes and derive satisfaction from them^[2].

2.2 Environmental Factors: Course Content, Teaching Methods, Facilities, etc.

Environmental factors play a crucial role in the motivation of college students to participate in physical education classes. The richness and entertainment value of course content can significantly increase student participation. When the curriculum meets the diverse needs of students, they are more willing to engage. Innovation in teaching methods is also key to fostering student enthusiasm; for instance, the use of gamified learning and interactive teaching can stimulate student interest. In addition, the condition of facilities cannot be overlooked for the attractiveness of physical education classes. Modern and well-equipped sports facilities can provide a better sports experience, thereby enhancing students' willingness to participate.

2.3 Sociocultural Factors:

Social Concepts, Cultural Backgrounds, etc. Sociocultural factors play a subtle yet significant role in shaping college students' motivation to participate in physical education classes. The level of importance that society places on sports can influence students' attitudes. For instance, in societies that emphasize the relationship between sports and health, students may be more aware of the importance of physical activities. Cultural backgrounds also affect students' perceptions and behaviors towards sports. Different cultures have varying value conceptions of sports and preferences for traditional activities, leading to a diverse range of participation in physical education classes. Understanding these cultural factors helps educators design courses and activities that are more closely aligned with students' realities, thereby improving teaching effectiveness.

3. Strategies to Enhance College Students' Motivation to Participate in Physical Education Classes

3.1 Optimization and Innovation of Physical Education Curriculum Content

Optimizing and innovating the content of physical education courses is key to stimulating college students' motivation to participate. Course design should be based on students' interests and needs, offering a variety of physical activity options. For example, in addition to traditional sports like basketball and soccer, courses could include popular activities such as street dance, yoga, and cycling to cater to different students' interests. Moreover, course content should combine practicality with fun, such as organizing outdoor adventures or orienteering activities, which not only exercise students' physical abilities but also enhance their problem-solving skills and the joy of teamwork. Additionally, courses should incorporate elements of health education, teaching students how to maintain physical health and relieve stress through physical activities, making the curriculum closely related to students' personal

lives and career plans, thus increasing their intrinsic motivation to participate in physical education. Through these optimizations and innovations, the physical education curriculum will become more varied and engaging, attracting students to actively participate and fostering a habit and interest in lifelong physical fitness.

3.2 Improvement of Teaching Methods and Means

Traditional physical education teaching is often teacher-centered with low student participation, which can fail to ignite students' enthusiasm for learning. Therefore, teaching methods should focus more on student agency, adopting more interactive and participatory teaching models. For instance, implementing cooperative learning in small groups, where students play different roles within the group to complete physical tasks or solve problems, can enhance their teamwork skills as well as their sense of involvement and responsibility. Introducing modern information technology, such as using apps to record sports data or virtual reality (VR) technology to experience different sports environments, can greatly increase the interest and appeal of the course. Additionally, the method of teaching evaluation should be reformed. It should not rely solely on exam scores but should consider students' classroom performance, participation, progress, and their practical application of sports knowledge. Through these improvements in teaching methods and means, students' autonomous learning abilities can be effectively enhanced, and their interest and enthusiasm for physical education can be stimulated, thereby encouraging active participation in sports activities.

3.3 Improvement of Sports Facilities and Environment

Improving sports facilities and the environment is also crucial for enhancing students' motivation to participate in physical education classes. Schools should invest in modern sports facilities, ensuring diversity and safety to meet the sports needs of different students. Improving the accessibility and convenience of using sports venues ensures that all students have the opportunity to use the facilities at suitable times. Additionally, creating a positive sports culture that encourages healthy competition and mutual support among students can greatly enhance their willingness to participate in sports activities. By improving the physical environment and facilities, students are more likely to be motivated to engage in physical education and maintain an active lifestyle.

Conclusion

This article has explored the motivations of college students for participating in physical education classes, finding that there is a variety of motivations and that they differ among students. In order to enhance these motivations, the article has proposed strategies such as optimizing and innovating the content of physical education courses, improving teaching methods and means, and improving sports facilities and the environment. It is hoped that by implementing these strategies, college students' motivation to participate in physical education can be increased, thereby promoting their physical and mental health and comprehensive development.

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