

Development of Wellness Culture through corrective gymnastics

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Abstract

Background and Study Aim Immobility leads to a decrease in the adaptive functions of the body, which is expressed in a weakening of the immune system and disorders in the psycho-emotional state. In addition, it harms the musculoskeletal system. The aim is to establish the influence of corrective spinal gymnastics on the development of the wellness culture, through optimal motor load in the tracked age period.

Material and Methods The study subjects are 26 eight-year-old students from the initial stage of education at a metropolitan school. The dynamics of motor activity indicators based on spinal straightening complexes between boys and girls were monitored in five motor tests to determine the level of motor capacity. A comparative analysis of empirical values was carried out between the beginning and end of the study period from September 2023 to May 2024.

Results Different types of sports stress different muscle groups, so progress is different in tests. All adolescents should be encouraged to play sports. The students in the study group are heterogeneous, showing progress in different tests. At the end of the school year, some students show no progress in results or maintain the levels from the beginning of the school year.

Conclusions The decisive improvement of students' motor development is of extreme importance for their general working ability and their future realization in various areas of life. For this reason, complex effective measures are needed, especially in schools, so that physical education becomes a truly decisive factor for the high level of motor development, comprehensively affirming the Wellness Culture.

Keywords: corrective gymnastics, wellness culture, spinal gymnastics, motor development

Introduction

The promotion of wellness culture has gained significant attention as an integral part of enhancing physical and mental health in modern society. Wellness culture encompasses a holistic approach to health, integrating physical activity, mental well-being, and healthy lifestyle practices. It serves as a foundation for promoting lifelong habits that enhance quality of life, particularly when introduced during formative years. Through activities like corrective gymnastics, wellness culture offers opportunities to address physical development while fostering resilience and overall well-being in children.

Numerous studies highlight the significance of "Wellness Culture" and "Wellness Practices" in promoting physical health, mental well-being, and a balanced lifestyle. Nesheva and Chipeva [1] studied the integration of cheerleading into school wellness programs as part of physical education. They assert that cheerleading promotes physical fitness, social skills, and emotional well-being among students. The authors also highlight the importance of ensuring safety and supervision in cheerleading activities to maximize its benefits and foster a holistic approach to student wellness.

Ignatova [2] explored the integration of smart educational models in wellness practices, emphasizing their role in enhancing physical activity and promoting emotional intelligence among students. The study highlights the potential of innovative methodologies, including distance learning technologies, to support the development of wellness culture and motor potential. Author asserts that these approaches can effectively improve physical, mental, and emotional well-being in educational settings.

Dimitrova [3] investigated the standards for wellness services and the certified skills of specialized staff within the Bulgarian niche tourism industry. The study highlights the critical need for well-trained personnel to meet the increasing demands of the wellness sector and emphasizes the importance of standardization in service quality. Author concludes that collaboration between institutions and organizations is essential for developing state standards and certification programs to ensure high-quality wellness services and enhance Bulgaria's competitiveness in the global market.

Ustyenko [4] analyzed the influence of wellness culture on the formation and development of the wellness industry. The study introduced the concepts of "wellness culture" and "wellness industry," emphasizing their structural components and social functions. Author highlights the need

for effective integration between tourism and the wellness industry, focusing on innovative recreational approaches, modernization of facilities, and national programs to promote wellness tourism as a means to enhance quality of life.

Authors of studies on “Wellness Culture” emphasize its essential role in fostering lifelong health and well-being. They highlight the necessity of integrating wellness practices into daily routines and educational settings to build a strong foundation for physical and mental resilience.

Numerous studies emphasize the importance of “Corrective Gymnastics” particularly in school-aged children and younger populations, for addressing postural issues, enhancing motor skills, and promoting overall physical development. In a study by Palhares [5], the theoretical principles of corrective gymnastics were examined with a focus on postural biomechanics. The author highlights the importance of the pelvis as the central structure for posture and emphasizes exercises that address the entire locomotor system while respecting individual limits. The findings suggest that corrective gymnastics, by incorporating systematic and holistic exercises, can improve musculoskeletal function, postural alignment, and overall balance.

In research conducted by Živković and Buišić [6], the role of corrective gymnastics in early childhood education was examined, with a focus on its integration into curricula for educators and teachers. The study emphasizes the importance of preventive and corrective exercises in addressing postural disorders and body deformities in preschool and young school-age children. The authors argue for the inclusion of corrective gymnastics as a mandatory subject in teacher training programs, highlighting its potential to promote proper posture, support motor development, and enhance overall health from an early age.

In research conducted by Kinov [7], the role of corrective gymnastics was examined in physical education lessons for students in special schools for individuals with mental retardation. The author highlights the effectiveness of specially designed gymnastic exercises in addressing scoliosis and other postural deformities common in this population. Author findings demonstrate that regular application of corrective exercises significantly reduced the prevalence and severity of scoliosis, showcasing the potential of targeted physical activities to improve musculoskeletal health and overall physical function in children with mental disabilities.

A study by Rokicka-Hebel [8] evaluated the impact of corrective gymnastics on motor skills in five- and six-year-old preschool children. The author revealed that while participants demonstrated slight improvements in specific skills, such as walking on a balance bench and throwing a ball against a wall,

the overall contribution of corrective gymnastics to motor development was limited. The study concluded that the effectiveness of these activities depends heavily on the quality of implementation and the engagement of educators.

Research on “Corrective Gymnastics” underscores its critical role in supporting the healthy physical development of children. The findings advocate for the inclusion of corrective exercises in early education programs to address postural issues and enhance motor coordination effectively.

Evidence supporting this is presented in other studies on various aspects of the application and use of corrective exercises for different conditions and age groups. Corrective exercises are very necessary for today’s immobile and physically unprepared teenagers [9, 10, 11, 12]. Physical education, along with moral, aesthetic, mental, and work education, supports the all-round development of the personality, making it equally beneficial for the individual and society [13, 14, 15, 16]. Different types of corrective exercises are incorporated into each of the presented lesson units, with emphasis on proper execution to achieve the goals and objectives of the research [17, 18, 19, 20].

Despite the growing body of evidence highlighting the benefits of wellness culture and corrective gymnastics, significant challenges remain in their practical implementation. Many educational institutions still lack structured programs that effectively integrate these practices into the daily routines of children and adolescents. Moreover, the variability in execution quality and the limited engagement of educators often hinder achieving the desired outcomes. Addressing these gaps requires continued research and a concerted effort to develop comprehensive strategies that align with the diverse needs of different age groups and conditions.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the influence of corrective spinal gymnastics on the development of wellness culture through optimal motor load during the observed age period. The object of the study is the process of pedagogical interaction and the impact of corrective exercises on posture correction.

Materials and Methods

Participants

The study included 26 eight-year-old students from the initial stage of education at a metropolitan school. Ethical standards for research involving human participants were strictly adhered to, in compliance with the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski.” Written informed consent was obtained from the parents or legal guardians of all participants prior to the commencement of the study.

Study Design

Tests

The study utilized several motor tests, each designed to assess specific physical qualities and performed under modified or group methods:

1. *30m Run (Modified Method)*. This test evaluates speed and acceleration over a short distance. Participants start from a standing position and sprint 30 meters as quickly as possible, with the time recorded for each student.
2. *Standing Long Jump (Modified Method)*. The standing long jump measures explosive leg power. Participants jump forward from a standing position, landing on both feet. The distance is measured from the take-off line to the nearest point of contact on landing.
3. *Throwing a Solid Ball (Modified Method)*. This test assesses upper body strength and coordination. Students throw a heavy, solid ball as far as possible using a two-handed overhead technique. The distance of the throw is recorded.
4. *Shuttle Run (Modified Method) 4 x 50m*. The shuttle run tests endurance and speed over a longer distance. Participants run back and forth between set markers, completing multiple lengths to cover a total distance of 200 meters.
5. *Agility T-Test (Modified Method)*. This combined test was modified based on the well-known "Agility T-test," which evaluates change-of-direction speed during forward sprinting, lateral shuffling to the left and right, and back-pedaling [21, 22]. The test was further enhanced by incorporating a tennis ball throw. Additionally, a rubber hoop was used as part of the test.

The dynamics of motor activity indicators based on spinal straightening exercises were monitored through five motor tests to assess the level of motor capacity in boys and girls. A comparative analysis of empirical values was conducted between the beginning and end of the study period, spanning from September 2023 to May 2024.

Assessment of Motor Activity

The evaluation of motor activity was performed as follows:

- Assessment of individual test results.
- Calculation of the final physical capacity score.

The assessment of individual test results was conducted using two methods:

1. A 20-point scale.
2. Interval determination according to a six-point scoring system.

To evaluate individual test results using the 20-point scale:

- The points assigned for each result were determined based on the age and gender of the students, using standardized tables.
- This process was repeated for all tests.
- The scores obtained were converted to the six-

point grading system, and the final physical capacity score was calculated as the arithmetic mean of the scores from all tests.

Using a 20-point scale provides better comparability between individual tests and highlights how many points are needed to achieve a higher score.

To evaluate results using the six-point scoring system:

- The scores were determined according to the age and gender of the students, referencing standardized tables.
- Scores from all tests were averaged to calculate the final physical capacity score.

The final assessment of a student's physical capacity was calculated only when results from all five tests were available.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of corrective spinal gymnastics on motor capacity and posture correction in eight-year-old students. Data collected from motor fitness tests were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, with comparisons drawn between the beginning (September 2023) and end (May 2024) of the academic year.

For each test, results were assessed using a 20-point scale and a six-point grading system. The final physical capacity score for each participant was calculated as the arithmetic mean of the scores across all five motor tests. Comparative analysis included evaluating differences in the dynamics of motor activity indicators between boys and girls. The significance of progress within the academic year was determined by comparing mean scores at the two time points.

The results were further analyzed to identify trends in motor development, taking into account factors such as individual variability and the impact of regular participation in physical education lessons. Descriptive statistics and graphical methods, such as bar charts, were used to illustrate group performance and highlight differences in test results over the study period.

Results

The study assessed the maximum percentage improvement in performance indicators for each motor test among all participants. Figure 1 summarizes the results, showcasing the highest percentage increase in performance across various physical tests, including speed, power, and agility. These improvements highlight the effectiveness of the applied corrective spinal gymnastics program. As shown in Figure 1, the *Standing Long Jump* demonstrated the highest maximum improvement (33%), indicating significant gains in explosive leg power among participants. The

remaining tests showed consistent improvements of 16% to 17%, reflecting balanced progress in speed, strength, and agility. These results suggest that the corrective spinal gymnastics program effectively enhanced physical performance across various motor domains. The differences in improvement percentages may be attributed to the specific nature of each test and its emphasis on particular physical qualities.

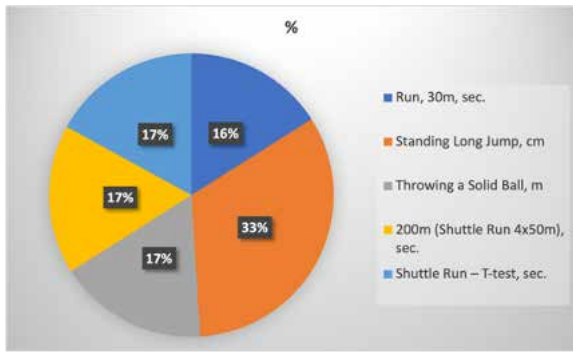


Figure 1. Maximum Performance Improvements in Motor Tests

The study also analyzed the average relative increase in motor activity for boys and girls across various physical tests. Figure 2 presents the results, highlighting gender-specific differences in the improvement of motor performance. These findings provide insights into the effectiveness of corrective spinal gymnastics in enhancing physical capabilities for both genders. Figure 2 highlights gender-based variations in the relative increase in motor activity across the tests. Boys demonstrated the highest improvement in one of the power-based tests, while girls showed greater progress in tests emphasizing agility and coordination. In some tests, boys exhibited higher average relative increases, while girls performed better in others, suggesting that gender differences influence the development of specific motor skills. These variations may be attributed to differences in physical attributes,

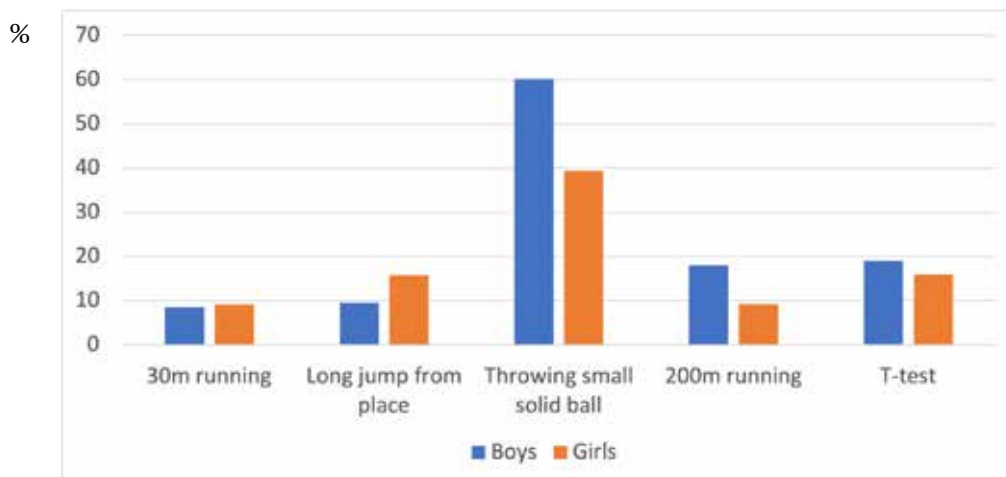


Figure 2. Analysis of Average Relative Increase in Motor Activity

training response, or baseline performance. These results confirm and align well with the findings of our previous study [23].

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to evaluate the influence of corrective spinal gymnastics on motor activity and posture correction in eight-year-old students. The results indicate significant improvements in motor capacity among participants, particularly in specific tests such as the standing long jump and the 1kg medicine ball push at the end of the experimental period. However, variations in performance were observed, with some students maintaining similar levels of motor ability throughout the study.

The present study builds upon the author’s prior research [12-18, 23], affirming the effectiveness and relevance of implementing innovative methodologies in physical education to promote Wellness Culture and enhance motor capacity. Previous studies demonstrated the benefits of integrating specialized systems, such as the Blaze-Pod Trainer, to develop agility and general motor readiness in school-aged children, while highlighting the critical role of structured physical education in addressing motor deficits caused by modern sedentary lifestyles and e-learning environments [12, 16]. Furthermore, earlier findings emphasized the importance of fostering speed, strength, and coordination abilities, aligning them with the developmental characteristics of younger students [14]. The current results corroborate these conclusions, extending their practical applicability by validating corrective gymnastics as a means to address postural issues and support motor improvement in primary education settings. These findings underscore the necessity of adopting comprehensive and innovative approaches to physical education to ensure sustained progress in motor skills and overall wellness [2].

The findings align with existing research emphasizing the importance of Wellness Culture and corrective gymnastics in improving physical capacity and promoting overall health. For instance, Nesheva and Chipeva [1] demonstrated how wellness practices, including physical activities, foster social skills and emotional well-being, which is consistent with the observed positive effects on the students' motivation and participation in this study. Similarly, Ignatova [2] highlighted the role of innovative approaches in wellness education, suggesting that modern methodologies can further enhance the effectiveness of corrective gymnastics [1, 2].

The present results also resonate with Dimitrova's [3] analysis, which underscored the significance of structured wellness programs in institutional settings. Author emphasis on standardization and high-quality implementation parallels the need for well-prepared and thoroughly executed physical education lessons observed in this study [3].

In the context of corrective gymnastics, the findings reinforce earlier conclusions about its role in addressing postural issues and enhancing motor skills. Palhares [5] emphasized the biomechanical principles of corrective gymnastics, particularly its focus on improving the stability and alignment of the spinal region, which is central to the exercises applied in this study. Moreover, Živković and Buišić [6] stressed the importance of incorporating corrective gymnastics into early education curricula, a practice reflected in the current research's integration of spinal exercises into the physical education program [6].

Ustyenko's work on the structural components of wellness culture and its social functions further supports the significance of combining corrective gymnastics with wellness practices to optimize health outcomes [4]. This aligns with the emphasis in this study on achieving both motor improvements and broader wellness goals through tailored physical activities [4].

The role of teacher engagement and the quality of exercise implementation, highlighted by Kinov [7] and Rokicka-Hebel [8], is evident in this study. These authors pointed out that the success of corrective gymnastics largely depends on the involvement of educators and their ability to adapt exercises to individual needs. This study observed similar trends, where teacher involvement directly influenced the progress of students in motor tests [7, 8].

While the results affirm the benefits of corrective gymnastics, they also highlight existing challenges, such as variability in student progress and the impact of factors like attendance, motivation, and extracurricular activity levels. The heterogeneity of the study group underscores the importance of individualized approaches and the need for further research to optimize training programs for diverse

populations.

To emphasize the connection between upbringing at the age of eight and potential manifestations in adulthood, it is essential to recognize that habits and physical activity patterns established during childhood significantly influence health outcomes later in life. Evidence suggests that early interventions targeting motor skill development, posture correction, and wellness culture lay the foundation for improved physical fitness, reduced risk of chronic diseases, and better overall quality of life in adulthood. These findings are supported by studies that highlight the long-term impact of early childhood education and physical activity on adult health and well-being:

- The relationship between burnout and wellness culture has been observed in emergency medicine providers, where moderate correlations were found between wellness culture domains, such as value alignment and provider appreciation, and lower burnout rates [24].
- Social media plays a significant role in promoting wellness culture, as seen in plastic surgery residency programs, where Instagram had the highest engagement rates, and wellness-related content primarily focused on work-life balance and educational events [25].
- Research has questioned the inclusivity of wellness culture, examining how it often excludes certain demographics, highlighting the need for more equitable approaches [26, 27].
- The use of innovative methodologies, such as Blaze-Pod Trainer systems, has demonstrated effectiveness in developing motor potential and agility in primary education, affirming the role of structured physical education programs in fostering wellness culture [16].
- The positioning of continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) as luxury wellness technologies highlights broader trends in health and wellness culture, raising concerns about accessibility and equity in preventative health measures [28].
- Digital wellness culture is expanding through email marketing strategies, offering a perceived escape from mainstream healthcare timelines while promoting personal engagement and global adoption of wellness ideals [29].
- Higher perceptions of wellness culture and workplace appreciation have been linked to improved mental health outcomes and reduced burnout among academic faculty, emphasizing the importance of institutional support in fostering wellness [30, 31].
- The interplay between wellness culture and participatory social media affordances has been shown to enable the spread of misinformation and extremism, raising concerns about its ethical and social implications [32].

In this context, the results of our study not only complement previous findings but also confirm and provide new insights into addressing the problem. By focusing on corrective spinal gymnastics and its impact on motor development and wellness culture among school-aged children, our research highlights the practical application of tailored physical education methodologies. These findings reinforce the importance of structured, age-appropriate interventions to enhance motor skills, promote healthy habits, and support overall well-being, while also addressing gaps identified in previous studies related to accessibility and long-term effectiveness.

Limitations of the Study

This study has certain limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. Firstly, the sample size of 26 students, though sufficient for initial observations, may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Secondly, the study focused solely on eight-year-old students, which restricts the applicability of the results to other age groups.

Additionally, the influence of external factors, such as varying levels of extracurricular physical activity, parental involvement, and nutritional habits, was not controlled. These factors could have contributed to differences in motor development and physical performance among participants.

Finally, the study period of one academic year may not fully capture long-term trends or the sustained impact of corrective spinal gymnastics on motor development and wellness. Future research should consider longitudinal designs and larger, more diverse samples to validate and extend these findings.

Practical Recommendations

Systematic inclusion of spinal-rectifying complexes in physical education lessons is essential. Regular monitoring and consistent application during each session help address individual needs and support overall motor development.

Motor fitness test data should be used to identify strengths and weaknesses of individual students and the class as a whole. Tracking the dynamics of physical qualities over time allows teachers to adjust training methods and improve their effectiveness. Analytical assessments provide valuable insights into the success of applied training methods and help refine them for better outcomes.

The systematic evaluation of results enables teachers to identify athletically gifted students and guide them toward specialized training activities. Schools should implement multi-faceted approaches to ensure that physical education becomes a decisive factor in achieving high levels of motor development and fostering Wellness Culture.

Progress within the academic year can be measured by comparing test scores from the beginning and the end of the year, focusing on the impact of training while considering limitations related to ontogenetic factors.

Conclusions

The findings of this study underscore the importance of integrating corrective spinal gymnastics into physical education programs to support the development of motor skills and wellness culture among young students. This approach aligns with broader educational objectives, emphasizing the holistic development of children and the promotion of healthy habits from an early age.

The study highlights the need for structured, systematic methodologies in physical education, tailored to the diverse needs and abilities of students. The effectiveness of such programs depends significantly on the active engagement of educators and the consistent implementation of evidence-based practices.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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