

INTEGRATION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES INTO GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

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Abstract: Emotional well-being and physical activity are two essential components that support students' holistic development. This article explores how physical activity can enhance students' emotional well-being through guidance and counseling services. Using a literature review method, the article examines relevant studies published between 2014 and 2025. The findings indicate that emotional well-being significantly influences academic achievement, character development, and students' social relationships. Meanwhile, physical activity not only benefits physical health but also helps reduce stress, elevate mood, and strengthen the counseling process. Integrating physical activity into guidance and counseling services has proven effective in supporting students' mental health. Therefore, collaboration among teachers, families, and school policymakers is crucial in creating an environment that promotes sustained psychological well-being and healthy lifestyles.

Keywords: emotional well-being; guidance and counseling; mental health; physical activity

INTRODUCTION

Students' emotional well-being is a fundamental aspect in supporting the achievement of national education goals. In today's fast-paced and competitive digital era, Indonesian students face increasing challenges related to unhealthy lifestyles, such as a lack of physical activity, sleep disturbances, and academic stress. According to data from the Ministry of Youth and Sports in 2023, about 65% of Indonesian children and youth have low levels of physical activity, which can directly affect both their physical and psychological health. Health and fitness are basic human needs that can be met through enjoyable, consistent physical activities (Pratama & Putri, 2024).

Research by Arrahman, Firman, & Netrawati (2023) shows that low levels of self-acceptance in children can affect their daily lives. This condition may also hinder their growth and the optimal development of their potential. Every child has their own unique

needs and challenges (Nasution, Sembiring, Hayati, & Nasution, 2023). Encouraging students to adopt a healthy lifestyle is not easy, yet introducing it from an early age is an effective way to help them understand the importance of maintaining their health (Mulyana et al., 2024). Students' emotional and physical well-being plays a crucial role in supporting educational goals. However, unhealthy lifestyle challenges such as a lack of physical activity and stress remain significant concerns. Therefore, promoting healthy habits from an early age is essential to support children's growth and help them realize their full potential.

Emotional well-being is a crucial part of children's overall development, as it influences their academic success and the quality of their social interactions (Affifah, Suhailah, & Anggraini (2023). According to Nursakinah (2024), mental health plays a vital role in supporting students' success both academically and socially. Similarly, Mylsidayu & Bujang (2023) state that physical activities, such as exercise, offer numerous benefits, including physical benefits that contribute to mental health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. During exercise, the body releases endorphins, which generate feelings of happiness and comfort, making individuals who regularly engage in physical activity appear more relaxed and content. Emotional well-being and mental health are therefore essential components in supporting children's holistic development, particularly in terms of academic achievement and social relationships. Physical activity, especially exercise, benefits not only physical health but also positively impacts mental well-being by relieving stress, anxiety, and depression while enhancing feelings of happiness through endorphin release.

The guidance and counseling approach plays a significant role in enhancing students' emotional well-being by providing holistic support that addresses not only academic needs but also mental and physical health. (Liana, 2024) explains that emotional intelligence is essential for improving a person's quality of life, especially when dealing with modern-life pressures such as stress, anxiety, and interpersonal conflicts. Grajek et al. (2021) also highlight the importance of regular exercise, noting that it improves bodily function, slows aging, supports daily activities, and benefits both physical and mental health regardless of the age at which one begins. A holistic guidance and counseling approach is therefore crucial for promoting students' emotional well-being, as it encompasses support in academic, mental, and physical domains. Emotional intelligence and physical activities, such as exercise, also play a major role in helping individuals manage life pressures, maintain mental health, and enhance their overall quality of life.

METHOD

This study employed a literature review approach to examine the integration of physical activity into guidance and counseling services as a strategy to enhance students' emotional well-being. The literature review was conducted systematically to ensure transparency, rigor, and relevance in selecting and analyzing previous studies. The search was conducted across several national and international academic databases, including PubMed, Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis, and SAGE. Keywords used in the search included "physical activity," "exercise," "guidance and counseling," "school counseling," "emotional well-being," "student well-being," and "mental health in education." These keywords were combined using Boolean operators to broaden and refine the search results. The search was limited to peer-reviewed articles published between 2014 and 2025 to ensure inclusion of recent, relevant literature. The publication type inclusion criteria were limited to

peer-reviewed journal articles, including empirical studies and conceptual reviews, published in reputable national or international journals.

The initial search yielded approximately 120 articles. After removing duplicate records, 95 articles remained. Titles and abstracts were then screened to assess relevance to the integration of physical activity within educational guidance and counseling contexts, resulting in 45 articles. Subsequently, full-text screening was conducted by applying inclusion and exclusion criteria. Articles were included if they: (1) discussed physical activity or exercise in relation to emotional or mental well-being, (2) were conducted in educational or student-related settings, and (3) provided theoretical or empirical insights relevant to guidance and counseling services. Articles were excluded if they focused solely on clinical populations, lacked relevance to counseling or educational contexts, or did not explicitly address emotional well-being outcomes. Based on this process, 20 articles were selected for final analysis.

The selected articles were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. Key themes were identified and categorized based on their relevance to emotional well-being, psychological benefits of physical activity, and the role of guidance and counseling services in facilitating holistic student development. This analytical process enabled the synthesis of findings across studies and the development of a coherent framework for integrating physical activity into counseling practices to enhance students' emotional well-being.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Emotional Well-Being

Children's emotional well-being plays a crucial role in supporting their overall growth and development (Affifah, Suhailah, Anggraini, & Putri, 2023). Emotional well-being refers to a mental state characterized by feelings of happiness, life satisfaction, and the ability to maintain balance between positive and negative emotions (Afridah, Rahmawati, Zamardah, H, & Salsabila, 2022). When emotional well-being is overlooked, it can lead to various psychological problems and hinder academic achievement (Mubarak & Helsa, 2025). Students' emotional well-being forms an essential foundation for academic success, character development, and the quality of social interactions within the school environment. Support from teachers and the school community is vital in fostering conditions that promote students' emotional development.

Various studies indicate that students' emotional well-being in school settings remains a serious issue requiring attention. According to Tsani, Setiawan, & Muhammad (2023), emotional well-being is increasingly important in education, as schools serve as environments that support students' emotional well-being. Similarly, Imam (2024) states that emotional well-being is a crucial component of the learning process, and that teachers play a vital role in fostering a conducive environment that nurtures students' emotional growth. Research by Yusra & Darmiyanti (2024) shows that homeroom teachers hold a key role in supporting the emotional well-being of elementary school students. Overall, students' emotional well-being remains a significant concern in schools, and teachers, especially

homeroom teachers, play an essential role in fostering an environment that supports emotional development and effective learning.

Students who possess strong emotional awareness at school tend to adapt more effectively to the learning process and experience fewer obstacles that might disrupt their academic progress (Aziz, Jumainah, & Makhtuna, 2024). According to findings by Primarni, Makmudi, Kartika, & Nuhdi (2025), in today's modern era marked by rapid technological advancement, individuals are required to learn independently and take initiative in continuously developing their skills. Their research indicates that emotional well-being is strongly linked to improved abilities and competencies, which, in turn, contribute to better academic achievement. A study by Wibowo, Setiawati, Qodriah, & Ayriza (2021) reveals that students' well-being in Indonesia is shaped by eight core aspects: joy, enthusiasm, happiness, active participation, social relationships, sense of existence, search for life meaning, and achievement.

Within guidance and counseling services, emotional well-being is facilitated through counseling approaches that emphasize emotional awareness, cognitive restructuring, and self-regulation. Techniques derived from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) help students recognize and manage maladaptive emotional responses, while person-centered counseling fosters emotional acceptance and psychological safety. In this context, emotional well-being serves as both the target and the outcome of counseling interventions, which can be further strengthened through supportive strategies, such as integrating physical activity. Overall, students' well-being and emotional awareness play a crucial role in supporting learning adaptation, skill development, and academic success. Factors such as independence, initiative, and the eight dimensions of well-being serve as key components in shaping an optimal learning experience in the modern era.

Physical Activity

Exercise not only improves physical health but also supports psychological well-being by enhancing mood, reducing stress, and improving sleep quality. From the perspectives of guidance and counseling and psychology, this habit can be fully utilized to promote both students' mental and physical health (UNESA, 2024). Families play an important role in shaping children's physical activity habits by providing support and opportunities for physical activity from an early age. Meanwhile, school-based interventions are also encouraged to increase adolescents' participation in physical activity, including classroom-based programs that have become part of school wellness policies (Erwin, Abel, Beighle, & Beets, 2015). This shows that physical activity has long been recognized as an essential strategy for improving students' overall well-being.

One emerging strategy receiving growing attention is integrating physical activity into guidance and counseling services. A study by Gagliardi, Faulkner, Ciliska, & Hicks (2014) explains that physical activity counseling involves advice and discussions between health professionals and clients about habits and the implementation of physical activity routines. Physical activity has been widely acknowledged as a key component in supporting mental and emotional health. Nisa (2024) states that exercise is effective in reducing stress and

improving mood by stimulating endorphin release, which helps alleviate anxiety and strengthen mental health.

Similarly, Mufid & Ulinuha (2024) assert that exercise triggers endorphin release, which enhances mood and helps ease mild depressive symptoms by establishing healthy routines and shifting focus away from negative thoughts. Integrating physical activity into guidance and counseling services holds great potential to support students' mental health, particularly by reducing stress, improving mood, and fostering healthy routines that strengthen the effectiveness of the counseling process. According to findings by Mahindru, Patil, & Agrawal (2023), physical activity has been shown to improve sleep quality and help address various psychological issues, as exercise in general is associated with mood enhancement and improved well-being.

Research by Marconcin et al. (2022) reveals that adequate levels of physical activity are linked to better well-being, improved quality of life, and reduced symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress across all age groups. Saputra, Utomo, Runesi, Louk, & Astut (2024) emphasize that enjoyable approaches can increase adolescents' participation in physical activity, while sports activities can also serve as a medium for developing social skills and fostering emotional support among youth. Physical activity not only contributes to better sleep quality and psychological health but also enhances mood, strengthens social skills, and builds emotional support, especially in adolescents. To provide a clearer and more systematic overview of how emotional well-being and physical activity work together to support students' psychological health. Table 1 summarizes the main functions, supporting factors, psychological benefits, roles in guidance and counseling services, and research support for each aspect:

Table 1. The Role of Emotional Well-Being and Physical Activity in Supporting Student Psychological Health

Aspect	Emotional Well-Being	Physical Activity
Main Function	Supporting students' growth, character formation, social relationships, and academic achievement	Improving physical and psychological health, as well as strengthening the effectiveness of the counseling process
Supporting Factors	Teachers/homeroom teachers, school environment, emotional awareness, technology, and the eight dimensions of well-being	Support from family and school, integration into guidance and counseling services, engaging approaches, and healthy habits
Psychological Benefits	Balancing emotions, preventing psychological disorders, and supporting learning, adaptation, and motivation.	Reducing stress and anxiety, enhancing mood, improving sleep, and alleviating mild depression.
Role in Guidance and Counseling	Creating an emotionally supportive classroom environment through the	Used in physical activity-based counseling services to reinforce psychological interventions and

Aspect	Emotional Well-Being	Physical Activity
	guidance of teachers and homeroom teachers	establish healthy routines
Research Support	Affifah et al. (2023), Yusra & Darmiyanti (2024), Imam (2024), Wibowo et al. (2021), Primarni et al. (2025)	UNESA (2024), Mufid & Ulinnuha (2024), Gagliardi et al. (2014), Marconcin et al. (2022), Mahindru et al. (2023)

In the context of guidance and counseling services, integrating physical activity is not limited to general advice; it can be implemented through established counseling techniques. From a cognitive-behavioral perspective, physical activity can be incorporated into Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) by helping students identify maladaptive thoughts related to stress or low motivation and replace them with adaptive behaviors through structured physical routines. Physical activity thus functions as a form of behavioral activation that supports emotional regulation. In addition, Motivational Interviewing (MI) can be utilized to explore students' ambivalence toward physical activity and strengthen intrinsic motivation to adopt healthier lifestyles. Through reflective dialogue and goal clarification, counselors help students connect physical activity with personal values and emotional well-being. Behavioral contracts may also be applied by collaboratively setting achievable physical activity goals and monitoring progress, thereby reinforcing commitment and self-regulation. Through these approaches, physical activity becomes an integrated component of counseling interventions rather than a standalone recommendation.

CONCLUSION

Emotional well-being and physical activity are two complementary components that play a vital role in supporting students' holistic development. Emotional well-being contributes to character building, academic success, and stronger social relationships, while physical activity significantly supports both mental and physical health and enhances the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services. Through a holistic educational approach that integrates these two aspects, schools can create an environment that fosters students' optimal growth academically, emotionally, and physically. Support from teachers, families, and school policies is essential in promoting healthy lifestyles and achieving long-term psychological well-being.

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