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Physical education in prophetic hadith: educational perspectives for contemporary Islam

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Prophetic hadiths related to physical education and analyzes their educational significance within the framework of Islamic education. A qualitative library research approach was employed using the Kutub al-Tis'ah, classical and contemporary hadith commentaries, and relevant scholarly literature. Data were identified through thematic hadith analysis, verified for authenticity, classified into themes, and analyzed using descriptive and content analysis. The findings indicate that physical education in the Hadith encompasses hygiene, physical fitness, sports, nutrition, disease prevention, environmental cleanliness, mental health, and healthy lifestyles. These teachings support the objectives of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, particularly preserving life, intellect, and human dignity. Physical education is an integral component of Islamic education, providing a theoretical foundation for developing holistic curricula based on authentic Prophetic traditions.



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Introduction

Islam is a comprehensive way of life that governs the relationship between human beings and Allah, fellow humans, the environment, and themselves. This holistic perspective is reflected in Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, which seeks to preserve religion, life, intellect, lineage and human dignity, and property (Kamal, 2020). These objectives implicitly emphasize the protection of the human body because physical well-being forms the basis for fulfilling religious, intellectual, and social responsibilities. Accordingly, Islamic acts of worship, including prayer (ṣalāh), fasting (ṣawm), and pilgrimage (ḥajj), involve structured physical movements that contribute to both physical health and spiritual development. Fleming and Khan, as cited in Zaman (1997), further argue that Islamic prayer functions as a form of restorative physical exercise, demonstrating that physical activity has long been embedded in Islamic teachings. Therefore, physical education should be regarded as an integral component of Islamic education rather than merely a complementary aspect of human development.

Physical health occupies a central position in Islamic education because it enables individuals to perform worship, develop intellectual capacity, maintain emotional well-being, and fulfill social responsibilities. This relationship is reflected in the expression al-'aql al-salīm fi al-jism al-salīm (Lazuardi, 2014). Recent studies indicate that Islamic physical education encompasses personal hygiene, healthy nutrition, adequate rest, and regular physical activity as essential elements of holistic education (Nopel, 2022). Likewise, physical health is recognized as a fundamental human right that must be preserved in accordance with Islamic teachings (Kamal, 2020). Furthermore, the Qur'an and the Hadith establish a complementary framework in which physical, moral,

and religious education collectively prepare human beings to fulfill their role as Allah's vicegerents (khalifah) on earth (Budiman & Suharto, 2021). These findings demonstrate that physical education constitutes an essential dimension of Islamic educational philosophy.

Despite these contributions, previous studies have mainly identified forms of physical education in Islam, such as swimming, archery, and horseback riding, together with their scriptural foundations (Yulinar & Kurniawan, 2011; Akbar, 2019). Although these studies confirm the health benefits and religious legitimacy of such activities, they provide limited discussion of their educational significance within the broader philosophy of Islamic education. Consequently, physical education continues to receive less scholarly attention than 'aqidah, akhlāq, and intellectual education (Lazuardi, 2014). This limitation is important because physical education promotes not only physical fitness but also healthy lifestyles, self-discipline, and balanced human development (Sudarsinah, 2021). Likewise, Islamic education seeks to develop the whole person by nurturing both the physical and spiritual dimensions of human fitrah (An-Nahidl, 2017). Therefore, a more comprehensive educational interpretation of the Prophetic traditions is needed to explain the conceptual contribution of physical education to the holistic objectives of Islamic education.

The educational value of physical education is clearly reflected in the Prophetic traditions, which present the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the ideal model for Muslims. Authentic hadiths describe his participation in horseback riding, archery, wrestling, running, and brisk walking, indicating that these activities were educational practices fostering endurance, discipline, courage, coordination, and self-control rather than mere recreation (Charef & Benmouiza, 2025; Giyarsi et al., 2025). The Prophet also frequently sought Allah's protection from weakness and laziness, emphasizing the close relationship between physical vitality and spiritual commitment (Giyarsi et al., 2025). Although swimming is not explicitly reported as a regular Prophetic practice in authentic hadith, Muslim scholars have long recognized it as a beneficial activity within Islamic education (Yusuf et al., 2026). Collectively, these studies suggest that the Prophetic tradition promotes physical education as a means of developing both physical competence and moral character.

Nevertheless, significant gaps remain in the existing literature. Most previous studies have focused on identifying recommended physical activities or discussing their legal and health-related aspects, while only limited attention has been given to explaining how the Hadith construct a comprehensive philosophy of physical education within Islamic education (Lazuardi, 2014; Kamal, 2020). Moreover, few studies have synthesized educational hadiths into an integrated conceptual framework linking physical education with Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah and holistic human development. As a result, the theoretical contribution of the Prophetic traditions to contemporary Islamic educational thought remains insufficiently explored. Addressing this gap is essential because Islamic education seeks to integrate physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual development into a unified educational system.

Based on this gap, the present study offers a conceptual interpretation of educational hadiths related to physical education within the framework of contemporary Islamic educational theory. Unlike previous studies that primarily catalogued physical activities or emphasized their religious legitimacy, this study explains how the Prophetic traditions position physical education as an integral component of holistic Islamic education that supports the realization of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah. As the second primary source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an, the Hadith provides both conceptual principles and practical educational guidance (Muvid, 2020). Accordingly, this study aims to examine selected hadiths related to physical education and analyze their educational significance in order to strengthen the theoretical foundation of Islamic physical education and provide a reference for developing contemporary Islamic educational curricula.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative library research design because the primary objective was to examine and interpret educational hadiths related to physical education within the framework of Islamic education. A thematic hadith analysis (takhrij mawḍū'i) was adopted to systematically identify, classify, and interpret hadiths addressing physical education. This approach was selected because it enables the integration of dispersed narrations into coherent educational themes, making it suitable for explaining the conceptual contribution of the Hadith to contemporary Islamic educational theory.

Research Procedure

The study was conducted through four stages. First, relevant hadiths were identified using the Encyclopedia of Hadith: The Nine Books of the Imams (Lidwa Pustaka) by searching keywords associated with physical education, including strength, body, physical fitness, archery, horseback riding, wrestling, running, and walking.

Second, the authenticity and contextual meanings of the selected hadiths were verified through authoritative classical commentaries (sharḥ). Third, the hadiths were classified into thematic categories according to their educational content. Finally, each theme was interpreted by relating it to the principles and objectives of Islamic education and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah.

Data Sources

The units of analysis consisted of authentic hadiths concerning physical education contained in the Kutub al-Tis'ah. Hadiths were included if they explicitly or implicitly discussed physical health, physical activity, bodily rights, or educational values associated with physical development. Primary sources comprised the Encyclopedia of Hadith: The Nine Books of the Imams and authoritative classical hadith commentaries, whereas secondary sources included peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly books relevant to Islamic education, hadith studies, and physical education.

Data Collection

Data were collected through systematic document analysis. Relevant hadiths were retrieved using predefined keywords, followed by a screening process to exclude narrations unrelated to educational aspects of physical education. The selected hadiths were subsequently verified using classical commentaries to ensure the accuracy of interpretation and contextual understanding before being organized into thematic categories.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis following the procedures proposed by Zed (2019), consisting of inventory, classification, interpretation, and synthesis. During the inventory stage, relevant hadiths were identified and documented. The classification stage organized the hadiths into educational themes, while the interpretation stage examined their meanings through authoritative hadith commentaries. Finally, the synthesis stage integrated the findings into a conceptual framework explaining the educational significance of physical education within Islamic education. The use of multiple primary and secondary references served as literature triangulation to enhance the credibility and consistency of the interpretations.

Results and Discussions

Research Findings

Following an inventory of hadiths using the keywords strength, body, physique, archery, horse riding, wrestling, running, and walking in the Encyclopedia of Hadith: The Nine Books of the Imams software, the identified hadiths were screened and classified by their relevance to the concept of physical education in Islam. The analysis yielded several thematic categories that represent the Islamic perspective on physical education, as summarized in Table 1 (Munawwir, 2007).

Table 1. Hadiths Related to Physical Education

Keyword	Main Theme of the Hadith	Hadith Collections
Strength	The importance of physical capability in performing acts of worship; maintaining bodily rights; prohibition of excessive worship; the superiority of a strong believer; maintaining physical vitality and well-being.	(Shahih Al-Bukhari), (Shahih Muslim), Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Sunan al-Nasā'ī, Sunan Ibn Mājah, Sunan al-Dārimī, Musnad Aḥmad
Body / Physique	The obligation to protect the body, maintain physical health, and avoid doubtful (shubhat) matters that may affect both physical and spiritual well-being.	Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Sunan Ibn Mājah, Sunan al-Tirmidhī
Archery	Archery as a recommended physical activity; a symbol of strength and military preparedness; encouragement to develop physical skills through archery.	Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Sunan al-Nasā'ī, Sunan Ibn Mājah, Sunan al-Dārimī, Musnad Aḥmad
Horse Riding	Horse riding as a physical exercise and competitive activity practiced during the Prophet's era; encouragement to develop endurance and riding skills.	Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Sunan al-Nasā'ī, Sunan Ibn Mājah, Musnad Aḥmad, Sunan al-Dārimī
Running	Running competitions practiced by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ; sprinting with 'Ā'ishah; running	Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Sunan al-Nasā'ī, Sunan Ibn Mājah, Musnad Aḥmad

Keyword	Main Theme of the Hadith	Hadith Collections
	during Ṭawāf and Sa'y as demonstrations of physical fitness and endurance.	
Wrestling	Wrestling as a measure of physical strength and self-control; the Prophet's wrestling match with Rukānah; emphasis on emotional restraint over physical power.	Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Musnad Aḥmad
Walking	Walking as one of the Prophet's regular physical activities and an example of maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle.	Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Sunan al-Nasā'ī, Musnad Aḥmad

The findings demonstrate that the concept of physical education in the Hadith extends beyond sports and exercise. It encompasses physical fitness, health maintenance, balanced worship, bodily rights, endurance training, skill development, and the cultivation of healthy living habits. These themes indicate that physical education occupies an integral position within Islamic teachings and contributes to the holistic development of Muslims.

Representative Hadiths

The following hadiths were selected as representative examples of the findings.

Hadith 1

Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA):

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "The strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer, although there is goodness in both. Be eager for that which benefits you, seek help from Allah, and do not lose heart. If something befalls you, do not say, 'If only I had done such-and-such,' but rather say, 'This is the decree of Allah, and He does whatever He wills,' for the phrase 'if only' opens the door to Satan." (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, No. 4816)

According to An-Nawawi (2014), the term "strong" (*al-qawiyy*) in this hadith primarily refers to strength of determination, enthusiasm, and perseverance in performing righteous deeds rather than mere physical power. A strong believer demonstrates courage in defending justice, steadfastness in worship, patience in adversity, and consistency in fulfilling religious obligations. Nevertheless, these spiritual qualities are closely linked to physical capability, as good health and physical fitness enable individuals to perform acts of worship and social responsibilities more effectively.

Hadith 2

Narrated by Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ (RA):

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "O Abdullah, have I not been informed that you fast every day and spend the entire night in prayer?" I replied, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah." He said, "Do not do that. Fast and break your fast; pray at night and also sleep, for your body has a right over you, your eyes have a right over you, your wife has a right over you, and your guests have a right over you..." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, No. 1839)

Al-'Asqalānī (2015), explains that this hadith clearly prohibits excessive acts of worship that may harm one's physical condition or neglect other responsibilities. The phrase "Do not do that" indicates a firm prohibition against religious extremism. Instead, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advocated moderation by encouraging worship according to one's physical capacity. He recognized that continuous fasting and prolonged nightly prayers could weaken the body and negatively affect one's obligations toward family and society. Thus, this hadith establishes an important educational principle that physical health should be preserved because it serves as the foundation for sustainable worship and social responsibility.

Hadith 3

Narrated by 'Ā'ishah (RA):

"I accompanied the Prophet (peace be upon him) on one of his journeys. We raced one another, and I outran him while I was still light in weight. Later, after I had gained weight, we raced again, and he outran me. He then said, 'This victory makes up for the previous one.'" (Sunan Abū Dāwūd, No. 2214)

According to Bailey (2018), the expression "we raced one another" refers to a running competition between the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his wife, 'Ā'ishah. This narration demonstrates that running was a permissible recreational activity and an enjoyable form of physical exercise within the Prophet's household. Beyond illustrating marital affection, the hadith also provides historical evidence that sprinting was practiced during the Prophet's lifetime. From the perspective of physical education, the narration highlights the

importance of maintaining physical fitness through recreational exercise while fostering healthy social and family relationships.

Hadith 4

Narrated by 'Uqbah ibn 'Āmir al-Juhanī (RA):

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) recited the verse, "Prepare against them whatever strength you can" (Qur'an 8:60), and then said three times, "Indeed, strength is archery; indeed, strength is archery; indeed, strength is archery." (Sunan Abū Dāwūd, No. 2153)

This hadith explains the meaning of "strength" mentioned in Qur'an 8:60. As noted by (Bailey, 2006), the Prophet emphasized archery because it represented one of the essential forms of military preparedness during his time. Nevertheless, beyond its military context, archery develops concentration, precision, coordination, patience, and physical endurance. Therefore, from an educational perspective, the hadith illustrates that physical education in Islam is closely connected with character formation, discipline, self-control, and preparedness for fulfilling social responsibilities.

Hadith 5

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"Allah admits three people into Paradise because of one arrow: the one who makes it seeking reward, the one who shoots it, and the one who hands it to the archer. Practice archery and horseback riding, although archery is dearer to me than horseback riding. Every amusement in which a Muslim engages is vain except practicing archery, training one's horse, and playing with one's wife, for these are lawful and beneficial." (Sunan Ibn Mājah)

This narration demonstrates that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) highly encouraged both archery and horseback riding as valuable physical activities. According to al-Suyūṭī et al. (2007), the command to "practice archery and horseback riding" implies that Muslims should develop multiple physical competencies rather than mastering only a single skill. Archery receives particular emphasis because it cultivates accuracy, concentration, patience, and practical benefit for society. Horseback riding, on the other hand, promotes balance, endurance, courage, and self-confidence. Together, these activities reflect the Prophet's holistic approach to physical education, integrating physical competence with moral character, discipline, and social responsibility.

Summary of the Research Findings

The analysis of the selected hadiths reveals that physical education occupies a significant position within Islamic teachings. Rather than focusing solely on sports or physical exercise, the Prophetic traditions present physical education as a comprehensive educational process that integrates physical fitness, health preservation, moderation in worship, skill development, emotional regulation, discipline, and character formation. Activities such as archery, horseback riding, running, wrestling, and walking were not merely recreational pursuits but educational practices designed to cultivate physically healthy, mentally resilient, and spiritually committed individuals.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that maintaining physical health is considered a religious responsibility because it enables Muslims to fulfill their obligations toward Allah, themselves, their families, and society. Consequently, physical education in Islam should be understood as an inseparable component of holistic Islamic education, contributing to the realization of the objectives of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, particularly the preservation of life (ḥifẓ al-nafs), intellect (ḥifẓ al-'aql), and human dignity.

Fulfilling Physical Rights

From the Islamic perspective, the Qur'an recognizes that human beings possess three fundamental dimensions: the physical, spiritual, and intellectual potentials (Hasnah et al., 2023). Accordingly, the primary objective of Islamic education is to nurture and develop these dimensions in a balanced and integrated manner (Rohman, 2019). Allah has endowed human beings with hearing, sight, and intellect as essential faculties for acquiring knowledge and fulfilling their responsibilities as His servants. Preserving these God-given capacities and employing them for righteous purposes constitute religious obligations, as emphasized in Qur'an 17:36. Since the proper functioning of these faculties depends largely on physical well-being, maintaining bodily health becomes an indispensable component of Islamic education. Consequently, the concept of tarbiyah jismiyyah (physical education) occupies an important place within the broader framework of Islamic educational philosophy.

According to Ulwan (1997), the Qur'an provides numerous foundations for physical education, including the fulfillment of physical needs (Qur'an 2:233), encouragement to develop physical strength (Qur'an 8:60), and the preservation of health and human life (Qur'an 2:195; 4:29). These verses indicate that physical well-being is

not merely a biological necessity but also a religious responsibility that supports the fulfillment of spiritual and social obligations (Abdel Haleem, 2005).

Al-Ghazali, as cited by Muhajir (2016), emphasized that physical development serves as the foundation for spiritual excellence. The purpose of physical education is therefore not limited to maintaining bodily fitness but also to achieving harmony between the body and the soul. In his view, the human body functions as the instrument through which individuals fulfill their religious duties. For example, performing prayer properly requires adequate physical ability to stand, as prescribed in the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions. Likewise, fasting, completing the recitation of the Qur'an, earning a lawful livelihood, and fulfilling other religious obligations all depend on maintaining good physical health. Thus, physical fitness should be regarded as an essential prerequisite for the effective practice of Islamic worship.

Given the significance of physical well-being, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) repeatedly emphasized the importance of fulfilling the rights of the body. Several authentic hadith prohibit excessive acts of worship that may cause physical harm, including continuous fasting (*ṣawm al-dahr*) and prolonged nightly prayers that compromise one's health and social responsibilities. Al-'Asqolaniy (2001) explains that these narrations demonstrate the Prophet's firm rejection of religious extremism and promote moderation in worship in accordance with one's physical capacity. Excessive devotional practices may impair physical health and prevent individuals from fulfilling their responsibilities toward their families, guests, and society. The Prophet himself exemplified this balanced approach by maintaining harmony between worship, family life, and social engagement.

Kiai Faqihuddin Abdul Qadir further explains that the body's rights encompass three essential dimensions: consuming lawful and nutritious food (*al-taghdhiyah bi al-halal al-tayyib*), obtaining adequate rest (*akhdh al-rahah*), and fulfilling sexual needs through lawful and ethical means (*talbiyat al-gharizah al-jinsiyyah*) (Hidayat, 2022). These principles illustrate that preserving physical health is an integral aspect of Islamic ethics and human dignity.

The Qur'an also explicitly prohibits self-harm. Allah states:

"Do not kill yourselves. Surely Allah is Most Merciful to you. Whoever does so out of aggression and injustice, We shall cast him into the Fire, and that is easy for Allah." (Qur'an 4:29–30)

According to (As-Sa'diy, 2002), this prohibition extends beyond suicide to include all forms of self-destructive behavior that may endanger human life and health. Consequently, intentionally neglecting nutrition, consuming harmful substances, or overexerting oneself to the point of physical exhaustion contradicts Islamic teachings because such actions violate the rights entrusted to the human body.

These scriptural foundations support the argument of Walseth and Fasting, as cited by Farooq & Parker (2009), that Muslims regard the body as a divine trust (*amanah*) bestowed by Allah, requiring proper care and maintenance. Similarly, physical activity and sports serve as effective means through which Muslims fulfill their bodily responsibilities in accordance with Islamic teachings.

In practical terms, maintaining physical health includes several fundamental practices. First, personal and environmental hygiene plays a crucial role in preventing disease and promoting public health. Evidence from the World Health Organization (2010) demonstrates that healthy environments substantially reduce the global burden of disease, while poor sanitation significantly increases mortality and morbidity rates. These findings correspond closely with Islamic teachings on purification (*ṭahārah*), which regard cleanliness as an essential component of faith. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) declared that "purification is half of faith," emphasizing the central role of cleanliness in Islamic life.

Second, Islam requires the consumption of lawful (*halal*) and wholesome (*tayyib*) food. A balanced diet consisting of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals, combined with adequate physical activity, is essential for maintaining health (Bridgeman & Mansukhani, 2016). The Qur'an repeatedly commands believers to consume lawful and wholesome food while prohibiting harmful substances such as alcohol, pork, carrion, and blood, all of which have been shown to pose significant health risks (Syukriya, 2019). Moreover, the Prophet encouraged Muslims to avoid doubtful (*shubhat*) matters in order to preserve both physical and spiritual well-being.

Third, regular physical activity and exercise constitute essential components of a healthy lifestyle. Numerous scientific studies have demonstrated that physically active individuals experience better cardiovascular health, improved physical fitness, enhanced psychological well-being, and reduced risks of chronic diseases compared with sedentary individuals (Fletcher et al., 2018). These contemporary findings are remarkably consistent with

Islamic teachings. Although Qur'an 8:60 originally emphasized physical preparedness for defense, its broader implication encourages Muslims to develop physical strength and endurance. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) personally promoted activities such as archery, horseback riding, wrestling, running, and walking, thereby establishing physical exercise as an integral element of a healthy and productive Muslim lifestyle. This educational tradition continued during the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab, who incorporated swimming, archery, and horseback riding into the curriculum of the Kuttab, reflecting the long-standing importance of physical education within Islamic educational practice.

Maintaining Emotional Well-Being

Emotional well-being is closely associated with physical health. Persistent negative emotions, including anger, stress, anxiety, and frustration, can impair physiological functions, weaken the immune system, and increase the risk of chronic diseases such as hypertension, cardiovascular disorders, and certain types of cancer. Moreover, emotional instability often contributes to unhealthy behaviors, including overeating, smoking, alcohol consumption, and substance abuse, all of which have serious health consequences (Bridgeman & Mansukhani, 2016). Therefore, maintaining emotional health constitutes an essential component of holistic well-being.

Islam provides a comprehensive framework for emotional regulation through moral and spiritual education. Virtues such as patience (*ṣabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), maintaining social relationships (*ṣilat al-raḥim*), trust in Allah (*tawakkul*), as well as frequent supplication (*du'ā'*) and remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), contribute significantly to emotional resilience and psychological stability. These ethical values not only strengthen one's spiritual life but also promote mental and physical health. Consequently, Islamic physical education should not be viewed solely as bodily training but as an integrated educational process that nurtures both physical fitness and emotional well-being.

Developing the Strong Believer

The ultimate objective of Islamic education is inseparable from the purpose of human creation as described in the Qur'an. Human beings were created to worship Allah ('*abd Allāh*') (Qur'an 51:56) and to serve as His vicegerents (*khalīfat Allāh*) on earth (Qur'an 2:30; 38:26). Accordingly, Islamic education seeks to prepare learners to fulfill these complementary responsibilities effectively.

Yusuf al-Qaradawi defines Islamic education as a comprehensive educational system that develops the whole person, encompassing the intellect, heart, soul, body, character, and practical skills (Muhajir, 2016). This holistic perspective implies that physical development is not separate from spiritual and intellectual development but forms an essential foundation for both. A healthy body enables individuals to perform acts of worship, fulfill social responsibilities, pursue knowledge, and contribute productively to society.

The close relationship between the body and the soul has long been recognized in both Islamic scholarship and modern educational thought. The body serves as the dwelling place of the soul, making physical and spiritual well-being mutually dependent (Latif, 2022). Consequently, preserving physical health also contributes to maintaining spiritual vitality, while neglecting the body may adversely affect one's emotional and spiritual condition. This relationship is reflected in the Prophetic tradition reported by Ibn Mājah and Musnad Aḥmad, which emphasizes that a sound soul resides within a sound body, illustrating the inseparable connection between physical and spiritual health.

Likewise, intellectual development depends substantially on physical well-being. The classical principle *mens sana in corpore sano* ("a healthy mind in a healthy body"), which corresponds to the Arabic expression *al-'aql al-salīm fī al-jism al-salīm*, reflects this enduring relationship. Contemporary research further confirms that regular physical activity positively influences brain function, cognitive performance, memory, and learning capacity (Di Liegro et al., 2019). These findings reinforce the importance of physical education in supporting academic achievement and intellectual development.

This understanding is consistent with the well-known hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) declared that "the strong believer is better and more beloved to Allah than the weak believer." Classical scholars explain that the term strong encompasses both physical and spiritual strength. Al-Nawawi interprets strength as determination, enthusiasm, perseverance in worship, courage in defending truth, and steadfastness in promoting righteousness and preventing wrongdoing. Similarly, al-Qurṭubi and al-Sindi describe the strong believer as one who possesses physical endurance, spiritual resilience, patience, sincerity, and commitment in fulfilling religious obligations and serving society.

Therefore, the concept of the strong believer extends far beyond physical power alone. It integrates physical fitness, psychological resilience, spiritual commitment, intellectual competence, and moral excellence into a

unified educational ideal. This holistic understanding closely aligns with Bucher's concept of physical education, which emphasizes physical, mental, social, and motor development (Permana, 2020).

Furthermore, (Bailey, 2018) argues that physical education and sport contribute significantly to learners' physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Similarly, Rasberry et al. (2011) found substantial evidence that regular physical activity improves academic performance by enhancing concentration, attention, classroom behavior, and cognitive functioning. Importantly, increasing instructional time devoted to physical education does not negatively affect academic achievement; rather, it supports overall educational outcomes.

From the perspective of Islamic education, these findings reaffirm that physical education deserves equal attention alongside religious, moral, and intellectual education. A balanced educational system that nurtures all dimensions of human development is essential for producing strong believers who are capable of fulfilling their dual roles as devoted servants of Allah and responsible stewards of the earth.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the Prophetic Hadith conceptualizes physical education as an integral component of Islamic education rather than merely a form of physical activity. The analysis reveals that physical education fulfills two fundamental educational functions: preserving the rights and well-being of the human body as an amanah from Allah and developing the characteristics of the strong believer (al-mu'min al-qawī), encompassing physical fitness, intellectual competence, emotional resilience, spiritual commitment, and moral responsibility. These findings extend previous studies by providing a conceptual framework that integrates educational hadiths with the objectives of Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah, thereby strengthening the theoretical foundation of Islamic physical education. The study also highlights that the educational values embodied in the Prophetic traditions including discipline, perseverance, self-control, courage, and responsibility remain relevant for contemporary Islamic education and may serve as a reference for developing holistic physical education curricula. Future research is recommended to examine the implementation and effectiveness of this conceptual framework in Islamic educational institutions across different educational contexts.

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