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CAN PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES BE CONDUCTED THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION ONLINE PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

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Abstract: Online education is one of the most widely used and preferred forms of distance education today. In recent years, it has developed rapidly and has become an important part of educational systems. However, the question of how to effectively deliver education through online platforms and how to teach courses from different disciplines continues to be explored. Educators, in particular, have concerns about how physical education courses can be conducted in an online environment. Physical education primarily focuses on physical activity and the development of motor skills, making it significantly different from academic subjects. With advancements in educational technologies and learning management systems, physical education courses can also be delivered online. However, physical education and sports teachers need to possess sufficient knowledge and skills in curriculum design, teaching–learning processes, content preparation and delivery, as well as monitoring and evaluating student performance in online settings. This study presents a review of the literature on whether online physical education courses can be effectively implemented. It examines online education, preparation and implementation of online physical education lessons, technologies used in these courses, and the challenges encountered. As a result, it has been determined that online physical education classes can support students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning outcomes. In addition, a hybrid (blended) model is considered the most appropriate approach for online physical education, and activity-based physical education lessons are found to be more suitable for online delivery.

Keywords: Distance Education, Physical Activity, Hybrid Learning, Learning Management Systems

Introduction

Technological developments have become an essential part of human life and have significantly influenced all areas, including education. While the use of technology in education was once considered optional for teachers, it has now become almost a necessity. Teachers who aim to reach today's students-who are highly engaged with and dependent on technology-must effectively integrate technological tools into their teaching practices.

Advancements in educational technologies have facilitated the development of distance education. Among various distance education formats, online education has become the most widely used approach. The widespread use of information and communication technologies in education has contributed to the expansion of online learning, making education more accessible, flexible, and cost-effective [1].

Online education enables learners to access information anytime and anywhere through internet connectivity. It is defined as a form of education in which instruction and content are primarily delivered via the internet. Online learning is also referred to as e-learning, virtual learning, or cyber learning. With the continuous advancement of technology, online education has become a more flexible and efficient educational process, allowing instructors to provide instruction independent of time and place, while also reaching a larger number of students.

Although the fundamental pedagogical principles of traditional education largely remain unchanged, modern technologies have transformed the ways in which teachers interact and communicate with students. Online education offers opportunities to create active, innovative, and effective learning environments. However, compared to face-to-face education, it often requires more time and effort in terms of preparation, delivery, and assessment. Despite the rapid development of online education in recent years, its full potential has not been realized across all disciplines. While online education is widely applied in academic subjects that focus primarily on cognitive skills, its applicability in fields that emphasize psychomotor skills-such as physical education-remains a subject of debate. Although integrating technology into physical education has long been discussed, delivering physical education entirely through online platforms is still not widely accepted. Some physical education teachers and researchers continue to approach online physical education with skepticism and express concerns regarding its effectiveness [2].

Although teachers, administrators, and students from various disciplines have gained experience with online education, it appears that both teachers and students still have limited experience in conducting physical education classes through online platforms. However, the widespread availability and accessibility of computer and internet technologies, along with students' high motivation to use these technologies, are considered facilitating factors for the implementation of online physical education. Since around 2010, there has been a growing trend toward the use of online platforms in the field of physical education. It has been suggested that online education-and particularly online physical education-may represent the future direction of education, potentially serving as an alternative to, or even replacing, traditional physical education classes.

Identifying the advantages and disadvantages of online physical education compared to traditional methods is crucial for understanding the challenges faced by both students and teachers. Such understanding is essential for developing effective planning strategies and improving the teaching–learning process in online environments. In this context, it is particularly important to enhance physical education teachers' knowledge and skills related to online teaching processes, including lesson preparation, implementation, assessment, instructional technologies, and materials. Based on these considerations, the present study aims to provide insights into online education, the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of online physical education lessons, the technologies used in these lessons, and the challenges encountered. The study is intended to contribute to both physical education teachers and researchers working in this field [3].

Online learning processes

Online education is considered a tool that can make the teaching–learning process more student-centered, innovative, and flexible. In online education, students can engage in synchronous or asynchronous learning experiences through various devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops with internet access. Within these environments, students can participate in learning activities and interact with teachers and peers regardless of their physical location.

Online education operates across a broad spectrum, ranging from simple internet-based searches and web-supported activities to hybrid courses and fully online classes. In this context, educational programs are typically classified based on the proportion of face-to-face and online instruction. Accordingly, four main types are identified: traditional, web-enhanced, blended (hybrid), and fully online learning environments.

Table 1. Types of online education

Percentage of Online Content	Course Type	Description

0%	Traditional	Courses with no use of online technology. Content is delivered through face-to-face interaction, either orally or in written form.
1–29%	Web-Enhanced	Courses that primarily take place face-to-face but utilize web-based technologies. The syllabus and assignments may be delivered via a web-based system.
30–79%	Blended / Hybrid	Courses that combine face-to-face and online instruction. A significant portion of the content is delivered online. Face-to-face sessions are typically used for orientation, exams, or safety procedures.
80% and above	Fully Online	Courses in which most or all of the content is delivered online. Generally, there are no regular face-to-face meetings.

Blended learning in online education

At the core of online learning processes lies the instructional approach known as blended or hybrid learning. Blended learning integrates online learning with other instructional methods, combining the strengths of both environments. It has been suggested that blended learning will likely become the dominant model of the future, surpassing both traditional and fully online education in prevalence. In blended learning environments, students complete a significant portion of their coursework online, typically outside of school. However, they periodically meet face-to-face with instructors for guidance, practice, and assessment-related activities. Research has indicated that instructional approaches combining online and face-to-face learning often yield better outcomes than fully online instruction alone. Blended learning is student-centered and allows learners a degree of autonomy in determining their pace, schedule, and learning pathways. This flexibility makes it a highly effective and adaptable model for modern education systems [4].

Online physical education

Physical education courses are designed to provide students with knowledge and skills related to active and healthy living, physical fitness, sportsmanship, and motor behavior, while also contributing to the development of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. The primary goal of physical education is to develop physically literate individuals who enjoy participating in physical activity and possess the knowledge, skills, and confidence to maintain an active lifestyle. Online physical education can be defined as the delivery of physical education content and learning outcomes through online platforms. While online physical education shares the same objectives as traditional physical education, it differs in terms of the learning environment. Traditional physical education takes place in physical settings such as classrooms, gyms, and schoolyards, whereas online physical education is conducted through digital platforms.

Online physical education was first introduced in 1997 at Florida Virtual School. Initially, these courses were designed to allow students to allocate more time to core academic subjects such as reading, writing, and mathematics. Over time, online physical education has also been used as an alternative way for students-particularly at the middle school level-to fulfill physical education requirements outside the traditional school setting.

In the United States, the availability of online physical education courses has expanded significantly. While in 2016 such courses were offered in 31 out of 50 states, by 2020 they were available in all states. Teachers' perspectives on online physical education vary. Some physical education teachers express satisfaction due to increased opportunities for individualized interaction with students, while others raise concerns regarding issues such as validity, accountability, and

assessment. One of the most common criticisms is that students may not engage in sufficient physical activity or adequately develop motor skills in an online environment.

However, advancements in technology have helped address some of these concerns. Devices such as smartwatches, smartphones, tablets, and exergames (exercise-based digital games) have made it easier and more engaging for students to participate in physical activities and develop motor skills in online settings. In recent years, the feasibility of online physical education has improved significantly. Many countries have developed infrastructure to support online education, enabling greater access for students living in remote areas and for those with special needs. As a result, online physical education has become a more accessible and inclusive alternative within modern education systems.

Advantages and limitations of online physical education

It has been reported that participation rates in online physical education classes may be higher than in face-to-face classes due to the flexibility they provide in terms of activity time, activity selection, and learning environment. Online physical education allows students to fulfill their physical education requirements outside of regular school hours, thereby creating more time for other academic subjects during the school day. However, several criticisms have been raised regarding online physical education. One of the main concerns is that these courses tend to focus more on the cognitive components of the curriculum, while placing less emphasis on physical fitness. As a result, online physical education may be insufficient in meeting the recommended weekly requirement of approximately 225 minutes of physical activity for children [5].

In traditional school settings, physical education classes are conducted in environments such as schoolyards, gymnasiums, and sports facilities, with access to various types of equipment. In contrast, online physical education relies on digital tools such as instructional videos, computer-based games, video conferencing platforms, web-based software, and mobile applications. The differences in learning environments and instructional materials between traditional and online physical education highlight both the strengths and limitations of online education. While online physical education offers flexibility and accessibility, it also presents challenges in ensuring adequate physical activity and skill development.

Table 2. Strengths and weaknesses of online physical education

Strengths	Weaknesses
Students' strong interest in technology may facilitate learning.	Difficulties in ensuring accountability and monitoring students' performance.
Interaction with teachers and peers can be achieved through digital platforms.	Limited effectiveness in developing motor skills.
Students can engage in activities at any time and progress at their own pace.	Overemphasis on fitness and cognitive aspects may neglect comprehensive physical education.
Students can perform in a non-competitive environment, which may benefit those who feel uncomfortable in group settings.	

As shown in Table 2, online physical education presents both advantages and limitations. While it provides flexibility, accessibility, and technology-supported interaction, it also raises concerns regarding performance monitoring, motor skill development, and the comprehensive delivery of physical education content. When designing online physical education courses, it is

important for teachers to consider the availability of appropriate spaces and equipment. Online learning environments may offer convenience for some students; however, they may also reduce motivation for those who lack suitable conditions. In such cases, collaboration with institutions such as sports facilities may help ensure that students can participate in physical activities with appropriate equipment and supervision.

Conclusion

In conclusion, online physical education has emerged as a viable and increasingly relevant component of modern education systems. Despite initial concerns regarding its applicability, particularly in relation to the development of psychomotor skills, advancements in technology and learning management systems have made it possible to deliver physical education in online environments. The findings of this study indicate that online physical education can support students' cognitive, affective, and, to some extent, psychomotor development. However, it is evident that fully online models may not be sufficient to meet the physical activity requirements of students. Therefore, a blended or hybrid approach, which combines online instruction with face-to-face practice, appears to be the most effective model for physical education.

Online physical education offers several advantages, including flexibility, accessibility, and the integration of technology into learning processes. At the same time, it presents challenges such as limited physical interaction, difficulties in monitoring performance, and reduced opportunities for direct skill acquisition. In light of these findings, it can be concluded that online physical education should not be seen as a complete replacement for traditional physical education, but rather as a complementary approach. When supported by appropriate planning, technological tools, and instructional strategies, online physical education can contribute significantly to the development of physically literate individuals and promote lifelong engagement in physical activity.

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