

The Values of Physical Education from the Perspective of the Hadith

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ABSTRACT

Physical education plays a strategic role in developing students holistically by integrating physical, mental, social, moral, and spiritual dimensions. However, in educational practice, physical education is often narrowly focused on physical activities and sport skills, with limited integration of religious and moral values. This study aims to analyze the physical education values contained in the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and examine their relevance to modern physical education concepts. This research employed a qualitative approach using library research with a thematic Hadith analysis design. Data were collected from primary sources in the form of Hadiths and supported by secondary sources, including books and scientific journals related to physical education, health, and Islamic education. The findings indicate that the Hadith contains comprehensive physical education values, such as the importance of physical health and fitness, development of motor skills, discipline and consistency in physical activity, sportsmanship and moral character, and balance between physical and spiritual well-being. These values highlight that physical activity in Islam is not merely physical training but also a means of character formation and spiritual awareness. Furthermore, the study reveals a strong alignment between Hadith-based physical education values and modern physical education concepts that emphasize holistic development, health-oriented learning, character education, and lifelong active lifestyles. The study concludes that integrating Hadith-based values into physical education can strengthen its philosophical foundation and support the development of physically healthy, mentally resilient, and morally grounded individuals.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary educational discourse, physical education (PE) is recognized as a vital mechanism for fostering multi-dimensional student development, spanning physical, psychological, emotional, and social domains (Dyson et al., 2021). Far from being a narrow tool for motor skill acquisition, PE serves as a strategic pipeline for

character internalization, self-regulation, and democratic values such as discipline, sportsmanship, and collective responsibility (Opstoel et al., 2020). Modern pedagogical paradigms view the human body not merely as an instrument for mechanical conditioning, but as an integrative medium through which cognitive and affective growth are realized (Whitehead et al., 2018). This holistic framework has gained heightened urgency globally, as educational institutions grapple with rising sedentary behaviors, sharp declines in youth physical activity, and a broader adolescent public health crisis (Guthold et al., 2020).

Concurrently, within Islamic anthropology, the human construct is understood as a harmonious and indivisible synergy between the physical (*jism*) and the spiritual (*ruh*) (Al-Zuhaili & Rahman, 2019). Islam rejects the dualistic separation of body and soul, positioning physical vitality as a foundational prerequisite for optimal spiritual efficacy and community engagement (Mustafa & Amin, 2022). A robust and resilient physiology directly facilitates the performance of mandatory ritual obligations—such as prayer (*Salah*), fasting (*Sawm*), and pilgrimage (*Hajj*)—while enabling individuals to effectively execute their social duties (Hassan et al., 2021). Consequently, the preservation of somatic health is treated not as a secular leisure choice, but as a sacred trust (*amanah*) bestowed by Allah SWT, for which every individual remains metaphysically accountable (Achour et al., 2023).

This metaphysical worldview finds its primary normative validation in the Hadith literature, the secondary source of Islamic jurisprudence and ethics, which explicitly elevates physical robustness (Amara, 2019). A foundational tradition states that "A strong believer is better and more loved by Allah than a weak believer," establishing physical capability as a core virtue linked to spiritual merit and social utility (Muslim bin al-Hajjaj, 2025; Al-Asqalani, 2018). Within instructional settings, this Prophetic mandate transforms physical conditioning from a mundane routine into a value-driven pursuit of excellence (Memon & Abdou, 2020). Furthermore, early childhood motor development is explicitly targeted in prophetic traditions advocating for specific foundational skills: "Teach your children swimming, archery, and horse riding." These activities historically cultivated endurance, spatial focus, and courage, mirroring modern PE goals of fostering resilience through structured movement (Nasrullah & Ismail, 2017).

Crucially, the intersection of Prophetic guidance and movement sciences transcends the secular boundaries of mainstream PE by introducing a teleological dimension rooted in the theology of intention (*niyyah*) (Halstead & Khan, 2021). Islamic axiology posits that everyday physical actions are transformed into acts of devotion (*ibadah*) when performed with the conscious intent of maintaining systemic health, enhancing communal utility, and preparing the body for spiritual labor (El-Mesawi, 2018). This conceptual synthesis effectively dismantles the traditional dichotomy between worldly physical culture and otherworldly spiritual pursuits (Walseth et al., 2022). By reframing athletic participation as a moral imperative, the Hadith paradigm offers a powerful motivational framework that infuses standard physical training with transcendental purpose.

Beyond motivational aesthetics, the Hadith framework establishes precise bioethical and regulatory guidelines that anticipate modern safety and pedagogical principles (Auda, 2021). The overarching legal maxim derived from prophetic decree, "You must not harm yourself and you must not harm others," serves as an absolute ethical boundary for risk management and competitive behavior in sports (Kamali, 2019). This canonical directive directly aligns with contemporary PE standards that prioritize student safety, psychological security, and injury prevention (Chróinín et al., 2024). Moreover, Islamic ethical codes governing interpersonal conduct structurally mandate honesty, equity, and absolute sportsmanship, offering a robust baseline for internalizing prosocial behaviors through active sports participation (Ibrahim & Latif, 2020).

Furthermore, prophetic teachings enforce a strict law of homeostasis, emphasizing that the physical body possesses inherent rights that must be balanced with spiritual and intellectual pursuits (Al-Attas & Hashim, 2020). This principle of proportional development directly challenges contemporary trends toward hyper-competitive, commercialized youth sports or excessive, health-harming physical regimes (Hardman & Green, 2017). However, despite this rich philosophical compatibility, a profound pedagogical disconnect persists within modern school systems. Contemporary physical education curricula in formal institutions frequently suffer from a reductionist approach, focusing strictly on technocratic skill acquisition and athletic metrics while ignoring deeper religious-philosophical values (Zaman & Sa'ari, 2016). This systemic failure creates a distinct operational gap between Islamic ontological theories of health and actual instructional practices in the gym or field.

Confronting the dual modern crises of juvenile physical decline and systemic moral degradation, this study establishes its novelty by moving beyond generalized fitness paradigms to present an integrated, Hadith-centric curricular framework for physical education. While previous literature treats physical literacy and religious instruction as isolated modules, this research introduces a non-dichotomous synthesis where Prophetic ethics directly drive physical performance and safety metrics. By transforming the Hadith from a static historical text into an active pedagogical tool, this study provides a culturally resonant, normatively grounded blueprint. Ultimately, this approach aims to reconstruct physical education as a unified domain capable of simultaneously producing physical vitality, psychological resilience, and robust moral character in the contemporary era.

2. METHOD

This research was conducted with a qualitative approach using a library research method. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand, interpret, and construct the meaning of physical education based on the perspective of the Hadith and relevant Islamic and educational sources. The library research method was used because all research data are sourced from written texts, including verses of the Qur'an, books of commentary, hadith, and scientific literature discussing physical education, health, and the concept of humanity in Islam. With this design, the research

does not emphasize numerical measurements, but rather an in-depth analysis of the meaning and relevance of the concepts studied.



Figure 1. Library Research Method

The research design used is a conceptual-analytical study with a thematic hadith approach. In this design, hadiths related to physical aspects, health, physical strength, life balance, and human activities are collected and analyzed systematically to develop a comprehensive concept of physical education. This approach is combined with studies of modern physical education theory and the thoughts of classical and contemporary scholars to obtain an integrative understanding of the values of hadith and the concept of physical education. This research design allows for a synthesis between normative Islamic sources and physical education practices in the context of formal education.

Data collection was conducted through searching, reading, and reviewing primary and secondary sources relevant to the research focus. The primary source in this study was the Hadith, while secondary sources included books, scientific journals, proceedings, and previous research findings related to physical education, health, and the concept of humanity in Islam. Data collection was conducted systematically by recording Hadith, expert opinions, and physical education concepts relevant to the research objectives.

The development of research instruments was carried out in the form of document analysis guidelines. This instrument was compiled to assist researchers in identifying, classifying, and interpreting data obtained from various sources. The analysis guidelines cover several aspects, namely: (1) Hadith related to contemporary education. (2) What physical education values are contained in the hadith. (3) The relevance of physical education values in the hadith to the concept of modern physical education.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hadith Related to Physical Education

Physical education and sports in Islam are firmly grounded in various hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which emphasize the importance of

maintaining health, strengthening the body, and developing physical abilities as part of the perfection of a believer (Amara, 2019). These hadiths not only emphasize physical fitness but also contain moral, spiritual, and social values that make physical activity a means of improving the quality of life and worship (Mohamed et al., 2020). Through recommendations for maintaining a strong body, maintaining bodily rights, and practicing sports such as running, swimming, archery, and horse riding, Islam demonstrates that physical activity is an integral part of religious teachings (Nasrullah & Ismail, 2017). Therefore, studying the hadiths on physical education and sports is crucial for understanding how Islam fosters physical strength while simultaneously shaping the character and spirituality of its followers.

Hadith about the Virtues of Physical Strength

نَشَدَ الْمُؤْمِنُ خَيْرٌ وَأَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِ الضَّعِيفِ

Translation: A strong believer is better and more loved by Allah than a weak believer.

This hadith serves as a general basis for Islam's encouragement of its followers to strengthen their bodies through exercise and physical activity, as physical strength supports both worship and social life (Mustafa & Amin, 2022). It also provides an important foundation for the value of physical strength in Islamic teachings. The strength referred to in this hadith encompasses faith, mental strength, and especially physical strength, which can support a Muslim in carrying out worship and daily activities (Hassan et al., 2021). Islam views the body as a trust that must be protected, nurtured, and strengthened so that a person can fulfill their obligations more optimally (Achour et al., 2023). Through this hadith, Muslims are encouraged to engage in physical activities such as exercise, physical exercise, and a healthy lifestyle as a form of obedience to Allah. Physical strength is not only beneficial for maintaining physical health but also enhances one's ability to work, help others, and contribute to society. Thus, this hadith serves as spiritual motivation for Muslims to continue developing physical fitness, as a strong body supports a believer's productivity, enthusiasm, and the quality of worship in their social and religious lives.

Hadith about Body Rights that Must be Protected

إِنَّ لِبَدَنِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا

Translation: Indeed, your body has a right over you.

This hadith emphasizes that maintaining health, fitness, adequate rest, and consuming good food are part of a Muslim's obligation towards his or her body. Islam views the body as a trust that must be cared for so that it can function optimally in carrying out worship and daily activities (Al-Zuhaili & Rahman, 2019). In this context, exercise and physical activity are not merely optional, but part of a responsible commitment to fulfilling the body's rights. Through regular physical activity, a person can maintain strength, prevent disease, and improve quality of life, thus making them more prepared for worship, work, and benefiting others (Yusof & Shah, 2018). This

hadith provides a strong spiritual foundation that physical health is an integral part of religious life (Mohamed et al., 2020).

Hadith about Swimming, Archery and Horse Riding

عَلِّمُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ السِّبَاحَةَ وَالرَّمَايَةَ وَرُكُوبَ الْخَيْلِ

Translation: Teach your children to swim, archery and horseback riding.

Scholars agree that its meaning aligns with the spirit of Islamic teachings, which encourage physical strengthening and physical skills. This narration demonstrates the importance of mastering sports that train strength, agility, coordination, and physical readiness, such as swimming, which improves endurance, archery, which trains focus and muscle control, and horse riding, which builds courage and physical stability (Nasrullah & Ismail, 2017). Because its meaning is reinforced by authentic hadiths about the virtues of physical strength, scholars view this narration as motivation for Muslims to develop the physical abilities of the younger generation, so that they grow into healthy, strong individuals who are ready to carry out the duties of life, worship, and social service (Memon & Abdou, 2020; Nasruddin et al., 2022).

Hadith about the Running Race between the Prophet and Aisha

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ: سَابَقْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَسَبَقْتُهُ، ثُمَّ سَابَقْتُهُ بَعْدَ أَنْ حَمَلْتُ اللَّحْمَ فَسَبَقَنِي، وَقَالَ: هَذِهِ بِتِلْكَ

Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

"I once ran a race with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and I won. Then, when I was fat, I ran again and the Prophet (peace be upon him) won."

This hadith demonstrates that sports such as running are not only permitted but also practiced by the Prophet as a healthy form of recreation and to strengthen family ties (Amara, 2019). This narration confirms that the Prophet did not view exercise as something foreign, but rather as a part of everyday life that brings physical, emotional, and social benefits (Ibrahim & Latif, 2020). The running competition contains lessons about the importance of maintaining fitness, enjoying physical activity with family, and fostering an atmosphere of love and intimacy. This hadith also reinforces that exercise is a means of maintaining health and strengthening social bonds from an Islamic perspective (Zainuddin & Munir, 2021).

Hadith about Cleanliness and Health

الطُّهُورُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ

Translation: Cleanliness is part of faith

Cleanliness is a crucial element in sports and physical health, making physical activity part of a healthy Islamic lifestyle (Achour et al., 2023). In the context of physical education, personal hygiene, clothing, and the training environment significantly influence health and comfort during exercise (Al-Zuhaili & Rahman, 2019). This

principle demonstrates that physical activity performed while maintaining cleanliness not only supports performance and physical health but also reflects a healthy lifestyle aligned with Islamic values (Mohamed et al., 2020).

Values of physical education are contained in the hadith

The conceptualization of physical education in the corpus of the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) presents a holistic paradigm that positions physical development as an integral part of human existence. This axiological foundation emphasizes that physiological strength and fitness are not merely biological achievements, but crucial theological assets for a Muslim to optimize ritual worship (*habluminallah*) and social contribution (*habluminannas*) (Mustafa & Amin, 2022). Pedagogically, the prophetic call to master specific skills such as swimming, archery, and horse riding reflects the principle of motor-skill acquisition and the development of fitness components such as coordination, balance, and agility (Nasrullah & Ismail, 2017). In modern sports discourse, this approach aligns with He et al. (2024) motor development theory, which states that mastery of fundamental movement skills from an early age lays the foundation for environmental adaptability and individual resilience in facing life's ecological challenges.

Beyond motor aspects, the substantial value articulated in the Hadith is strengthening self-discipline and habituating a consistently active lifestyle (*istiqamah*). Structured and sustained physical activity in Islamic teachings serves as a self-regulation instrument for building mental and physical resilience (Achour et al., 2023). These characteristics are closely intertwined with the concept of Lifelong Physical Activity (LLPA) and the contemporary sports pedagogical model adopted by global organizations such as the WHO, which promotes physical activity as a long-term health investment to mitigate the sedentary behavior crisis (Corbin & Lindsey, 2020; Guthold et al., 2020). A previous study by Asonitou et al. (2024) also confirmed that disciplined physical exercise not only improves cardiorespiratory function but also transforms movement routines into lifelong healthy habits.

Ethically, the dimensions of sport from the perspective of the Hadith strictly integrate the values of sportsmanship, honesty, self-control, and the high bioethical principles of safety. This principle is rooted in the universal Islamic legal maxim of not harming oneself or others (*la darar wa la dirar*), which, in parallel, serves as the primary standard in risk management in modern physical education curricula (Kamali, 2019). Furthermore, prophetic teachings uphold the law of balance (homeostasis) that rejects the dichotomy between physical (somatic) and spiritual (spiritual) needs, where the body is seen as a trust that has biological rights that must be fulfilled proportionally (Al-Attas & Hashim, 2020). This synergy strengthens the theory of Holistic Development in education (Kirk, 2020), proving that the reconstruction of physical education based on Hadith values offers a comprehensive blueprint that is not only oriented towards athletic performance, but also on the formation of moral character (noble morals) and psycho-spiritual maturity that is highly relevant to the ideal goals of 21st-century education (Memon & Abdou, 2020).

The relevance of physical Education Values in The Hadith to the Concept of Modern Physical Education

The axiological dimensions of physical education embedded within the prophetic traditions (Hadith) of Prophet Muhammad SAW demonstrate a profound ontological convergence with contemporary pedagogical paradigms that champion holistic human development. In modern educational discourse, physical education (PE) functions as a multifaceted vehicle designed to systematically optimize physical fitness, psychological well-being, prosocial dynamics, and structural character internalization (Dyson et al., 2021). This comprehensive agenda directly mirrors the normative mandates found in the Hadith literature, which elevates physical vitality to an essential manifestation of robust spiritual devotion; specifically, the prophetic declaration posits that a physically resilient believer is inherently more optimal and beloved by Allah than a fragile one (Kuswandi, 2024; Amara, 2019). Consequently, prophetic axiology strips physical conditioning of mere mechanical utilitarianism, infusing it instead with functional and moral imperatives that parallel the ultimate objective of modern PE: the cultivation of socio-economically productive, healthy, and high-functioning individuals (Memon & Abdou, 2020).

Concurrently, the core tenets of modern health-based physical education intersect seamlessly with prophetic principles regarding somatic rights and physiological homeostasis. Modern curricular frameworks are intentionally engineered to induce habitual, lifelong active lifestyles as a preventative strategy against chronic hypokinetic diseases and as a mechanism to elevate systemic quality of life (Guthold et al., 2020). This contemporary biomedical objective finds its theological justification in the Hadith corpus, which explicitly dictates that the physical body possesses inherent, unalienable rights (haqq) that must be systematically fulfilled. By framing somatic care as a mandatory responsibility rather than an elective leisure pursuit, this prophetic imperative provides a robust ethical foundation that reinforces modern, public health-oriented PE strategies aimed at sustaining somatic and psychological equilibrium across the human lifespan (Achour et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the systematic acquisition of fundamental movement skills (FMS) and specialized motor competence—which form the pedagogical cornerstone of modern physical literacy—is heavily validated by explicit prophetic directives. The canonical traditions recommending the deliberate instruction of specific tactical and physical disciplines, namely swimming, archery, and equestrian arts (HR. Al-Baihaqi), directly align with contemporary motor development theories. Within modern kinesiological frameworks, these distinct practices are categorized as advanced motor skills that cultivate foundational coordination, spatial awareness, and specialized agility necessary for sustained athletic engagement across life stages (Nindyna Puspasari & Merryana Andriani, 2017; Nasrullah & Ismail, 2017). Thus, these prophetic recommendations serve as a foundational normative framework that justifies the rigorous development of motor literacy and athletic competence within contemporary PE curricula (Nasruddin et al., 2022).

In terms of behavioral modification, the values of discipline, behavioral consistency, and routine exercise habituation prioritized in the Hadith directly correspond to the foundational mechanics of athletic conditioning and fitness retention. The prophetic maxim asserting that the deeds most profoundly valued by the Divine are those executed with absolute consistency, regardless of their scale or magnitude (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim), deeply resonates with modern models of long-term physical activity participation (Hassan et al., 2021). This conceptual framework highlights a critical pedagogical reality: the efficacy and physiological dividends of physical education are not merely contingent upon high-intensity, sporadic athletic outputs, but are deeply dependent upon the structural sustainability, longitudinal consistency, and behavioral permanence of the physical regimes.

Ultimately, modern physical culture views competitive sports and movement experiences as essential laboratories for socio-emotional character building, emphasizing the internalization of sportsmanship, collective cooperation, and emotional self-regulation. This secular moral framework finds an enriched counterpart in the Hadith literature, which universally demands the manifestation of noble morals (akhlaq al-karimah), equity, and psychological gentleness across all human endeavors (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim; Ibrahim & Latif, 2020). When these perspectives are synthesized, physical activity transcends mere somatic conditioning, transforming instead into a powerful medium for sophisticated moral, ethical, and civic education (Walseth et al., 2022). Integrating these prophetic values structurally solidifies the philosophical architecture of physical education, creating a holistic instructional domain capable of simultaneously producing physically viable, mentally mature, and ethically grounded global citizens.

4. CONCLUSION

From a theological-pedagogical standpoint, physical education derived from the Hadith corpus provides a robust, multi-dimensional normative framework that transcends mere somatic conditioning by seamlessly integrating health, motor competence, structural discipline, and socio-emotional sportsmanship with transcendental spiritual equilibrium. This prophetic paradigm directly converges with contemporary physical education models that champion holistic human development, lifelong active lifestyles, and bioethical safety principles; yet it goes further by enriching modern secular practices with critical ethical and spiritual dimensions that are frequently underutilized in formal schooling. Consequently, integrating these Hadith-based values into institutional physical education curricula serves as a vital pedagogical mechanism to fortify the philosophical foundations of movement sciences, thereby elevating standard physical activity into a meaningful, value-driven practice capable of simultaneously cultivating physiological vitality, psychological resilience, and noble moral character (akhlaq al-karimah) in students.

As a recommendation, formal educational institutions, curriculum policymakers, and physical education practitioners are encouraged to design and implement culturally responsive pedagogy that structurally integrates the ethical values of the Hadith into

everyday physical activities. Physical education teachers need to be trained to focus not only on assessing psychomotor aspects or raw athletic performance, but also to contextualize each movement, game rules, and safety principles as manifestations of worship, spiritual discipline, and strengthening moral character. Furthermore, further experimental research at the macro level is highly recommended to measure the empirical effectiveness of this integration model on students' fitness levels, self-regulation, and psychosocial development in both Islamic-based and public schools.

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