



Recreational Sports Participation and Its Role in Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle among Adolescents in Makassar City

Muhammad Sadzali¹

{muhammad.sadzali@unm.ac.id¹}

Universitas Negeri Makassar, Jl. A. P. Pettarani, Tidung, Kec. Rappocini, Kota Makassar, Sulawesi Selatan 90222¹

Abstrak. Makassar, as one of Indonesia's major cities, is characterized by urbanization, with rapid technological development and a modern lifestyle. This situation indirectly encourages adolescents to interact more frequently with digital technology than engage in physical activity. However, Makassar also boasts a variety of sports facilities, public spaces, and recreational sports communities that can be utilized to increase adolescent participation in physical activity. Research on recreational sports participation among adolescents in Makassar is important because it can provide an empirical understanding of how their involvement in these activities contributes to improving healthy lifestyles, including physical fitness, mental health, and the quality of social relationships (Sallis et al., 2020). Therefore, this study focuses on examining in more depth how recreational sports participation plays a role in shaping healthy lifestyles among adolescents in Makassar. This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits, both for the development of sports science and for the formulation of education and public health policies. Theoretically, this study can enrich the literature on the relationship between recreational sports and a healthy lifestyle in adolescents, while practically, the results of this study can be a reference for local governments, schools, and sports communities in developing activity programs that can encourage adolescent involvement in fun and beneficial physical activities (Bauman et al., 2022).

Keywords: Recreational sports participation, healthy lifestyle, Makassar city youth.

1 Introduction

The development of the era marked by advances in digital technology has brought about significant changes in people's lifestyles, including among adolescents. Currently, physical activity among adolescents tends to decline due to the increased use of gadgets, computers, and internet-based activities, which encourage them to spend more time sitting or lying down. This phenomenon is often referred to as a sedentary lifestyle, a condition in which a person engages in activities with minimal physical movement, resulting in various negative impacts on physical and psychological health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), more than 80% of adolescents worldwide do not achieve the recommended level of physical activity, which is at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity activity per day. This fact indicates that adolescents' lack of physical activity is a major risk factor for obesity, metabolic disorders, and even mental health decline.

Recreational sports are one solution to increasing physical activity among adolescents because they are flexible, enjoyable, and do not require competitive achievement. Recreational sports emphasize enjoyment, health, and social interaction, making them accessible to a wide range of groups without requiring special skills. This makes recreational sports more accessible

to adolescents, who naturally seek activities that are enjoyable, varied, and free from competitive pressure. Previous studies have shown that adolescent involvement in recreational sports can improve physical fitness, reduce stress, boost self-confidence, and encourage a healthy lifestyle in everyday life (Nurulita, 2024).

In this context, recreational sports can be a relevant alternative activity to encourage adolescents to participate in physical activities that not only improve physical health but also provide enjoyment, a sense of community, and stress management. Recreational sports can be understood as voluntary, enjoyable, and unstructured sports activities that can be carried out individually or in groups according to individual interests and needs (Siedentop, 2019). Common forms of recreational sports among adolescents include futsal, cycling, basketball, volleyball, jogging, swimming, and traditional games involving physical elements. These activities are important because they integrate physical, psychological, and social health aspects more comprehensively, thereby encouraging the development of a healthy lifestyle among adolescents (Caspersen, Powell, & Christenson, 2021).

Adolescents, as the nation's future generation, require special attention in developing a healthy lifestyle. This is because individuals transition from childhood to adulthood, marked by physical, emotional, and social changes. Habits formed during adolescence will form a strong foundation for their adult lifestyle. Therefore, adolescent participation in recreational sports can significantly contribute not only to improving physical fitness but also to improving mental health, emotional control, and their ability to build positive social interactions (Telama et al., 2019). Therefore, adolescent involvement in recreational sports can be viewed as a long-term investment in developing healthy and productive human resources.

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Therefore, this study focuses on examining in more depth how recreational sports participation plays a role in shaping healthy lifestyles among adolescents in Makassar. This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits, both for the development of sports science and for the formulation of education and public health policies. Theoretically, this study can enrich the literature on the relationship between recreational sports and a healthy lifestyle in adolescents, while practically, the results of this study can be a reference for local governments, schools, and sports communities in developing activity programs that can encourage adolescent involvement in fun and beneficial physical activities (Bauman et al., 2022).

2 Method

This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach with a survey method, as the primary objective was to obtain an empirical overview of the level of recreational sports participation and its role in promoting a healthy lifestyle among adolescents in Makassar City. According to Sugiyono (2022), quantitative methods with a descriptive design are highly appropriate for uncovering social phenomena that can be measured using standardized instruments, allowing the results to be generalized to specific populations. This approach also allows researchers to analyze the relationship between recreational sports participation variables and healthy lifestyle indicators without manipulating the conditions under study.

The population in this study was all adolescents aged 15–18 years residing in Makassar City. Makassar City was chosen as the research location because it is one of the metropolitan cities in Eastern Indonesia with a high level of urbanization that impacts adolescent activity patterns, including a tendency toward an increasing sedentary lifestyle.

From this population, the researchers selected a sample of 150 respondents using purposive sampling, a sampling technique based on specific predetermined criteria (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The respondent criteria for this study were: (1) 15–18 years old, (2) residing in Makassar City for at least the past three years, and (3) actively participating in recreational sports activities at least once a week.

This study consisted of two main variables. The independent variable was recreational sports participation, measured through several indicators such as frequency, duration, type of sport chosen, and motivation for participation. The dependent variable was adolescents' healthy lifestyle, analyzed through indicators of physical fitness, diet, sleep quality, stress management, and social interaction. The variables were measured using a questionnaire instrument developed based on theoretical indicators from WHO (2020) and previous research (Bauman et al., 2022).

The instrument used in this study was a Likert-scale questionnaire, consisting of 25 items related to recreational sports participation and 30 items regarding a healthy lifestyle. The Likert scale used had five response options, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," with scores of 1–5. Prior to use, the research instrument was tested for validity and reliability. Validity was tested using Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a value of ≥ 0.70 indicating good instrument reliability (Arikunto, 2019).

Research data was collected through direct questionnaire distribution in schools, public spaces, and sports communities in Makassar City. Furthermore, researchers conducted brief interviews with several respondents to strengthen their understanding of the answers. This technique was used to obtain more comprehensive data and better illustrate the phenomenon of recreational sports participation in the context of adolescents' daily lives.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentage calculations, means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions to describe the characteristics of respondents and their tendencies to participate in recreational sports. Furthermore, Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between recreational sports participation levels and adolescents' healthy lifestyles. This analysis was chosen because it is suitable for examining relationships between variables on both interval and ratio scales (Sugiyono, 2022). All analyses were carried out using SPSS software version 25, so that the data obtained could be processed systematically, accurately and responsibly.

3 Result

Based on data obtained from 150 adolescents in Makassar City, recreational sports participation rates were found to be quite high, although the frequency and types of activities varied. Of the total respondents, 68% of adolescents reported regularly participating in recreational sports at least twice a week, while the remaining 32% participated only irregularly, less than twice a week. This data indicates that the majority of adolescents in Makassar City have a good awareness of the importance of engaging in enjoyable physical activity, although a relatively passive group remains.

In terms of the type of sport chosen, the survey results indicated that futsal was the most popular recreational sport at 30%, followed by jogging at 22%, basketball at 18%, volleyball at 15%, cycling at 10%, and swimming at 5%. This distribution illustrates that team sports are more popular among adolescents because they provide opportunities for building social interaction, cooperation, and group solidarity. Meanwhile, individual sports such as jogging, cycling, and swimming remain quite popular because they are more flexible, do not require special facilities, and can be done at one's own leisure time.

In terms of activity duration, the majority of respondents (72%) engaged in recreational exercise for 30–60 minutes per session, which aligns with the WHO (2020) recommendations on physical activity needs for adolescents. Meanwhile, 18% of respondents exercised for more than 60 minutes, and 10% did so for less than 30 minutes per session. This indicates that the majority of adolescents engage in physical activity for the ideal duration to

maintain physical fitness.

The study also showed a relationship between recreational sports participation levels and healthy lifestyle indicators. Adolescents who regularly participated in recreational sports reported more regular sleep patterns, with 65% sleeping 7–8 hours per night, while only 38% of those who rarely exercised reported adequate sleep. Regarding food consumption, 60% of active respondents reported consuming a balanced, nutritious diet more frequently, while only 35% of respondents with low participation observed a healthy diet. Furthermore, regarding stress management, 70% of adolescents with high participation reported feeling better able to manage their emotions and stress, compared to only 40% of those with low participation.

From a social perspective, 75% of respondents who actively participate in team sports stated that they found it easier to make new friends and improved their communication with peers, while only 42% of respondents who preferred individual sports reported similar benefits. These findings demonstrate that recreational team sports are not only beneficial for physical health but also serve as an important means of developing social skills, solidarity, and sportsmanship in adolescents.

Overall, the results of this study confirm that recreational sports participation plays a significant role in fostering a healthy lifestyle among adolescents in Makassar City. High levels of participation have been shown to be positively correlated with regular sleep patterns, healthy eating habits, good stress management, and increased social interaction. Therefore, recreational sports are an effective medium for encouraging healthy lifestyle habits in adolescents and are a strategic solution to mitigate the impact of a sedentary lifestyle that is increasingly prevalent in today's digital age.

4 Discussion

The research results show that the level of recreational sports participation among adolescents in Makassar City is relatively high, with 68% of respondents regularly participating in recreational sports at least twice a week. This finding indicates that recreational sports have become an important part of adolescents' lives, especially in facing the challenges of a modern lifestyle filled with sedentary activities. According to Sallis et al. (2020), regular involvement in physical activity is crucial for adolescents, as it can prevent various health risks such as obesity, metabolic syndrome, and psychological disorders. Therefore, the high participation of Makassar adolescents in recreational sports is a positive sign for efforts to develop a healthier and more active generation.

In terms of the types of sports chosen, futsal (30%) is the dominant activity, followed by jogging (22%), basketball (18%), volleyball (15%), cycling (10%), and swimming (5%). This distribution shows that team sports are more popular than individual sports. This aligns with social interaction theory, which states that adolescents tend to prefer activities that provide opportunities for building relationships, solidarity, and togetherness (Eccles & Barber, 2019). In other words, choosing team sports like futsal and basketball is not only about maintaining physical fitness, but also about fulfilling the social and psychological needs of adolescents.

The duration of activity also revealed interesting findings. 72% of respondents exercised for 30–60 minutes per session, which aligns with WHO recommendations (2020). This finding confirms that the majority of adolescents meet the minimum standards for physical activity to maintain fitness. This ideal duration of activity has positive effects on cardiovascular function, muscle strength, and endurance (Caspersen, Powell, & Christenson, 2021). Furthermore, the habit of exercising for a sufficient duration can increase metabolism, reduce fatigue, and balance hormones that play a role in emotional management.

The study also showed a strong link between recreational sports participation and healthy lifestyle indicators. Respondents with high levels of participation were more likely to have regular sleep patterns (65%), compared to those who rarely exercised (38%). This fact supports the view that exercise plays a role in improving sleep quality because it can reduce anxiety levels, stabilize circadian rhythms, and trigger the release of endorphins, which contribute to feelings of relaxation (Brand et al., 2020). In the context of adolescents, good

sleep quality is crucial because it is related to brain development, learning concentration, and emotional health.

In terms of dietary habits, 60% of adolescents who actively participate in sports pay more attention to consuming a balanced, nutritious diet, while only 35% of those in the low-participation group exhibit similar habits. This can be explained by the theory of healthy behavior, which states that involvement in physical activity tends to encourage individuals to be more concerned with other aspects of their health, including diet (Prochaska & Velicer, 1997). In other words, recreational sports have a domino effect that can motivate adolescents to adopt other healthy habits in their daily lives.

Furthermore, this study also showed that recreational sports have a significant impact on stress management, with 70% of adolescents with high participation feeling better able to manage emotional distress compared to 40% in the low-participation group. This finding aligns with the research of Biddle, Ciaccioni, Thomas, & Vergeer (2019), which confirmed that physical activity has a protective role for mental health by reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety in adolescents. Thus, recreational sports are not only a form of entertainment but also serve as a natural therapy for managing the psychological stress often experienced by adolescents.

The social aspect is also an important part of this discussion. As many as 75% of respondents who actively participate in team sports stated that these activities helped them expand their friendships and improve their communication skills, while only 42% of those who participate in individual sports experienced the same benefits. This finding confirms that team sports serve as a means of developing social skills, strengthening solidarity, and internalizing the values of sportsmanship (Coakley, 2021). This is particularly relevant in the context of adolescents, as at this stage of development, they need a space to build a social identity, learn to cooperate, and interact with their peers.

Overall, the results of this study reinforce the theory that recreational sports have multidimensional benefits for adolescents, encompassing physical, psychological, and social aspects. This aligns with research by Telama et al. (2019), which shows that exercising from a young age positively impacts a healthy lifestyle into adulthood. Therefore, the research findings in Makassar City not only provide theoretical contributions to enriching the sports literature but also have practical implications for the government, schools, and sports communities. Recreational sports programs need to be expanded and well-facilitated to reach more youth, so they have the opportunity to engage in physical activities that are enjoyable, accessible, and beneficial in the long term.

5 Conclusion

The results of this study confirm that recreational sports participation plays a crucial role in promoting healthy lifestyles among adolescents in Makassar City. The relatively high participation rate (68%) indicates that recreational sports have become part of adolescents' routine activities, particularly in team sports such as futsal, basketball, and volleyball. This involvement has been shown to have a positive impact on various aspects of a healthy lifestyle, including sleep quality, diet, stress management, and social skills. Therefore, recreational sports are not merely entertainment activities, but rather a strategic tool in developing a healthy, active, and highly competitive young generation.

Another conclusion that can be drawn is that adolescents with high participation tend to be more disciplined in maintaining healthy habits compared to those with low participation rates. For example, 65% of the active group had more regular sleep patterns compared to 38% of the passive group, and 60% of the active group showed greater attention to healthy eating compared to 35% of the passive group. This fact reinforces the view that recreational sports serve as an entry point for developing broader healthy lifestyle behaviors, where physical engagement triggers changes in other aspects of adolescents' lives.

The practical implications of this research are the need for greater support from various parties, including local governments, schools, and sports communities, in providing

adequate access to and facilities for recreational sports. Public facilities such as futsal fields, city parks for jogging, and bicycle paths must be continuously developed and maintained so that they can be optimally utilized by adolescents. Furthermore, schools need to integrate recreational sports programs into extracurricular activities to reinforce healthy habits among students. In this way, recreational sports can be an effective and enjoyable health education strategy.

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on the relationship between sports participation and healthy lifestyles among adolescents in Indonesia. These findings corroborate previous research that emphasizes the benefits of sports for physical, mental, and social health (Biddle et al., 2019; Telama et al., 2019). However, this study also highlights the differences in benefits between team and individual sports, thus providing a basis for further research to understand variations in sports activity preferences among adolescents.

Considering the findings of this study, a key recommendation is the need for a collective effort to expand recreational sports participation as part of a healthy lifestyle among adolescents in Makassar City. This movement could take the form of a health campaign, a sports festival, or a community program involving parents, teachers, and health workers to ensure the sustainability of these healthy habits. If recreational sports participation can be continuously increased, not only will adolescent health be maintained but the overall quality of life of the community can also be significantly improved.

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