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The current situation of using physical activity games to develop physical fitness for 5-6-year-old children at 19/5 preschool, Thai Nguyen city, Vietnam

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Abstract

Developing physical fitness qualities is one of the primary goals of preschool education. Based on theoretical and practical research on the use of physical activity games to develop physical fitness qualities for 5-6-year-old children, this paper investigates the current situation regarding the use of physical activity games to develop physical fitness qualities at 19/5 Preschool, Thai Nguyen City. The study aims to contribute to enhancing children's physical development and improving the teaching quality of preschool teachers.

Keywords: Physical fitness qualities, physical activity games, preschool

1. Introduction

Physical education in preschools plays a foundational role in the comprehensive development of children, especially for the 5-6-year-old age group, a golden period for the development of motor skills and physical fitness qualities (PFQs). According to the Council of Europe, physical development in early childhood not only promotes health but is also closely linked to intellectual, emotional, and social development ^[1]. One effective method that aligns with the psychological and physiological characteristics of preschool children is the use of physical activity games (PAGs) in physical education activities.

PAGs are considered a form of learning through movement, helping children develop PFQs such as speed, strength, endurance, dexterity, and flexibility ^[2]. Additionally, these games contribute to the development of social skills, coordination, and self-confidence in communication ^[3]. Many studies have shown that organizing PAGs scientifically and appropriately for each age group can significantly improve physical fitness and enhance learning engagement in preschoolers ^[4], ^[5].

However, in the current context of preschool education in Vietnam, the use of PAGs in physical education classes has not received adequate attention. Some teachers still struggle with selecting and organizing appropriate games, resulting in limited effectiveness ^[6]. Practical observations show that the use of PAGs to develop PFQs for 5-6-year-old children at 19/5 Preschool in Thai Nguyen City remains limited. Therefore, understanding the current situation of using PAGs to develop PFQs for this age group at 19/5 Preschool is essential to improve the effectiveness of PFQ development in preschools and enhance the teaching quality of preschool educators.

2. Research Methods

The research employed the following methods.

- **Document analysis and synthesis:** Theoretical foundations, academic papers, studies, and statistical data related to the topic were analyzed and synthesized to establish a theoretical basis for the paper.
- **Data collection method:** A survey was conducted with 113 preschool teachers using questionnaires designed to gather information on the current use of PAGs for developing PFQs in 5-6-year-old children at 19/5 Preschool, Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam.
- **Statistical mathematics method:** Data were analyzed using SPSS (version 26), a specialized software for statistical analysis in social sciences.

3. Research Results

3.1. Current situation of using physical activity games to develop PFQs for 5-6-year-old children at 19/5 Preschool, Thai Nguyen City, Thai Nguyen Province.

3.1.1. Preschool teachers' awareness of the necessity of using PAGs to develop PFQs for 5-6-year-old children

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Through surveys and interviews with several preschool teachers about the necessity of using PAGs to develop PFQs for children aged 5-6, the following results were obtained:

Table 1: Preschool teachers' awareness of the necessity of using PAGs to develop PFQs in 5-6-year-old children (p=113)

Necessity level					
Very necessary		Necessary		Not necessary	
Quantity	%	Quantity	%	Quantity	%
45	39,82	68	60,18	0	0

The results in Table 1 indicate that all preschool teachers recognize the necessity of using PAGs to develop PFQs in 5-6-year-old children. Among them, 39.82% consider it very

necessary, and 60.18% consider it necessary. This is a positive sign of teachers' awareness regarding the use of PAGs for PFQ development in 5-6-year-old children.

3.1.2 Time periods when preschool teachers organize PAGs for 5-6-year-old children

Through class observations, surveys, and interviews, the following data were collected:

Table 2: Time periods for organizing PAGs for 5-6-year-old children (p=113).

Time period	Frequency					
	Frequent		Occasionally		Never	
	Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%
Morning arrival	2	1,77	3	2,65	108	95,58
Learning centers	5	4,42	11	9,73	97	85,84
Transition between classes	44	38,94	30	26,55	39	34,51
Physical education class	110	97,35	3	2,65	0	0,00
Outdoor activities	92	81,42	21	18,58	0	0,00
Afternoon activities	40	35,40	73	64,60	0	0,00
End-of-day pickup	0	0,00	6	5,31	107	94,69

From the data, it is evident that most teachers frequently organize PAGs during physical education classes (97.35%) and outdoor activities (81.42%). In contrast, very few organize PAGs during morning arrival (94.69%), learning center activities (85.84%), and pickup time (94.69%). While PAGs are considered an important tool in physical education classes, observations indicate that the games are still limited in variety and organization, lacking appeal and therefore not

effectively stimulating children's active participation.

3.1.3 Preschool teachers' evaluation of the conditions necessary for using PAGs to develop PFQs in 5-6-year-old children.

Like other educational activities, the effective use of PAGs for PFQ development requires certain objective and subjective conditions. Through surveys and discussions with preschool teachers, the following results were obtained:

Table 3: Conditions for using PAGs to develop PFQs in 5-6-year-old children (p=113)

Condition	Necessary level					
	Very necessary		Necessary		Not necessary	
	Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%
Selecting/designing appropriate PAGs for PFQ development.	110	97,35	1	0,88	2	1,77
Having a reasonable plan for PAG use	4	3,54	105	92,92	4	3,54
Having a suitable play environment	105	92,92	7	6,19	1	0,88
Having instructional materials for using PAGs	83	73,45	23	20,35	7	6,19
Having specific evaluation criteria	101	89,38	12	10,62	0	0,00
Close cooperation with families	10	8,85	99	87,61	4	3,54

From the table, it can be seen that most teachers believe multiple conditions must be met to effectively use PAGs for PFQ development. "Selecting/designing appropriate PAGs for PFQ development" is considered the most critical condition, followed by "having a suitable play environment," "having specific evaluation criteria," and "having instructional materials." In addition, "having a reasonable plan" and "close cooperation with families" are

also regarded as necessary.

3.2. Current development status of PFQs in 5-6-year-old children at 19/5 Preschool, Thai Nguyen City, Thai Nguyen Province.

To assess PFQ development in 5-6-year-old children, relevant documents were reviewed, and expert interviews were conducted to select six physical exercises for evaluation. The results are shown below:

Table 4: PFQ development level of 5-6-year-old children (p=60)

PFQ	Exercise	Gender	Development level					
			High		Average		Low	
			Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%
Agility	18m sprint	Boys	14	23,33	30	50,6	16	26,67
		Girls	13	21,67	28	46,9	19	31,67
Strength	Dominant hand throw	Boys	15	25,00	29	49	16	26,67
		Girls	14	23,33	29	48,5	17	28,33
	Standing long jump	Boys	15	25,00	30	49,8	15	25,00
		Girls	13	21,67	28	47,3	19	31,67
	Combined	Boys	15	25,00	29	49,4	16	26,67
		Girls	13	21,67	28	47,1	19	31,67
Dexterity	Catching and bouncing ball	Boys	13	21,67	28	48,1	19	31,67
		Girls	14	23,33	31	51	15	25,00
	One-leg balance	Boys	13	21,67	27	46,1	20	33,33
		Girls	14	23,33	28	47,7	18	30,00
	Combined	Boys	13	21,67	28	47,1	19	31,67
		Girls	13	21,67	29	49,4	18	30,00
Endurance	75-second run	Boys	13	21,67	30	50,6	17	28,33
		Girls	11	18,33	28	47,3	21	35,00

From Table 4, we observe that boys generally outperform girls in agility, strength, and endurance, while girls perform better in dexterity. This objectively reflects preschool children's motor development characteristics: boys tend to prefer intense and fast-paced movements, excelling in speed, power, and endurance, whereas girls perform better in activities requiring precision, finesse etc.

Based on the above analysis, we provide a general assessment of the current development level of children's physical fitness qualities as follows:

- The PFQ development of 5-6-year-old children at 19/5 Preschool, Thai Nguyen City, is mostly at average and low levels.
- The PFQ development levels vary between boys and girls. Boys show better development in agility, strength, and endurance, particularly at the high level, as

reflected in indicators like the 18m sprint, standing long jump, and dominant hand throw. Conversely, girls show better performance in dexterity. However, these differences are not significant.

3.3 Difficulties Encountered by Preschool Teachers in Using Physical Activity Games to Develop Physical Fitness Qualities for 5-6-Year-Old Children.

Through questionnaire surveys, conversations with several preschool teachers, classroom observations, and direct participation in some physical education sessions for 5-6-year-old children at 19/5 Preschool in Thai Nguyen City, we found that preschool teachers face a variety of difficulties when using physical activity games (PAGs) to develop children's physical fitness qualities (PFQs). Some of the most common challenges are as follows:

Table 5: Difficulties Encountered by Preschool Teachers in Using PAGs to Develop PFQs in 5-6-Year-Old Children (p = 113)

Difficulty	Degree of difficulty					
	Very difficult		Difficult		Not difficult	
	Qty	%	Qty	%	Qty	%
Selecting or designing appropriate PAGs	56	49,56	46	40,71	11	9,73
Creating a suitable play environment	21	18,58	72	63,72	20	17,70
Assessing children after the games	15	13,27	94	83,19	4	3,54
Lack of specific instructional materials	26	23,01	72	63,72	15	13,27
Overcrowded classes	8	7,08	58	51,33	47	41,59
Lack of time to organize games	14	12,39	74	65,49	25	22,12

From Table 5, it is evident that preschool teachers face multiple challenges in using PAGs to develop PFQs in 5-6-year-old children, with varying degrees of difficulty. The most common challenge reported was "selecting or designing appropriate PAGs," with 49.56% identifying it as very difficult and 40.71% as difficult. This was followed by "creating a suitable play environment" (18.58% very difficult; 63.72% difficult); "assessing children after the games" (13.27% very difficult; 83.19% difficult); "lack of specific instructional materials" (23.01% very difficult; 63.72% difficult); "overcrowded classes" (7.08% very difficult; 51.33% difficult); and "lack of time to organize games" (12.39% very difficult; 65.49% difficult).

4. Conclusion

Based on the above research findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

In practice, preschool teachers have recognized the necessity of using PAGs to develop PFQs in 5-6-year-old children.

However, in general, they have not yet applied appropriate strategies in utilizing these games, resulting in limited physical development outcomes for the children. There are both subjective and objective causes contributing to this situation. This calls for educational administrators and policymakers to propose effective solutions to overcome these challenges. One of the fundamental causes is the insufficient attention given to training and professional development for preschool teachers, particularly regarding the skills needed to organize play-based activities in 5-6-year-old in general and the application of PAGs to develop PFQs in particular. As a result, the overall educational effectiveness and the specific development of children's PFQs have not met expectations and do not yet satisfy the requirements of the current educational reform.

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