

# Social Perceptions of Physical Education and Sports Classes in the Cultural Imagination of High School Students Exempt from Sports Participation

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**Abstract---**This study aims to uncover the social and cultural perceptions of physical education and sports classes among exempt high school students. The researchers employed a descriptive-analytical approach with a random sample of 200 exempt students from four high schools in Boumerdès Province. A questionnaire was used to collect data.

The results obtained by the researchers highlighted the following:

- Religious justifications exist for exemptions related to gender mixing and clothing.
- Physical education is perceived more negatively than other subjects.
- Health-related justifications, such as chronic illnesses or disabilities, were common.

In conclusion, this study offers several recommendations, including the enactment of a law that would require school health physicians to provide accurate diagnoses of students' health conditions, along with comprehensive and convincing medical files, rather than leaving it to personal considerations alone.

**Keywords---**social representations, cultural imagination, physical education and sports, high school students.

## 1. Introduction

Physical education and sports play a key role in developing learners' personalities and their physical, psychological and social abilities. They are not just recreational activities; they are an essential part of the curriculum, promoting balance between mental and physical health, and encouraging positive social behaviours. However, perceptions of this subject vary significantly among different groups of high school students. This perception is influenced by various factors, such as family background,

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socialisation, religious beliefs, prior experiences and the impact of digital society, which promotes lifestyles involving reduced physical activity and increased screen time.

Field observations of physical education and sports classes have shown that some students engage positively, viewing the classes as an opportunity for self-expression, releasing energy, and acquiring new physical skills. Conversely, others are sceptical or indifferent, considering it unproductive compared to theoretical subjects. This disparity is more pronounced between students who regularly participate in the class and those who are exempt for health, religious or personal reasons. This leads to entirely different cultural and social representations, which affect their attitudes towards physical activity both inside and outside school.

In light of the transformations occurring in contemporary society and the challenges related to digitisation and changing values, there is an increased need to study this topic in depth. Understanding prevailing social perceptions and the factors that influence them can contribute to the development of educational strategies that consider students' cultural and social diversity. Furthermore, this understanding can enhance the role of physical education and sports in developing a balanced personality and achieving the comprehensive development goals of the educational system.

## **2. Problem statement**

Physical education and sports are considered essential components of a comprehensive education due to their role in developing learners' physical abilities, motor skills and social values. However, not all students engage with physical education classes to the same extent. While some students regularly participate in physical activities at school, others are exempt for religious, health, or personal reasons. This variation in participation raises questions about how social perceptions of these classes are formed, particularly given the growing influence of cultural heritage, the social environment and family attitudes towards sports and physical activities.

The social environment significantly affects how students perceive physical education and sports classes. Customs and traditions influence attitudes towards these classes, particularly with regard to the appropriateness of sports attire and gender segregation. Health and psychological factors may cause some students to refuse to participate, while others view the class as an opportunity to have fun and break up the academic routine. Family background also clearly impacts attitudes towards this class; families that support physical activity often instil positive attitudes in their children, while others may regard it as less important than academic subjects.

These factors intersect with the influence of the media and the public image of sport, as well as educational curricula that may focus on the physical aspects of sport without paying sufficient attention to the educational and psychological dimensions. Teachers can play a crucial role in shaping students' perceptions through their teaching style and their ability to motivate students to participate. Conversely, peer behaviour during class can encourage or discourage participation, reflecting a complex social dynamic within the classroom environment.

In light of this information, the research problem emerges: how do exempt students perceive physical education and sports classes according to the prevailing cultural imagination, and what factors influence this perception? The following general question arises from this:

What is the nature of the cultural imagination of high school students exempt from physical education and sports classes?

The following sub-questions can be framed from this general question:

Do religious beliefs stemming from the cultural imagination influence the formation of representations among students exempt from physical education and sports classes?

Do exempt students' perceptions of physical education and sports compared to other educational subjects affect their inclination to avoid it?

Does the health status of students exempt from physical education and sports influence their negative perceptions of the subject?

**Based on these sub-questions, we propose the following hypotheses:**

**General hypothesis:**

The social representations of physical education and sports classes among students exempt from participation in secondary school are characterised by religious dimensions and a more negative perception of the subject than other educational materials, with health-related aspects being significant as well.

**Sub-hypotheses:**

Religious beliefs stemming from cultural imagination influence how students exempt from physical education and sports classes form representations. - The cultural imagination of students exempt from physical education and sports classes compared to other educational subjects affects their tendency to avoid it.

- The cultural imagination of students exempt from physical education and sports, compared to other subjects, affects their tendency to avoid these subjects. - The health status of students exempt from physical education and sports contributes to the formation of negative representations about the subject.

- The health status of students exempt from physical education and sports contributes to negative perceptions of the subject.

**3. Objectives of the study:**

To reveal the nature of social representations of physical education and sports classes in the cultural imagination of students exempt from participation at high school level.

- To determine the impact of religious and cultural beliefs in shaping these representations.
- To determine the impact of religious and cultural beliefs on these representations. - To assess the influence of prevailing perceptions of the status of physical education and sports compared to other educational subjects on students' attitudes towards avoiding it.
- Assess the influence of prevailing perceptions of the status of physical education and sports compared to other subjects on students' attitudes towards avoiding them. - To clarify the role of health factors in forming negative representations of physical education and sports.
- Clarify the role of health factors in forming negative perceptions of physical education and sports.

**4. Importance of the study:**

It contributes to the enrichment of educational and psychological literature related to understanding students' perceptions of physical education and sports within the Algerian cultural context.

It also provides educational decision-makers with practical indicators to help them review and regulate exemption policies based on objective, scientific foundations.

- It helps physical education teachers and practitioners to recognise the cultural, social and health factors that influence students' attitudes, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of their teaching. - To assess the influence of prevailing beliefs.
- It emphasises the importance of involving school physicians in accurately detecting and diagnosing health issues, reducing unjustified exemptions and improving the status of physical education and sports within the education system.

## 5. Definition of concepts and terminology

### 5.1 Social representations:

A set of ideas, values and norms formed collectively within a society that guide individuals' understanding of reality, influencing their behaviour and relationships (Durkheim, 1997, p. 113).

Operational definition of social representations: A set of ideas, values and norms that high school students collectively form towards physical education and sports classes, guiding their understanding of the subject and influencing their behaviour and relationships.

### 5.2 Physical Education and Sports:

An essential component of general education, it aims to promote holistic individual development through physical, social, moral and psychological means. It contributes to preparing learners for life by enhancing their physical health, developing their social relationships and instilling positive values and behaviours (Al-Diri, 1983, p. 62).

The operational definition of physical education and sports is the designated educational class in the curriculum aimed at developing students' physical, social and value-based capacities. This study measures the cultural imagination of students exempt from participation through this definition.

### 5.3 Cultural imagination:

A collection of representations formed within a society that are based on social, cultural, ideological, belief-related and value-related factors. Rather than being limited to individual imagination, it is a 'collective imagination' that shapes people's views on specific subjects such as school, sports, religion, work, and the body (Hewstone, 1989, p. 261).

Operational definition of cultural imagination: the totality of social, cultural, ideological, belief-based and value-related representations held by high school students exempt from physical activity, which collectively shape their perspective on physical education and sports classes.

### 5.4 High school students:

Learners typically aged between 15 and 18 years who are studying at secondary level according to the official curriculum established by the Ministry of National Education in preparation for transitioning to university or vocational training.

Operational definition of high school students: Students enrolled in secondary institutions during the 2024/2025 academic year who have been exempted from participating in physical education and sports classes. This group forms the research population through which their cultural perceptions related to physical education and sports are measured.

## 6. Previous studies:

### First Previous Study:

Kheniche, A. and Mahad, A. (2018). "The Phenomenon of Exemption from Physical Education and Sports Classes for Students with Special Needs in Secondary Education".

This study aimed to reveal the reality of this phenomenon and identify the factors leading to it from the perspectives of teachers, students and school health physicians. The researchers employed a descriptive-analytical approach, using questionnaires and interviews as the main tools for collecting data from various groups, including physical education teachers, exempt students and school health physicians.

The results of the study indicated that the vast majority of participants lacked accurate knowledge of modified and adapted physical activities for students with special needs. The results also showed that exemptions are often granted without thorough medical scrutiny and sometimes take the form of a mere administrative procedure. Physicians primarily cited health factors as the reason for exemptions, while students often expressed a lack of desire to engage in physical activity. The study confirmed that the absence of specialised training among teachers, coupled with inadequate follow-up by physicians, significantly contributed to the prevalence of exemptions.

The researchers concluded that the neglect of the concept of modified physical activities by physicians and teachers clearly contributed to the expansion of this phenomenon. They recommended establishing a standardised exemption prescription that specifies the nature and severity of the disability, as well as including specific measures for modified physical activities in teacher training programmes. They also recommended organising training workshops and specialised studies to support this group in a scientific and methodological manner.

This study is important for current research because it provides a scientific basis for understanding the factors leading to exemptions, and highlights the role of specialised teacher training and the contribution of physicians in dealing with exempt students. This enables the formulation of practical proposals to reduce the phenomenon. (Kheniche & Amir, 2018).

### **Second, previous study:**

Mohamed Al-Arabi (2012): 'Reasons for High School Students' Disengagement from Physical Education and Sports Participation'. Reasons for High School Students' Disengagement from Physical Education and Sports Participation'.

The researcher aimed to uncover the factors that cause high school students to withdraw from physical education and sports classes. A descriptive-analytical approach was employed, with a questionnaire serving as the primary tool for collecting data from a random sample of male and female students across ten high schools in the Blida Education Directorate.

The results indicated that disengagement is not linked to a single cause, but rather the result of several interrelated factors, the most significant of which are:

- Teachers' reliance on traditional teaching methods that do not consider students' needs and motivations.
- A focus on negative feedback, leading to a lack of self-confidence and motivation. - The nature of the teacher-student relationship and the teacher's leadership style. Findings show that authoritarian or lenient styles impact students' attendance.
- The nature of the teacher-student relationship and the teacher's leadership style. Findings show that authoritarian or lenient styles impact students' attendance. - The monotony of class content, which fails to include engaging activities suitable for adolescents.
- Monotony in class content, which fails to include engaging activities suitable for adolescents. - The monotony of class content, which fails to include engaging activities suitable for adolescents.
- The absence of pedagogical tools and sports facilities within institutions limits the effectiveness of participation.

The researcher concluded that addressing this phenomenon requires reevaluating the training of physical education teachers from theoretical and practical perspectives and adopting modern teaching methods that emphasise engagement and motivation. The researcher also recommended integrating positive feedback and developing class content to make it more appealing and aligned with students' interests. Other recommendations included improving sports infrastructure and providing necessary pedagogical tools, as well as involving inspectors and teachers in developing training programmes that keep pace with modern educational developments. (Mohamed, 2012).

### **Third, previous study:**

Ait Aissa Abdel Wahab (2023): 'The Phenomenon of Female Secondary School Students' Disengagement from Physical Education and Sports'.

This study addressed the issue of female secondary school students disengaging from physical education and sports classes. The researcher aimed to diagnose the social, cultural and educational factors hindering female students from engaging in this educational activity. A descriptive analytical approach was employed, with data collected through various tools (questionnaires, interviews and observations) from a sample of female students and educational stakeholders.

The results revealed that disengagement is influenced by a complex system of factors, the most important of which are:

- The impact of social and cultural customs and traditions that discourage girls from participating in sports.
- A lack of educational resources and inadequate sports facilities in educational institutions.
- Absence of family encouragement and weak support from parents.
- Some teachers' educational practices, particularly their teaching methods, which do not consider the specific needs of female students.
- Low awareness among female students of the health and educational benefits of physical education.

Regarding recommendations, the researcher emphasised the need to:

- Reassess programmes and curricula to align with the specific needs of female students and motivate their participation.
- Organise awareness campaigns for parents and students to highlight the importance of physical education for physical health and social development.
- Improve sports infrastructure within institutions and provide suitable spaces that consider the privacy of girls.
- Involve the local community and various stakeholders, such as parents, associations and clubs, in supporting and encouraging girls' participation in sports. (Ait Aissa, 2023).

#### **-Fourth, previous study:**

Ben Toumi, A. N. (1996). 'Reasons for Rural Female Students' Disengagement from Physical Education and Sports in Algerian High Schools'.

The researcher employed a descriptive approach, distributing a questionnaire to 180 female students from rural high schools in Algeria. The study aimed to uncover the reasons behind rural female students' disengagement from physical education and sports classes in Algerian high schools.

The study found that the primary reasons for disengagement were:

- The absence of adequate sports infrastructure within educational institutions.
- The lack of sports clothing available to all female students, which creates material and social barriers.
- Religious and social beliefs, particularly those related to gender mixing and outdoor activities, reflecting the strong influence of customs and traditions on female students' perceptions.
- Religious and social beliefs, particularly those related to gender segregation and outdoor activities, reflecting the strong influence of customs and traditions on female students' perceptions. (Abdul Nasser, 1996).

#### **Previous study:**

Fahsi, M. R. (2012). 'An Introduction to the Study of the Phenomenon of Some Algerian High School Students' Reluctance to Participate in Physical Education and Sports'.

In light of the absence of mandatory participation and the ease with which students can obtain a medical certificate for exemption without providing genuine health justifications, this study aimed to shed light on the real reasons behind students' disengagement from physical education and sports.

The researcher employed a descriptive-analytical approach, drawing on his experience as a physical education teacher through observation, field visits and direct contact with students and teachers. Based on his experiences and observations, he presented a series of stages and considerations.

The results of the study revealed that disengagement is linked to several factors, the most significant of which are:

- Gender mixing during participation, which raises doctrinal and religious concerns among some students, particularly veiled girls.
- The mentality of Algerian society, which still views physical education as inferior to other core subjects in terms of academic success rates.
- The mentality of Algerian society, which still considers physical education to be inferior to other core subjects in terms of academic success rates.
- The pedagogical approach not aligning with reality due to overcrowded classes (sometimes with more than 50 students), limited session time, and a lack of necessary sports facilities and pedagogical tools for effective implementation.

- The pedagogical approach to the subject does not align with reality given the overcrowded conditions in classes (sometimes with more than 50 students), the limited time allocated to each session and the lack of necessary sports facilities and pedagogical tools for its effective implementation.

The researcher concluded that reinforcing physical education and sports among students can only be achieved by reconciling the educational values of the subject with the prevailing values in Algerian society. This will help to avoid any reluctance or contradictions in practice, ensuring positive attitudes towards the subject and enhancing participation among young people. (Fahsi, 2012).

### **Comment on Previous Studies and Identification of the Novelty in the Current Study**

#### **Comment on previous studies and identify the novelty of the current study.**

Previous studies reveal that exemption or disengagement from physical education and sports classes is not linked to a single factor, but rather the result of multiple interacting dimensions, including health, pedagogy, society and culture. For example, Ben Toumi's (1996) study showed that social and religious beliefs, as well as material constraints such as sports clothing, directly influence rural female students' disengagement from physical education. Similarly, Fahsi Mohamed Riyad's (2012) study indicated that exemptions are often associated with religious considerations (e.g. gender mixing and veiling) and a societal mentality that views physical education as less important than core subjects.

From a pedagogical perspective, Al-Arabi's (2012) study highlighted that reliance on traditional teaching methods, lack of engagement and inadequate sports facilities were among the main reasons for students withdrawing from participation. Ait Aissa's (2023) study focused on social and cultural factors inhibiting female students' participation, such as customs and traditions, a lack of family encouragement, and inadequate sports equipment.

Conversely, Kheniche and Amir's (2018) study addressed students with special needs, emphasising that exemptions are often granted without thorough medical scrutiny, and that the absence of specialised teacher training and inadequate medical follow-up exacerbate the issue.

## **7. Methodology used**

The current study builds upon these findings by providing a comprehensive analysis of the cultural imagination surrounding physical education among high school students exempt from participation. The study will explore the specific social and cultural representations that shape students' attitudes, providing new insights into the factors influencing disengagement and suggesting targeted interventions to address the issue.

### **7.1 Study methodology**

In this study, we employed a descriptive-analytical approach as this aligns well with the research objectives. This approach aims to describe the phenomenon under investigation and analyse its dimensions in relation to religious, health and cultural factors.

### **7.2 Exploratory study**

The exploratory study serves as a preliminary phase for testing the research and the research tool to ensure their validity. In this context, we undertook several steps, the most important of which include:

- Obtaining official permission from the Directorate of Education for Boumerdès Province to conduct fieldwork.
- Coordinating with the directors of the targeted high schools and assigning educational assistants to distribute the questionnaires.
- Conducting a preliminary test of the questionnaire on a limited sample of students who are exempt from the original study.
- Identifying the main confounding factors and challenges that we may face during the implementation of the main study, in order to isolate them.
- Identifying the main confounding factors and challenges that may be encountered during the implementation of the main study, with the aim of isolating them.

### 7.3 Research population:

The research population consists of all students exempt from physical education and sports classes in secondary education in Boumerdès Province during the 2024/2025 academic year. This includes 49 high schools.

### 7.4 Research sample and selection method

A random sample of 200 such students was selected and distributed across four high schools in Boumerdès Province.

Ahmed Ben Ayad High School (Si Mustapha) - Touzout High School (Thénia)

- Frantz Fanon High School (Boumerdès) - Ksiour High School (Beni Amran)

### 7.5 Study tool

In this study, we relied on a questionnaire as the primary tool for collecting data. The questionnaire consists of three sections, each containing seven questions, for a total of 21 questions.

It was constructed using a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree – Agree – Neutral – Disagree – Strongly Disagree), with scores ranging from 5,4,3,1,2.

### Stages of Tool Development:

Literature review: reviewing previous scales, questionnaires and related literature on the topic. - Scientific validation: Presenting the questionnaire to specialists in physical education and sports from universities in Boumerdès and Constantine, Algeria.

- **Scientific validation:** presenting the questionnaire to physical education and sports specialists from universities in Boumerdès and Constantine, Algeria. - Scientific validation: Presenting the questionnaire to specialists in physical education and sports from universities in Boumerdès and Constantine (Algeria).

- **Validity and reliability testing:** the reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and split-half methods on a sample of 30 students outside the main sample. The reliability coefficients ranged from 0.70 to 0.94 and the validity coefficients from 0.83 onwards, reflecting the accuracy and suitability of the tool for application. The following table presents the complete validity and reliability results.

Table 1: Results of the reliability and validity of the scale.

Dimensions	Question Numbers	Questions:	Reliability Value	Validity
Religious Dimension	1	1. Is it religiously unacceptable for males and females to mix in physical and sports education?	Cronbach's Alpha(0.70)	0.83
	2	2. Sportswear does not align with Islamic values.		
	3	3. Taking part in physical and sports education goes against what is accepted in our society.		
	4	4. Attending physical education and sports classes has a negative effect on my religious commitment.	Half-Split Reliability (0.81)	0.90
	5	5. Family pressures have led me to request an exemption from physical education and sports.		
	6	6. I feel guilty practising physical education in front of the opposite gender.		
	7	7. Physical education is less important than Islamic education.		



Dimensions	Question Numbers	Questions:	Reliability Value	Validity
Scientific and Cultural Dimension	1	8. I would prefer to use the time allocated to physical and sports education to review core subjects.	Cronbach's Alpha(0.78)	0.88
	2	9. Physical and sports education does not have a positive effect on my academic performance.		
	3	10. Physical education does not contribute to my academic future.		
	4	11Scientific subjects are more important than physical and sports education.		
	5	12. Physical education is merely a break and a form of entertainment, nothing more.		
	6	13. Taking part in physical and sports education distracts me from other subjects.		
	7	14. I make sure to use the time allocated for physical and sports education to prepare for exams.		
	1	15. I was exempted from physical education due to health issues preventing me from exerting myself physically.	Cronbach's Alpha(0.94)	0.96
	2	16. I have chronic illnesses that prevent me from participating in physical education.		
	3	17. Participating in physical and sports education poses a risk to my health.		
Health Dimension	4	18. I have medical reports proving my inability to participate in physical education and sports.	Half-Split Reliability (0.96)	
	5	19. I believe that not participating in physical and sports education is a waste of my effort and energy.		
	6	20. I feel anxious about getting injured while practising physical and sports education.		
	7	21. I prefer to avoid physical and sports education to maintain my physical condition.		

#### Determining the Sample Direction:

The direction of the sample was determined by calculating:

[Maximum Score - Minimum Score - Minimum Score. / Maximum Score = (5 - 1) / 5 = 0.80.] Thus, we add 0.80 each time to determine the sample direction. The table below shows the ranges of the sample direction.

Table 2: Sample categorization

Sample Direction	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly Disagree
Category	4.20 - 5	3.40 - 4.20	2.60 - 3.40	1.80- 2.60	1 - 1.80

## 7.6 Study domains

- Temporal domain: The field study was conducted between 10 January and 20 May 2025.
- Spatial Domain: Four high schools in Boumerdès Province.
- Human domain: 200 students exempt from physical education and sports classes.

## 7.7 Statistical analysis methods:

Data were analysed using SPSS 26, relying on the following statistical indicators:

- Mean
- standard deviation.

Weighted percentage

- Student's t-test to verify the significance of differences.
- Cronbach's alpha
- Split-half reliability

## 8. Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Results

Arrange the questions according to the dimensions shown in Table 01.

### 8.1 Presentation and analysis of the results of the first hypothesis:

This hypothesis posits that the representations of students exempt from physical education and sports classes are influenced by religious beliefs stemming from cultural imagination.

Table 3: Results of Students' Responses Regarding the Influence of Religious Beliefs Stemming from Cultural Imagination on the Representations of Students Exempt from Physical Education and Sports Classes

Question Number	Frequency and Percentage	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Weighted Percentage	T Value	SIG Value	Sample Direction
01	T	81	90	15	05	09	4.11	0.98	82.08	16.45	0.00	Agree
	N	40.5	45	7.5	2.5	4.5						
02	T	95	67	26	04	08	4.18	1.00	83.6	16.62	0.00	Agree
	N	47.5	33.5	13	02	04						
03	T	71	75	29	13	12	3.90	1.13	78	11.17	0.00	Agree
	N	35.5	37.5	14.5	6.5	06						
04	T	91	59	26	14	10	4.04	1.14	80.8	12.07	0.00	Agree
	N	45.5	29.5	13	07	05						
05	T	71	76	20	16	17	3.84	1.23	76.8	9.62	0.00	Agree
	N	35.5	38	10	08	8.5						
06	T	62	84	34	11	09	3.90	1.04	81	12.07	0.00	Agree
	N	31	42	17	5.5	4.5						
07	T	83	69	29	13	06	4.05	1.04	81	14.20	0.00	Agree
	N	41.5	34.5	14.5	6.5	3						
After the Overall Religious Belief- Significance Level (0.05)							28.05	6.16	80.14	16.17	0.00	Agree

The results of the study revealed a general tendency among students towards the 'Agree' option, with mean scores for all items in the religious dimension ranging from 3.84 to 4.18. The weighted percentage for the religious dimension was 80.14%, indicating that this dimension had a high level of influence in explaining exemptions from physical education and sports classes.

The highest agreement rate was recorded for the item related to gender mixing, at 82.8%, with a mean score of 4.11. This was followed by the item regarding the incompatibility of sports clothing with religious teachings, which had an agreement rate of 83.6% and a mean score of 4.18. In contrast, the

fifth item, which stated that family was the reason for exemption, had the lowest agreement rate of 76.8%, with a mean score of 3.84.

These findings reinforce those obtained for the religious dimension as a whole, which included an average score of 28.05 for all items and a general weighted percentage of 80.14%. The SIG value was estimated at 0.00 for all items, indicating statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

These results clearly indicate that students do not reject physical education and sports in principle; rather, they reject the conditions associated with practising them, primarily relating to gender mixing, inappropriate sports clothing and social embarrassment. For example, 78% of those surveyed felt embarrassed practising in front of the opposite gender, while 81% believed that Islamic education was more important than physical education and sports. This reflects a value hierarchy that prioritises religious education in the school system.

These findings are supported by a study by Ben Toumi Abdul Nasser (1996), which revealed that the main reasons female students in rural areas disengage from physical education and sports are a lack of facilities, a lack of appropriate clothing for veiled students and issues related to gender mixing. Similarly, Yahiaoui et al. (1993) found that wearing the hijab posed a barrier to participating in sports activities alongside a lack of family encouragement, insufficient sports facilities, difficulty obtaining suitable sports clothing, gender mixing and the absence of female sports instructors.

The intersection of the results from these studies with the findings of the current study suggests that religious beliefs are a key factor influencing students' perceptions of physical education and sports classes. The consistent appearance of similar factors (such as mixing, clothing, the hijab, inadequate facilities and the absence of female instructors) across multiple studies highlights structural issues that should be addressed in educational and sports policies aimed at increasing female participation in physical education and sports.

Thus, statistical data supported by previous field evidence underscore the necessity of creating a school environment that harmonises with learners' cultural and religious references, overcoming participation barriers and ensuring safe, socially acceptable practice.

## 8.2 Presentation, analysis and discussion of the results of the second hypothesis:

This hypothesis posits that students exempt from physical education and sports due to cultural considerations are more likely to disengage from these subjects than from other educational subjects.

Table 04: Results of Students' Responses on the Influence of Cultural Imagination on Disengagement from Physical Education and Sports Compared to Other Subjects

Question Number	Frequency and Percentage	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Weighted Percentage	T Value	SIG Value	Sample Direction
01	T	44	98	30	14	14	3.72	1.09	74.4	2.26	0.00	Agree
	N	22	49	15	07	07						
02	T	36	93	30	20	21	3.52	1.20	70.4	6.05	0.00	Agree
	N	18	46.5	15	10	10.5						
03	T	38	103	25	13	21	3.62	1.17	72.4	7.45	0.00	Agree
	N	19	51.5	12.5	6.5	10.5						
04	T	50	73	48	08	21	3.62	1.20	42.4	7.21	0.00	Agree
	N	25	36.5	24	044	10.5						
05	T	28	87	38	28	19	3.39	1.17	67.8	4.64	0.00	Neutral
	N	14	43.5	19	14	9.5						
06	T	01	54	63	47	35	2.70	1.06	54	4.04-	0.00	Neutral
	N	0.5	27	31.5	23.5	17.5						
07	T	36	66	56	22	20	3.38	1.19	67.6	4.50	0.00	Neutral

Question Number	Frequency and Percentage	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Weighted Percentage	T Value	SIG Value	Sample Direction
	N	18	33	28	11	10						
After the Overall Religious Belief- Significance Level (0.05)							23.93	6.44	68.37	6.42	0.00	Disagree

The results of the study revealed that the mean scores for all items in the scientific-cultural dimension ranged from 2.70 to 3.72, indicating a general tendency among students towards the 'Agree' option at a moderate level. The weighted percentage for the scientific-cultural dimension was 68.37%, suggesting that this dimension moderately influences exemptions from physical education and sports classes.

The highest agreement rate was recorded for item 01, in which students expressed a preference for other subjects over physical education, with a percentage of 74.4% and a mean score of 3.72. This was followed by item 3, which addressed the perceived ineffectiveness of the class from an academic perspective, with an agreement rate of 72.4% and a mean score of 3.62. Item (04) also had an agreement rate of 72.4% and a mean score of 3.62. In contrast, the lowest level of agreement was found for item (06), which stated that physical education does not add value to students' educational journeys and distracts them, with a percentage of 54% and a mean score of 2.70. Overall, the scientific-cultural dimension exhibited an average score of 23.93 and a weighted total percentage of 68.37%. The SIG value was estimated at 0.00 for all items, indicating statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

These results clearly indicate that students do not reject physical education and sports in essence; rather, they downplay its value compared to other core subjects. For instance, 74.4% of the sample considered that priority should be given to other educational subjects, while 67.8% believed that greater attention should be directed towards core subjects such as mathematics and sciences, reflecting a value hierarchy that grants theoretical subjects a superior status within the school system.

Supporting these findings, Yahiaoui Ahmed and others (1993) revealed that wearing a hijab, lack of dedicated facilities, and insufficient family encouragement are all factors that have affected students' perceptions and placed physical education in a secondary position. Similarly, Al-Arabi's study (2023) indicated that reliance on traditional teaching methods, monotony of class content, and lack of pedagogical tools have made physical education less appealing compared to theoretical subjects. Additionally, Heneish Ali and Mohad Amer (2018) showed that the lack of awareness regarding the value of modified physical activities led students to regard them as a secondary activity in their educational priorities.

The intersection of the results of these studies with those of the current study reinforces the validity of the interpretation that the scientific-cultural dimension is an important factor in students' perceptions of physical education and sports classes. Repeated references to the same factors (such as prioritising core subjects, a lack of awareness about the importance of physical activity, traditional teaching methods and a lack of resources) across multiple studies highlight structural issues that must be considered in educational and sports policies aimed at improving the status of physical education and sports. Thus, statistical data supported by previous field evidence underscore the necessity of reintegrating physical education and sports into the school curriculum to ensure they are practised in an educational environment that aligns with learners' needs and values.

### 8.3 Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of the Results of the Third Hypothesis

This hypothesis posits that there are statistically significant differences in levels of perceptual-motor awareness in the dimensional measurements between the experimental group and the control group, favoring the experimental group that underwent the movement education program based on movement storytelling.

Table 05: Results of Post-Test Measurements in the Perceptual-Motor Scale for the Experimental and Control Groups

Question Number	Frequency and Percentage	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Weighted Percentage	T Value	SIG Value	Sample Direction
01	T	24	23	26	59	68	2.38	1.369	47,2	-6.40	0.00	Disagree
	N	12	11.5	13	29.5	34						
02	T	15	22	13	79	71	2.15	1.23	43	-9.69	0.00	Disagree
	N	7.5	11	6.5	39.5	35.5						
03	T	21	21	10	80	28	2.24	1.30	44.8	-- 8.27	0.00	Disagree
	N	10.5	10.5	10	40	14						
04	T	22	29	30	44	75	2.40	1.39	48	-6.12	0.00	Disagree
	N	11	14.5	15	22	37.5						
05	T	23	28	36	40	73	2.44	1.39	48.8	-5.66	0.00	Disagree
	N	11.5	14	18	20	36.5						
06	T	20	29	33	46	72	2.40	1.36	48	-6.27	0.00	Disagree
	N	10	14.5	16.5	23	36						
07	T	28	22	35	44	71	2.46	1.42	49.2	-5.36	0.00	Disagree
	N	14	11	17.5	22	35.5						
Overall Health Dimension - Significance Level (0.05)							16.46	8.65	47.02	7.41-	0.00	Strongly Disagree

The results of the study revealed a general tendency among students towards the ‘Strongly Disagree’ option regarding justifications for exemptions for health reasons, with mean scores for all items in the health dimension ranging between 2.15 and 2.46. The weighted percentage for the health dimension was 47.02%, reflecting the low level of health factors as a genuine reason for exemption from physical education and sports classes.

The highest opposition rate was recorded for item 07, concerning students’ beliefs that their health conditions prevent them from participating in physical activities. This item received a percentage of 49.2% and a mean score of 2.46. This was followed by item 5, with a percentage of 48.8% and a mean score of 2.44. In contrast, the lowest level of opposition was observed for item (02), addressing students’ perceptions of the impact of their health condition on participation, with a percentage of 43% and a mean score of 2.15.

Overall, the health dimension exhibited an average score of 16.46 and a weighted total percentage of 47.02%. The SIG values for all items were 0.00, indicating statistical significance at the 0.05 level. These results clearly indicate that exemptions granted for health reasons are often done so without an accurate medical evaluation, and are instead based on formal or administrative grounds. This finding is supported by previous studies, such as that by Fihy Muhammad Riyad (2012), which revealed that many students request exemptions for non-medical reasons, using health justifications to mask other factors. Similarly, Heneish and Amer (2018) found that students often lack awareness of the health benefits of physical activity, meaning health factors are less influential than social or cultural factors. Furthermore, studies by Al-Arabi Muhammad (2012) and Ait Aissa Abdelwahab (2014) revealed that educational and pedagogical factors, such as a lack of encouragement in classes and a reliance on traditional teaching methods, contribute to students’ disengagement from physical education. This leads them to cite health reasons for non-participation.

The intersection of the results from these studies with those of the current study reinforces the interpretation that the health dimension is not a primary factor in students’ disengagement from physical education and sports. Instead, it is intertwined with cultural and social considerations, such as religious beliefs and community reservations about gender mixing, as well as educational and pedagogical factors, such as a lack of specialised teacher training and encouragement, motivation and suitable infrastructure in schools. Therefore, the statistical data, supported by previous field evidence,

highlight the necessity to reconsider exemption methods, enhance student awareness and encouragement, and improve resources and infrastructure to ensure the effective practice of physical education and sports in a healthy and motivating school environment.

#### 8.4 Presentation, analysis and discussion of the general hypothesis results

This hypothesis posits that the social representations of physical education and sports classes among secondary school students exempt from participation are characterised by religious dimensions, a perception of inferiority compared to other subjects, and a health dimension, in that order.

Table 06: Results of the General Hypothesis on the Ranking of Social Representations of Physical Education and Sports Classes Among Students Exempt from Participation in Secondary School

Survey Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation	Weighted Percentage	T Value	Sample Direction	Value Sig	Significance Level	Statistical Decision
- Religious Dimension	28.05	6.16	80.14	16.17	Agree	0.00	0.05	Statistically Significant
- Scientific Dimension	23.93	6.44	68.37	6.42	Disagree	0.00		
- Health Dimension	16.46	8.65	47.02	-7.41	Strongly Disagree	0.00		

The results of the study relating to the general hypothesis reveal that the social representations of physical education and sports classes among students exempt from participation in secondary school were ranked unexpectedly, contrary to the applicable legal and regulatory texts in the Algerian national education sector. The findings showed that the religious dimension was ranked first, with a mean score of 28.05 and a standard deviation of 6.16, accounting for 80.14% of the total. The value ( $T = 16.17$ ) is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, reflecting a general tendency among students towards the 'Agree' option. This indicates that religious motivation is the primary reason influencing their perspective on exemptions from physical education and sports classes.

Second place went to the scientific-cultural dimension, with a mean score of 23.93 and a standard deviation of 6.44, a weighted percentage of 68.37%, and a value of  $T=6.42$ , which is statistically significant. This indicates a tendency towards 'disagree', meaning that many students view physical education as less important than other core subjects.

Conversely, the health dimension, which should legally be the sole justification for exemptions, ranked last with a mean score of (16.46) and a standard deviation of (8.65), with a weighted percentage not exceeding (47.02%) and a value of ( $T=-7.41$ ) at the (0.05) significance level, reflecting a general tendency towards "Strongly Disagree," indicating that health was not the primary justification in the social representations of exemptions.

This ranking reveals a clear paradox between what is legally stipulated and what is actually practiced in the field. Ministerial Decision No. 778, dated October 26, 1991, in Article 33 of the educational community system, states that exemptions from physical education and sports classes can only be for health reasons justified by a medical certificate issued by a school health doctor, a public health doctor, or a certified doctor when necessary. However, actual practice shows that the religious and socio-cultural dimensions dominate at the expense of the health dimension. This was confirmed by testimonies from many students, especially female students, who indicated that the school doctor often does not verify the health reason but merely issues an exemption certificate upon the student's request, reflecting a degree of professional leniency that contradicts the ethics of school medicine.

From a broader perspective, these results also contradict national and international laws that emphasize the essential role of physical education and sports. In Algeria, Law 13-05 stipulates that physical education is a fundamental element in the physical, mental, social, and moral development of individuals, as well as its role in talent discovery and utilizing free time. Internationally, the ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) in the United States affirms that physical education is a core subject within the school curriculum, serving as a foundation for the overall success of the student.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the results of this study contradict the general hypothesis that health reasons would be the main reason for exemptions from physical education and sports participation. Instead, it is evident that religious and socio-cultural factors dominate students' perceptions of this subject. This reflects, on the one hand, a deficiency in the application of educational laws within institutions and, on the other hand, the strong influence of cultural, social and religious backgrounds on students' and their guardians' attitudes towards physical education.

## **9. Overall Conclusion:**

The overall results show that exemptions from physical education and sports classes in secondary school are not primarily due to health reasons, as stipulated by law, but are primarily linked to religious and socio-cultural factors that make the subject less important than other educational subjects. The study showed that the social representations of exempted students reflect the dominance of the religious dimension and a perception of inferiority towards physical education. Health reasons, the sole official justification, ranked last. This indicates a clear discrepancy between regulatory legal texts and their practical application within educational institutions.

These results reveal deficiencies in the implementation of educational laws and medical oversight, while simultaneously highlighting the influence of societal culture on the attitudes of students and their parents/guardians towards physical education and sports. This leads to physical education being perceived as a secondary or dispensable subject, which poses a risk to the educational curriculum's objectives of positioning physical education as a fundamental tool for learners' physical, mental, social and moral development, as well as to national and international efforts to promote students' physical and mental health through physical activity.

Therefore, exemptions from physical education and sports can no longer be considered merely an organisational procedure; they have become an educational and social phenomenon reflecting the interplay of multiple dimensions (religious, cultural, health-related, and pedagogical). This necessitates reconsidering the mechanisms for granting exemptions and intensifying awareness programmes about the educational and health benefits of physical education to ensure it occupies its rightful place within the Algerian educational system.

## **10. Recommendations:**

### **1. At the level of legislation and oversight**

- The necessity of enforcing the provisions of Ministerial Resolution No. 778 (1991) through strict mechanisms that guarantee the granting of exemptions for health reasons only, with periodic oversight of the implementation of these provisions within educational institutions.
- Establish a national digital platform to record and track all exemptions, such that no certificate may be issued without electronic authentication by the school health physician.
- Review administrative and deterrent penalties in the event of leniency in granting exemptions or tampering with the laws.

## **2. At the level of school health**

- Train school health physicians in the fields of sports medicine and adolescent medicine to ensure professional and scientific handling of exemptions.
- Adopt a unified medical protocol that defines precise criteria for cases requiring exemption, with mandatory examinations before issuing any certificate.
- Integrating a psychosocial assessment alongside the medical assessment to differentiate between genuine exemption based on health reasons and exemption based on cultural or religious reasons.

## **3. At the level of educational curricula**

Incorporating physical education among the core compulsory subjects, similar to science and literature subjects, in line with Law 89-03 and international trends such as the ESSA Act.

Developing educational approaches that take into account religious and cultural specificities, such as allocating separate spaces for both sexes and adapting sports uniforms to align with the values of Algerian society.

Linking physical education to other subjects through an interdisciplinary approach, highlighting its role in supporting intellectual abilities and academic achievement.

## **4. At the level of professional training for teachers**

- Training teachers in social communication skills and dealing with religious and cultural representations that may limit student participation.
- Enhancing their capabilities in using digital media and interactive programs (augmented reality, digital simulations) to encourage students to engage in practice.

## **5. At the Student and Family Level**

- Launch national awareness programs targeting students and parents on the importance of physical activity for physical and mental health and academic success.
- Integrate the family as a key partner in school sports activities through open days and awareness-raising forums.
- Work to correct misconceptions that consider physical education a secondary or recreational subject, and highlight its value as a tool for socialization and sustainable health.

## **6. At the Scientific Research Level**

- Encourage field studies on the phenomenon of exemption and its underlying causes in various Algerian states to compare cultural and social differences.
- Fund research projects on the relationship between physical education and quality of school life, linking it to academic success and the mental health of students.
- Benefit from international experiences (Finland, Canada, the United States) in linking physical education to the comprehensive education and health system.

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