The Physical Health Condition and Health Promotion Program for Female Students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

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Abstract

The declining physical health of female college students, vital to talent development and the nation's future, highlights the urgent need for action in college physical education. This study aims to assess the physical health of female students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, identify key factors influencing their health through fitness tests and questionnaires, and propose evidence-based strategies for improvement. The primary objective of this study is to assess the physical health status of female students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. The survey targets 300 female students from grades one to three, while the experimental subjects include 54 freshman female students from the same university. This study understands their health status and identifies influencing factors. Methods used include literature review, expert interviews, questionnaires, experiments, tests, and statistical analysis. The study analyzed test results and exercise habits to identify health factors and proposed strategies to enhance their health based on relevant theories and Shanghai University of Finance and Economics' teaching practices.

The results of the study were as follows: The physical health test results show that most female students achieve a passing level, indicating a need for increased exercise. Freshman girls need to improve vital capacity, flexibility, standing long jump, and one-minute sit-up scores, while juniors need to enhance 50-meter and 800-meter run performances. Poor health levels are due to individual and external factors, such as lack of interest in sports and inadequate physical education facilities.

This study reveals progress in flexibility and endurance among female students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics but highlights challenges in strength, speed, and consistent exercise habits. Gender-specific patterns and environmental barriers call for tailored interventions, improved facilities, and targeted training. Comprehensive reforms in physical education are essential to address these gaps and promote holistic student health and development.

Keywords: Physical Health Condition; Health Promotion Program; Female Students; Shanghai University

* Received: December 9 2024; Revised: December 25 2024; Accepted: December 26 2024

Introduction

The rapid development of science and technology, alongside societal progress, has heightened awareness of personal health and sustainable societal development. The physical health of students, as the future of the nation, has garnered significant attention. On December 20, 2006, the Ministry of Education, the General Administration of Sport, and the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League jointly issued the "Decision on Carrying Out the Sunshine Sports for Hundreds of Millions of Students," aiming to enhance the health levels of students nationwide. College students are viewed as the elite force driving societal advancement, making it imperative for college sports workers to focus on their comprehensive quality development with health at its core.

College physical education represents the highest and final stage of school physical education, bridging the gap between academic and social physical education. Female college students, as a crucial segment of both the university and society, play an irreplaceable role in historical development. Their health status and attitudes toward sports significantly impact not only their offspring's physical health but also the quality of talent training and the nation's future. Recent years have seen a decline in the physical health of female college students, raising concerns. The "Basic Standards for Physical Education Work in Colleges and Universities," especially Article 15, mandates that students with physical fitness test scores below 50 points face dropout treatment, underscoring the urgency of improving the physical health of female students.

Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, a top "Project 211" university, predominantly comprises female students, making research on their physical health highly relevant. This study analyzes the physical health status of female students at this university, investigating daily physical exercise habits and identifying key factors affecting their health. By integrating both domestic and international research with the university's teaching practices, this paper proposes effective methods to enhance the physical health of female students.

Since the previous investigation and research on the status quo of physical fitness in China is based on the provinces (municipalities directly under the central Government) as the research object, the monitoring of students' physical health development status is carried out according to the national administrative region, and then the Ministry of Education summarizes the national data evaluation to determine the overall development level of students' physical health status. Therefore, the research on the status of college students' physical health is mainly divided into two levels: first, the Ministry of Education announced the announcement of students' physical health monitoring results to comment on the physical health of college students, the second is scholars according to regional research data to evaluate the physical health of different categories of students in the region and comparative research with the national basic data.

From 1979 to 2014, under the leadership of the relevant state departments, six large-scale national surveys on students' physical fitness were conducted, resulting in valuable data and research findings. Between 1979 and 2000, the physical development and health status of primary and secondary school students in China significantly improved. This was reflected in increased height, weight, and chest circumference, along with better body symmetry. However, the growth in functional fitness, particularly lung capacity, did not show significant improvement and even declined in some age groups. While physical fitness indicators such as

standing long jump and 1-minute sit-up showed improvements, lung capacity remained a concern.

After 2000, physical fitness levels began to decline. According to the 2002 survey results, students' speed, explosive power, and strength continued to decrease, especially in events such as the 50-meter sprint and standing long jump. Additionally, lung capacity saw further reductions, and the rates of overweight and obese students rose significantly, becoming a major health issue among urban students. Poor vision remained prevalent. The surveys in 2004 and 2010 showed some slight improvements in certain areas, such as increased lung capacity among college students. However, the overall trend continued to show declines, particularly in explosive power, strength, and endurance among university students. Although the decline had slowed compared to the period between 2000 and 2005, the general level of physical fitness still required further improvement.

There are many researches on the factors affecting the change of students' physical fitness, which are mainly analyzed from the aspects of society, family, school and students by theoretical and empirical research methods. This research analyzes the factors affecting students' physical fitness from a theoretical perspective. (Fan et al. 2006) highlighted concerns over the decline in students' physical health, emphasizing that it cannot be solely the responsibility of communities and parents. Schools, as educational institutions, also play a crucial role in reversing this trend. Improving students' health requires joint efforts from schools, communities, and families. (He et al. 2006) explored how family environment, fitness awareness, and investment in fitness influence students' physical fitness, focusing on parental involvement and attitudes toward children's exercise. (Zhu. 2006) attributed the decline in student health to poor educational concepts, heavy academic burdens, insufficient school sports, and unhealthy living environments. (Chen. 2007) pointed out that the rapid growth of the internet has impacted student lifestyles, with "internet dependence" and "addiction" posing serious risks to both the physical and mental health of teenagers.

Recent progress in various fields, including medicine, sports, and education, has brought attention to human physical health. Countries like Japan, Korea, the US, and the UK have advanced physical fitness monitoring, especially in the US and Japan. In the US, college women often engage in independent physical training, while in Japan, popular clubs play a key role. Both countries emphasize cardiopulmonary endurance, muscle strength, flexibility, and body composition. In China, since the launch of the National Fitness Program in 1994, more women have participated in sports. However, surveys show that while 84% of college students engage in extracurricular activities, the intensity and duration are insufficient, leading to poor health outcomes. Studies indicate that female students have weak exercise habits, with low frequency and intensity. (Liu et al. 2005) noted that while female students have a positive attitude toward exercise, their participation is low due to short duration and limited variety. (Gong. 2005) found that many female students in Chengdu recognize the importance of exercise but face barriers such as limited facilities. (Cui and Mu. 2006) emphasized that physiological and emotional factors also affect participation and recommended improved teaching and awareness to promote lifelong fitness.

In conclusion, female students' involvement is still inadequate even though the value of physical activity is acknowledged. A friendly atmosphere and improved sports instruction can promote healthier lifestyles.Therefore, the research question of this study is (1) what is the current physical health status of female college students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, and (2) what factors influence their health, and (3) what evidence-based strategies can improve their physical well-being?

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the physical health status of female students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.
2. To identify the main factors affecting their health through physical fitness tests and questionnaires.
3. To propose effective strategies to improve their physical health.

Research Scope

This study takes the physical health status of female students in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics as the research object, and the survey objects are 300 female students in grade one to three in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. The experimental subjects were 54 freshman female students in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, a top "Project 211" university under the Ministry of Education, has a predominantly female student body. Researching their physical health provides valuable insights for improving health standards in similar institutions. This study focuses on the physical health of female students at the university by analyzing fitness test results and surveying their daily exercise habits. The study identifies key factors affecting their health. By combining findings from both domestic and international research with the university's teaching practices, this paper proposes effective methods to enhance the physical health of female students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.

Literature Review

The literature on health promotion and physical fitness highlights diverse strategies aimed at improving well-being across different populations, including university students, elderly communities, and individuals at risk of chronic diseases. The following sections synthesize insights from three recent studies that contribute valuable perspectives to understanding and addressing the physical health challenges of female college students.

Promsit (2024) emphasizes the critical role of community participation in promoting health, particularly for the elderly population in Chaiyaphum Province. The study develops an exercise model centered on community involvement, featuring Tai Chi dance programs tailored to the needs of older adults. This structured program, supported by manuals and media resources, demonstrates how collaborative and engaging approaches can address physical health challenges effectively. While focused on the elderly, the findings underscore the value of supportive environments and well-designed programs, which are also relevant to enhancing physical activity among college students. A similar framework could encourage female college students to actively participate in physical fitness programs.

Chuchuen (2024) explores the role of health literacy in preventing hypertension among pre-hypertension risk groups in Kokmungngoi Subdistrict. Through a quasi-experimental design, the study demonstrates that health literacy programs can significantly improve participants' health behaviors and outcomes, such as reducing blood pressure levels. The study highlights the importance of education, decision-making skills, and self-management in driving positive health changes. For female college students, integrating health literacy into physical education curricula could empower them to make informed choices about physical activity and overall wellness.

Yang, Siriphan, and Hongseanyatham (2024) develop strategies to promote physical fitness among university students, addressing policy, curriculum design, facilities, motivation, and program sustainability. The study identifies six key aspects for effective fitness promotion: policy and administrative support, curriculum and programs, facilities and equipment, engagement and motivation, monitoring and assessment, and sustainability of fitness programs. This comprehensive framework highlights the multifaceted approach required to foster a supportive and engaging environment for university students to adopt healthier lifestyles. The strategies proposed in this study are particularly relevant to addressing the low participation in physical activity among female students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.

Previous literature collectively emphasize the importance of tailored interventions, education, and supportive environments in promoting physical health. Promsit (2024) underscores the role of structured, community-focused programs, while Chuchuen (2024) highlights the impact of education and literacy on health behaviors. Yang et al. (2024) provide actionable strategies to create a holistic and engaging fitness environment for university students. Together, these findings inform the current study's approach to understanding the physical health status of female college students, identifying influencing factors, and developing evidence-based strategies to improve their well-being. By integrating elements of these frameworks, the study aims to design practical and effective interventions to encourage healthier lifestyles among this critical demographic.

Research Methodology

1. Literature Data Method

Using the keywords of "physical health" and "physical health of female students in colleges and universities", we searched the relevant literatures from 2000 to 2020 in the database of CNKI, and found 1461 relevant literatures, 39 of which are directly related to this paper. By reading, sorting out and analyzing the literature on the physical health status of female college students, the background information related to this study was understood, and the research ideas and research framework were established for this study.

2 .Experimental Method

A targeted experiment on the reform of teaching form was conducted for female freshmen in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. The specific implementation plan is as follows:

Class composition: 10 minutes of preparation, 30 minutes of functional training, 45 minutes of special teaching, 5 minutes of summary and relaxation exercise. See Attachment 2 for the specific program of functional training.

According to the physical health standards of college students and the basic situation of female students in finance and economics university, functional training is conducted in each class, and homework is arranged after class to gradually improve the physical health of female students in finance and economics university.

3. Mathematical Statistics

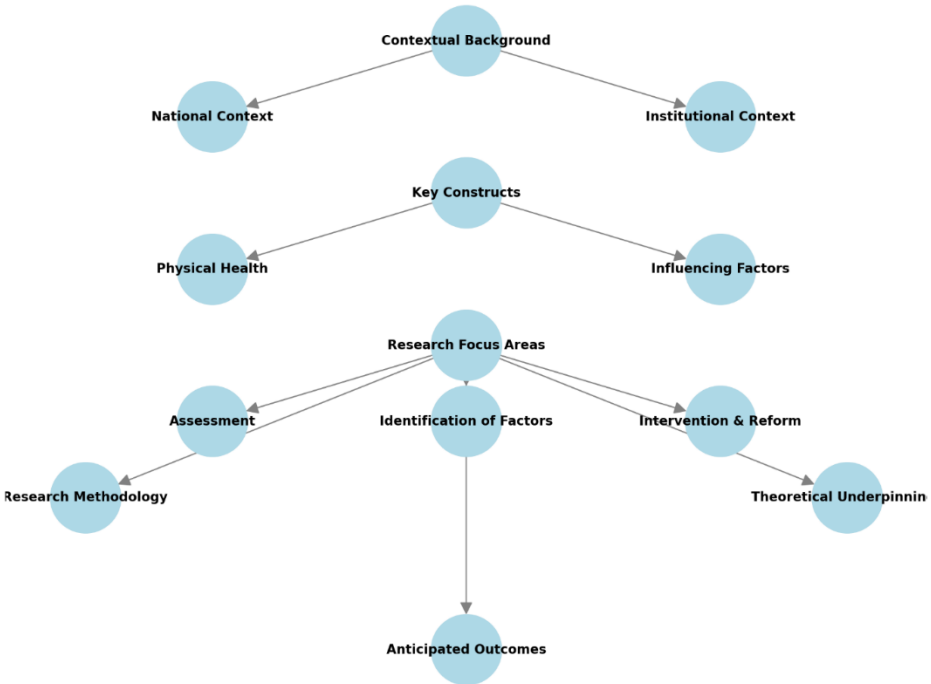
SPSS17.0 was used for statistical analysis of the collected physical health data and the data obtained from the questionnaire. Combined with the data and relevant theories, analysis and synthesis, comparison and other methods were used to analyze, in order to explore the regularity of the interrelation between the relevant factors.

4. Research analysis method

This study focuses on assessing and improving the physical health of female students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. The research targets female students from grades one to three, analyzing physical fitness test results and daily exercise habits to identify key health factors. It explores the effectiveness of physical education reforms and functional training programs in addressing deficiencies in cardiopulmonary function, flexibility, endurance, and core strength.

The study encompasses a multi-faceted approach, including literature review, surveys, experiments, and statistical analyses, to understand both individual and systemic factors affecting physical fitness. By integrating domestic and international practices, the research aims to propose tailored health promotion strategies and actionable recommendations to enhance the physical well-being of female students at the university, contributing to broader discussions on student health in higher education institutions.

Conceptual Framework



Research Results

College physical education is the last stage of school physical education, and it is also the connecting station between school physical education and social physical education. It plays a key role. Female college students are an important part of college students, but also an important part of the society, so their physical health problems have been widely concerned.

Under the general trend of declining physical health level of college students year after year, the Basic Standards for Physical Education Work in colleges and universities issued by the state put forward many new requirements for physical education work in colleges and universities. In particular, Article 15 clearly stipulates that students who get less than 50 points in physical education test upon graduation will be treated with incomplete study. This also makes it urgent to improve the physical health level of female students in colleges and universities.

1. To Investigate the physical health status of female students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.

When studying the physical health status of female students in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, the test results of "National Physical Health Standard for Students (Revised in 2023)" are mainly used for evaluation. Compared with the previous requirements for passing, the test results are divided into four grades: "excellent", "good", "pass" and "fail".

The survey selected a total of 4081 female students from the first to third year of Shanghai University of Finance and Economics to analyze the physical test data, but 319 female students due to go abroad, illness and other reasons have no physical test results, so the effective data is 3762. Among them, there were 1242 female freshmen, 1386 female sophomores and 1134 female juniors.

The Qualified Status of All Items in the Physical Fitness Test of Female Students in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

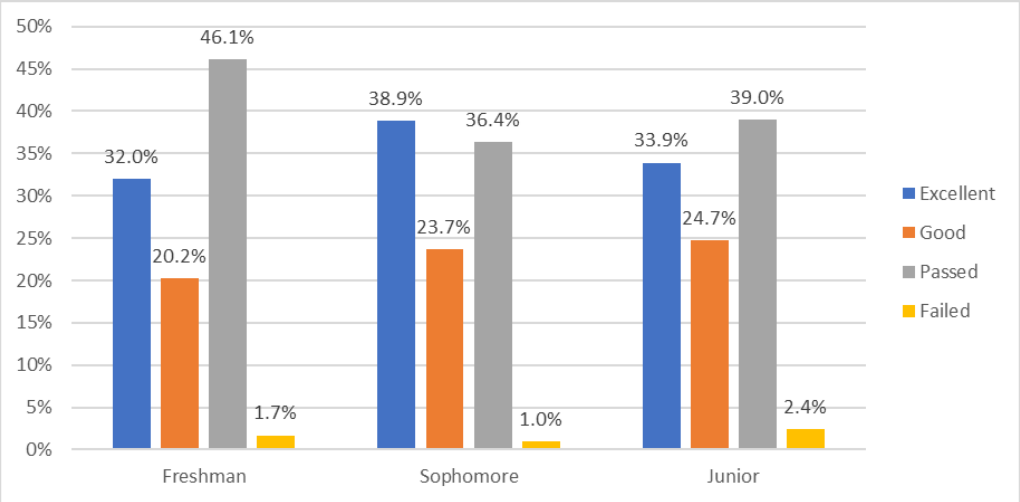


Figure 1 Percentage of Girls of Different Grades in Spirometry Test

As can be seen from Figure 1, Among the results of the spirometry test of female students in each grade of the University of Finance and Finance, the proportion of female students who failed the spirometry test in the three grades is very small, so the passing rate is still very high. However, 46.1% of the freshman girls were passing, while 36.4% and 39.0% of the sophomore and junior girls were passing, respectively, indicating that most of the freshman girls' vital capacity was passing and needed to be further improved.

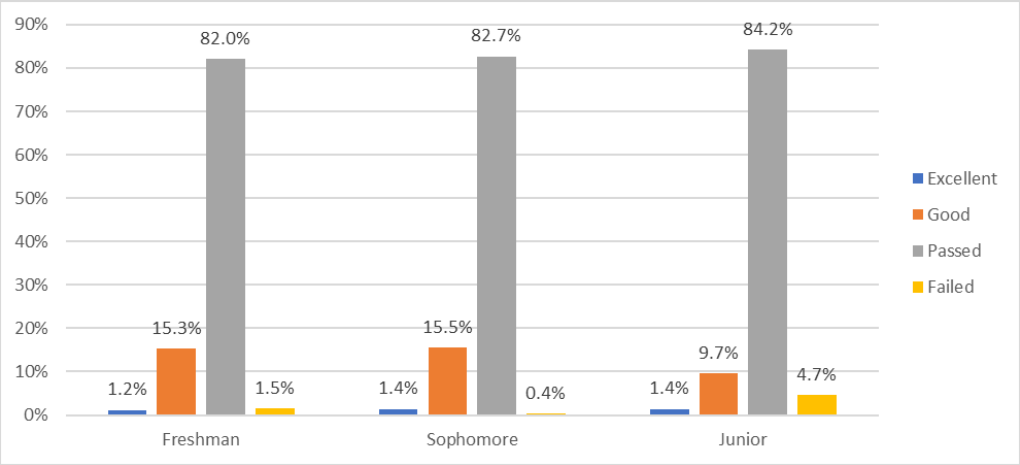


Figure 2 Percentage of Different Grades in the 50-meter running Test of Female Students in Each Grade

Figure 2 shows that most female students in all three grades performed at the passing level in the 50-meter run, with a relatively low proportion achieving excellent or good results. Junior students exhibited the highest rates of both passing and failing compared to freshmen and sophomores, suggesting that their performance in the 50-meter run requires improvement.

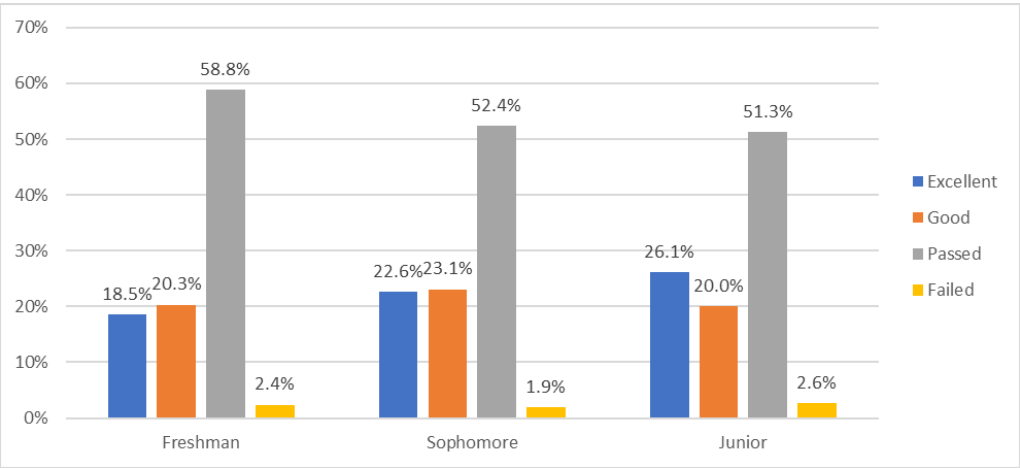


Figure 3 Percentage of Female Students at Each Grade on the Seated Flexion Test

Figure 3 shows that junior and sophomore girls outperformed freshman girls in the seated forward bend test, with a larger proportion achieving excellent and good results. Nearly 60% of freshman girls attained only a passing grade, indicating that their performance in the seated forward bend requires further improvement.

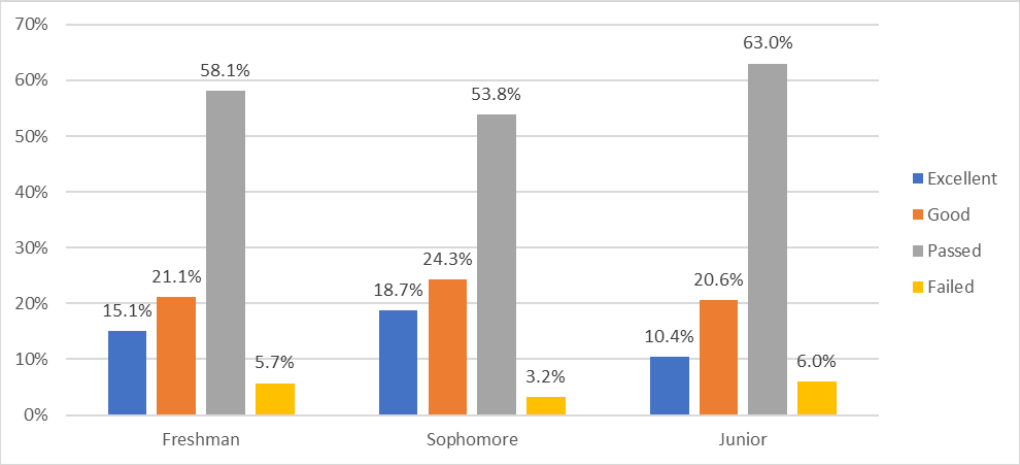


Figure 4 Percentage of All Grades in Standing Long Jump Test of Female Students of Each Grade

Figure 4 shows that sophomore girls performed the best in the standing long jump, with a higher proportion achieving excellent and good grades compared to freshmen and juniors. Junior girls had the lowest proportion of excellent and good results, with 63.0% at the passing level and the highest failure rate among the three grades. Freshman girls also had a high passing rate of 58.1%, with 5.7% failing, indicating that both junior and freshman girls require improvement in this area.

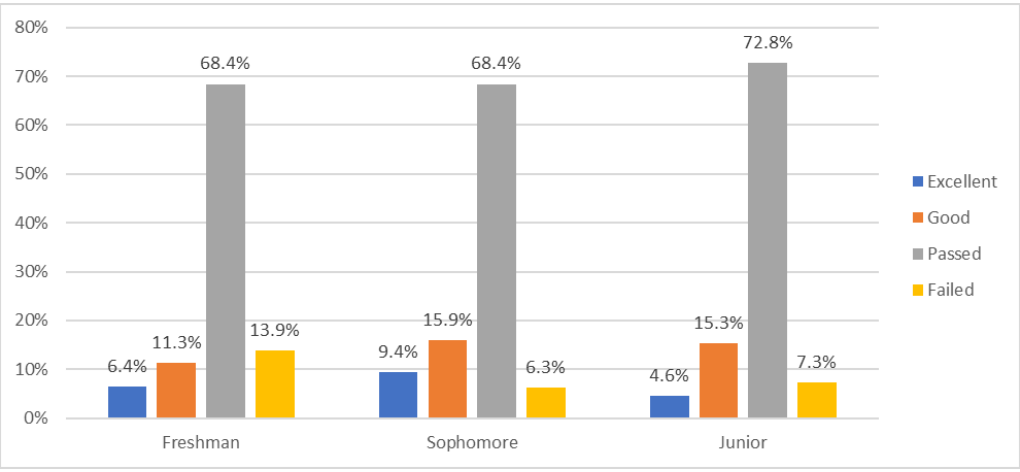


Figure 5 Percentage of Girls in One-minute Sit-up Tests at Different Levels by Grade

Figure 5 shows that sophomore and junior girls outperformed freshmen in the one-minute sit-up test, with a greater proportion achieving excellent and good results. Freshman girls had the highest failure rate at 13.9%, highlighting the need for significant improvement in their performance in this area.

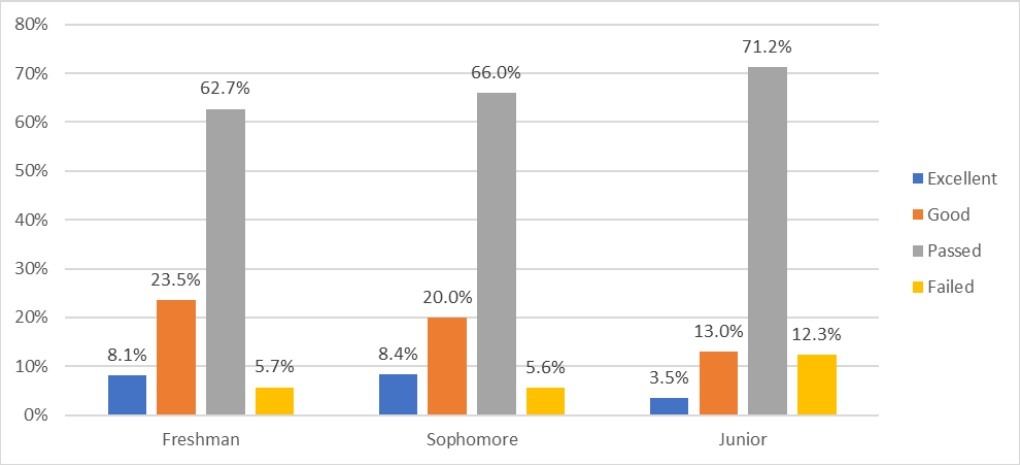


Figure 6 Percentage of Different Grades in the 800-meter Running Test of Female Students

Figure 6 shows that sophomore e girls slightly outperformed freshman and junior girls in the 800-meter run, with juniors having the lowest proportion of excellent and good results and the highest failure rate. Overall, 71.2% of students only achieved passing grades, and the excellent rate across all grades was low, indicating that the 800-meter performance of female students, particularly juniors, requires significant improvement.

2. To identify the main factors affecting their health through physical fitness tests and questionnaires.

2.1. Frequency and Duration of Physical Exercise for Female Students of Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

As can be seen from Table 1, in the survey of the actual frequency of female students participating in physical exercise, 4.1% of female students said they exercised every day, 67.8% of female students said 1-2 times a week, 24.1% of female students said 3 times a week or more, 2.6% of female students said 1-3 times a month, and 1.5% of female students said they did not exercise. From the above data, it can be seen that the frequency of female students participating in physical exercise tends to be 1-2 times a week, 1-3 times a week or more, indicating that female students in finance and economics universities are relatively active in participating in physical exercise. However, the number of people who choose to exercise every day is very small, and even a small number of girls choose not to exercise or exercise 1-3 times a month, indicating that the frequency of female students participating in physical exercise still needs to be improved.

In the survey of the ideal frequency of financial college girls to participate in physical exercise, 19.3% of girls choose to exercise every day, 26.7% of girls choose to exercise 1-2 times a week, 52.6% of girls choose 3 times a week or more, 1.1% of girls choose 1-3 times a month, 0.4% of girls choose not to exercise. Compared with the actual exercise situation, the number of people who choose to exercise every day increased by 41 people, the number of people who choose to exercise 3 times a week or more increased by 77 people, while the number of people who choose 1-2 times a week decreased by 111 people, in addition, the number of people who choose to exercise and no exercise also decreased by 4 and 3 people respectively. It can be seen that the ideal exercise frequency of financial college girls is higher than the actual exercise frequency.

Table 1 Frequency of Female Students Participating in Physical Exercise

Frequency of Physical Exercise	Actual Situation		Ideal Situation	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Exercise every day	11	4.1	52	19.3
Do this 1-2 times a week	183	67.8	72	26.7
3 or more times a week	65	24.1	142	52.6
1-3 times a month	7	2.6	3	1.1
No exercise	4	1.5	1	0.4

Time for female students of Shanghai University of Finance and Economics to participate in physical exercise each time.

The statistical results of the questionnaire show (Figure 7): In the survey of the time for female students of finance and economics to participate in physical exercise each time, 34.81% of the girls said it was less than 30 minutes, 48.89% of the girls said it was between 30 and 60 minutes, 13.33% of the girls said it was 60 minutes or more, and 2.96% of the girls were not sure.

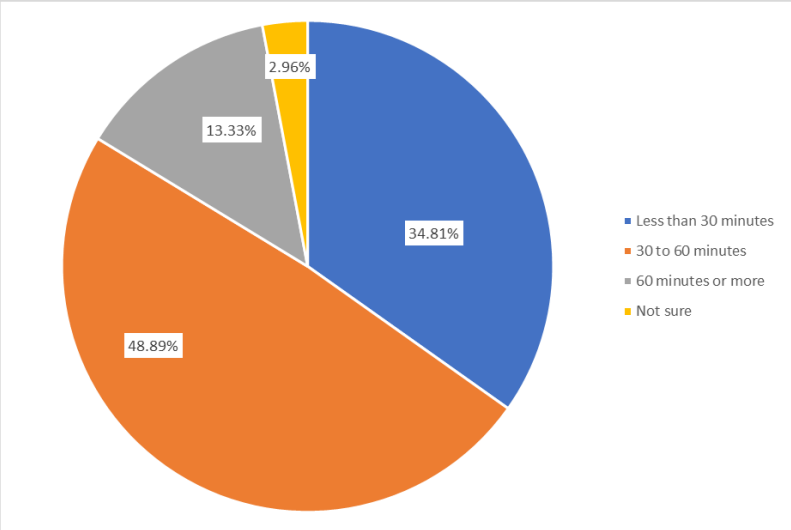


Figure 7 Time of Participating in Physical Exercise for Female Students in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

2.2. Selection of Physical Exercise Items and Exercise Forms for Female Students of Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

As can be seen from Table 2, among the physical exercise items often chosen by female students of finance and economics, 64.4% of them choose running, 47.8% of them choose ball games, 26.3% of them choose aerobics, 4.4% of them choose martial arts, 12.2% of them choose yoga, 16.7% of them choose fitness and bodybuilding. 23.0% of the girls choose suburban activities, 1.9% of the girls choose roller skating, 15.2% of the girls choose swimming, 0.4% of the girls choose other, among which the other girls fill in rock climbing.

Table 2 The Physical Exercises Often Chosen by Female Students of Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

Sports	Frequency	Percentage	Order
Running	174	64.4	1
Ball Games	129	47.8	2
Aerobics	71	26.3	3
Martial Arts	12	4.4	8
Yoga	33	12.2	7
Fitness and Bodybuilding	45	16.7	5
Suburban Activities	62	23.0	4
Roller Skating	5	1.9	9
Swimming	41	15.2	6
Other	1	0.4	10

From the above data, it can be seen that female students of finance and economics mainly exercise through running and ball games, followed by aerobics, suburban activities, fitness, swimming and yoga, and less female students choose martial arts, roller skating and rock climbing. It shows that female students of finance and economics mainly exercise through running and ball sports, and wushu, roller skating and other events are neglected because they do not meet the psychological and physiological needs of female students.

2.3. Experimental Measures to Improve the Physical Health of Female Students in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

Since the "Basic Standards for Physical Education in colleges and Universities" issued by the state put forward many new requirements for physical education in colleges and universities, especially in Article 15, it is clearly stipulated that when students graduate, their physical fitness test results less than 50 points will be given the treatment of dropout, which also makes the physical fitness test more and more important. Therefore, in the composition of

the freshman sports results adopted 50% process evaluation +50% physical test results calculation method, and the physical test total score of 50 points below, the semester sports results will be unqualified.

It is found that the speed, endurance and waist and abdominal muscle strength of female students in finance and economics university are poor, which needs to be strengthened by targeted exercises. Therefore, in the physical health improvement experiment, we introduce functional training into the physical education class in college, so as to effectively improve the physical health level of female students in finance and economics university.

1）Experimental Subjects

The subjects of this experiment were 54 female freshmen in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, who chose basketball as their special study in PE class.

2）Specific Measures of Physical Health Improvement Experiment for Female Students in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics

A targeted experiment on the reform of teaching form is carried out in the first year of the university of Finance and economics. The specific implementation plan is as follows:

Offer sports club courses to freshmen. From September 10, 2023 to January 2, 2024, a total of 17 weeks of classes are offered.

Class composition: 10 minutes of preparation, 30 minutes of functional training, 45 minutes of special teaching, 5 minutes of summary and relaxation exercise.

According to the physical health standards of college students and the basic situation of girls in finance and economics university, functional training is conducted in each class, and homework is arranged after class to gradually improve the physical health of girls in finance and economics university.

The composition of sports scores: 50% process evaluation +50% physical test scores, of which the total score of physical tests is less than 50 points, the semester sports scores are not qualified.

Since Shanghai University of Finance and Economics has implemented a comprehensive PE teaching reform, the control group of the experiment is inconvenient to arrange, so the experiment adopts the method of self-before-after comparison to testics the effect of PE teaching reform. The results of physical test at the end of the semester were compared and analyzed, so as to verify the effect of physical education reform in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.

Table 3 The Overall Physical Test Results Before and After the Physical Education Teaching Experiment

Grades	Upon Admission		End of Term	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	0	0.0	3	5.6
Good	10	18.5	17	31.5
Passed	41	75.9	34	63.0
Failed	3	5.6	0	0.0
Total	54	100.0	54	100.0

Before the PE teaching reform, none of the female students in the experimental group had achieved an excellent level. After one semester, 5.6% of the students reached excellence, and the number of good students increased by 13.0%. The number of passing students decreased by 12.9%, and no students remained at the failing level. Overall, the reform resulted in significant improvement, with 37.1% of students achieving excellent or good results, compared to 18.5% at the beginning.

The experiment led to significant improvement in lung capacity ($P < 0.05$), demonstrating the effectiveness of functional training for cardiopulmonary health. However, no significant improvement was observed in the 50-meter sprint, indicating the need for additional focus on speed training. Flexibility improved significantly ($P < 0.05$), while explosive power and core strength showed minor gains. The 800-meter run also improved significantly ($P < 0.05$), and the overall fitness score increased by 4.34 points, further confirming the positive impact of the PE reform.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal critical insights into the physical fitness of female students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. While improvements were observed in certain areas following physical education (PE) reforms, key challenges remain, particularly in endurance, explosive power, and the consistency of exercise habits.

Comparison with National and International Trends

The results align with national studies indicating that while awareness of physical fitness among students is increasing, consistent participation in exercise programs remains low. The better performance in flexibility and aerobic endurance reflects the influence of routine PE classes and functional training programs. However, compared to international standards, such as the structured club activities in Japan or the fitness-focused curriculum in the United States, gaps persist in addressing explosive power and speed among students. Incorporating more diverse and engaging physical activities, as seen in other countries, may help address these deficiencies.

Gender-Specific Challenges

The study highlights gender-specific challenges in improving physical fitness. Female students often exhibit stronger performance in flexibility and lower injury rates in aerobic activities, yet lag behind in strength and speed-based exercises. This pattern is consistent with physiological differences and sociocultural factors that influence female participation in high-intensity activities. Tailored interventions focusing on strength training and short-burst exercises can bridge this gap while maintaining student engagement.

Implications for Physical Education Reform

The improvements in flexibility, as indicated by significant gains in sit-and-reach performance, demonstrate the effectiveness of incorporating stretching routines and low-impact activities into PE programs. However, limited progress in explosive power and sprint performance suggests that the current curriculum lacks sufficient focus on strength and speed training. Future reforms should incorporate targeted interventions, such as resistance training, plyometric exercises, and interval training, to improve these areas.

Role of Environment and Infrastructure

Environmental and infrastructural factors also play a significant role in shaping student fitness outcomes. Limited access to sports facilities and overcrowded schedules often hinder students from engaging in regular exercise. Universities must prioritize the development of accessible, well-equipped sports facilities and implement flexible activity schedules to encourage higher participation. Partnerships with local communities to create shared sports spaces could further alleviate these constraints.

Behavioral and Social Factors

Behavioral factors, such as inconsistent exercise habits and low intrinsic motivation, remain significant barriers. Peer influence and social dynamics within university settings could be leveraged to enhance participation rates. Initiatives such as group-based fitness challenges, sports competitions, and peer mentoring programs may foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for physical activity. Additionally, regular health assessments and progress tracking can provide personalized feedback, reinforcing motivation and accountability among students.

Broader Implications for Higher Education

This study underscores the broader importance of physical fitness in higher education institutions. Beyond physical health, regular exercise has been linked to improved cognitive performance, mental health, and social well-being. Universities must integrate holistic health strategies that address these interconnected dimensions, ensuring that physical education programs contribute meaningfully to students' overall development.

In summary, the findings of this study highlight significant challenges and opportunities in improving the physical health of female students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics. Most students achieve only passing levels in fitness tests, with specific deficits observed among freshmen in vital capacity, flexibility, standing long jump, and sit-ups, while juniors struggle with sprint and endurance runs. Factors contributing to these outcomes include a lack of interest in sports, inconsistent exercise habits, and insufficient facilities and schedules. While physical education reforms have improved flexibility and aerobic endurance through functional training, gaps persist in explosive power, speed, and core strength, indicating a need for targeted interventions like resistance training, plyometrics, and interval exercises. Gender-specific challenges further complicate the issue, as physiological and sociocultural barriers hinder participation in strength and speed-based activities.Environmental

and behavioral factors, including limited access to facilities and low motivation, exacerbate the problem. Solutions such as group-based challenges, peer mentoring, and accessible infrastructure could address these barriers. Beyond physical health, the study underscores the broader value of physical education in enhancing cognitive, mental, and social well-being, calling for holistic reforms that integrate these dimensions into higher education strategies.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, several recommendations are proposed to improve the physical health of female students at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics:

1. Raise Awareness: Implement educational programs to highlight the importance of physical health and exercise through workshops, seminars, and health campaigns.

2. Integrate Physical Activity: Incorporate mandatory physical education and exercise sessions into the curriculum to promote regular activity and healthy habits.

3. Improve Facilities: Enhance sports facilities on campus, providing well-equipped gyms and fields to encourage participation.

4. Personalized Fitness Programs: Offer tailored fitness programs focusing on specific areas such as lung capacity, flexibility, and endurance.

5. Promote Participation: Encourage involvement in sports clubs, intramural sports, and fitness classes to create a more active student body.

6. Health Assessments: Conduct regular fitness tests to monitor students' health and provide personalized feedback.

7. Collaborate with Health Professionals: Work with healthcare experts to offer nutritional counseling, fitness coaching, and mental health support for a holistic approach to well-being.

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