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A Review of Habituated Exercise, Cognitive Functions and Academic Performance



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Abstract. Cognitive ability is an essential contributor to academic performance. When cognitive skills are strengthened, students' overall learning ability improves, and overall academic achievement is often associated with superior cognitive functioning. Growing evidence indicates that cognitive abilities can be enhanced through regular participation in exercise. Just as enhanced cognitive functioning contributes to academic achievement in school settings, emotional distress tends to be a critical barrier to learning and is often associated with poorer cognitive functioning and academic performance. Importantly, exercise habits have been shown to play a significant moderating role in the relationship between emotional distress and academic performance. Indeed, scores of studies support for the positive effects of exercise on cognitive functioning. For adolescents, schools have been identified as a major source of stress. This presentation explores the literature on the relationship between exercise habit strength, emotional distress and academic indicators in adolescents.

Biography. Associate Professor Dr. Hairul is a lecturer in Exercise and Sports Science Programme, School of Health Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia. He has a Master degree from Springfield College, USA and a PhD from the University of Western Australia in Sports & Exercise psychology. His areas of research interest include the use of psycho-behavioral techniques in sports performance and health enhancement, particularly progressive muscle relaxation. He also has a deep interest in psychometric development and validation. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hairul has published over 150 journals, conference proceedings, books, book chapters, and newspaper columns. He writes a weekly newspaper column in which he addresses issues related to emotional and mental health from various aspects especially exercise and mental health. He successfully obtained 29 research grants either as a principal investigator or a co-investigator. Associate Professor Dr. Hairul is actively involved in national coaching certification board as a curriculum board member, He also provides regular consultation for private and governmental agencies such as National Sports Council and State Sport Council as well as sports associations particularly in sports and exercise psychology. Besides academics, his is passionate about volleyball which he is actively playing and coaching.