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Title of Dissertation/Thesis: Assessing the mediating effect of student problem behaviors on the relationship between physical activity and academic achievement in the intermediate grades
Institution conferring degree: The Pennsylvania State University
College, School, or Division: College of Education
Department or Program: School Psychology
Advisor/Committee Chair: James DiPerna, Ph.D.
Committee Member: Shirley Wwoika, Ph.D.
Committee Member: Cristin Hall, Ph.D.
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Physical activity, externalizing behaviors, academic achievement

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The Pennsylvania State University
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ASSESSING THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF STUDENT PROBLEM BEHAVIOR ON THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES

A Dissertation in
School Psychology

by

Aisha I. Pavelski

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the possible mediating effect of student problem behavior on the longitudinal relationship between physical activity and academic achievement in both third and fifth grade. Data were drawn from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development (SECCYD; NICHD, 2010). Measures included physical activity accelerometer data, the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 1991), and the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-educational Battery – Revised (Woodcock & Johnson, 1989). Analyses of the longitudinal relationships among these variables did not indicate direct or indirect relationships between overall levels of student physical activity and academic achievement. Exploration of the inclusion of prior achievement in the model addressed the need for researchers to include prior achievement when evaluating these relationships. Future research should address the necessity of introducing additional physical activity above and beyond what is typical within the school setting. Further evaluation of the most effective types of interventions to implement, and what outcomes to be measured, would benefit teachers, administrators, school psychologists, educators, and policymakers alike.