



Impact of Heavy School Bags on the Physical and Psychological Health of the Secondary School Students

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Abstract

Students' health and wellbeing are seriously threatened by heavy school bags. It has a serious, detrimental physical impact on developing children that can harm their knees and vertebral column. In addition, it makes them anxious. Students who carry heavy backpacks often experience tiredness, muscle soreness, back pain, distortion of the natural curvature of the spine, rounding of the shoulders, poor body posture, and attention span problems. In extreme cases, carrying heavy school bags might also result in lumbar and cervical pain. Moreover, in the schools which are functioning in multi-storeyed buildings, the children have to climb the steps with heavy school bags, which further aggravates the problem and health consequences. The present study aimed at studying the impact of heavy school bags on physical and psychological health of the students. Descriptive and survey method was used for this study. A rating scale prepared by the researcher was used to quantify the response. The findings of the study showed that the students get tired by carrying the school bags. They also experience back pain, leg pain and shoulder pain. These factors definitely impacts their attention in classrooms throughout the day.

Keywords: Physical and Psychological Health, School Bags

INTRODUCTION

Health professionals and experts have expressed their concern about the negative effects of school pupils, carrying too many heavily filled bags. Frequent usage of these heavy bags can put students at risk for a variety of physical health issues, including back, neck, shoulder, and leg discomfort. Nevertheless, these issues are frequently disregarded and mistaken for growing pains, poor posture, a sedentary lifestyle, and other causes. In one day, the average school child studies about 8 different subjects. This means that children carry at least 8 different school books, and this doesn't include other notebooks, worksheets and other things they might need. The impact of carrying heavy bags over time, often causes children to experience back pain, with girls generally experiencing more pain than boys. Children carrying particularly heavy school bags frequently develop a forward head posture, with the body hinging forward at the hips to balance out and compensate for the heavy weight on their backs, thus causing unnatural posture alignment,

Large school backpacks have been a definite hardship on young shoulders who are attending school. The government and educational boards have made a lot of attempts to minimize the weight of school bags. A recent change known as The School Bag Policy of India 2020 has been put into place to address this problem.

The NCERT (National Council of Education Research and Training), through several surveys and studies, found that carrying heavy bags was bad for students' health and resulted in stunted growth, especially for those in pre-primary and primary classes. The adverse effect of those backpacks on children's spinal posture, foot shape and walking pattern has time and again been noted. Pallavi Rao Chaturvedi, vice-president of the Early Childhood Association, says, "Children usually compensate for the load on the back by leaning forward, straining the muscles of the neck, back and shoulders. Heavy school bags are 'deforming' children as growing numbers suffer irreversible back problems. If youngsters experience back discomfort at such an early age, they may continue to do so for the next 60 to 70 years, incurring significant financial and psychological costs.

AIM OF THE STUDY

To Study the Impact of Heavy School Bags on the Physical & Psychological Health of the Students.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS:

Physical health is the well-being of the body and the proper functioning of the organism of individual. Physical wellbeing is the ability to maintain a healthy quality of life that allows us to get the most out of our daily activities without undue fatigue or physical stress. Physical Health is correlated with Mental Health because good physical health leaves a better personal feeling in the long term.

Psychological health is characterized by a reasonable and continuous finding of satisfactions in one's living. At the most basic level, psychological wellbeing is quite similar to other terms that refer to positive mental states, such as happiness or satisfaction. Mental and physical health are equally important components of overall health.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To study the impact of heavy school bags on the physical & psychological health of students.
2. To study the impact of heavy school bags on the physical & psychological health of male & female students.
3. To compare impact of heavy school bags on students, on the basis of gender.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY: The researcher has used Descriptive and Survey Method to carry out the research.

SAMPLE: The sample for the present study included 73 students from Std. VII of St. Thomas High School, Goregaon, Mumbai.. Data was collected by Ms. Dianne Jagtap.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE: Convenience sampling technique was used.

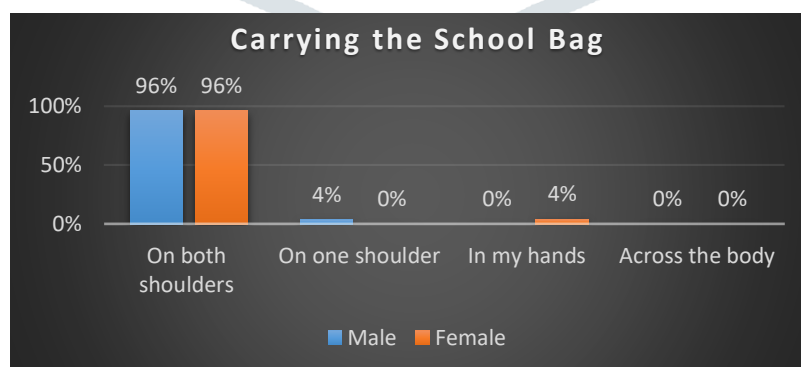
TOOL: The researcher prepared a Rating scale containing 14 items.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

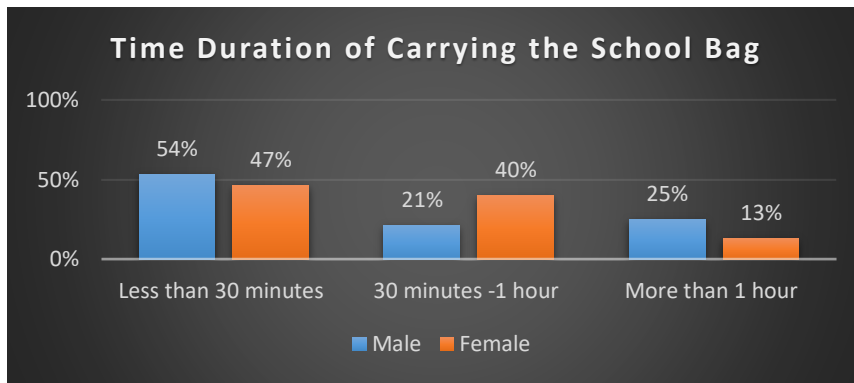
The researcher has used the Descriptive Analysis. Bar graphs and pie charts were used to represent the data.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

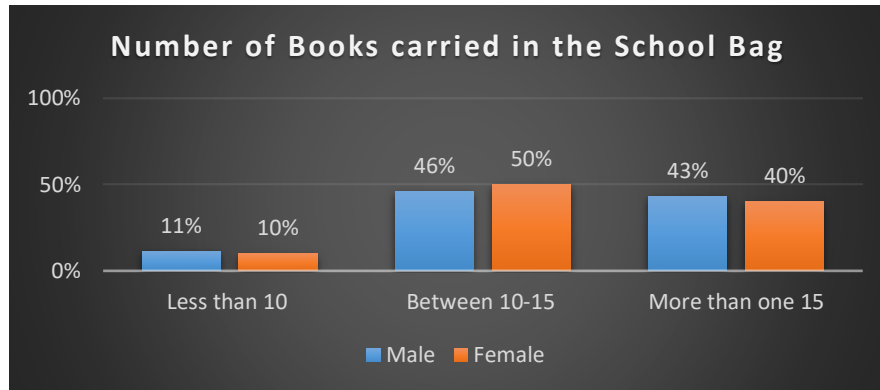
- 96% of students carry their school bag on both their shoulders, 2% of them carry their school bag on one shoulder, 2% of them carry their bags in their hands & and 0% of them across the body. Following graph shows the gender wise comparison.



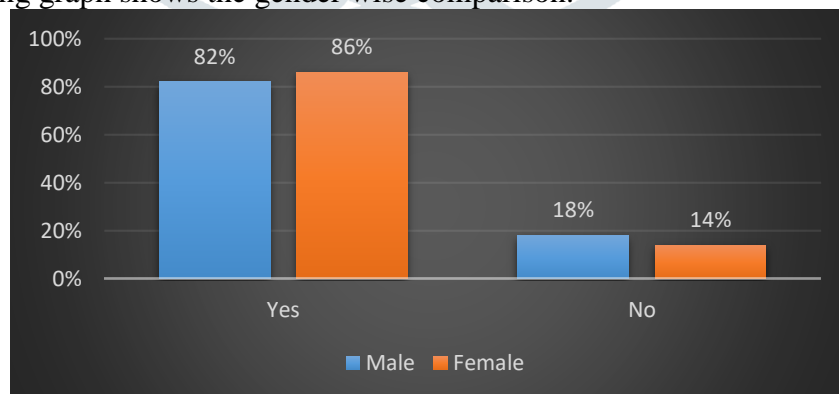
- 25% of students carry their school bags for less than 30 minutes per day, 31% of students carry their school bags for around 30 minutes to one hour per day & 19% of students carry their school bags for more than 1 hour per day. Following graph shows the gender wise comparison.



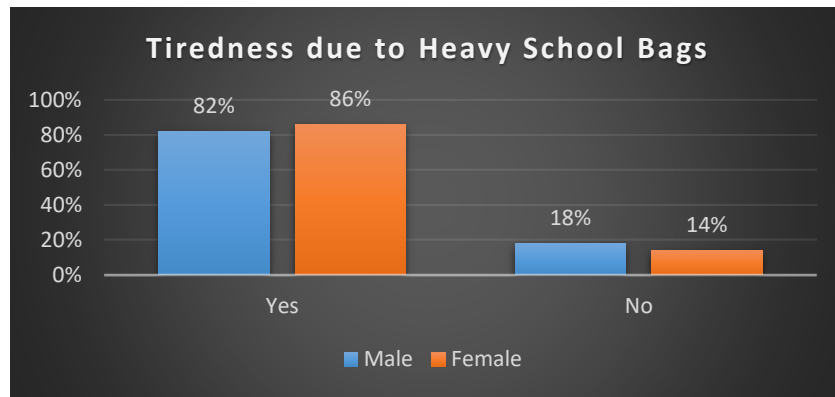
- 5% of students carry less than 10 books in their school bags, 52% of students carry between 10- 15 books in their school bag & 43 % of students carry more than 15 books in their school bags. Following graph shows the gender wise comparison.



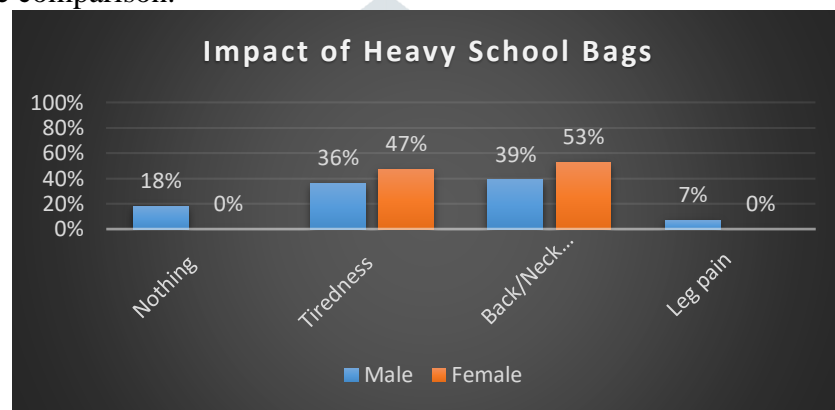
- 97% of students follow the time table & carry books, as per the time table & 3% of students don't follow the time table while packing their bags. This implies that practically all students adhere to the timetable and carry books in accordance with it. Following graph shows the gender wise comparison.
- 100 % of students carry their tiffin, water bottles in their school bag only. This implies that all students carry their tiffin, water bottles in their school bag only as it helps them to keep their belongings organized and easily accessible. This suggest that carrying water bottles & tiffin in the school bag, is one of the causes that leads to heavy bags.
- 91% of the students feel that their school bags are heavy. Remaining 9% of students don't feel that their school bag is heavy. Following graph shows the gender wise comparison.



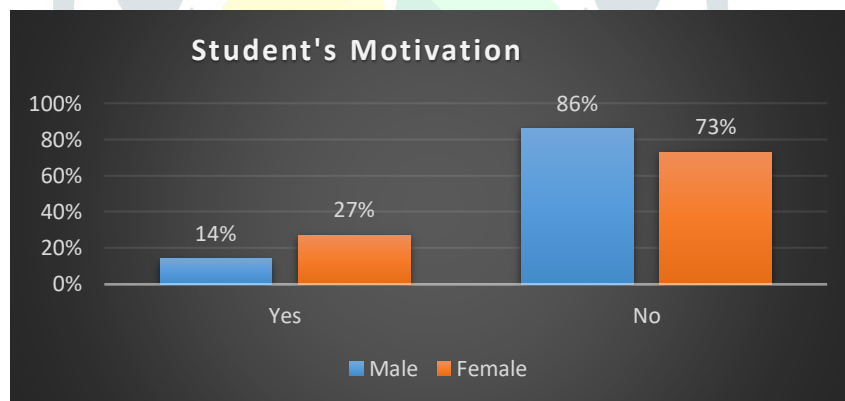
- 91% of the students experience tiredness while carrying their school bags. Remaining 9% of students don't feel tired while carrying their school bags. Following graph shows the gender wise comparison.



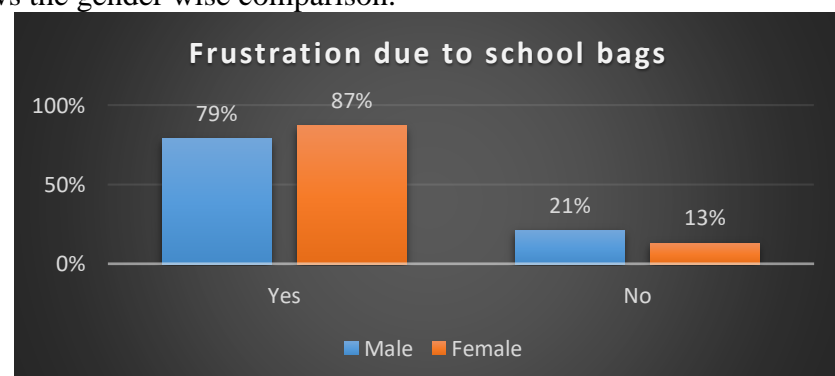
- 100% of the students feel some sense of discomfort while carrying their school bags.
- 41% of the students experienced tiredness while carrying their school bag, 47% of the students experienced either back/ neck/shoulder pain while carrying their school bag, 3 % of students experienced leg pain while carrying their school bag & 9 % of students felt no effect while carrying their school bags. Following graph shows the gender wise comparison.



- 79% of the students are motivated to come to school in spite of their heavy school bag & 21% of the students feel demotivated to come to school due to their heavy school bag. Following graph shows the gender wise comparison.



- 83% of the students feel that they feel frustrated towards their educational activities, due to pain /discomfort cause by heavy school bags. 17% of the students don't feel frustrated towards their educational activities. Following graph shows the gender wise comparison.



SUGGESTIONS TO REDUCE THE WEIGHT OF SCHOOL BAGS:

- Reduce the number of textbooks required for each subject. With the advancement of technology, e-books and online resources can be used as an alternative to traditional textbooks, this will not only reduce the weight of school bags but also promote digital literacy among students.
- Also, facility of lockers to be provided in schools for students for storing assignments, projects, books.
- Another solution is to implement a rotating timetable system where students only carry books for the classes they have on that particular day. This will significantly reduce the weight of their bags and allow them to focus on their studies without any physical discomfort.

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