

Research Paper

Impact of Sport Participation on Personality and Positive-Negative Affect of Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of sport participation on personality as well as positive and negative affect. A sample of 100 participants (50 sports students and 50 non-sports students) age ranged 13-19 years, was taken from the schools. NEO-BFI and PANAS scales were used to examine the participants. Findings of the present study revealed significant difference between sports students and non-sports students on the dimensions of personality as well as positive and negative affect. The findings suggest that sport participation increased positive affect, enhanced emotional stability, reduced neuroticism and facilitated extraversion tendency.

Keywords: *Sports, Development, Personality, Positive and Negative Affect*

In today's fast-paced and competitive world, sports participation has emerged as more than just a recreational activity. It has become a dynamic platform for personal growth, fostering positive changes in individuals' personality and elevating their self-esteem. From children engaging in team sports to adults pursuing individual athletic endeavour, the impact of sports on psychological well-being has garnered increasing attention among researchers and practitioners. As we delve into the fascinating realm of the relationship between sports participation and psychological aspects (i.e., personality, affect), a deeper understanding of the profound effects of athletic engagement on the individuals' overall personality and affect (positive and negative) awaits more empirical exploration and investigation.

Sports activities not only improve physical fitness but also have the power to shape the personality structure and regulate emotions. Sports participation, beyond its physical benefits, has long been recognized as a tool for transformative experiences that influence various aspects of an individual's life. Understanding how sports participation influences personality tendencies and affect is crucial for promoting healthy personality and positive affect along with managing negative affect.

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Impact of Sport Participation on Personality and Positive-Negative Affect of Adolescents

Relatively stable pattern of behavior represents the personality of an individual. In psychological terms, personality refers to the characteristic ways of responding to individuals and situations, including unique and relatively stable qualities. According to Allport (1937), personality is the dynamic organization within the individual, of those psycho-physical systems that characterize his/ her characteristic adjustment to the environment. In other words, personality could be defined as the distinctive patterns of behavior, including thoughts and emotions, that characterize each individual's adaptations to the situations of his life or her life (Mischel, 1968).

A number of theories have been developed over the years to explain the personality traits, structures, types, tendencies and dynamics of certain pattern of behaviour, the recent one being McCrae and Costa's five factor model of personality (McCrae & Costa, 1987). The five-factor model of personality (FFM) refers to a set of five broad trait dimensions or domains, which is referred as the "Big Five": Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience. The characteristics of highly extraverted individuals include assertiveness and talkative, fun-loving and outgoing (rather than quiet and reserved). Agreeable individuals are cooperative, caring, and polite (rather than antagonistic and rude). Conscientious individuals are task focused, achievement oriented, responsible, and orderly (rather than distractible and disorganized). Neurotic individuals are prone to experiencing negative emotions, such as anxiety, depression, and irritation (rather than being emotionally resilient). Individuals with high openness to experience have a broad rather than narrow range of interests, are sensitive rather than indifferent to art and beauty, and prefer novelty to routine.

The main aim of developing the Big Five (FFM) was to represent as much of the variability in individuals' personalities as possible, using only a small set of trait dimensions. Many personality research now confirm that its five domains capture the most important, basic individual differences in personality traits and many alternative trait models can be conceptualized in terms of the Big Five structure. The five-factor model has comprehensively studied the role of nature and nurture in the development of particular traits in an individual. It was concluded that many of the traits such as extroversion or neuroticism are genetically inherited. It was further developed and evident in a person's behaviour through the environmental factors. For instance, personality traits and tendencies depend on the individuals' capabilities to regulate emotion and affect in a certain context.

Emotions can be viewed as organized responses, crossing the boundaries of many psychological subsystems, including the physiological, cognitive, motivational, and experiential systems. Several researchers introduced and developed the concept of emotional intelligence as a type of intelligence which includes abilities, competencies and skills, which enables a person to identify emotions, be able to resolve emotional issues, to manage and control own as well as other emotions (Bar-On, 2006; Goleman, 1995, 1998; Meyer & Zizzi, 2007). Mayer and Salovey (1989-1990) defined emotional intelligence as ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. Affect is a central feature in many psychological phenomena, including emotion. Affect is a state of mind that occurs in response to emotion.

It can be stated that personality is a sum total of emotions; how we feel, how we express those feelings get embedded in our personality and become a part of us. Emotional intelligence is a key determinant in personality development. Studies have indicated that

Impact of Sport Participation on Personality and Positive-Negative Affect of Adolescents

emotionally intelligent people have better personality traits. They have lesser degree of neuroticism and have positive personality traits. Emotional intelligence was found to be negatively correlated with neuroticism and positively associated with extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness (Saklofske, 2007). It is required to have an understanding of emotions and awareness of the individual differences for the skillful management of emotions. These individual differences are observable in the individuals' characteristics and behaviors that can reflect in the personality traits and tendency.

Although numerous personality traits can originate in families, and social contact helps to mould and refine them. One manner of engaging that teaches cooperation and competitiveness and how to act appropriately through sports. It is crucial to recognise different personality types in athletes in order to improve performance since personality significantly influences how an athlete performs. It differs from person to person and sport to sport. It is possible that one personality feature is more inactive in one sport than the other.

Sports participation plays an important role in shaping a person's personality. There is a lot more to playing sports than just strategies and outcomes. Both emotion and personality are impacted through sport involvement. As there are possibilities to learn how to regulate emotions, develop interpersonal skills, establish connections with others, and improve tangible talents, sports offer thus an opportunity to develop personality (Slutzky & Simpkins, 2009).

Every sport places a high value on goal-setting, and an individual's personality strongly influences the kind of objective they choose to pursue. The influence of sports involvement on a person's personality was demonstrated by the discovery that players belong to an individual sports exhibit higher levels of optimism, resilience, persistence, self-efficacy, and self-esteem (Eysenck, et al., 1982; Kremer & Scully, 1994; Laborde et al., 2016). To assess how sports have a good influence on personality, a group of students participated in a three-month sports training programme that shown a positive influence on the students' personality by substantially decreasing their predisposition towards neuroticism and increasing their feeling of responsibility and outwardness (Tazegul, 2014). It seems that personality issues were the team's second-most common source of conflict. Players are acknowledged for having strong personalities, and it is usual for these characteristics to come into contact and lead to conflict (Laios, et al., 2014).

Sport and delinquency were found to possess a negative correlation in early adolescence and college students by Segrave & Hastad (1982). Lower levels of delinquency were correlated with increased athletic participation. Similar results from other research have been found, supporting the idea that exercise and sport are linked to less problematic behaviour and emotional irresponsibility (Brown & Siegel, 1988).

Participating in sports in this way undoubtedly develops character, personality and emotional maturity. These are the conclusions from studies and research conducted abroad and in India, on these areas still in its early stages. We additionally need to comprehend how sports activity affects several facets of our character, like as personality or emotions. Therefore, this study represents progress in that direction. It is an attempt to examine how playing sports impacted individuals' emotional regulation and personality.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

100 participants were purposively chosen for the present study. They were classified into two groups; athletes (n=50) and non-athletes (n=50). The athlete group includes individuals who participated in sports events or national competitions and practiced their sport everyday for at least three hours. Those who did not participate in any sports made up the non-athlete category of participants. Athletes were tested on the school pitch when they were in real-time practice, while non-athletes were evaluated in school classrooms during leisure time. School administrators' and relevant authorities' approval as well as participants' consent were obtained before data collection.

Tools

The following questionnaires were translated in Hindi and modified using translation and back translation techniques for greater accuracy and adaptability.

- **Personality Scale (John & Srivastava, 1999):** To assess personality of participants, NEO-BFI was used. 44-item inventory that measures an individual on the Big Five Factors (dimensions) of personality (Goldberg, 1993). These are the dimensions; Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness. The participants chose the options on a 5-point scale where 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree and 5= Strongly Disagree.
- **The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988):** To measure Emotional Intelligence, PANAS inventory was used to study the dominance of affect (positive or negative). It contains 20 words describing affect. It measures 10 positive affect; Interested, Excited, Strong, Enthusiastic, Proud, Alert, Inspired, Determined, Attentive and Active and 10 negative affect, Distressed, Upset, Guilty, Scared, Hostile, Irritable, Ashamed, Nervous, Jittery and Afraid. The participants rated the statements on a 5-point scale with 1= Very slightly or not at all, 2= A little, 3= Moderately, 4=Quite a bit, and 5=Extremely.

RESULTS

An independent t-test was performed to compare the significance of means of the athlete group and the non-athlete group on the measures of personality and Positive-Negative affect.

Table 1: Personality

| Personality Dimensions | Sports Group | Non-Sports Group | t-value |
|------------------------|--------------|------------------|---------|
| Extraversion | | | |
| Mean | 26.04 | 25.38 | 0.82 |
| SD | 4.058 | 3.30 | |
| Agreeableness | | | |
| Mean | 31.60 | 30.16 | 1.90 |
| SD | 3.95 | 3.58 | |
| Conscientiousness | | | |
| Mean | 31.36 | 30.04 | 1.72 |
| SD | 3.88 | 3.79 | |
| Neuroticism | | | |
| Mean | 22.16 | 24.20 | 2.53* |
| SD | 4.34 | 3.67 | |
| Openness | | | |
| Mean | 33.70 | 34.80 | 1.24 |
| SD | 4.66 | 4.16 | |

* $p < .05$

Impact of Sport Participation on Personality and Positive-Negative Affect of Adolescents

Results shows (Table 1) significant difference (t-value = 2.53, p-value = .01) between sports and non-sports groups. The athlete group has a lower score (mean = 22.16, SD = 4.34) on the Neuroticism-Emotional stability domain (mean=22.16) than the non-athlete group (mean = 24.20, SD = 3.67). It suggests that athlete group participants are more emotionally stable than participants from the non-athlete group. A significant difference between the two groups was not evident on the other domains. However, the athlete group (AG) scored higher than the non-athlete group (NAG) on three domains; extraversion (AG mean = 26.04 SD = 4.58, NAG mean = 25.38, SD = 3.30), agreeableness (AG mean = 31.60 SD = 3.95, NAG mean = 30.16 SD = 3.58), and conscientiousness (AG mean = 31.36, SD = 3.88, NAG mean = 30.04, SD= 3.79). On the domain of openness, non-athletes show more openness (mean = 34.80, SD = 4.16) in comparison to athletes (mean = 33.70, SD = 4.66).

Table 2: Positive and Negative Affect

| Affect | Sports Group | Non-Sports Group | t-value |
|----------|--------------|------------------|---------|
| Positive | | | |
| Mean | 184.72 | 169.90 | 1.54 |
| SD | 49.98 | 46.06 | |
| Negative | | | |
| Mean | 132.00 | 120.10 | 1.47 |
| SD | 43.62 | 36.80 | |

It (table 2) reported no significant difference on the positive affect (PA), (t-value = 1.54, p-value =.12), and negative affect (NA), (t-value = 1.47, p-value =.14) between the athlete and the non-athlete groups. However, the mean scores of the athlete group were higher on both the measures of positive affect (mean = 184.72, SD = 49.98) and negative affect (mean = 132.00, SD = 43.62) than the non-athlete group (PA mean = 169.90, SD = 46.06, NA mean = 120.10, SD = 36.80). This indicates that participants in the athlete group were more vocal and expressive, and felt all kind of emotions whether it was positive or negative affect, more than non-athlete group.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the impact of sports participation on the personality tendency and positive-negative affect. Findings of this study showed a considerable distinction between the personality characteristics of athletes and non-athletes. Athletics are a single endeavour in which developmentally essential abilities may be learnt through physical activity, teamwork, the acquisition of physical and mental tactics, adherence to the laws and regulations specific to the sport. Sports may be used to develop the life skills, including social, motor, and learning abilities as well as emotional and interpersonal skills.

Findings revealed that athletes were more emotionally stable than non-athletes. It also indicated that athletes performed better on the dimensions of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, while they displayed less openness to experience compared to non-athletes. Another studies (Roy, 1971; Young & Ismail, 1976) has similar results where development of boys were observed over a period of time while they were engaged in highly competitive sports and sports environment. Findings reported high extraversion and comparatively more emotional stability, less anxiety among the sport persons than the non-sport persons. A study (Eysenck, 1979), suggested that physical education students were more extraverted, less anxious, and more sociable as compared to those students who were not belong to physical education class.

Impact of Sport Participation on Personality and Positive-Negative Affect of Adolescents

Several studies have been done to study the effect of sports on emotional intelligence of individuals and varying findings have been found. It indicated that both positive and negative emotions such as excitement, anger, fear, happiness, sadness, embarrassment and joy or enjoyment were experienced during sport participation in equal manner (Hanin, 2000). In another study (Perlini & Harvelson, 2006), found that players had greater emotional intelligence compared to non-sports participants. A study (Smith et al., 1995) supported the link between emotional skill and athletic performance.

The present study reported no significant difference between sports group and non-sports group on the measure of positive and negative affect. However, on comparing means of sports and non-sports groups, it was evident that sports group have displayed greater on both the domains of emotional measure (i.e., positive affect and negative affect). It suggests that both the positive affect and negative affect were more evident among sport participants rather than non-sport participants. Thus, to some extent, it provides the same result as a study (Hanin, 2000) reported presence of both positive as well as negative emotions among athletes. According to Smith & Smoll (1991), sport is seen to have an impact on the development of characteristics including collaboration, positive attitudes towards accomplishment, stress management, perseverance, unselfishness, acceptable risk-taking, and the capacity to bear disappointment and delayed reward. These characteristics all indicate emotional maturity.

CONCLUSION

The study is aimed to understand the role of sports in personality tendency and emotion regulation of adolescents. Findings revealed that daily sports practice and regular participation in sports make individuals emotionally stable, less neurotic, more vocal about feeling, express different kind of emotions and manage negative emotion effectively, which shapes the entire personality of the individuals and their interaction with the world, hence having an beneficial effect on personality tendency as well as emotional intelligence and positive-negative affect of the adolescents.

Implications

Since there have been several changes to the educational system in recent years, although sports and physical education are still considered electives in schools. It is now essential to encourage young people to participate in sports through creating positive attitude towards sport participation. Due to the increased use of cell phones, online gaming, various types of substance use, and other harmful habits, youth today are becoming more and more vulnerable and disconnected from the outside world and social contact, which has resulted in a sense of distance, sporadic insensitivity towards others, and serious psychological issues. According to the study's findings, it is crucial to comprehend how sports may help young people develop strong personality character and emotion regulation. Participation in sports is essential for young people's healthy physical and psychological growth. Additionally, greater research in this field may provide new perspectives on the advantages of sports participation for several facets of adolescent development and well-being.

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Impact of Sport Participation on Personality and Positive-Negative Affect of Adolescents

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Impact of Sport Participation on Personality and Positive-Negative Affect of Adolescents

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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