

Evaluating Social Skills of Female Athlete Students in Several Sports

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Abstract

Social skills not only influencing interpersonal relationships and following acquisitive properties but also decreasing mental problems, psychological disorders and behavioral deviations through educational progress caused exercise to be tested as an educational subject in this study comparing impact of physical exercise on social skills in several sports. Therefore, this study compared social skills of female students participating in national championship competitions. The statistical population was comprised of 2500 high school students and 216 subjects were selected randomly. Two questionnaires were used in order to collect data: Personal Information Questionnaire and Social Skills Questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, independent t-test, and one-way ANOVA were used to analyze data. The results demonstrated that track and field athletes were better than others in 7 subscales of social skills, but swimming athletes had lower social skills. Furthermore, significant difference was between individual and team sport athletes. However, significant relationship between athletic background and social skills was not observed. Moreover, level of function had no effect on social skills. Based on the results of this study, the effect of team sports on social skills was higher than individual sports. Findings of previous research confirmed this issue. It seemed that lack of significant relationship between athletic background and social skills resulted from the homogeneity of the population and sample plus closeness of athletic background of the subjects to each other.

Keywords: Social skills, Team sports, Individual sports, Interpersonal relationships, Acquisitive properties

1. Introduction

Social skills are behaviors that empower people to have an effective interaction, avoid dissatisfactory responses and indicate individuals' social and behavioral healthiness. These skills originate from the cultural and social grounds. They include the behaviors like initiating new relationships, asking help and offering help. The outcomes of having improper levels of social skills lead to lack of proper social and behavioral health in adulthood. Chittenden (1942) defined the social skills as certainty and influencing others' behavior. Van Hasselt *et al.* (1979) developed this definition so that the social skills influencing the others without injuring them. This definition is comprised of expressing happiness, acknowledging the others' praise and other behaviors necessary to make interpersonal relationships. Social skills not only influence interpersonal relationships and following acquisitive properties but also decrease mental problems, psychological disorders and behavioral deviations. The opportunity of their teaching is a big gap in schools. Children can both develop their physical appearances and health and furthermore, they can also acquire skills, such as knowing themselves, establishing communications, self-confidence and self-sufficiency through physical education and sports (R.Ferudun Dorak , Lale Yildiz , Civan Sortullu,(2012)). Over the years, as educational jargon changed, it becomes more common to describe this objective as social or emotional development rather than character development, but the two essentially meant the same thing. The progressive education movement serves to emphasize even more the importance of social development function of schools, and many physical education teachers place great importance on social development outcomes in physical education. Physical education has always been thought as the least important subject. Other subject teacher often uses physical education classes to catch up with their syllabus. To many students, physical education is just prolonged recess period. Physical education teachers put most of their effort to teach sport skills while values have always been the hidden agenda. This study is an effort to consciously plan for social development in physical education classes besides maintained teaching sport skills to students (Norlena Salamuddin, Mohd Taib Harun 2010).

The social function of physical exercise and sports in developing social relationships is a fundamental function influencing the whole community structure and relations between the social classes. When sport is not considered desirably, its aversive outcomes affect social interests and discontinue the relations or its financial deviations prevent the emergence and growth of proper social interests. Giulianotti (2005) see the potential for sport as a tool to develop more human rights. Self-discipline, diligence, obedience to authority and collective responsibility are values to be fostered in sport (Henricks, 2006). Physical education causes acquisition and accumulation of various personal, social and social-moral skills which can act as a social capital to enable youth to function successfully in a broad range of social situations (Bailey, 2005). Physical education focuses on development of skills such as cooperation, teamwork, empathy and a sense of personal responsibility (Wright *et al.*, 2004). Yaguti and Hadi (2000) demonstrated that self-esteem, locus of control and social skills of athletic

students are higher than non-athletic ones. Pascarella *et al.*, (1995) found that the athletes get lower scores than non-athletic ones in skills related to comprehension. Albert and Petitpas (2004), in a program of life skills development in high school athlete students, concluded that the exercise and post-school activities lead to grow creativity and self-efficiency in adolescents and improve their communicative abilities. Stansbury (2004) found that participation in sport has positive effect on development of leading skills and interpersonal relationships in athlete students. Aris (2004) demonstrated that athlete students have better extraversion, socialism and self-analysis resulting in well-being of themselves and the society than non-athlete students.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Participants

The statistical population was comprised of female athlete students who participated in national championship competitions. Sampling was done randomly stratified and 216 students ($n=216$) were selected from 11 sport fields: chess ($n=16$), track and field ($n=24$), skating ($n=11$), swim ($n=29$), shooting ($n=21$), table-tennis ($n=14$), badminton ($n=9$), futsal ($n=20$), volleyball ($n=20$), basketball ($n=28$), handball ($n=24$).

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. Personal Informational Questionnaire was composed of 4 parts; sport fields, team/individual sports, sport background, and level of function (championship).

2.2.2. Social Skills Questionnaire: Social skills of athletes were assessed via Social Skills Questionnaire (Keramati, 2007). This questionnaire contains 40 items measuring 7 different skills: respecting the others (6 items), doing duty (4 items), rule obeying (4 items), group activities (5 items), insurability (10 items), making friends (5 items) and accountability (6 items). Participants rate each item on a 5-point likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree). Questionnaire had acceptable level of internal reliability (α coefficient=0.89).

2.3. Procedures

The method of this study was descriptive-survey. The questionnaires were distributed in the first day of tournament in dormitory environment. It was done by coaches' coordination and collected after being completed by the athletes.

2.4. Statistical analysis

In this research, descriptive statistics was used in order to calculate mean, standard deviation. Inferential statistics was used to calculate correlation, independent t-test and ANOVA. Also all the statistical operations were done by SPSS software.

3. Results

Table 1 shows that social skills were significantly different based on the sport fields ($F_{(10, 205)}=4.29$, $p<0.001$). Track and field athletes enjoyed the most social skills and the least social skills belonged to swimming athletes.

Regarding the information of table 2, there was significant difference about social skills between team and individual sport athletes ($p<0.05$). Mean score of team sport was 8.68 and that of individual sport was 7.69. This means that team sport affected social skills more than individual sport.

Based on results of table 3, it is observed that the correlation between the sport background and social skills was not significant ($p<0.05$).

As shown in table 4, the results indicate that social skills were not significantly different in several level of function ($p<0.05$).

4. Discussion

Social skills were different based on kinds of sport fields, however previous research proved that social and educational processes inherent in physical education of school sport, and not the activity type per se, are the vital elements in effecting behavioral changes (Sandford *et al.*, 2006). Cartledge and Milburn (1986) understood that participants of team sports are more socialized than individual sports (translated by Nazari Nejad, 1996), which confirmed the results of this study presenting significant difference between individual and team sport athletes so that team sport athletes enjoyed more social skills. Because of probable homogeneity between the sample and statistical population about sport background, its association with social skills was not significant. Moreover, level of function showed no significant effect on social skills.

As Danish *et al.* (2005) have found, school sport has no magical effect on adolescents' life skills. Rather, structuring and delivering sport programs influence adulthood experiences. Chelladurai (2007) demonstrated in a review work that an extensive body of research in sport psychology has focused on coaching behaviors and styles but significantly less work has focused on the specific nature of coach-athlete relationships in youth sport settings (e.g., Jowett *et al.*, 2007). Holt *et al.* (2008) have suggested, youth thought that only skill of teamwork/leadership experiences transferred to other domains of their life through their involvement in high

school sport. Sport leads to an increase in self-esteem, confidence, poise and self-assurance (Coakley, 2007). Kaufman and Wolff (2010) Demonstrated that sport fosters four dimensions that can be linked to efforts for progressive social change. These dimensions include social consciousness, meritocracy, responsible citizenship and interdependence.

Therefore Participation in physical education activities provides students with one of the truly natural channels for social adjustment and behaviour. Through the years, sports and other play activities have been used as outlets for social drives. The physical education program, when organized carefully and taught properly, can make an outstanding contribution to the socialization process in the school curriculum (Norlena Salamuddin, Mohd Taib Harun 2010).

Finally it can be said that further research with large population in several age ranks is required to examine the results in detailed.

5. References

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Table 1: Comparing social skills based on sport fields

| | Sum of squares | df | mean square | F value | P-value |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|---------|
| Between groups | 74.38 | 10 | 7.43 | 4.29 | 0.000 |
| Within groups | 355.23 | 205 | 1.73 | | |
| Total | 429.61 | 215 | | | |

Table 2: Comparing social skills based on team and individual sports

| | N | Mean | SD | t value | df | P-value |
|------------|-----|------|-------|---------|-----|---------|
| Individual | 123 | 7.69 | 1.554 | 0.16 | 212 | 0.04 |
| Team | 91 | 8.68 | 1.213 | | | |

Table 3: Correlation between sport background and the social skills

| | correlations | Sport background |
|---------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Social skills | Pearson correlation | 0.03 |
| | Sig. | p = 0.63 |
| | N | n = 214 |

Table 4: Comparing social skills based on the level of function

| | Sum of Squares | df | mean Square | F value | P-value |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|---------|
| Between groups | 7.67 | 5 | 1.534 | 0.760 | 0.58 |
| Within groups | 419.82 | 208 | 2.018 | | |
| Total | 427.49 | 213 | | | |