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Exploring The Role Of University-Based Sport In The Development And Transfer Of Important Life Skill Of Interpersonal Communication; Self-Perceived Sports Experiences Of Student-Athletes

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose: Present study was subjected to explore the role of sports in the development of important life skills of interpersonal communication and their transfer to other domains of life among university's student-athletes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Materials: A sample of $n=355$ (male=265; 79.1%), female=70 ;20.9%) completed questionnaires. The researchers collected the required information with the help of self-administered structured questionnaire encompassing the selected variables of the study. The responses were tabulated and analyzed with the help of computer software.

Results: The analyzed data indicated that sport's participation is statistically significant in predicting a change in interpersonal communication skills at $p < .005$, which means that sport has played an important role in developing an important life skill of interpersonal communication skills among university students. The analyzed inferences indicated a weak correlation between sport and transferring the life skills developed through sports to other domains of life among university students, $r(335) = .341$, while $P < .005$, that is statistically significant.

Conclusions: The results of the study indicated that sport did significantly develop an important life skill of interpersonal communication among university students, however; this study interpreted that sports have produced a weak influence on transferring interpersonal communication skills to other important domains of life.

INTRODUCTION:

Since ancient times, the significance of sport has been recognized as a vehicle for personal development. Development of life skills through sport is one of the primary goals of contemporary youth sport organization. Not only the sports society has the interest to develop young citizens through sports but also the general psychology has been the duty to with for the development of youth through sports. For example, the emphasis is put on positive psychology-building strengths versus correction of people's deficits (Larson, 2000; Seligman, 2002).

Keeping into consideration the above statements, it is not astonishing that sports psychologists and physical educationists are intended to use sports as an important tool to develop life skills among children and youth. Despite these, a variety of large scale interventions programs have been introduced and used for youth development. For instance, the First Tee life skills through golf, Teaching Responsibility through Physical Education and Sport, Play It Smart, and Sports United to Promote Education and Recreation programs have been developed (Weiss, Stuntz, Bhalla, Bolter, & Price, 2013; Hellion & Walsh, 2002; Petitpas et al., 2002; Danish, 2000). Over the past few years, all the above-stated programs have been created to use sport as a framework to foster beneficial growth among their youthful respondents.

Researchers in youth development have significant interest in developing life skills through sport. Also, they have a paramount interest in exploring the factors influencing the development links concerning life skills through sports participation. Different studies have been conducted in a multiple areas of life skills outcomes through participation in sports activities such as the development of self-esteem (Slutsky & Simpkins, 2009), talent development (Burgess & Naughton, 2010), development of leadership qualities (Extejt & Smith, 2009), character development (Camiré & Trudel, 2010), and academic achievements (Trudeau & Shephard, 2010). Although most of the research concentrated on two significant issues; a) whether the above-stated life skills are developed through sports or not, b) whether these life skills transfer to children and youth in other domains of life. These questions are still inconsistent. On the one side, the findings indicate that youth life skills are not developed through involvement in sports. On the other side,

results indicate that the sport program can learn significant life skills if organized under the correct situation, kids and youth.

Research studies in Western cultures indicated that sports participation helps in developing particular life skills among its participants (Hodge, Danish, & Martin, 2013; Park, Lavalley, & Tod, 2013; Hayden et al., 2015). For example, one research stated that involvement in sports helps to build character (Doty, 2006). Another research found that sport builds athletes' social lives and athletic identity (Chen, Snyder, & Magner, 2010). Several studies indicated the relationship of sports participation and deploying corporate social responsibility (Smith & Westerbeek., 2007), social skills (Vidoni & Ward, 2009), prosocial values among adolescents (Brunelle, Danish, & Forneris, 2007), and self-esteem (Pedersen & Seidman, 2004).

Researcher in the area of youth development through sports primarily focuses on school-based sports participation. Research conducted in respect of sports participation on a school-based team explicitly indicated that participation in sports help students in different areas. No matter, it is the development of emotional intelligence competencies (Harrison & Narayan, 2003), development of self-esteem (Gerber & Pühse, 2008; Kort-Butler & Hagemen, 2011), body image (Eim et al., 2013), reduced depression and anxiety (Gerber & Pühse, 2008), and emotional distress (Poitras et al., 2016). Particularly, the high-school based sports program is highly linked with students' intrinsic motivation and concentration (Petitpas et al., 2004). The research found that adolescents reported greater psychosocial abilities including prosocial behaviour, self-efficacy, personal and social obligations (Carreres-Ponsoda et al., 2012).

Transfer of Life Skills through Sport: Sport, though, is regarded as a significant instrument for life skills growth. Earning only suitable life skills through sports and later transferring these life abilities to other realms of life is compulsory. Upon this statement, research described that coaches are the key factors helps in transferring the life skills developed through sports to the classroom and other important domains of life among student-athletes (Camire et al., 2009). Another study describing the importance of coaches concerning the realization of life skills development among student-athletes and also ascertain the most relevant and appropriate skills that help in the lives of athletes (Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007). Additionally, coaches are responsible to understand the coaching climate where they were learning life skills through sports. Therefore, those coaches who are working at vocational institutions might focus on transferring life skills to other domains of life whereas, private trainers may be more likely to concentrate on transferring life skills to a classroom environment. Besides, one study identified some tactics applied by exceptional coaches in perspective of encouraging life skills developed through sport into other important domains of life (Camiré et al., 2012; Trottier & Robitaille, 2014). Their findings revealed that all athletes are not the same concerning their physiological as well as psychological approaches. Some athletes are unable to know how learned life skills are transmitted to the real-life scenario in the sport setting; for that reason, coaches understand the need for exercising the teaching moments concerning the application of life skills in a real-world situation. Besides, some trainers gave volunteer job, in which their athletes could give back to the society, to better comprehend the use of life skills created through sport. It is essential that the coach use intentional approach to develop life skills through sports and later on the life abilities to other significant areas of life on this concept.

The researchers identify numerous divergent topics with regard to how the transfer is theorized, particularly when investigating the transfer of learning from sport programs. In this regard, various studies focus on a tapered concept of narrow as they relate transfer to the behavioural change or youth outcomes. For instance, several researchers analyzed the transfer of

life skills in respect of academic outcomes like absenteeism or students behaviour in the classroom (Wright, Ding, & Pickering, 2010; Walsh, Ozaeta, & Wright, 2010; Walsh, Ozaeta, & Wright, 2007), but they did not validate directly what and how these life abilities are applicable to such results as accountability and self-control. Moreover, in the above-mentioned studies, the investigators did not interview the study-participants Whether they viewed these abilities as appropriate to their life or their academic stressors were affected. Hence, another study conducted by Allen, Rhind, and Koshy (2015) looked at the perception of the learners of what life skills they learned through sport and then used in the classroom setting. Their results indicated that learners recognized the role that sports play in enhancing their classroom performance. Also, they reported that school-sport gave them a better attitude about school in general. However, the investigators did not examine the specific skills they learned in sports and what sports program help them in developing life skills and improving academic performance. Furthermore, the study revealed a contradictory finding that students were unable to understand the relevance and application of life skills learned through sports within their classroom setting. On the other side, the study's results disclosed that youth exhibited more personally and socially responsible due to responsibility-based curriculum. They did not see, however, the ability to transfer these behaviors outside the classroom structure (Gordon, 2010). These studies proposed that regardless of the benefits obtained or not due to program involvement, youth were unable to have a clear link between life skill and their utility outside the sports context. It is now suggested that researchers address students ' perceptions of the transfer experience first, before generating the hypothetical concept that youth can attribute behavioral modifications or program outcomes.

Various researchers opined that students have narrow understanding of the life skills imparted in sports program, and this edges their ability to utilize these life skills in other milieus. In this regard, one study revealed that limited understanding and unawareness on part of youth concerning life skills are some of the barriers to transfer of life skills (Danish, 2002). Another study indicated that students do not realize the utility of life skills in other situations of life (Petitpas et al., 2005). In one study, researchers were unable to determine how, where and why, despite the reality that the program explicitly did not teach either skill, participants expressed learning about initiative and teamwork. (Holt et al., 2008). While it is encouraging that these positive outcomes have been prominent in these young people's minds, it does not strengthen the argument that intentional programs teaching particular life skills help young people transfer their learning to other settings.

Though the present research has focused on important life skill of Interpersonal communication identified from amongst the life skills.

Interpersonal Communication Skill:

Communication is an integral part of our daily lives and considered as one of the critical element in sports setting. Therefore, physical education and other youth developmental researcher motivate people especially, sedentary individual to take part in sports and physical activities. The success of a coach in planning strategy and also in the tactical aspects of game largely depends upon the his/her ability of communication. No matter this communication with athletes but also with assistant coaches, trainers, officials, and physical education teachers (Robert, Weinberg, & Gould, 2015).

Communication is categorized in two ways: interpersonal and intrapersonal. When we generally talk about communication, it means interpersonal communication, which involves at

least two persons in a meaningful exchange. On the other hand, intrapersonal communication also called ‘self-talk’ is the communication we have with ourselves.

Good communication skills are the amongst the most important components that enhance the performance and personal growth of individual those who participate in sports and other physical exercises. Upon this argument, Jowett and Wylleman (2006) states that good interpersonal communication has central role in psychology of sports and exercise. Some study described that Olympic swimmers mainly focuses on the coaches’ social competences relative to communication. Another study has shown that likes to prefer variety of information and emotion from their coaches’ pregame talk (Vargas-Tonsing & Guan, 2007). Strong communication is one of the important benchmarks for becoming successful sports and exercise professional (Robert et al., 2015).

HYPOTHESES:

Ha 1 Predictor (Sports participation) has developed the important life skill of interpersonal among university students and Ha 2 Predictor (Sports participation) has produced positive role in the determination of Criterion variable (Transfer of Interpersonal communication skills) among University student-athletes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Participants:

All those male and female students who participated in competitive sports events including Inter-Collegiate, Inter-Varsity, and all Pakistan Inter-Varsity in public and private sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa constituted as the accessible population of the study. The researcher then obtained a total number of those students who participated in sports events of Inter-Collegiate, Inter-Varsity, and all Pakistan Inter-Varsity from the respective Directorate of Sports of every university. According to the Entry Form of students 778 students from the sampled universities participated in the Inter-Collegiate, Inter-Varsity, and all Pakistan Inter-Varsity sports competitions. Amongst them, the researcher selected a representative sample (n=389 fifty 50% of the total population) with the help of a stratified random sampling technique.

Research Design:

A cross-sectional research design with survey research technique was used to support the study. The cross-sectional research design helps in measuring the differences between groups of diverse people, subject, or any phenomenon rather than a process of change (Gorard & Stephen, 2013). As the study was specifically focused to investigate the association of sport in the development and transfer of life skills among university students of KP, therefore; a cross-sectional research design was appropriate to achieve the set objectives of the study. For obtaining desirable information, the researcher used the survey technique, in which the data were collected at a specified time of the year from different students of both private and public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Data Collection Tool:

The present study aimed at investigating the development and transfer of interpersonal communication skills through sports among university student-athletes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As the study was guided by a quantitative research method, therefore, a structured questionnaire was developed and used for collecting the requisite data.

Data Collection Procedure:

Prior to data collection, the researchers accorded formal approval from Students Supervisory Committee (SSC), Department of Sports Sciences and Physical Education, Gomal University to conduct a survey in the university. The researcher distributed the questionnaires among students and at the same time they were properly guided to fill/complete the questionnaire. All the items were thoroughly explained and translated in Urdu Language to avoid any bias while answering the items of the questionnaire. The process of data collection was completed in the shortest possible time from different universities students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The researcher distributed 389 questionnaires among the universities students, out of these 342 questionnaires were received back. The researcher excluded 7 spoiled questionnaires, and finally, 335 questionnaires duly filled were used for data analysis.

Statistical Analysis:

The responses collected through questionnaires were carefully arranged, tabulated and analyzed with the help of appropriate statistical techniques. Pearson Correlation, linear regression, ANOVA were applied to test the hypotheses of the study.

RESULTS:

Descriptive Analysis:

Development of interpersonal skills among university students those who did take part in sport was assessed through six different questions and the percentage along with Chi-Square scores have been presented in table 1.

Table 1: Showing responses of students regarding the role that sport has planned in the development of interpersonal communication skills

Development of Interpersonal Communication Skills through Sports						
Statement	SA	SWA	NU	SWDA	SDA	Chi Square
Participation in sports helped me to develop leadership skills	61.8	18.5	6.3	9.0	4.5	572.597
I valued sports participation to develop sacrifice for the greater good	24.2	36.4	31.3	6.9	1.2	196.388
Sports played an important role in developing the skill of recognizing other's needs	28.7	34.3	26.6	8.7	1.8	256.314
Involvement in sports helped me in developing to communicate with varsity of people	48.4	29.3	13.1	7.8	1.5	225.104
I developed the quality of teamwork through participation in sports	55.8	28.7	4.8	8.4	2.4	485.313
Coach provided me opportunities for the development of interpersonal communication skills	12.2	18.5	12.2	24.2	32.8	55.433

SA= Strongly Agree, SWA= Somewhat Agree, NU= Neutral, SWDA, Somewhat Disagree and SDA=Strongly disagree

It is evident from the above (table 1) that above fifty percent 61.8 of students strongly agreed, (18.5%) somewhat agreed, (6.3%) remained silent and (9.0%), (4.5%) respectively somewhat agreed and strongly agreed with the role of sport in perspective of the development leadership skills. In response to item no.2, (24.2%) and (36.4%) strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that they valued sports participation to develop sacrifice for the greater good. A total of (28.7%) strongly agreed and (34.4%) somewhat agreed that they developed the skill of recognizing other's needs through sport, whereas (26.6%) could not decide, (8.7%) somewhat disagreed and (1.8%) strongly disagreed with it.

As presented in the above table, majority portion of the students (48.4%) strongly agreed and (29.3%) somewhat agreed about the role of sport in developing the skill of communication with the varsity of people. Near sixty percent (55.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed and (28.7%) somewhat agreed regarding the role that sport has played in developing the quality of teamwork among university students. Majority of university students including (24.2%) strongly disagreed and (24.2%) somewhat disagreed with the statement that “Coach provided me opportunities for the development of interpersonal communication skills”.

Testing of Hypotheses:

Ha 1 Participation in sport has developed the important life skill of interpersonal communication among university students.

The first table of the regression analysis refers to the correlation analysis between the sport's participation and the development of interpersonal communication skills. Therefore, table 4.16 indicates, there is a strong positive relationship between sport and interpersonal communication skills, $r(335) = .703$, $P < .005$, that is statistically significant.

Table 2: Correlational analysis of sport's participation and interpersonal communication skills

		Correlations	
		Interpersonal Communication Skills	Sports Participation
Pearson Correlation	Interpersonal Communication Skills	1.000	.703
	Sports Participation	.703	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Interpersonal Communication Skills	.	.000
	Sports Participation	.000	.
N	Interpersonal Communication Skills	335	335
	Sports Participation	335	335

According to table 3, the R is .703. The value of R² indicates that 70% of the variation in interpersonal communication skills can be explained by the sport's participants. The 'Adjusted R Square', that defines the value of R² in the population. The 'Standard Error' that is the number of the accuracy of estimation. This value describes that for each value of the Predictor variable (Sports Participation), the estimate of the variation of Criterion variable (Interpersonal Communication Skills) is 1.54.

Table 3: Model summary of sport’s participation interpersonal communication skills
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.703 ^a	.494	.482	1.54551

a. Dependent Variable: Interpersonal Communication Skills

b. Predictors: (Constant), Sports Participation

Table 4 determines whether the estimation is statistically significant? According to the below table no.4.18 of ANOVA, the F-value is 64.62 that is statistically significant at $p < .005$. As a result, it can be interpreted that the estimation is highly unlikely due to chance or sampling error. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis that participation in sport has developed the important life skill of interpersonal communication among university students is accepted.

Table 4: ANOVA table for linear regression of sport’s participation and interpersonal communication skills

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	391.231	1	19.231	64.623	.000 ^b
	Residual	99.096	333	.298		
	Total	490.327	334			

a. Dependent Variable: Interpersonal Communication Skills

b. Predictors: (Constant), Sports Participation

The coefficients table is presented to find out the exact relationship between sport and the development of interpersonal skills. The value of (Constant) is listed in the first column that is 59.64 having a standard error of 1.342. The ‘b’ is .47 with a standard error of .031. It means that for each additional unit of sport’s participation, development of interpersonal communication skills is predicted to increase by .47. The table also describes the ‘standardized coefficients of Beta’ (b), which indicated that when Predictor (Sport’s Participation) changes by one standard deviation, how many standard deviations will change the Criterion (Interpersonal Communication Skills), which is the value of the standardized coefficient of b (b). The *t*-value (8.04) and *p*-value ($p < .005$) indicated that the predictor variable of sport’s participation is statistically significant.

Table 5: linear regression equation for sport’s participation and interpersonal communication skills

Model	Coefficients		T	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Beta		
		Std. Error		

1	(Constant)	59.642	1.342	.703	24.305	.000
	Sports Participants	.476	.031		8.039	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Interpersonal Communication Skills

Based on the above inferences, it can be interpreted that sport’s participation is statistically significant in predicting a change in interpersonal communication skills at $p < .005$, which means that sport has played an important role in developing an important life skill of interpersonal communication skills among university students.

Ha 2 Predictor (Sports participation) has produced positive role in the determination of Criterion variable (Transfer of Interpersonal communication skills) among University student-athletes.

The researcher applied linear regression to determine the role of sport in transferring the life skills developed through sports among university students and the results have been presented in different outputs. Table 6 refers to the correlation analysis between sport’s participation and the transfer of life skills developed through sports to other domains of life. The analyzed inferences indicated there is a weak correlation between sport and transferring the life skills developed through sports to other domains of life among university students, $r(335) = .341$, while $P < .005$, that is statistically significant.

Table 6: Correlational analysis of sport’s participation and transfer of life skills to family endeavours

Correlations			
		Transfer of IPCS	Sports Participation
Pearson Correlation	Transfer of IPCS	1.000	.341
	Sports Participation	.341	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Transfer of IPCS	.	.000
	Sports Participation	.000	.
N	Transfer of IPCS	335	335
	Sports Participation	335	335

a. Predictors: (Constant), Sports Participation

b. Dependent Variable: Transfer of Interpersonal Communication Skills

Table 7 of the regressional model is showing the influence of predictor (Sport’s Participation) upon criterion (Transfer of Life Skills). The R Square (.116) describes the variation between the Predictor variable and Criterion variable, which is actually the Square of multiple R (.341a). The value of R² indicates that 34% of the variation in the transfer of life skills can be explained by sport’s participation. In the next column, the upper value “1” in the (df) denotes the number of criterion variables, whereas the lower values (333) denotes the total number of responses for all the variables in the equation “N-K-1” = (number of respondents-number of criterion variables) i.e., $\{(335-1-1) = (333)\}$. The F-Value in the next column (43.704) is found significant at .000a level of significance.

Table 7: Linear regressional model showing influence of predictor upon dependent variable

Dependent Variable	Predictor	R	R ²	Df	F-Value	P-Value	Beta Score	Significance
Transfer of IPCS	Sport's Partic	.341 _a	.116	(1,333)	43.704	.000b	.341	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Sports Participation

b. Dependent Variable: Transfer of Interpersonal Communication Skills

The statistical analysis interprets that participation in sport has produced (34%) influence in transferring the life skills developed through sports to other domains of life.

DISCUSSION:

The hypothesis that sports have played an important role in the development of important life skills of interpersonal communication among the university's student-athletes, the results of the study indicated that sport did significantly develop an important life skill of interpersonal communication among university students. When analyzing the responses of athletes pertaining to the development of various interpersonal communication skills through participation in sports, all show that athletes acknowledged the role of sports in the development of these attributes. Same findings have been substantiated by various researchers i.e, (Gano-Overway et al., 2009) whose findings indicated that sports are considered a key factor in promoting and developing various communications skills among sports-participants. Interpersonal communication is a face-to-face communication both individually and in groups in which the people exchange their feelings, information, and meaning either by verbal or non-verbal messages (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, 2016). The results might be interpreted with caution because the study was carried out by including students those who were studying at the university level. In a future study, the researcher is ambitious that including other levels of students such as schools and colleges would help in the credibility of future research in this area.

The statistical inferences of this study interpreted sports has produced a weak influence on transferring interpersonal communication skills to other important domains of life. Descriptive findings of this study revealed that the majority of participants used interpersonal skills to other domains of life on their own accord. These findings determine that interpersonal skills developed through sports can be transferred to other domains of life if the transfer is taught by sports coaches and trainers in a systematic manner. Research conducted by Danish, Petitpas and Hale (1993) indicated that one of the main impediments to transfer life skills is that sport-participants do not know about the skills they have learned. It is important for coaches and trainers to teach athletes important life skills development through sports, and also to use them in important domains of life. Research indicated that even though sports participation provides an opportunity to acquire life skills, however; the program of intentional teaching life skills produces a better effect (Theokas et al., 2008). This finding supports and facilitates the importance of intentional teaching life skills within sport. Another study recommends that coaches might implement intentional teaching life skills program to get maximum benefits of sports participation, especially in respect of development and transfer of life skills (Camir'e, Forneris, Trudel, & Bernard's, 2011).

CONCLUSION:

The main purpose of this research paper was to explore the role of sports in the development and then transfer of interpersonal communication skills among university's student-athletes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The results of the study indicated that sport did significantly develop an important life skill of interpersonal communication among university students, however; The statistical inferences of this study interpreted that sports have produced a weak influence on transferring interpersonal communication skills to other important domains of life. The participants in this study strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that they had never been taught to learn interpersonal skills neither they had advised to transfer life skills developed through sports to other important domains of life. It is a limitation that the present study did not explore why coaches are not playing their due role in teaching life skills development through sports? Future study, especially the role of a coach in the development and transfer of life skills through sports should investigate this important phenomenon.

LIMITATION:

The present study was carried out among the university level students, the researcher is ambitious to inclusion of larger and diverse population would help in adding to the credibility of future research in this area. Likewise, this practice would produce better results that would substantiate the relation of the sport with the development and transfer of life skills among students.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

No conflict of interest has been found in the study.

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