Engagement In Sports And Academic Pressures On College Students; Mediating Role Of Social Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

Objective of the study: The study was conducted with the purpose of engagement in sports and academic pressures on college students; mediating role of social intelligence.

Methodology: For this purpose, a quantitative research method with a cross-sectional survey approach was used to investigate the academic stress of college students about their sports participation; mediating the role of social intelligence. The sample of this study was n = 663 (30% of the total population n = 2210) applying a stratified random sampling strategy was selected from the Government Degree Colleges of Peshawar. However, after the elimination of some invalid and spoilt questionnaires; the researcher used 615 correctly filled questionnaires for data analysis. A standardized tool Students Academic Stress Inventory developed by Lin and Chin (2009) and the Social Intelligence Questionnaire developed by Chadha and Ganshen (2015) used for assessing Students' Academic Stress and Social Intelligence of College Students, Peshawar Division and participants self-reported their previous youth sports participation.

Results and Conclusion: Participation in sports is paramount in developing social intelligence competency among its participants. The analyzed data depicted that social intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between academic stress and sports participation of college students.

Recommendations: Keeping into consideration, the findings of the study; the researcher recommended that all the colleges focus on the promotion of mental health

awareness among students. This can be done by arranging counseling programs in the colleges. There is a dire need to give extra attention and care to athletes if no counseling centers could help promote mental health awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Academic stress refers to students' attitudes and behavior toward the pressure of accomplishing academic demands and achievements (Karaman et al., 2019). Students' perceived expectations of academic performance cause academic stress (Deb et al., 2014). Usually, students feel academic pressure to meet the expectations of their parents (Bedewy and Gabriel, 2015; Deb et al., 2015), academicians (Bedewy and Gabriel, 2015; Jayanthi et al., 2015), and others. So, it is crucial to identify whether the demographic factors of the students (e.g., gender) and their parents' educational qualifications contribute to academic stress. Deb et al. (2015) concluded that the parent's educational level and occupation impact their expectations of their children's academic performance, which causes stress. Although Ang and Huan (2006) denied any relationship between gender and academic stress, Jayanthi et al. (2015) reported higher anxiety and academic stress among female students compared to male students and Baber et al. (2011) reported the opposite, i.e., higher academic stress among male students compared to their counterparts. Besides, the tire of education contributes to academic stress, where students studying in the final year of undergraduate level encounter a higher level of stress (Baber et al., 2011). Extant literature (Ullah et al., 2023) also explained that students' perceived course load and difficulty, test anxiety, final grades, excessive homework, and financial hardship of family cause stress among the students. Ullah et al. (2023) explained that severe academic stress and delayed identification hamper students' ability to study efficiently with proper time management and consequently downgrade students' academic performance.

The role of sports participation in the academic achievement and social intelligence of students has been a topic of debate for decades. Critics observe that sports activities deflect time

away from the classroom, sports divert talent from academic programs and the students who put their energies into sports are less likely to pursue academic objectives ((Daley & Ryan, 2000). They do not have the time or energy to achieve excellence and satisfaction in both roles. Supporters of sports programs argue that sports participation improves students' achievement, and motivation, improves students' grades, keeps them in college, raises their educational aspirations, and increases students' overall interest and commitment as well as their engagement in more student-teacher contact, more positive attitudes (Tripathi, 2013). College sports participation is important in maintaining the link between the institution and the community (Lawrence et al., 2009). College sports programs represent an important means of students' recreation and social integration through which they can release their stress and fatigue (Reed & Giacobbi, 2004). Furthermore, college sports as well as athletic programs are considered imperative sources of students' involvement and continued interest in the perspective of their participation in sports (Cosh & Tully, 2015). Thus, the merging between education and sports represents an interesting topic for debate. Therefore, the study was conducted to investigate the engagement in sports and academic pressures on college students and; the mediating role of social intelligence.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the relationship between academic stress and social intelligence among college students.
2. To determine the relationship between academic stress and sports participation among college students.
3. To determine the relationship between social intelligence and sports participation among college students.
4. To determine that social intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between academic stress and sports participation of college students.

Hypotheses of the Study
1. Academic stress has a significant negative relationship with the social intelligence of college students.
2. Academic stress has a significant negative relationship with the sports participation of college students.

3. Social intelligence has a significant negative relationship with sports participation of college students.
4. Social intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between academic stress and sports participation of college students.

Delimitations of the Study

In research, the investigator cannot cover all the aspects of the study due to certain circumstances. Therefore, the researcher usually delimitates his/her study. Following this, the present study was delimited to four districts Charsadda District, Nowshera District, Peshawar District, and Khyber District. Likewise, to make the study manageable the researcher has focused on three aspects academic stress, sports participation, and intelligence of the students who participate in sports activities at Degree Colleges of the above-mentioned districts.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research Design

Research design describes an overall plan followed to obtain the purpose being investigated (Asenahabi, 2019). Research design enables the investigator to select an appropriate sample, develop and use a valid tool, manipulate study variables, and data collection procedures as well as statistical tests being used (Greenhoot & Dowsett, 2012).). In the researcher's opinion, descriptive research was the best way to investigate the study at hand.

Justification for the Selection of Descriptive Research Design

As the study deals with the assessment of the hypothesis and analysis of the relationship between variables, hence; the researcher adopted a descriptive research design. Likewise, the researcher collected data from all the sports participants of Government Degree Colleges of Peshawar Division, therefore, the survey method was used for the collection of the required information.

Population

The larger group of people to which the researcher intends to generalize the obtained findings is called the population whereas, a sample is a group of people such as teachers,

parents students, and players from which data is obtained (Borman, 2012). All the students studying in Government Degree Colleges of Peshawar Division constituted the population for the study.

Sample and Sampling

The researcher used stratified random sampling to select representatives from the whole population. In this regard, the researcher selected a sample of n = 1105 (50% of the total population n = 2210) from each college considering the proportion of the students in the respective colleges.

Data Collection Tool

The success of any research largely depends upon the tool used for the collection of needed data. The problem of the present study revolves around the following three variables; a) Students' Academic Stress, b) Social Intelligence, and c) Sports Participation. Therefore, the researcher used the following standardized tools for gathering information to investigate the Academic Stress of College Students regarding their Sports Participation and the mediating Role of Social Intelligence. A standardized tool Students Academic Stress Inventory developed by Lin and Chin (2009) and the Social Intelligence Questionnaire developed by Chadha and Ganshen (2015) used for assessing Students' Academic Stress and Social Intelligence of College Students, Peshawar Division and participants self-reported their previous youth sports participation.

Procedure of Data Collection

Ethical consideration is one of the important steps of research. Therefore, due consideration should be given to the important principles of the ethical consideration of this research report. A formal approval from the Students Supervisory Committee, Department of Sports Sciences and Physical Education, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan was obtained to conduct the surveys in the respective colleges of Peshawar Division. Before the collection of data, the researcher obtained full consent from the study participants. The dignity, privacy, and adequate level of confidentiality of the responses of the study participants have been ensured.

After these processes, the researcher then arranged meetings with the concerned teachers of the respective colleges to finalize the date and time for the surveys. The researcher then collected the required data through personal visits and recollected the data accordingly. Finally, the valid responses of (615) respondents were then used for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the most important part of any research thesis. The data analysis portion focuses on summarizing the collected data. This part of the research thesis consists of the interpretation of the collected responses gathered through the use of logical reasoning. The researcher used appropriate statistical tests for accurate and appropriate analysis of research findings. To interpret the inferential statistics (hypothesis testing) Pearson Correlation was applied to analyze the research hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

$H_0 1$:   Academic stress has a significant negative relationship with the social intelligence of university students

Table 1: The relationship between Academic Stress Inventory and Social Intelligence of the student-athletes

		Academic Stress Inventory	Social Intelligence
Academic Stress Inventory	Pearson Correlation	1	.818[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	615	615
Social Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	.818[**]	1.00[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	615	615

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The above table illustrates that academic stress has a significant positive relationship with the social intelligence of college students. The data also show that the relationship between academic stress and social intelligence of university students is strongly positive, therefore, (r = .818) and the significant value is (P =.000 < .05), which means that the p-value is less than the sig level and the value of R is also positive. So, there is a significant positive relationship

between academic stress and the social intelligence of college students. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

H₀2   Academic stress has a significant negative relationship with the sports participation of university students.

Table 2: The relationship between Academic Stress Inventory and sports participation of the students' athletes

		Academic Stress Inventory	Sports Participation
Academic Stress Inventory	Pearson Correlation	1	.083**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.232
	N	615	615
Sports Participation	Pearson Correlation	.083**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.232	
	N	615	615

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table no 2 explained that academic stress has a negative significant relationship with sports participation of college students. The data also show that there is no relationship between academic stress and sports participation of university students, therefore, (r = .083) and the significant value is (P =.232 > .05), which means that the p-value is greater than the sig level and the value of R shows a very little bite relationship means show nothing. So, there is a negative relationship between academic stress and the social intelligence of college students. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted.

H₀3:   Social intelligence has a significant negative relationship with sports participation of university students.

Table 3: The relationship between Social intelligence and sports participation of the students' athletes

		Sports Participation	Social Intelligence
Sports Participation	Pearson Correlation	1	.876**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006
	N	615	615
Social Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	.876**	1

Sig. (2-tailed)		.006	
N		615	615

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above data show that sports participation has a positive significant relationship with the social intelligence of college students. The data also show that the relationship between sports participation and social intelligence of college students is strongly positive, therefore, (r = .876) and the significant value is (P =.006 < .05), which means that the p-value is less than the sig level and the value of R is also positive. Subsequently, it can be said that there is a positive significant relationship between sports participation and the social intelligence of college students. Based on these statistics, the alternative hypothesis is hereby accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

$H_0$4: Social intelligence has significantly mediates the relationship between academic stress and sports participation of college students

Table 4: Social intelligence has significantly mediated the relationship between academic stress and sports participation of College students

		Sports Participation	Social Intelligence	Academics Stress
Sports Participation	Pearson Correlation	1	.876**	.083**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.232
	N	615	615	615
Social Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	.876**	1	.818**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	615	615	615
Academics Stress	Pearson Correlation	.083**	.818**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.232	.000	
	N	615	615	615

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above Table presented the mediating role of social intelligence competency in perspective of the relationship between academic stress and sports participation of College students. The P value for all three variables sports participation, social intelligence, and academic stress was

found   less   than   the   significant   level   (Sports
participation=.000, social intelligence=.000 and academic
stress=.232. Therefore, the set hypothesis is accepted with
two out of three.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant
positive relationship between academic stress and the social
intelligence competency of college students. Upon the
present finding, Weiten Dunn and Hammer (2014) indicated
that academic endeavors prepare students to be acquainted
with psychological adjustment. That is, the psychological
adjustment of the students significantly contributed to their
social intelligence competency (Aljazi & Alrekebat, 2019).
Studies have demonstrated that self-efficacy is positively
correlated with and influences academic achievement
(Hanham, Lee & Teo, 2021). It was especially stronger among
college students than elementary students (Pajares & Schunk,
2001).
On one side, the results of the study described that academic
stress has a negative relationship with sports participation of
college students. On the other side, the analyzed data pointed
out that there is a positive significant relationship between
sports participation and the social intelligence of college
students. This supports the literature's findings that
participation in sports is paramount in developing social
intelligence competency among its participants. Recent
research conducted by Wann and Weaver (2009) has found
consistent positive associations between sports Results of
another study indicated that boys and girls who participated
in sports had a higher social intelligence than their peers who
did not play team sports as college athletics may offer a sense
of identification, as opposed to non-athletes and this might
account for the stronger association between sports
participation and social intelligence in students. Another
study by Lumpkin & Favor (2013), collected data from the
Kansas State Department of Education, comparative analyses
were made between student-athletes and non-athletes, and
social intelligence was found higher in student-athletes than
than non-athletes.
The analyzed data depicted that social intelligence
significantly mediates the relationship between academic

stress and sports participation of college students. It is apparent that the primary focus of sports participation is social intelligence and the college cannot ignore or neglect the development of emotional domains and other personal factors contributing to the success of students (Pope, 2005). This perspective is based on the hypothesis that people who are capable of expressing and understanding emotions, assigning meaning to emotional experience, and regulating their feelings in sports will be better adjusted, psychologically and socially (Ciarrochi, Chan, Caputi, &Roberts, 2001).

CONCLUSION

It has been concluded that college students reported high levels of academic stress. The specific academic stressors Teachers Stress, Results Stress, Test Stress, and Time Management Stress were measured among the college students.

The analyzed data revealed that college athletes reported significant social intelligence competency. Consequently, the results indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between academic stress and the social intelligence competency of college students.

On one side, the results of the study described that academic stress has a negative relationship with sports participation of college students. On the other side, the analyzed data pointed out that there is a positive significant relationship between sports participation and the social intelligence of college students. It means that participation in sports is paramount in developing social intelligence competency among its participants. The analyzed data depicted that social intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between academic stress and sports participation of college students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As the study indicated social intelligence significantly mediates the relationship between academic stress and sports participation of college students. Therefore, special attention may be given to the development of social intelligence competency so that athletes can able to manage their emotions and prioritize their mental health.

2. Research in the future could use longitudinal or experimental designs to investigate the links between Emotional intelligence, sports or physical activities, and academic stress.

3. Furthermore, future research could investigate the potential mediators and moderators (e.g., coping strategies or personality traits) in the linkage between sports and physical activities and academic stress.

4. All the colleges may focus on the promotion of mental health awareness among students. This can be done by arranging counseling programs in the colleges.

5. There is a dire need to give extra attention and care to athletes if no counseling centers could help promote mental health awareness.

6. The researcher recommended that physical educationists, coaches, and trainers look at how athletes deal with stress.

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