

Understanding the Perceived Sport-experiences of Athletes and Officials on the Leadership Skills Development through Sport

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Abstract

The on-going research is being done to understand the existing sport-experiences of players and officials about the expansion of leadership abilities via sport. This descriptive-analytical study was conducted on n=472 (394 players; 78 officials) participated in the Inter-Regional u-23 Games, 2018 organized by the Directorate General of Sport, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. A valid and reliable questionnaire was used for the collection of required data. The software package SPSS-24 was used to evaluate the collected data sets. Sports engagement has been found to play an important role in the expansion of leadership skills ($p < .05$) and the interrelationship between participation in sport and augmentation of leadership skills (.471 ** at 0.01). The inferential analysis revealed no significant difference between male and female players and coaches on the role of sport in the development of leadership skills ($p > .05$). However, significant differences were measured concerning the role of sport in developing important skills of leadership based on the respondents' sport experiences ($p < .05$). These findings can be attributed to the promotion of the sport proponents who argue that participation in sport is considered as an important tool that helps in developing important leadership skills among youth.

Keywords: Understanding, Perceived, Sport-experience, Development, Leadership Skills

Introduction

Transferring leadership to younger generations is a significant factor in all facets of life, which is possibly one reason that many youth groups are cultivating leaders as a core goal. The association between personality traits and leadership has been thoroughly investigated by researchers in adults (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). Researchers have worked on developing the leadership skills of engineering students, medical students, agriculture students, and EMBA students (Cox, Cekic, & Adams, 2010; McElravy & Hastings, 2014; Varkey, Peloquin, Reed, Lindor, & Harris, 2009; Vohra, Rathi, & Bhatnagar, 2015). Some other investigators contrasted the principal leadership skills of metropolitan, suburban, and agricultural areas by the level of student accomplishment at the university (Erwin, Winn, & Erwin, 2011).

Leadership is "the process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2010, p.3). The influencing method usually includes promoting encouragement in others, where the leaders concentrate on getting people to work for a shared goal. (Vroom & Jago, 2007). Professors of management and organization argue that exemplary modern leaders build a sense of mission vision for the community, inspire others to join them in pursuing the task, establish social infrastructure for followers to work, generate optimism and confidence in followers, grow other leaders within the community and achieve results. The focus today is also on better understanding leadership as a dynamic social mechanism by exploring the relationship between leaders, followers, leaders and followers and dyads, and the context in which leadership takes place (Eberly, Johnson, Hernandez, & Avolio, 2013). Throughout sport and exercise, the leadership aspect

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also involves decision making, inspiring others, seeking input, building interpersonal relationships, and confidently leading the team group (Weinberg & Gould, 2018).

Leadership plays a prominent part in all aspects of life among individuals in general and among students. It is a matter of common observation that students go through many career developments steps in life, where they need leadership skills. In real-world scenarios, students face many career challenges, job problems, and contradictions between idealism and preferences. For this purpose, they need leadership skills to take on obstacles, solve problems, and estimate the professional direction. Therefore, a research study suggests that leaders should be assimilated into the curriculum of engineering (Cox, Cekic, & Adams, 2010). A leader decides where the group or team must go and offers direction and support to help get there. Good leadership coaches have a vision of what to aspire for, as well as the daily structure, inspiration, and encouragement to turn vision into action. Coaches, instructors, and exercise specialists are practitioners who strive to provide the best opportunities for everyone to achieve (Weinberg & Gould, 2018).

Several agencies are playing an increasingly influential role in the development of life skills and sporting activities are indeed an incredible platform for that as well. Sport typically provides an extensive and inclusive variety of sports suitable for persons of different ages and abilities, with a concentration on the potential benefits of sport. Sport for development projects was identified by the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace in 2003 as “*All types of psychological stimulation leading to physical health, mental wellbeing and connections with the community, such as play, exercise, professional or competitive sport, and primitive sports and games.*” Most proponents of Sport for Development and Peace have adopted this interpretation, and it is the proper definition of sport for the objectives of this project. Sports activities be a significant persuasive tool and sports experts argue that these activities build and grow important leadership skills. Highly recognized skills include decision making, inspiring participants, providing input, building interpersonal relationships, and confidently leading the team group (Araujo, Davids, Chow, Passos, & Raab, 2009; Cook & Fletcher, 2017; Shepherd, Lee, & Kerr, 2006). Keeping into consideration the importance of leadership, it is imperative to promote the sport. For this purpose, understanding and exploring the perceptual experience of players, coaches and officials are very much important. Consequently, the current research was carried out to investigate the function of sport in developing leadership skills in light of the experience of players and officials who participated in Inter-Regional u-23 Games, 2018 organized by the Directorate General of Sport, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Objectives

1. To determine the effect of the independent variable (Sport Participation) upon the dependent variable (Development of Leadership Skills).
2. To evaluate the relationship between the independent variable (Sport Participation) upon the dependent variable (Development of Leadership Skills)
3. To analyze the significance of demographic attributes (gender and sport experience) in changing the participants’ opinion on leadership skills development through sport.

Research Hypotheses

The following were the major research hypotheses of this study extracted from the conceptual framework (figure 1) developed through literature review.

Ha1 the independent variable (Sport Participation) has a significant effect on the dependent variable (Development of Leadership Skills).

Ha2 There is a significant correlation between sport participation and the development of leadership skills.

Ha 3 The demographic attributes (gender and sport experience) has a significant effect on changing the participants’ opinion on leadership skills development through sport (**H₃ –H₆**).

Literature Review

Existing Research

Research in youth leadership development through physical education and sport has increased in recent years. For example, one study examined the leadership behaviors among six erstwhile captains of the men ice hockey university squad (Dupuis, Bloom, & Loughhead, 2006). Another research focused on analyzing the In-depth qualitative interviews to examine the various behaviors that leading athletes performed from an early age, as well as the positions and factors that peers, coaches, and

parents played throughout these practices (Wright & Côté, 2003). Extejt and Smith (2009) analyzed the relationship between organized sports team participation and leadership skills.

Benefits of Sport Participation

The importance of sport in one's life is important, and it has many advantages for physical and mental health. Sports are given priority in schools to enable the children's overall development and train them to meet all the challenges of life (Bailey et al., 2009). This improves their desire to do well in their learning and to achieve their life goal. Sports also have a crucial role to play in building principles and confidence (Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008). They help us make decisions quickly and improve our thinking process. The sportsmanship or the spirit of the sportsman that evolves during sports teaches one to accept victory or loss graciously with reverence for others. The sport also helps us to take a very optimistic and relaxed approach to the problems of life. Sports such as Kho-Kho, Kabbadi, and Football help the person improve physical fitness by strengthening their muscles and bones (Sharma, 2018).

Leadership Skills Development through Sport

Communication and Team Building

Sport provides an ample opportunity for the participants to improve important skills such as communication and team building. These skills enable an individual to act effectively and efficiently as a leader (Danish, Forneris, & Wallace, 2005). Playing and coaching athletic events, such as baseball, football, running, bicycling, and swimming, lets participants learn how to handle other players with respect, recognize strengths and weaknesses, build wins' techniques, and learn effective management. Participating in sports helps people build trust and make the requisite fast decisions to excel in all forms of leadership positions.

Leadership Styles

An effective and efficient leader has the quality of evaluating circumstances and determining the need and importance of various types of leadership. As a result, he can choose what type of leadership technique is best to achieve a pre-determined goal efficiently. Playing sport provides a variety of opportunities to understand and analyze when to act aggressively? For example, when a soccer player sees an opportunity to score a goal, he does the kick. In other situations, a leader must communicate with his subordinates before deciding and collect information (McEwan & Beauchamp, 2014).

Decision-Making Power

Sports give numerous opportunities for developing decision making power with the help of quick observation and analysis. A good leader always exhibits decisive power. A cricket batsman for example only has nanoseconds to decide where to play a shot. Likewise, a football quarterback for instance usually only has a few seconds to determine where to throw a pass. Playing small-sided and conditioned games (SSCG) helps in developing and improving the procurement of competences and decision-making procedures during training for a competitive, global workforce to succeed (Davids, Araújo, Correia, & Vilar, 2013).

Communication Skills

Communication is none of the pre-requisites for leading a successful life. Proper communication skill helps enable an individual to effectively deal with everyday demands. Researchers suggest that the skills of communication might be given due importance from the early stages of children. The development and improvement of communication skills can be influenced by a variety of factors including interaction with their parents, sibling, friends, and other peer groups. I addition, the nurture of the communication skills of children is greatly influenced by schoolteachers and coaches. Playing sport can provide an environment in which the children and youth can interact with a variety of players and coaches. This interaction can lead to the development of effective communication (Keegan, Spray, Harwood, & Lavalley, 2010). Thus, sport provides an atmosphere that acts as a training ground for youngsters, not just to develop their athletic abilities but also to communicate effectively.

Impact of Demographic Attributes

Research reveals that demographic attributes of the participants can have an impact on changing the perception/viewpoint/opinion on different questions about the problem under study. Studies like (Arif, Khan, & Khan, 2019; Khan, Khan, Arif, & Khan, 2019; Khan, W., Ali, A., & Arif, 2020 indicated that the demographic profile of the sample can change the mean score in research variable. In the

present study, independent sample t-Test and ANOVA are applied to compare the mean score based on the demographic grouping in the participants like gender and sport-experience.

Conceptual Framework

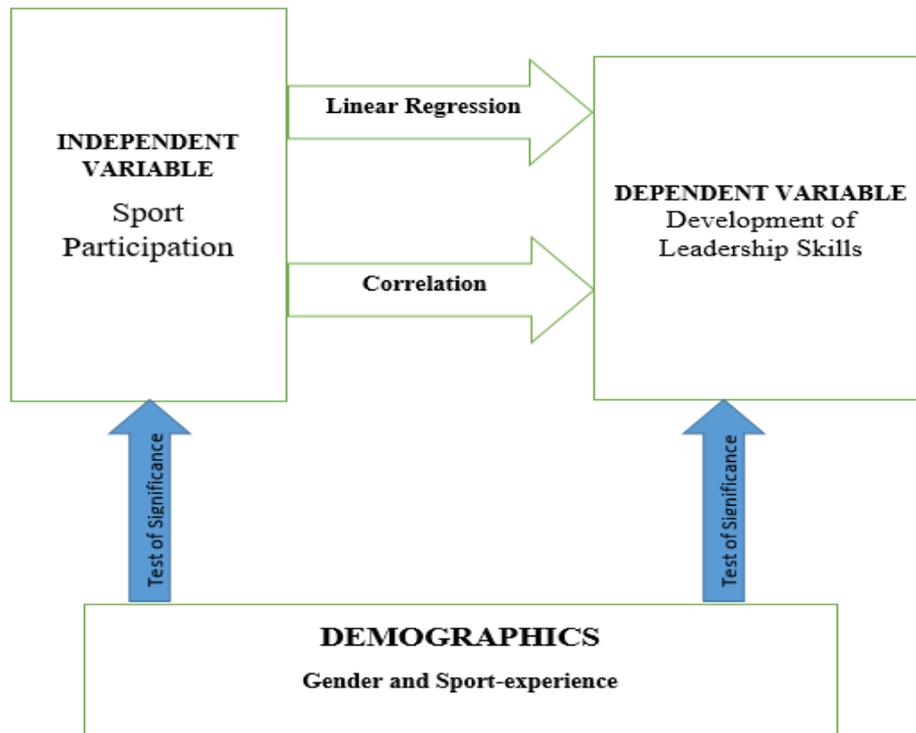


Figure 1 representing the conceptual framework

Research Methodology

Research Design

In survey research, observation and questionnaire are the most used methods for the collection of required data, it enables the researcher to find out the answer to a series of questions included in the questionnaire. Keeping into consideration the human as well as the social nature of the present research stud, a cross-sectional survey research design was used. Survey research design is considered as an outstanding medium for determining the attitude, viewpoint, and orientation in a large population (Groves, 2011).

Population and Sampling Strategy

The first step in selecting a sample is to define the population of concern. The population is known as a community of concern to the scientist, the community to which the researcher wishes to draw findings of the study (Marsden & Wright, 2010). All players and officials participated in Inter-Regional u-23 Games, 2018 organized by the Directorate General of Sport, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan constituted a population for the present study. One of the most critical steps in the research process is the selection of the sample of individuals who will participate, observe, or ask. In research, the term sample refers to the group on which information/data is obtained (Fowler, 2013). According to the Directorate General of Sport, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (2018) 394 players and 78 officials participated in Inter-Regional u-23 Games. The population of the study was finite and limited to the geographical area (i.e., Peshawar). For that reason, we entertained the whole population.

Table 1 Detailed Description of Population

	Males	Females	Total
Players	277	167	394
Officials	48	30	78

Research Instrument

The use of a quality data collection instrument is one of the essential aspects of the continuum of study. The conclusion researchers obtain are based on the data they obtain using research instrument (Burton & Mazerolle, 2011). A self-made closed-ended questionnaire was used for the collection of

the required information. The questionnaire comprised of three parts. Part (A) comprised personal information of the participants such as Gender, Sports Experience, and Particular Game. Part (B) consisted of sport-related information, while part (C) included the development of leadership skills through sport participation. A detailed description has been given in table No. 2.

Table 2 Item-wise breakup of the Questionnaire

Variables	Number of Items
Personal Information	03
Sport-related Information	08
development of leadership skills through sport	18

Pilot Testing

The preliminary Formulation of the questionnaire under the supervision of the supervisor and review of literature in an area. The developed draft was then administered among 32 players (males=16; females 16) smaller specimen size than expected to assess feasibility, length, expense, adverse effects, and to improve study design. We received valuable feedback from the pilot study and the questionnaire was accordingly incorporated.

Likewise, face and content validity were used to obtain the validity of the questionnaire. The questionnaire along with variables and hypotheses was administered among six experts in the discipline of sports science and physical education. The judges were given liberty to express their views on a three-point Likert scale (3. Not measuring, 2. Measuring with little change, 1. Clear measuring) to the association between items and variables. For all the items, the statistics were noted within the acceptable range i.e., .50 to 1.0; hence, all the items were maintained.

To calculate the reliability score of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient method was used and the coefficients for 29 items questionnaire was measured .878. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the questionnaire has high internal reliability.

Table 3 Reliability Statistics

Instrument	No. of Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Development of Leadership Skills through Sport	29	.878

Statistical Analysis

To verifying the normal distribution of data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied. To taste the hypotheses, the Chi-square test, Pearson correlation test, independent sample t-test, and ANOVA were used by SPSS, version 24. It is important to mention that all the set hypotheses were tested at a significant level of .05.

Data Analyses and Interpretation

Test of Normality

Table 4 Results of Shapiro-Wilk Test

Scale	Shapiro-Wilk Test		
	Statistics	Df	Sig. (p-value)
SPS	.882	472	.232
LSS	.889	472	.076

SPS= Sport Participation Scale, LSS= Leadership Skills Scale

The above table is presenting the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test in respect of the Sports Participation Scale, and Leadership Skills Scale, and the statistics have been given above. According to the table, the p-values were found as .232 and .076 respectively for SPS and LSS which is higher than the standard vale of significant ($p > .05$). Henceforth, it can be interpreted that the data are normally distributed and the application of parametric tests to verify the hypotheses was justified.

Testing of Hypotheses

Ha1 the independent variable (Sport Participation) has a significant effect on the dependent variable (Development of Leadership Skills).

Table 5 Chi-Square Test results

Variables	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig (2-sided)
Personal Chi- Square	84.306	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	68.887	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	72.893	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	472		

$\alpha = 0.05$

A Chi-square test was used to understand the respondents perceived sport-experiences regarding the role of sport in the development of leadership skills among its participants. According to the table, the sig. (p-values) were measured as .000 that is lesser than the standard level of significance $\alpha=0.05$. Bases on the above inferences, it can be said that the above hypothesis **Ha 1**The respondents perceive a significant role of sport participation in developing leadership skills is sustained.

Ha2 There is a significant correlation between sport participation and the development of leadership skills.

Table 6 Pearson Correlation Test results

Variables	Test	Sport Participation	Development of Leadership Skills
Sport Participation	Pearson	1	.471
	Correlation		
	(2-Tailed)		
	N	472	472
Development of Leadership Skills	Pearson	.471	1
	Correlation		
	(2-Tailed)		
	N	472	472

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

Pearson correlation test was applied to test the above hypothesis and the results have been presented in table no 6. The analyzed data presented .471 correlations at .001 levels (2-tailed) which indicated that participation in sport has a significant correlation with leadership skills development. Hence, the hypothesis **Ha 2** is accepted.

Ha 3 The demographic attributes (gender and sport experience) have a significant effect on changing the participants’ opinion on leadership skills development through sport. (**H₃ –H₆**).

H 3 Difference between the perception of players and officials

Table 7 Independent Sample t-Test results

Test of Variable	Grouping variable	Definition of Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Calculated t-value	Tabulated t-value	P-value
leadership skills	Sport	Players	394	3.34	.298	-1.222	-1.860	.172
	Persons	Officials	78	3.86	.257			

$\alpha = 0.05$

The table no.7 is describing the results of the Independent Sample t-Test regarding the perceived sport-experiences of players and officials to build leadership skills by including sport. The analyzed data describes that in the situation of correlating the perceived sport-experiences of players and officials, the calculated at (472) value of -1.222 is lesser than the tabulated t-value of -1.860. Therefore, the data revealed no significant difference between the perception of players and officials concerning the role of sport participation in developing leadership skills is accepted

Ho 4 Difference between the perception of male and female players

Table 8 Independent Sample t-Test results

Test of Variable	Grouping variable	Definition of Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Calculated t-value	Tabulated t-value	P-value
leadership skills	Gender	Males	277	3.69	.346	-2.222	1.906	.184
		Females	167	3.76	.313			

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 8 displays that in case of comparing the perceived sport-experiences towards the development of leadership skills through the sport of male and female players, the calculated at(472) value is -2.222 and ‘p’ value is .184 ($p>0.05$). Hence, it is not significant at the 0.05 level and Ho4 is retained. So, it can be interpreted that players don does not possess significantly different perceptions of leadership skills development through sport for gender (males and females).

Ho 5 Difference between the perception of male and female officials

Table 9 Independent Sample t-Test results

Test of Variable	Grouping variable	Definition of Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Calculated t-value	Tabulated t-value	P-value
leadership skills	Gender	Males	48	3.59	.336	-2.111	1.806	.172
		Females	30	3.66	.303			

$\alpha = 0.05$

The above table is presenting the results of an Independent sample t-test on the dissimilarity between the perception of male and female officials concerning the role of sport participation in developing leadership skills. According to the above results mean scores of male and female officials are 3.59 and 3.66 while the standard deviation is .336 and .303, respectively. The calculated t value -2.111 is lesser than the tabulated t-value 1.806. Hence, it can be interpreted that officials don not possess significantly different perceptions of leadership skills development through sport to gender (males and females).

Ho 6 Impact of respondent’s sports experience on their perception regarding the role of sports in developing leadership skills.

Table 10 Results of ANOVA

Categorical Variable	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Df	F	Table value	Sig.
Sport Experience	1-3 Years	98	3.226	.599	(3, 467)	32.751	9.234	.035
	4-6 Years	124	3.594	.532				
	7-10 Years	106	3.883	.379				
	11 and Above	144	3.612	.398				

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 10 shows the results of ANOVA on the differences between players and coaches based on their sport experience. According to this result mean scores of 1-3 years, 3-6 years, 7-10 years and 11 and above years are 3.226, 3.594, 3.883 & 3.612, respectively. Furthermore, the F value is 32.751, and the table value is 9.234. The F value is greater than the table value, with a p-value of .035 which declares rejection of a **Ho 6** hypothesis and indicates that the perception of players and officials regarding the role of sports in developing leadership skills significantly differs.

Results and Discussion

This study intended to understand the perceived sport-experiences of athletes and officials on the development of leadership skills through sport. Our results demonstrated that participation in sport has an important role in the development of leadership skills. Another promising finding was that there was strong evidence of a statistically significant correlation between sport participation and the development of leadership skills. This is an important finding in the understanding of the role of sport participation in the development of various leadership skills among youth. when we analyzed several questions like a) sport develops the ability to make a decision, b) development of interpersonal skills, c) development of team cohesion, and d) development of confidence then all the participants acknowledged the role of sport participation in this regard. These results are in line with the previous reports, showing that sports participation be a significant persuasive tool and sports experts argue that these activities build and grow important leadership skills. Possibly the best-known skills are decision making, encouraging partners, seeking feedback, building interpersonal relationships, and confidently leading the team group (Araujo, Davids, Chow, Passos, & Raab, 2009; Cook & Fletcher, 2017; Shepherd, Lee, & Kerr, 2006). Another study has found similar results, showing that physical education and sport are predictors of the development of physical and social abilities. The quality of team cohesion developed through sport, influence the overall performance and provides necessary skills that may transfer into other domains of life (Kao, 2019).

Our results demonstrated that the analyzed data indicated no significant difference between the perception of male and female players and male and female officials concerning the role of sport participation in developing leadership skills. From the results, both the categories of respondents acknowledged the role of sport in the development of leadership skills. This result ties well with previous studies wherein no evidence of statistically significant was found between male and female former athletes regarding the role of sport in the development of important leadership skills of hard

work (Arif, Khan, & Khan, 2019). Overall the outcomes from this research are per the findings reported that male and female university student-athletes have the same perceptions regarding the role of sport participation in the development of decision making and interpersonal communication skills (Khan, Khan, Arif, & Khan, 2019; Khan, W., Ali, A., & Arif, 2020).

Another important finding was that the analyzed data revealed no significant impact of respondent's sports experience on their perception of players and officials concerning the role of sports in developing leadership skills. A similar finding was obtained by Khan, Jamil, and Khan, (2012) who found that the perception of community members concerning the role of sport in the development of social training does not differ. Contrary to the above findings, one study revealed that demographic features such as gender, age, and level of sport involvement of athletes differ in the mean score of research variables (Khan, Khan, Arif, & Khan, 2019).

The limitations of the present studies include job stressors, access to every participant, and more significantly the lack of research attitude and aptitude. Resultantly, we included All players and officials who participated in Inter-Regional u-23 Games, 2018 organized by the Directorate General of Sport, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan in the survey. Regarding the limitations of the present study, it could be argued that the findings cannot be generalized upon the players and officials of other settings.

Conclusion

Research in leadership skills through sport has increased in recent years with the special context of homeland country Pakistan. It has been concluded that all the participants have acknowledged the role of the sport in the development of leadership skills. The analyzed data indicated no significant difference between the perception of male and female players and male and female officials concerning the role of sport participation in developing leadership skills. Sports participation is imperative to the overall development of its participants. With an increase in the ratios of participation in sport, more and more benefits are obtaining among its participants. Thus, an increase in the benefits has contributed to a massive decrease in the sedentary lifestyle and an increase in the development of various skills. Sport psychologists are continuously working to establish sports models and researchers are continuing to find the ways and means to develop and promote the sport. In the future, it is hoped that this research will lead to the development of sport in the country of Pakistan by providing statistical evidence on the role of sport in the development of leadership skills. If we cannot think and find the ways and means to develop and promote the sport, our masses will indulge themselves in antisocial activities. More research and innovation are required to develop and promote the sport while still supporting the overall development of the citizens of the country Pakistan.

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