

Perceptual Posture of Stakeholders: Efficacy of Sports in Curbing Violent Behaviors among Youth

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Abstract

Sports are considered as very strong agent for bringing positive changes in the behaviors of its participants. In this perspective a study was conducted in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to explore the perceptions of stakeholders about role of sports in curbing violent behaviors among youth. The study focused on eradication of antisocial behavior, aggressiveness, juvenile delinquency, violence, criminal offensiveness, and negative sentiments through participation in sports. The population for the study comprised of four strata consisting of parents, teachers, students and sportsmen/women. Multiphase sampling technique was used for taking sample out of target population. Teachers and students were selected through simple random, while parents and sportsmen/women were selected through convenient sampling technique. It was found that stakeholders consider sports as quite effective instrument for curbing antisocial and fostering pro-social behavior. Sports were found very effective tool for elimination of certain social problems such as aggressiveness, juvenile delinquency, violence, criminal offensiveness and negative sentiments. It was also found that sports are quite means of promoting self-control. It was recommended that sports competitions should be organized at union councils, tehsils and districts level and standard sports facilities should be provided to educational institutions and in each city and town of the country.

Keywords: Perceptions, Stakeholders, Sports, Violent behaviors.

Introduction

Sports may be defined as “all forms of physical activities that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organized or competitive sport, and indigenous sports and games.” (UNIATFSDP, 2003).

Sports and physical activities are excellent vehicles for socialization and best sources for social development of youth. Sport is considered to be a very valuable institution that helps the players learn numerous qualities that help them lead a successful

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practical life. Traits like leadership, moral character, and perseverance can be developed through participation in sports (Butcher, 1979). Violent behavior is a social problem and it is clear evidence of positive impact of sports on behavior. It is believed that sports activities within community reduce the crime rate and anti-social behavior among youth (Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sports, 2002). In a review of related literature, it is argued that sports develop the character, morality and positive values among youth such as good behavior, social relations between individuals and groups, hard work, sportsmanship and sense of fair play. The authors further argue that sports itself do not build and develop character in youth but create such positive traits among participants which are helpful in developing character and morality in youth (Ewing et al., 2002). An analysis of youth activities found that sports build character, develop physical skills and self-knowledge (Hansen et al., 2003). A study affirmed that through sports children and youth learn sportsmanship, morality and fair play. Sports can build and develop character of the children and youth. It is a powerful social experience (President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sport, 2006). Through participation in sports children and youth learn moral and ethical behavior. Sport is a tool for citizenship and cooperation. There is clear evidence that sports coaches play an important role in developing ethical and moral behavior among young players. Children and youth, who participate in sports, learn moral values and good behavior directly and indirectly. Through coaches' instruction and engagement in sports they learn moral values and good behavior directly while through observing the coaches' responses, they learn moral values and good behavior indirectly (Ewing et al., 2002).

In his study Cigliano (2006) stated that the officials of sports consider “discipline” among one of the behavioral attitudes that the participants learn through sports. It has been observed that the discipline players and athletes learn through sports participation gradually becomes a component of their behavioral conduct in their daily lives (National Federation of High Schools Association, 2003). Respect is another feature of the behavioral conduct that players and athletes learn through sports participation. Davis (2002) said that gatherings and frequent social interaction through sports participation enhance the sociability of the players and improve the abilities of respecting feelings of the others. In a survey study held in Canada the respondents considered tremendous contribution of sports activities in developing many behavioral traits such as honesty, fair play and respect. According to the respondents of this survey “participation in sports develops fair play skills such as respecting teammates, opponent’s players, judges, umpires, referees, and accepting official decisions with grace and dignity” (Butcher & Schneider, 2003). Rasmussen, (1999) asserted that through participation in sports players and athletes learn life skills such as respect for authority, honesty and conflict resolution. Conference Board of Canada conducted a survey on the “Socio-economic benefits of Sports in Canada”. Respondents of this survey stated that through sports participants learn problem solving skills, administrative skills, personal management, teamwork, decision

making, leadership and communication. The respondents further stated that leadership qualities and team work have a strong attitudinal dimension. The survey illustrated that respondents conceived a positive role of sports participation in character building, and improving personal traits such as self-discipline, honesty, integrity, courage, respect for others, a sense of fair play and fair dealing (Bloom et al., 2005).

Sport is an integral part of rehabilitation programs for young criminals and persons involved in anti-social behavior. Through participation in sports these young people learn community living and social norms (Andrews & Andrews, 2003). One advantage of sport is their therapeutic value and everyone believes on therapeutic value of sports (Seefeldt & Ewing, 2002). Youth sports programs that develop self-confidence, self-control, self-esteem, self-discipline, social and cognitive skills are the potentials to prevent from antisocial behavior (Saskatchewan, 2003).

Research disclosed that participation in sports help contain pessimism and negative sentiments (Mutrie & Biddle, 1995). Research provided some evidence that participation in sports help to control criminal offensiveness and using of drugs (United States of America_National Recreation and Park Association). Research also affirmed that Sports activities may be used for the prevention and reduction of crimes in society (Utting, 1996). But it will be unrealistic to say that sports activities alone be used for this purpose. Participation in sports develops such traits in youth which are beneficial for reduction of youth crimes. Sports give positive identity to youth, helps to develop the qualities of self-governance under the supervision of mature persons, team work, leadership and feeling of empowerment which are useful for crime reduction (Jamieson et al., 2007). Research reported that delinquent attitudes adversely effects student's ability to learn (DeVoe *et al.*, 2004), whereas many studies established that self-discipline and self-esteem develops through participation in sports help in minimizing the tendency towards delinquency (Taylor et al., 1999), anti-social behaviors (Jones & Offord, 1989) and crimes (Hartmann & Depro, 2006). Melnick et al. (1988) professes that in comparison to non-sportsmen, the sportsmen are less likely to be indulged in delinquency.

Power of sports in preventing many social problems and social evils has been recognized. It is therefore necessary to provide ample chances of sports participation to youth, not only for their social development but also for them to avoid many social problems such as antisocial behavior, juvenile delinquency, aggressiveness, violence, criminal offensiveness, and negative sentiments etc. But it is a matter of fact that in the eastern societies like Pakistan children take part in sports activities with the consent and permission of their parents. This permission by the parents is resulted, the way they perceive or conceptualize sports activities. According to Beets et al, parents are the primary inhibitors or proponents of their children's participation in sports and physical activity (Beets *et al.*, 2010). On the other hand, teachers have influence and firm hold upon the students and they are particularly influential in encouraging students to

participate in sports. Teachers play an important role in motivating or de-motivating the students for participation in sports by virtue of their influence. Therefore, teachers' positive attitude and perception towards physical education and sports activities tends to promote participation in sports. Sportsmen/women are viewed as role models and they have positive impact upon individuals and community. The children and youngsters inspire from them and start their sports. Moreover, students are the future of our nations and their positive perception, belief and attitude towards sports motivate them to participate in sports activities. These four categories of persons are known as stakeholders. It was very important to know the perception, opinion and approach of the stakeholders towards positive role of sports specially in controlling violent behavior. Positive perception of stakeholders can help implement different sports programs for controlling violent behavior among youth. In this context this study was conducted to explore the perceptual posture of stakeholders regarding efficacy of sports in curbing violent behavior among youth.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to explore the perceptions of stakeholders about efficacy of sports in curbing violent behaviors among youth between the ages of 15 to 24 years.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted in the main Districts of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Prime aim of the study was to explore the perception of stakeholders about efficacy of sports in curbing violent behavior. It was basically a survey design descriptive research study. The population for this study consisted of stakeholders included parents, teachers, students and sportsmen/women. The teachers, students and sportsmen/women of only Government Colleges of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were included in the study. Opinion of the sample population regarding role of sports in controlling violent behavior was taken through some basic questions.

In first phase of sampling the researcher randomly selected 7 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa out of 26 Districts. These districts were Peshawar, Mardan, Saidu Sharif, Haripur, Abbottabad, Dera Ismail Khan and Kohat. Secondly, four colleges i.e. two males and two female colleges were randomly selected from each sampled district. In the third phase stratified sampling technique was applied to sample out representatives from all the four strata of stakeholders i.e. parents, teachers, students and sportsmen/women. Teachers and students were selected through random sampling technique and parents and sportsmen/women were selected through convenient or available sampling technique. A total of 512 stakeholders were selected, whereas proportional representation was given to each stratum.

For the purpose of data collection, a structured questionnaire on five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1931) ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” consisted of 10 items was developed, validated and pilot tested by the researchers. The reliability of the measuring scale was tested through the Cronbach’s Alpha showing a value of 0.932 on standardized items. Following null hypotheses were tested.

1. There is no significant difference of perception among all categories of stakeholders regarding role of sports participation in controlling antisocial behavior.
2. There is no significant difference of perception among all categories of stakeholders regarding role of sports participation in helping to control aggressiveness.
3. There is no significant difference of perception among parents and teachers regarding role of sports in controlling criminal offensiveness.
4. There is no significant difference of perception among male and female regarding role of sports in helping to control Juvenile delinquency.
5. There is no significant difference of perception among students and sportsmen/women regarding role of sports in controlling negative sentiments.

Data Analysis and Results

The collected data were arranged, coded, tabulated and analyzed separately and treated statistically through statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version-16. Percentage was used for analysis of data while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Independent Sample T-Test were used for testing of hypotheses. Results of the study based on data collected from questionnaire have been given in table 1 below.

Table 1

Frequency (%) of participants’ responses to the questionnaire (n=512)

Statements	SA		A		NS		DA		SDA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Sports participation improves problem solving skills	22	4.3	282	55.1	79	15.4	105	20.5	24	4.7
Sports help to control antisocial behavior.	51	10.0	278	54.3	25	4.9	133	26.0	25	4.8
Sports participation foster pro-social behavior.	56	10.9	286	55.9	33	6.4	114	22.3	23	4.5
Sports participation helps to control aggressiveness.	36	7.0	302	59.0	36	7.0	115	22.5	23	4.5
Sports help to control Juvenile delinquency.	41	8.0	283	55.3	34	6.6	128	25.0	26	5.1
Sports participation helps to prevent violence.	52	10.2	254	49.6	64	12.5	121	23.6	21	4.1
Sports help to control criminal offensiveness.	37	7.2	267	52.1	65	12.7	125	24.4	18	3.6

Sports help to control negative sentiments.	33	6.4	282	55.1	79	15.4	94	18.4	24	4.7
Sports develop greater self-discipline.	81	15.8	299	58.4	29	5.7	68	13.3	35	6.8
Sports provide means of encouraging self-control.	85	16.6	302	59.0	31	6.1	75	14.6	19	3.7

F= Frequency, SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, NS= Not Sure, DA= Disagree, SDA=Strongly Disagree

Inferential Statistics

1. There is no significant difference of perception among all categories of stakeholders regarding role of sports participation in controlling antisocial behavior.

Table 2

ANOVA Table showing perception of stakeholders about role of sports participation in controlling antisocial behavior

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	2.224	3	.741		
Within Groups	615.248	496	1.240	.598	0.617
Total	617.472	499			

It was assumed that all the stakeholders have a similar opinion about role of sports in controlling antisocial behavior. To examine the hypothetical assumption made by the researcher, ANOVA was applied, the result of which has been given in Table 2 above. Table 2 shows that $F(3, 496) = .598, p = 0.617 > \alpha = 0.05$, which assert that null hypothesis has been accepted. It has established that there is no significant difference of perception among all categories of stakeholders regarding role of sports in controlling antisocial behavior.

2. There is no significant difference of perception among all categories of stakeholders regarding role of sports participation in helping to control aggressiveness.

Table 3

ANOVA Table showing perception of stakeholders about role of sports participation in controlling aggressiveness.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	1.712	3	.571	.528	0.663
Within Groups	535.936	496	1.081		
Total	537.648	499			

It was supposed that all the stakeholders have a similar standpoint about role of sports participation in helping to control aggressiveness. ANOVA was applied to test the hypothetical assumption made by the researcher, the result of which has been given in Table 3 above. Table 3 shows that $F(3, 496) = .528$, $p = 0.663 > \alpha = 0.05$, which asserts that null hypothesis has been accepted. It has established that there is no significant difference of perception among all categories of stakeholders regarding role of sports in controlling aggressiveness.

3. There is no significant difference of perception among parents and teachers regarding role of sports in controlling criminal offensiveness.

Table 4

Independent sample T-Test results showing comparative approach of parents and teachers about role of sports in controlling criminal offensiveness

Respondents	N	Mean	Std. Dev	t	df	p-value
Parents	128	3.38	1.061	-.179	248	0.858
Teachers	128	3.41	1.056			

The researcher assumed that parents and teachers have a similar perception about role of sports in controlling criminal offensiveness. To test the hypothetical assumption made by the researcher, independent sample t-test was applied, the result of which has been given in Table 4 above. Table 4 shows that $t(248) = -.179$, $p = 0.858 > 0.05$, which asserts that the null hypothesis has been substantiated and reveals that there is no significant difference of perception among parents and teachers regarding role of sports in controlling criminal offensiveness.

4. There is no significant difference of perception among male and female regarding role of sports in helping to control Juvenile delinquency.

Table 5

Independent sample T-Test results showing comparative approach of parents and teachers about role of sports in controlling criminal offensiveness

Respondents	N	Mean	Std. Dev	t	df	p-value
Male	269	3.40	1.079	.114	498	0.909
Female	243	3.39	1.086			

It was assumed by the researcher that there is no significant difference of perception among male and female regarding role of sports in helping to control Juvenile delinquency. This hypothetical assumption of researcher is tested through independent sample t-test, the result of which has been given in Table 5 above. Table 5 shows that $t(498) = .114$, $p = 0.909 > 0.05$, which asserts that the null hypothesis has been approved.

It has established that there is no significant difference of perception among male and female regarding role of sports in helping to control juvenile delinquency.

5. There is no significant difference of perception among all categories of stakeholders regarding role of sports in controlling negative sentiments.

Table 6

ANOVA Table showing perceived stance of stakeholders about role of sports in controlling negative sentiments

	Some of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	1.366	3	.455	.472	0.702
Within Groups	478.656	496	.965		
Total	480.022	499			

It was hypothesized by the researcher that all the stakeholders have a similar perception regarding role of sports in controlling negative sentiments. To examine the hypothetical assumption made by the researcher, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied, the result of which has been given in Table 6 above. Table 6 shows that $F(3, 496) = .472$, $p = 0.702 > \alpha = 0.05$, which assert the acceptance of null hypothesis, and reveals that there is no significant difference of perception among all categories of stakeholders regarding role of sports in controlling negative sentiments.

Discussions

The findings show that 59.4 % of stakeholders agreed with the notion that participation in sports improves problem solving skills. Research provided evidence that participation in sports improve the power and ability of resolving problems and making independent decision (Kerr, 1996). A survey was conducted through conference Board Canada on “the Socio-economic benefits of sport participation in Canada”. Bloom *et al.*, (2005) reported that respondent’s perceived sports as a tool that helps participants learn numerous attributes including problem solving, decision making, personal management, administrative skills, communication, team work and leadership. Williams *et al.*, (2002) stated that sports develop life skills such as problem-solving skills, cognitive skills, communicative skills and control of aggression.

It was standpoint of 64.3 % of the respondents that participation in sports helps to control antisocial behavior. Many research studies found that self-discipline and self-esteem gained through sports participation help to reduce the inclination towards delinquency, crimes and antisocial behavior (Taylor *et al.*, 1999). Seefeldt and Ewing (2002) argued that when sports used in combination with a full range of social, educational, and job-skill training programs, its usefulness to mediate anti-social

behavior in young people improves. Satcher (2005) found participation in sports help to reduce disruptive behaviors among the youth.

It was perceived by 66.8 % of the respondents that sports foster pro-social behavior, which matches with the findings of Heather et al. (2015) who found that participation in sports related to self-regulation, self-esteem, life skills and pro-social behavior. Similarly, Eccles *et al.* (2003) reported that sports develop pro-social behavior, increase self-esteem and reduce depression.

It was perception of 66 % of the respondents that participation in sports helps to control aggressiveness. This is consistent with the finding of Keren Shahar who found that sports help to control self-control, discipline and reduce overall feelings of aggression (cited by Toporek, 2011). Bredemeier and Shields (1986) stated that sportsmen/women show comparatively less aggressiveness.

It was the view of 63.3 % of the respondents that participation in sports helps to control Juvenile delinquency. Jamil et al. (2009) concluded that Juvenile delinquency was considered to be positively addressed through maximum participation in sports among the young people. Nicholson and Hoyer (2008) asserted that sports activities can be used as effective tool to reduce juvenile delinquency via involving endangers disadvantaged groups.

It was perceived by 59.8 % of the stakeholders that sports participation helps to prevent violence. Nichols and Crow (2004) argued that according to pro-social development theory sports can provide a system of legitimate relationships- coaches, fans, program leaders, pees - that can increase discipline, empathy, ability to work with others, pro-social values, self-esteem and professional goals among sports participants. Proponents of sports and physical education maintain that these are the psychological factors that ultimately reduce violence among youth. In other words; participation in sports can indirectly reduce violence among young people by protecting them from deviant peers. Hartmann and Depro (2006) classify large number of sports and recreation program that help to reduce violence in youth. According to them the United States of America Recreation and Park Association indicated 621 such programs and the Australian Institute of Criminology indicated more than 600 programs that help to reduce violence among youth.

It was the opinion of 59.3 % of the respondents that sports participation helps to control criminal offensiveness. This is consistent with the finding of Jamil (2009) who found that sports effectively control drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and criminal offensiveness. In another study Jamil et al. (2009) concluded that criminal offensiveness was believed to be controlled through maximum participation in sports.

This was the view point of 61.5 % of the respondents that sports participation helps control negative sentiments. This finding is supported by Jamil (2009) who found

that sports control over negative thoughts. The opinion of respondents was also evidenced by Mutrie and Biddle (1995) who found that sports activities help contain negative sentiments and pessimism, and prevents crimes and delinquency.

It was perceived by 74.2% of the respondents that sports develop greater self-discipline. Light (2010) found that sports and recreation programs develop self-discipline. Similarly, as a result of evaluation of the Sporting chance program, Lonsdale *et al.* (2011) found that sports develop self-discipline among participants. Hartmann (2003) argued that sports programs are often conceived as providing a site for self-discipline and character building. In a literature review

This was the perception of 75.6% of the respondents that sports provide a means of encouraging self-control. Many research studies reported that sports activities enhance self-control (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995) that helps improve the power of commitment among the players (Arnold, 1986). Cote and Fraser-Thomas (2007) suggested that youth sports programs are important to psychological development of youth. These programs provide the opportunities to learn important life skills such as self-control, discipline, cooperation and leadership.

Conclusions

It was concluded that the stakeholders consider sport as useful activity which improves problem solving skills. The study reveals that sports activities help to control antisocial behavior and foster pro-social behavior. The study discloses that sports activities are conceived as quite capable in controlling aggressiveness. Juvenile delinquency is one of the most serious social problems within society was also considered to be positively controlled through enhancement in sports participation among youth. The stakeholders believed that violence being a social phenomenon can very effectively be prevented through increase in sports participation in young peoples. Similarly, criminal offensiveness, which is a social problem and harmful act to individuals, society, community and state, can be controlled through maximum participation of sports among the youth. It was also concluded that negative sentiments can also be controlled through participation in sports. The stakeholders believed that self-discipline & self-control may be developed through maximum participation in sports.

It is concluded that there is no significant difference of perception among all categories of stakeholders regarding role of sports participation in controlling antisocial behavior, aggressiveness and negative sentiments, while no significant difference of perception found among parents and teachers regarding role of sports in controlling criminal offensiveness and among male and female regarding role of sports in controlling Juvenile delinquency.

Recommendations

This study was conducted only in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. To achieve better results and to generalize these results across Pakistan, this study may be conducted throughout Pakistan. To increase sports participation from grass root level different sports competitions should be organized at Union Councils, Tehsils and District level. Sports should be promoted in Educational institutions at large scale for having a nursery of sports right from the grass root level. Sufficient sports fund and facilities should be provided to educational institutions. Standard sports facilities should be provided in each city and town of the country including backward areas.

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