

ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES ON LEADERSHIP SKILLS OF GRADUATES

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Abstract

Sports activities have been shown to have an impact on the development of leadership. Different kinds of leadership are developed through the sport. This study examines the relationship between graduates' involvement in sports and their leadership skills using a mixed-methods methodology. Using the Multifactor Leadership Skills Questionnaire (MLSQ), 180 valid respondents were asked about how their involvement in sports affected their leadership qualities. Additionally, 35 of them were interviewed for the study, and data was obtained from them utilizing a semi-structured interview form. The findings highlight the positive relationship between participation in sports and the growth of leadership abilities, highlighting how sports can aid in the development of critical leadership qualities.

Keywords: leadership, sports, graduates, leadership types, activities

INTRODUCTION

The ability to lead is crucial and respected in both personal and professional spheres. A variety of abilities, such as teamwork, goal setting, communication, and decision-making, are necessary for effective leadership. Although professional training or natural aptitude are frequently cited as the methods for developing leadership qualities, participation in sports can also be a significant factor in this process. Engaging in sports activities necessitates the acquisition and use of multiple competencies, such as goal setting, communication, teamwork, and decision-making. Additionally, these abilities are necessary for efficient leadership. Consequently, it seems sense that engaging in athletics could enhance leadership abilities. However, little attention has been paid to the relationship between sports activities and leadership skills (Rayburn et al., 2001).

This study is significant because it can provide guidance to coaches, educators, legislators, and anybody looking to improve their leadership abilities. The results of this study have the potential to improve leadership development initiatives by providing guidance for the creation of sports-related leadership training programs. Sports participation can have a favorable effect on leadership abilities, according to studies. For instance, a study by Wang et al (2019) discovered that team sports can help adolescents develop their leadership abilities. Sports activities can enhance communication and teamwork abilities, which are essential for effective leadership, according to a different study by (Winfrey, 2020).

Academic achievement is highly prized in Pakistan, but extracurricular activities' relevance to general growth is less recognized. In Pakistan, young people love sports, especially in schools and universities. However, there hasn't been much research on how playing sports affects leadership traits, especially among graduates (Shaikh et al., 2010). Since most of the work on sports and leadership that has been produced up to this point has been done in Western contexts, there is a knowledge gap about the dynamics that exist in Pakistan.

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The purpose of this study is to investigate how sports activities affect the growth of leadership abilities. The study will employ a mixed-method approach, including surveys and interviews, to examine the relationship between sports activities and leadership skills among individuals of different ages and backgrounds (Javed & Naseer, 2023).

Participating in sports gives people the chance to work as a team, overcome obstacles, make decisions, and assume leadership responsibilities. Effective leadership requires the development of critical skills like motivation, communication, decision-making, and resilience, all of which can be fostered in the special setting that sports provide. To offer empirical support and useful implications, more research is necessary to determine the precise effect of sports activities on leadership abilities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The ability to lead is highly regarded in a variety of settings, such as business, education, and athletics. A variety of abilities, such as teamwork, goal setting, communication, and decision-making, are necessary for effective leadership. Although professional training or natural aptitude are frequently cited as methods for developing leadership qualities, participation in sports can also be a significant factor in this process. Several research have investigated the connection between leadership abilities and participation in sports. According to a study by Han and Beyerlein (2016) high school athletes who engaged in extracurricular activities had a higher likelihood of being leaders than their counterparts who did not play sports. Similarly, academics found that college athletes who participated in team sports activities were more likely to exhibit leadership qualities than those who did not participate in sports activities (Scott, 2017).

Sports and Leadership

Research has also been conducted on the development of leadership skills through participation in sports. For instance, Gucciardi et al (2009) discovered a favorable correlation between team sports engagement and the growth of communication and teamwork abilities, two things that are critical for effective leadership. Furthermore, Cece et al (2022) studied on a favorable correlation between individual sports participation and the growth of goal-setting abilities, another crucial element of successful leadership.

Leadership development may also be impacted by the kind of sports activity. According to a study by Kim et al (2021) learning martial arts was favorably correlated with the growth of leadership abilities, especially assertiveness and self-confidence. Partington and Shangi (1992) discovered in another study that involvement in adventure sports activities was positively correlated with the development of leadership abilities, such as the capacity for making decisions and solving problems.

Theoretical Frameworks of the Study

A person's surroundings, experiences in life, and personal traits are only a few of the many factors that influence the complex process of building one's leadership. Numerous theoretical

frameworks describe how leadership talents evolve. One such idea is the social learning theory, which contends that people learn new abilities by seeing and copying the behavior of others. This idea holds that participating in sports allows people to watch and learn from opponents, coaches, and teammates, which enhances their leadership skills (Bandura, 1977).

The theory of transformational leadership is a useful idea that emphasizes the need of inspiring and encouraging people to work toward common goals. Studies have shown that playing team sports provides opportunities to mentor and influence others, which aids in the development of transformational leadership qualities (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Furthermore, the situational leadership theory states that effective leadership requires both the conditions and the followers' level of readiness. Because sports are dynamic and always evolving, they provide an excellent environment for developing flexible leadership qualities (Hersey & Blanchard, 1990).

Statement of the Problem

Although there is some evidence that sports activities have a good effect on leadership abilities, not much research has been done in Pakistan on this subject. Furthermore, most of the previous research has concentrated on age groups or sports, which has limited our comprehension of the impact of graduates' participation in sports on their leadership abilities. By investigating the connection between Pakistani graduates' participation in sports and their leadership abilities, this study seeks to close this gap.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between sports activities and leadership skills among Pakistani graduates?
2. Which specific skills developed through sports activities have the most significant impact on the development of leadership skills of Pakistani graduates?
3. How do graduates perceive the relationship between sports activities and the development of leadership skills?
4. Are there differences in the impact of sports activities on leadership skills based on the type of sports activity or level of involvement?
5. How can sports activities be incorporated into leadership training programs to enhance the development of leadership skills?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To provide a comprehensive knowledge of the impact of sports activities on graduates' development as leaders, this study employed a mixed-method research strategy. Through the

integration of both quantitative and qualitative data, this approach provides a more thorough comprehension of the study problem. The quantitative component involved 185 graduates who completed a survey, while the qualitative component had 35 alumni who took part in in-depth interviews. These two methods were employed in this study to try to find out more about the relationship between sports participation and leadership qualities.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis allows researchers to delve deeply into participant experiences and provide richer, more comprehensive insights than can be acquired from just quantitative assessments. Using thematic analysis, the data show trends and themes that shed light on the nuanced ways that sports contribute to the development of leadership skills. This section presents the findings from the qualitative analysis, organized in accordance with the main themes identified in the participant comments. For professionals, educators, and lawmakers who are interested in leadership development, these topics offer valuable information and throw light on the different ways that involvement in sports influences leadership abilities.

Summary of Study Themes

1. **Lead by Example:** Respondents emphasized how athletics helped them learn how to set an example of tenacity and fortitude.
2. **Communication Skills:** A lot of respondents stated that playing sports helped them become better communicators, which allowed them to work well with colleagues.
3. **Teamwork:** It highlighted how important it is and how sports have taught people to cooperate to achieve a common objective.
4. **Adaptability:** According to the respondents, playing sports taught them to change their tactics according to the circumstances.
5. **Goal setting:** It was mentioned that playing sports helps people develop goal-setting abilities by assisting them in creating and achieving specified objectives.
6. **Discipline:** It was noted how sports, with their early practices and rigorous training schedules, foster a sense of discipline.
7. Respondents stated that playing sports had taught them how to remain composed and focused under pressure.
8. **Resilience:** A lot of respondents mentioned that playing sports helped them learn how to overcome setbacks and disappointments.
9. **Strategic Thinking:** A few interviewees stated that playing sports helped them learn how to think strategically and plan their moves to succeed.

10. Humility: A few respondents emphasized the importance of developing humility and being grounded even after success.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis is an organized process that uses statistical tools and procedures to help understand events. The influence of graduates' participation in sports on their leadership potential was assessed quantitatively in this study using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). By evaluating leadership efficacy and styles in connection to transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant behaviors, the MLQ provides a comprehensive assessment of leadership ability. The survey instrument covered demographic information about gender, level of education, sports involvement, and home location (rural versus urban). By including these variables, which examine potential differences in leadership abilities depending on these qualities, a more thorough understanding of the relationship between participation in sports and leadership development is made feasible.

Demographic Analysis of Gender

Table 01: Gender Analysis N=185		
Gender	N	%
Female	73	0.39
Male	112	0.61
Total	185	100%

A total of 185 people participated in the sports leadership survey, 73 identified as women and 112 identifying as men, representing 39% of all participants.

Demographic Analysis of Education Levels

Table 02: Education Level Analysis N= 185		
Education Level	N	%
Bachelor	63	0.34
Masters	114	0.62
PhD	8	0.04
Total	185	100%

In terms of survey respondents' educational attainment, 63 (or 34% of the total of 185 respondents) stated that they held a bachelor's degree. Furthermore, 114 respondents, or 62% of the entire sample, indicated that they held a master's degree. Merely 8 participants, or 4% of the total, indicated that they were PhD holders.

Demographic Analysis of Sports Duration

Table 03: Duration of Sports Played		
Durations	N	%
Duration of Sports Played		
less than 5 years	93	0.50
5-10 years	58	0.31
10-15 years	27	0.15
more than 15 years	7	0.04
Total	185	100%

According to the study, 93 participants, or 50% of the sample, said they had played sports for fewer than five years. Furthermore, 58 individuals, or 31% of the total, stated that they had played sports for five to ten years. In addition, 27 individuals, or 15% of the total, stated that they had played sports for ten to fifteen years. Merely 7 individuals, or for 4% of the total, stated that they had been involved in sports for over 15 years."

Demographic Analysis of Sport Types

Table 04: Sports Type Analysis N=185		
Sports Type	N	%
Cricket	137	0.74
Football	14	0.08
Hockey	8	0.04
Badminton	26	0.14
Total	185	100%

With 137 respondents, or 74% of the sample, cricket was the most popular sport among the participants in the study. Of all the participants, 8% were respondents, and their favorite sport was football. With 8 and 26 replies, respectively, representing 4% and 14% of the total participants, badminton and hockey were less popular.

Role of Sports in Leadership Development

Table 05: Sports Develops Leadership		
Respondents View	N	%
Yes	135	0.73
No	7	0.04

to some extent	38	0.21
not aware	5	0.03
Total	185	100%

When asked whether they thought athletics helped people become better leaders, 135 participants (73% of the total) said they did. Merely 7 individuals, accounting for 4% of the total, replied negatively. Furthermore, 38 respondents—or 21% of the sample said they answered, "to some extent." Finally, 5 respondents, or 3% of the sample, selected "not aware."

Gender Comparison across Sports Relation with Leadership

Gender	N	%
Female	37	0.27
Male	98	0.73
Total	135	100%

A total of 135 survey participants responded "yes" when asked if they thought sports helped develop leadership skills. This indicates that most participants believe that participating in athletic activities enhances leadership abilities. The data show that, when broken down by gender, 98 male respondents, or 73% of all those who answered "yes," believe that sports do indeed cultivate leadership qualities. Then again, 37 female respondents, addressing 27% of the 'yes' respondents, share this conviction too. This information proposes an important arrangement between orientations bunches regarding the positive effect of sports on administration improvement. It also emphasizes the large number of respondents, particularly males, who acknowledge the significance of sports in developing leadership abilities.

Sports Leadership Relationship by Education Level

Education Level	N	%
Bachelor	76	0.56
Masters	54	0.40
PhD	5	0.04
Total	135	100%

Of the respondents who think that athletics and leadership are associated, 135 people—or 100% of this subset—were classified according to their educational attainment. In particular, 76 responders—or 56% of the sample—had a bachelor's degree who said yes to sports leadership relationship. Furthermore, forty-four respondents, or 54 people, have a master's degree who said

yes. Finally, five responders, or 4% of the sample, were PhD holders, who confirmed the relationship between sports and leadership.

Sports Leadership across Sports Types

Table 08: Sports Leadership across Sports Type (Yes) N= 135		
Sports Type	N	%
Cricket	83	0.61
Football	35	0.26
Hockey	7	0.05
Badminton	10	0.07
Total	135	100%

The following is a breakdown of the 135 respondents who attested to the connection between leadership and sports as their preferred sports:

Of the respondents who confirmed the relationship, 83 people chose cricket as their favorite sport, making up 61% of the total. This made cricket the most favored sport. With 35 respondents (or 26% of the total respondents who confirmed the relationship), football was the second most favorite sport. Of the respondents who confirmed the relationship, 7 (or 5% of the total) selected hockey. Ten respondents, or 7% of the total, indicated that badminton and the relationship were real. This breakdown shows that football and cricket are the most popular sports among people who think that sports and leadership go hand in hand, with badminton and hockey being less popular.

Sports Leadership across Duration of Sports Playing

Table 09: Sports Leadership Confirmed by Duration in Sports (yes) N + 135		
Duration of Sports	N	%
less than 5 years	61	0.45
5-10 years	44	0.33
10-15 years	17	0.13
more than 15 years	13	0.10
Total	135	100%

The distribution of years of participation in sports among the 135 respondents who attested to the link between sports and leadership is as follows: 61 respondents (or 45% of the total respondents) who verified the relationship said it had been less than 5 years. 44 responses, or 33% of the total, verified the association over the age range of 5 to 10 years. Ten to fifteen years:

17 responders, or 13% of all respondents, attested to the relationship. Thirteen respondents, or 10% of the total, verified a connection spanning over 15 years. The distribution of respondents according to the number of years they have played sports is depicted in this breakdown, showing that a sizable percentage of those who verified the relationship have been involved in sports for less than five years, followed by those who have been involved for five to ten, ten to fifteen, and more than fifteen years.

Sports Relation with Types of Leadership

Table 10: Sports Relation with Types of Leadership	Mean
Transformation Leadership	3.2
Transection Leadership	2.9
Laissez-faire Leadership	2.7

Based on 185 graduates' replies to a question about the connection between leadership and sports, the study's mean score for Transformational Leadership was 3.2, indicating that graduates thought playing sports had the biggest influence on this style. Participation in sports appears to have a significant impact on transformational leadership, which is recognized for its capacity to uplift and encourage others toward a shared vision.

With a mean ranking of 2.9, transactional leadership was found to have a moderate influence from athletics. Participation in sports is thought to have a minor influence on transactional leadership, which is centered on interactions between leaders and followers and frequently depends on performance incentives. Allow things to happen naturally According to the respondents, leadership—which is typified by a hands-off approach—has the least impact from participation in sports, with a mean ranking of 2.7. According to these results, graduates think that playing sports has a bigger influence on their growth as transformational leaders—that is, inspirational and visionary—than on transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles.

Conclusions and Discussion

The mixed-method approach used in this study made it possible to fully comprehend the relationship between leadership qualities and sports involvement. A more thorough examination of the mechanisms through which participation in sports influences the development of leadership abilities was made possible by the combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The quantitative data provided statistical evidence of the association, while the qualitative data provided insightful information about the unique experiences and perspectives of graduates.

This study is important for Pakistan because it can influence policies and programs that promote youth sports participation. The future of Pakistan can be significantly impacted by understanding how sports can foster leadership traits, especially considering the country's challenges with young involvement and leadership development. Furthermore, by offering perspectives from a

developing nation context, this study adds to the body of knowledge already available on sports and leadership.

This study highlights the advantages of sports for leadership development, which is why it is in favor of including sports programs in Pakistani school curricula and youth development projects. This study emphasizes the importance of sports as a vehicle for leadership development in the Pakistani setting, but more research and financing for sports programs are needed to fully achieve sports' potential for youth empowerment and societal development.

Although this study provides useful information, there are still other areas that need further research. Initially, longitudinal studies might be conducted to examine the long-term effects of sports participation on leadership development. Comparative studies could also investigate how different sports participants' leadership ideologies differ from one another. Additionally, studies could investigate how sports help people develop leadership abilities including decision-making, cooperation, and communication.

The results of this study will have a big impact on a lot of different people that are involved, like coaches, educators, legislators, and those who want to become better leaders. The study's findings can help design sports-based leadership development programs, which could result in more successful leadership development campaigns.

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