



# Impact of Sports in Social Skills Development of Students

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## Abstract

Life skills include cognition, cooperation, self-control, communication, decision-making, problem-solving, coping with emotions, self-awareness, empathy, critical and creative thinking, dealing with peer pressure, awareness of risk, assertiveness, and preparation for the world of work. A sport is an area where one can express his/her feelings in various ways. Apart from the physical benefits, it provides the opportunity to the individual to develop their social skills. The purpose of this study was to know the role of sports in the development of social integration, cohesiveness, and peace in society. Out of total (n= 288) responses the respondents consisted of 167 (57.99%) students age group ranging between 18 to 25 years and 121 (42.01 %) teachers age group ranging between 25 to 65 years. The responses received from the participants were described with the help of descriptive statistics consisted of frequencies and percentage. Simple percentage distribution was estimated to assess the self-control, discipline, behavioral changes, coordination, cooperation, and maintenance of peace through sports participation. The analyses were performed using the Excel (Microsoft office plus 2016).

**Key Words:** Social Integration, Cohesiveness, Peace, Social Behavior, and Antisocial Activities

## Introduction

Man is a social animal who started living in groups for his safety and fulfillment of his desires. Living together is not an easy task. It requires numerous personal and social skills to adjust with each other. Whatever happened around us often was influenced by society. every individual wants social recognition and acceptance for which people have to develop their personality multidimensionally so that they can be well adjusted to society. Psychological and Social skills are the factors that make living conditions easy and comfortable in society. Life skills are important for young people to adjust themselves to society and manage the risk and challenges of life. (UNICEF, 2012) (Sørli, Hagen & Nordahl, 2020) Life skills include cognition, cooperation, self-control, communication, decision-making, problem-solving, coping with emotions, self-awareness, empathy, critical and creative thinking, dealing with peer pressure, awareness of risk, assertiveness, and preparation for the world of work. (UNICEF, 2012) Social and interpersonal skills or life skills can be learned and they can be affected by personal characteristics and environment. (Sørli, Hagen & Nordahl, 2020)

A sport is an area where one can express his/her feelings in various ways. Doing sports is the best way to keep an individual healthy and mentally strong. Apart from the physical benefits, it provides the opportunity to the individual to develop their psychological aspects and social skills. Leadership quality, interactions, cooperation, cultural exchange unity & discipline, and various other qualities are developed while playing sports. (Opstoel et al., 2019) Sports aim is to improve the quality of life and capabilities of the people through systematically planned activities. (Malm, Jakobsson, & Isaksson, 2019) According to sportscotland report published in 2003, “participating in sport can improve the quality of life of individuals and communities, promote social inclusion,

improve health, counter anti-social behavior, raise individual self-esteem and confidence, and widen horizons.” (“The Social Benefits of Sport An Overview to Inform the Community Planning Process.”, 2005) As per the definition given by The Council of Europe “Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual and organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.” (“The Social Benefits of Sport An Overview to Inform the Community Planning Process.”, 2005)

Nelson Mandela, the former president of South Africa strongly believed in the power of sports. In his fight for justice and promotion of peace in South Africa, he utilized sports because he was aware of the strength of sports and he opts for sports to make a significant change in his country. Mandela grabbed every opportunity to promote his country’s reputation all over the world and among the sporting events played a very important role. About sports, according to Madiba (Nelson Mandela) “Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair.” (Juricic, 2013) The area of sports is very vast which usually attracts youngsters. Many researchers found that in youngsters, participation in sports increases pro-social behavior and helped in reducing anti-social activities or crime. Along with that sports develops connectedness, sense of belonging and decrease social tensions. (Taylor, Davies, Wells, Gilbertson & Tayleur, 2015)

The purpose of this study was to know the role of sports in the development of social integration, cohesiveness, and peace in society.

### **Methods:**

An online survey-based study was developed and distributed to 1200 college students and teachers of higher education and school education. A 20-item questionnaire was designed with Likert response scale questions consisting of Scale Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree options. The option was provided to the respondents to provide further free text responses at the end of the questionnaire. The statements 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20 were positive statements and the statements 5,7,11,12,17,19 were the negative statements.

Before the distribution of the survey, a small group of 20 participants (10 students and 10 teachers) was constructed to conduct the study. This process enables the survey design to ensure that questions were clear, structured, and organized. In the questionnaire, the participants were asked for self-assessment on a 5-point Likert scale of agreeableness against specific questions. After getting permission from the Directorate of research, the Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology, and Sciences (SHUATS), Prayagraj, a link to the Google Form survey was distributed to a convenience sample of students and teachers via email, WhatsApp, and other social media handles. Google Form requires participants to be signed in to a Google account to complete the survey which prevented multiple entries from the individual participant. Afterward, participants were asked to read the description and requirements for the study and submit their consent. The online survey was conducted from 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. The criteria of selection of subjects were College students of 18 to 25 years of age and 25 to 65 years of age for teachers. The survey took 10-12 mins to complete. The responses of the questionnaire were collected with the key objective of students and teachers opinions towards the role of sports in social skills development. The responses received from the participants were described with the help of descriptive statistics consisted of frequencies and percentage. Simple percentage distribution was estimated to assess the self-control, discipline, behavioral changes, coordination, cooperation, and maintenance of peace through sports participation. The analyses were performed using the Excel (Microsoft office plus 2016).

**Results:**

From the total 1200 distributed survey we received 523 questionnaires. Out of 523 totals of 288 students and teachers were completely responded to this survey study so we further eliminated 235 responses. In total (n= 288) responses the respondents consisted of 167 (57.99%) students age group ranging between 18 to 25 years and 121 (42.01 %) teachers age group ranging between 25 to 65 years. The responses were received from the participants on five points Likert scale i.e. Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Also, the open question was asked at the end of the questionnaire. The statements 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20 were positive statements where Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree is showing the importance of sports in social skill development and the statements 5,7,11,12,17,19 were the negative statements where Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree shows the positive responses towards the sports participation. Data is represented in percentage form. Descriptive statistics of results are shown in table number 1.

**Table :1**  
**Responses of Participants**

Q. No.	Questions	Participants	N= 288	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Participation in sports helps to reduce physical violence, control aggressiveness, and improve discipline among the students?	Teachers	%	23.95	14.23	1.38	1.38	1.04
			N (121)	69	41	4	4	3
		Students	%	23.96	28.47	4.51	0.69	0.35
			N (167)	69	82	13	2	1
2	Participation in systematically planned sports activities reduces student involvement in antisocial activities?	Teachers	%	17.36	10.76	4.17	8.33	10.76
			N (121)	50	31	12	24	31
		Students	%	11.46	25.35	8.33	11.11	1.74
			N (167)	33	73	24	32	5
3	Creativity increases in students through sports participation.	Teachers	%	21.18	18.75	0.35	0	1.74
			N (121)	61	54	1	0	5
		Students	%	25	26.73	3.47	2.08	0.69
			N (167)	72	77	10	6	2
4	Does sports participation increase social integration and cohesiveness?	Teachers	%	23.96	14.58	2.43	1.04	0.00
			N (121)	69	42	7	3	0
		Students	%	26.04	26.04	4.51	1.04	0.35
			N (167)	75	75	13	3	1
5	Sports participation decreases intercultural solidarity.	Teachers	%	1.74	3.47	2.78	15.63	18.4
			N (121)	5	10	8	45	53
		Students	%	3.47	3.47	7.29	27.43	16.32
			N (167)	10	10	21	79	47
6	We learn the value of honesty and truth through sports participation.	Teachers	%	18.75	17.01	4.17	1.39	0.69
			N (121)	54	49	12	4	2
		Students	%	21.88	27.78	4.86	3.13	0.35
			N (167)	63	80	14	9	1
7	Level of confidence, co-operation, and coordination decreases among the students due to sports participation.	Teachers	%	2.78	2.78	1.39	11.46	23.61
			N (121)	8	8	4	33	68
		Students	%	5.9	5.9	3.13	19.1	23.96
			N (167)	17	17	9	55	69

8	Sports participation develops equality and brotherhood in students.	Teachers	%	26.74	12.15	1.74	0.35	1.04
			N (121)	77	35	5	1	3
		Students	%	29.17	25.69	2.78	0	0.35
			N (167)	84	74	8	0	1
9	Disciplined Sports participation helps in creating a peaceful environment and developing peace in society.	Teachers	%	18.4	20.49	2.78	0	0.35
			N (121)	53	59	8	0	1
		Students	%	21.88	29.86	3.82	1.39	1.04
			N (167)	63	86	11	4	3
10	Sports participation helps in upholding basic human rights i.e. Respect, Truth, Justice, Freedom, Compassion.	Teachers	%	16.67	20.49	4.17	0	0.69
			N (121)	48	59	12	0	2
		Students	%	21.88	26.04	7.64	21.88	0.35
			N (167)	63	75	22	63	1
11	Sports participation reduces the feeling of determination, kindness, and hope among the students.	Teachers	%	2.08	4.86	3.13	13.54	18.4
			N (121)	6	14	9	39	53
		Students	%	5.21	10.07	3.47	23.61	15.63
			N (167)	15	29	10	68	45
12	Intelligence, courage, and power decrease in the students due to participation in sports	Teachers	%	2.78	0.69	1.39	11.11	26.04
			N (121)	8	2	4	32	75
		Students	%	1.39	3.47	0.69	20.83	31.6
			N (167)	4	10	2	60	91
13	Sports participation connects students to the local community and with community activities.	Teachers	%	18.75	19.44	2.78	0.69	0.35
			N (121)	54	56	8	2	1
		Students	%	18.4	33.33	5.21	0.35	0.69
			N (167)	53	96	15	1	2
14	Participation in sports helps to reduce physical violence, control aggressiveness, and improve discipline among the students?	Teachers	%	19.10	19.44	2.08	0.69	0.69
			N (121)	55	56	6	2	2
		Students	%	19.79	28.47	5.56	3.47	0.69
			N (167)	57	82	16	10	2
15	Sports participation develops a supportive relationship and meaningful cooperation among students and with teachers.	Teachers	%	16.32	22.92	2.08	0	0.69
			N (121)	47	66	6	0	2
		Students	%	21.18	30.9	4.86	0.69	0.35
			N (167)	61	89	14	2	1
16	Sports participation provides interactive and collaborative activities which encourage social integration and cohesiveness among the students.	Teachers	%	16.67	22.22	2.78	0	0.35
			N (121)	48	64	8	0	1
		Students	%	15.97	35.42	5.9	0.35	0.35
			N (167)	46	102	17	1	1
17	Sports participation decreases teamwork, the feeling of group pride, and task commitment to achieve a common goal.	Teachers	%	2.43	2.78	2.78	17.01	17.01
			N (121)	7	8	8	49	49
		Students	%	4.51	8.33	5.21	20.49	19.44
			N (167)	13	24	15	59	56
18		Teachers	%	18.4	20.83	2.43	0	0.35

	Sports participation builds identity in society and motivates to work for the common interest.	Students	N (121)	53	60	7	0	1
			%	19.1	32.99	4.51	1.04	0.35
	Sports participation reduces leadership quality and competitive ability in the students.	Teachers	N (121)	7	7	4	32	71
			%	4.51	4.51	1.74	21.18	26.04
19		Students	N (167)	13	13	5	61	75
			%	20.49	18.06	2.08	1.04	0.35
	Sports participation increases emotional control in the students and helps them to deal with external pressure.	Teachers	N (121)	59	52	6	3	1
			%	25.69	25.35	4.86	1.39	0.69
20		Students	N (167)	74	73	14	4	2

### Discussion of Findings:

In the results it is clearly shown that teachers and students both were having a positive opinion on the statement that sports help to reduce physical violence, teachers and students both believe that sports participation controls aggressiveness and improves discipline among the students by improving self-control in them. (Houcine, Mohamed, Djamel & Habib, 2017) In sports, students are getting enough opportunities to set and achieve goals by utilizing their energy & aggression in a positive direction. Results also show that systematically planned activities also reduce the involvement of students in antisocial activities. Here teachers and students strongly believe in it. (Clark, H. J., Camiré, Wade, T. J., & Cairney, 2015) but 10.76% of teachers are strongly disagreed with this statement. It can be possible because in many events where students are participating without clear guidelines sometimes it happens that students are getting distracted from the real objective of the game and it can lead to an unacceptable response of the player in the society. Sports participation improves creativity in the participant. It is a very important area of discussion in sports participation and studies have been showing that sports participation gets influenced by creative people as well as it enhances the creativity of an individual too. (Zahno, S., & Hossner, E. J., 2020)

Results also show that Sports participation increases social integration and cohesiveness among students along with intercultural solidarity. It happens due to the involvement of a child in various activities. Along with that sports improve the social behavior of a child by involving him with teammates and other associated people. (Taylor, Davies, Wells, Gilbertson & Tayleur, 2015) Data shows that students learn the value of honesty and truth through sports participation because sports participation is based on ethics and restricted by the rules. So, when students are regularly participating in sports activities it improves their ethical behavior. Also, participants have strongly believed that level of confidence, co-operation, and coordination increases by sports participation.

Sports participation develops equality and brotherhood in students. (Taylor, Davies, Wells, Gilbertson & Tayleur, 2015)

Results show the participants have confidence that disciplined sports participation helps in creating a peaceful environment and developing peace in society. (Mitchell, Somerville, Hargie & Simms, 2020) Sports can make a significant difference in an individual's behavior. It gives a sense of fulfillment and happiness. When we talk about the role of sports in the development of peace then the question arises that how can sport spread peace or help in the development of peace throughout the world? According to the Cambridge dictionary, peace means "freedom from war and violence, especially when people live and work together happily without disagreements" ("peace", 2021) According to the definition of peace given by the international alert website "Peace is when people can resolve their conflicts without violence and can work together to improve the quality of their lives."

("What is peacebuilding? - International Alert", 2019) Sport is where participants are learning how to control aggression and compromise in the adverse situation. (Taylor, Davies, Wells, Gilbertson & Tayleur, 2015)

Results of the study show that Sports participation helps in upholding basic human rights i.e. Respect, Truth, Justice, Freedom, Compassion because these are the base of any sport. Participants disagreed with the statement that sports participation can reduce the feeling of determination, kindness, and hope among the students. Sports is the area where students are taking part to achieve their goal with full determination. When they achieve any target, they are having a feeling of accomplishment which provides extra thrust into their life. (Taylor, Davies, Wells, Gilbertson & Tayleur, 2015) Participants showed their disagreement when asked that Intelligence, courage, and power decrease in the students due to participation in sports. Participation in any game itself is a matter of courage and for playing any of the game you require some specific physical & mental abilities which makes you unique in that particular area. Regular participation in sports can also develop such qualities in the participants. Also, data shows that sports participation connects students to the local community and with community activities. In sports, participants are going to participate in various sports activities organized by local sports bodies. In this, they are also involved with society and this type of interaction enhances the social qualities of a child. As sports participation increases the ability of emotional control so, participation in sports helps to reduce physical violence, control aggressiveness, and improve discipline among the students by diverting their energy into a positive direction.

Data also shows that participants are agreed that sports participation develops a supportive relationship and meaningful cooperation among students and with teachers. Because the students those who have to participate in sports are having very cooperative nature and they are always ready to take any task. Also, sports participation provides interactive and collaborative activities which encourage social integration and cohesiveness among the students. Such qualities help the students to work collectively. Data shows the disagreement of participants in the statement that sports participation decreases teamwork, the feeling of group pride, and task commitment to achieve a common goal. Sports is the area where teamwork is very important without which no one can achieve success and satisfaction. The feeling of group pride and task commitment towards the common goal is also a key part of sports participation. Participants also had positive responses on sports participation builds identity in society and were motivated to work for the common interest. Now in this area where we can build our own identity and with the unity and dedicated work people can achieve targets of common interests. Participants are strongly disagreed with the statement that shows the sports participation reduces leadership quality and competitive ability in the students. Sports is the area that can vastly improve your leadership qualities and competitive abilities. This type of improvement in behavior makes the individual behavior more competitive and improves leadership qualities. It helps them to deal efficiently with external pressure (Taylor, Davies, Wells, Gilbertson & Tayleur, 2015)

## Conclusion

Sports participation benefitted physical, mental, social & emotional aspects of an individual most often. The survey results of this study are also similar to the various studies conducted by the researchers in their specific fields. Sports play an important role in improving players' behavior and Development of Social Integration, Cohesiveness, and Peace in society and among the nations. Sports participation makes an individual physically fit. Once the person is physically fit that physical health impacts the mental aspect. Our whole physical body and mental health are associated with each other and our action impacts them both. So, if a person is physically fit and mentally healthy then he will be able to maintain his social behavior in a better way. This will help a person to maintain peace within him. (Pot & Keizer, 2016) Also, Sports help to reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems. (Garcia-Falgueras, 2015) Generally, war or violence occurred due to disagreement which develops through expectations and overthinking. Once an individual started participating in sports it improves the behavior of an individual, develops self-control, patience, group cohesion, self-confidence, and control over emotion. Once the person develops these qualities then they can self-analyze their behavior which will be greatly helpful in the development of social integration, cohesiveness, and peace. It is recommended that further work can be done in this area as this is the area where we can greatly help to maintain good social relations and develop peace throughout the world. It is a must to add at the primary level in school so that students and

administration can use sports activities as a tool to improve the social behavior of the child at the initial stage which will help to built a healthy and happy society.

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