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Dr. Ekta Bhambri
Assistant Professor, Department
of Applied Psychology, S.P.M
College, University of Delhi, New
Delhi, India

Correspondence
Dr. Ekta Bhambri
Assistant Professor, Department
of Applied Psychology, S.P.M
College, University of Delhi, New
Delhi, India

Role of sports in student's transition from high school to college

Dr. Ekta Bhambri

Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to examine the college adjustment between athletes and non-athletes of the University of Delhi, sports persons who were part of any sports team at the college level and represented the university & college, and those who were not part of any team was part of the non-sports person's group. The sample of the present study consisted of 60 undergraduate students, 30- sports persons (15 male, 15 female); 30 - non-sports persons (15 male, 15 female) belonging to the first-year undergraduate within the age group of 17-19 years belonging to various colleges of the university of Delhi. The objectives of the present study were to investigate the role of sports in adjusting to college after completion of high school.

The tool which was used for the present study was CAS which is developed by W.D. Anton and J.R. Reed (1991). It consists of 108 items measuring 9 dimensions. The subscales are anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, self-esteem problems, interpersonal problems, family problems, academic problems, and career problems. Once the data was collected the raw scores were converted into t-scores and percentile scores with the help of the CAS scoring. After these descriptive & inferential statistics like Mean, S.D, and t-test were calculated. A significant difference was found in the subscales of Interpersonal problems (IP), Suicidal ideation (SI), Anxiety (AN), Self Esteem (SE), and Family problems (FP). This group of non-sports persons had more challenges adjusting to college than those who were on a sports team & on gender no significant differences were observed in any of the subscales of college adjustment.

Keywords: College adjustment, sports, transition, interpersonal relations, anxiety, self esteem

Introduction

In an increasingly globalized society, access to education is vital, and those who are more educated have more chances. Parents, educators, politicians, and students from all socioeconomic levels agree that a college degree is necessary for obtaining balanced, well-paying jobs and becoming contributing members of society (Bailey & Karp, 2003; Belfield & Bailey, 2011) [6, 7]. College is a period of transition and change, with many challenges in academic, social, personal/emotional, and institutional adjustment. Stress, concern, and tension are typically associated with college transition and adjustment.

Pursuing a college education necessitates adjustment on the part of all students, albeit the type and degree of adjustment will vary depending on background, experience, and past schooling. According to Shaffer, "adjustment" describes the process by which a living organism maintains a balance between its needs and the external factors that affect how those needs are met. College adjustment will also vary according to the institution's size, mission (e.g., research-intensive vs. teaching-intensive), affiliation (e.g., religiously associated institutions), and control (e.g., public vs. private). Students who quit high school, attend college full-time, and live on campus experience the most dramatic change, according to Arthur Chickering and Nancy Schlossberg (1995) [10]. Adult students who are attending part-time and juggling school and work will experience more change than younger commuter students who are still living at home and maintaining high school friendships.

Adolescence and emerging adulthood are periods of physical, social, psychological, and structural change that might have an impact on physical exercise barriers and motivations. University students comprise a separate subgroup throughout this time period because they are particularly affected by changing (structural) life conditions at the start of their studies.

Sedentary behavior (such as attending university classes) characterizes students' daily lives; nonetheless, physical exercise in this age group is critical since future patterns of adult health are established at this stage of life.

Both desocialization and socialization processes are involved in adjusting to college, according to Ernest Pascarella and Patrick Terenzini (1991) ^[17]. In response to the college experience, desocialization is the process of altering or letting go of particular values, beliefs, and characteristics that one brings to college. Being exposed to and adopting some of the new values, attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives that one is exposed to while in college is known as socialization. It also refers to the process of absorbing and internalizing the values, norms, and values of the institution that one is attending. The transition out of high school is characterized by Pascarella and Terenzini as "culture shock" a term they defined as "significant social and psychological relearning as a result of encounters with new ideas, new teachers and friends who hold quite disparate values and ideologies, new freedoms and opportunities, and new academic, personal, and social demands". Students without siblings or parents who went to college experience this culture shock particularly acutely. Modifications in roles, relationships, academic demands, and social demands are some specific examples of collegiate adjustment. In addition, depending on the institution, certain student subpopulations may experience adjustment problems.

Due to the increased academic pressure, employment stress, interpersonal communication difficulties, and the stark contrast of ideological changes brought on by the weakening or loss of advantages in the same group after entering college, college students are more likely to experience a variety of mental health issues. The study of sports exercise and mental health has developed into a significant area of sports psychology since the 1960s and 1970s, when exercise psychology began to gain popularity.

The primary goal of exercise psychology research is to advance physical and mental health and cultivate a positive physical and mental state. The goal of the research is to help athletes and exercisers benefit mentally, emotionally, and cognitively from sport activity by focusing on how to maintain and improve physical and mental health as well as form a good physical and mental state through various sports exercises. There is no question that regular exercise is beneficial for both physical and mental health. The beneficial impact of sports on college students' personal growth has been supported by numerous academics. When Muoz-Bullón *et al.* (2017) ^[15] compared the academic performance of athletes with that of non-athletes, they discovered that involvement in organized sports had a favorable effect on students' higher grades. The expansion of the wellness trend has increased interest in how college students adjust. Particularly when people first enroll in a university, they are stressed out and face numerous difficulties as a result of unfamiliar surroundings and tasks. While playing and watching sports have many advantages on an individual, interpersonal, institutional, community, and societal level, little research has been done on how sport-related experiences affect college adjustment.

Method

Present study

Not many studies have been done in the Indian context which investigate how pursuing sports at a competitive level relates to an adjustment to college among first-year undergraduate students. The purpose of the present study was to examine the college adjustment between athletes and non-athletes at the University of Delhi.

Objectives

To investigate the college adjustment of first-year undergraduate student's those enrolled through the sports category and non-sports category. To investigate if differences exist between sports category students and other students on any of the nine dimensions of college adjustment.

Sample

The study was conducted on 60 undergraduate first-year students selected across colleges of Delhi University, 30 sportspersons (15 male & 15 female), and 30 non-sportspersons (15 male & 15 female) within the age group of 17 -19 years. Equal numbers of male and female participants were selected for the study. Athletes who were part of any sports team at the college level and represented the university & college, and those who were not part of any team were part of the non-sports person's group. Sportspersons who were part of any sports team at the college level and represented the university & college, and those who were not part of any team were part of the non-sports person's group of students.

Tools

The tool used for the present study was The College Adjustment Scale (CAS) developed by William D. Anton & Jame R. Reed (1991) ^[2] along with a basic demographic questionnaire was used for the present study. The CAS consists of 108 items which measure 9 subdimensions and each subscale consist of 12 items. The 9 sub-dimensions are namely: anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, self-esteem problems, interpersonal problems, family problems, academic problems, and career problems. These items are presented as a four-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from Not At All True to Very True. For CAS scales, the internal consistency coefficient ranged from 0.83 to 0.92. Convergent and discriminant validity has been established with a correlation coefficient of .40 or larger, regardless of direction, and was chosen as representing a substantial relationship between the variables.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were both used to analyze the study's data. Mean and standard deviation of all the variables were computed as well as t was computed to find out if differences existed on any sub-dimensions of the college adjustment scale (CAS) between those students who belonged to sports teams & actively participated in any sports and those who were not.

Results

Table 1: Showing Mean, S.D., and t-value of Sports persons & Non-sports group on 9 subdimensions of CAS

Dimensions of CAS	Sports Persons		Non-Sports Persons		t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Academic Problems (AP)	23.5	6.7	24.5	6.6	0.65
Anxiety (AN)	21.76	7.8	25.76	7.9	1.96*
Interpersonal Problems (IP)	22.83	7.30	27.2	5.9	2.53**
Depression (DP)	20.36	5.14	21.03	5.95	0.47
Career Problems (CP)	22.5	6.00	24.3	7.5	1.04
Suicidal Ideation (SI)	17.6	5.9	21.7	6.9	2.29*
Substance Abuse (SA)	17.83	4.09	18.3	5.4	0.38
Self Esteem Problems (SE)	22.83	4.18	25.06	4.30	2.01*
Family Problems (FP)	19.4	5.48	22.5	4.96	1.85*

** Significant At .01 Level

* Significant At .05 Level

A significant difference was observed at .01 level on Interpersonal problems (IP) whereas a significant difference was observed at .05 level on Anxiety (AN), Suicidal ideation (SI), Self Esteem (SE), & family problems (FP) between the students belonging to the sports category as well as those who did not belong to the sports college team adjustment to college on the subscales of interpersonal problems (IP), suicidal ideation (SI), substance abuse (SA), and family problems (FP).

Discussion

All students must adjust to pursue a college education, but each student will adjust in a different way and to a different extent depending on their background, experiences, and prior education. College adjustment will also differ depending on the institution's size, mission (e.g., research-intensive versus teaching-intensive), affiliation (e.g., institutions with a religious affiliation), and control (e.g., public versus private). The goal of the current study was to compare how well athletes and non-athletes who were enrolled through the sports category, participated on college and university teams, and represented their countries at the state and national levels fared in college. The objectives of the present study were to investigate the role of sports in adjusting to college after completion of high school and if any difference existed between sports persons & nonsports persons in adjusting to college. The demographic questionnaire administered to these individuals comprised open-ended questions, which added additional insight from the results of the CAS. These questions comprised "In adjusting to college life how did you being a sportsperson facilitated or hindered it" and "What was the most difficult part of your adjustment".

Table 1 shows that a Significant difference was observed at .01 level on Interpersonal problems (IP) whereas a significant difference was observed at .05 level on Anxiety (AN), Suicidal ideation (SI), Self Esteem (SE), & family problems (FP) between the students belonging to the sports category as well as those who did not belong to the sports college team adjustment to college. The higher the score on CAS dimensions more difficulty the student faces in adjustment to college. The results from Table 1 indicate that sports persons showed better adjustment in comparison to non-sports persons on the dimension of Interpersonal problems (IP), Anxiety (AN), Suicidal ideation (SI), Self Esteem (SE), & family problems (FP). Pascarella and Smart (1991) ^[17] indicated that athletes thrive with their interpersonal relationships while Eiche, Sedlacek, and Adams-Gaston (1997) ^[12] showed athletes have an easier time adjusting to social life than non-athletes. This research supports their findings with the

significance found on the subscales of interpersonal problems (IP) and substance abuse (SA) of the non-athletes as compared to the athletes. All athletes fared better with interpersonal relationships and substance abuse. In addition, all nonsports persons had more problems with depression, self-esteem, family, and suicidal ideation.

From the above table, it can be inferred that no significant difference in another dimension of CAS was observed such as Academic problems (AP) and Career problems (CP) between students who were on sports teams and nonsports persons. These findings are at odds with those of Chickering (1969) ^[9], who claimed that athletes have difficulty pursuing their career goals. In this present study, the sample size was small which was a limitation of this study. A larger population completing the College Adjustment Scale (CAS) would give more insight into this topic as well as dividing the sports group based on level & and various sports they are pursuing. This study was limited to the colleges of Delhi thus it was a drawback as various universities and colleges would have distinct resources for sportspersons and other non-sport person students which would have an impact on how students are able to adapt and adjust in college.

The major theme which emerged out of the additional open-ended questions which were asked which helped the sportspersons to adjust to college was that being in the university team inculcated in them a feeling of responsibility, providing them with a core support group with whom they could identify & share their feelings and they lead a disciplined routine despite getting freedom in contrast to school. The areas where the sports group faced difficulty comprised meeting new people due to lack of time outside the team, and time management due to the balancing of sports with academic pursuits. In contrast, the non-sports group reported that they faced difficulties in meeting people and making friends in the initial phase, time management, and handling the freedom that college brings about. The common problem faced by both these group was time management and academic workload.

Thus it can be concluded that overall sports persons faces lesser issues in comparison to their counterparts in adjusting to college. This is supported by the significant findings on the subscales of interpersonal skills (IP), suicidal ideation (SI), Anxiety (AN), Self Esteem (SE) and family problems (FP). On these dimensions, students who were on sports teams scored significantly lower than non-sports persons, indicating that non-sports persons face more challenges in adjusting, which is supported by more problematic issues in these areas. In examining the overall results of this study, the most important point to be gleaned would be that students who are

in sports teams adjust better in comparison to those who are non-sports persons.

Conclusion

College adjustment is one of the most vital developmental processes that students go through. Colleges and universities may learn more about how to assist students to succeed in this transition by carrying out research in this domain. This research was designed to help continue to examine the needs of college students today. By analyzing sportspersons and non-sports persons as two distinct groups, one can observe the common issues as well as recognize significant distinctions among these groups. College counseling centers, coaches, sports departments, teachers, and administration can obtain a better understanding of the characteristics and challenges that today's college students face by evaluating these expectations. This study contributes to a need evaluation of adjustment issues in athletes and non-athletes. Counseling centers will be better prepared to provide programming that is more directly tailored to student needs. When developing services to offer, it is advantageous to have a greater grasp of the specific needs of athletes. It is vital for students to be aware of what may be impeding their academic progress. Faculty who are more aware of the need of the students can increase classroom performance. Colleges can provide relevant and necessary services to students and hence increase retention if they have a better understanding of their requirements.

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