

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION AS A RELAXATION ACTIVITY VERSUS A DEVELOPMENT PROFESSION: A QUANTITATIVE CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a comparative analysis of sports participation as a leisure activity versus its role as a development profession, with a specific focus on gender differences. Using a quantitative cross-sectional design, data were collected from 60 participants 30 males and 30 females who were involved in sports either recreationally or professionally. Key variables such as physical and psychological well-being, social integration, and skill development were measured and analyzed to identify significant differences between the groups. The quantitative analysis was utilizing a cross-sectional survey design to assess the motivations, participation rates, and barriers to sports participation among leisure sports participants and professional athletes. This approach allows for the collection of data at a single point in time, facilitating comparisons between the two groups. The results indicate that both male and female participants benefit from sports participation, but the nature of these benefits varies depending on whether the activity is pursued as a leisure pastime or a professional career. Male participants involved in professional sports reported higher levels of skill acquisition and career satisfaction but also faced greater stress and pressure. Female professionals exhibited similar patterns but reported slightly higher levels of psychological stress compared to their male counterparts. The study concludes that sports participation offers distinct advantages depending on gender and the nature of involvement either as a leisure activity or a professional pursuit. These findings can guide the development of gender-sensitive sports programs and policies that cater to the specific needs and goals of different populations.

Keywords: Sports, Leisure, Activity, Development, Profession, Skill

INTRODUCTION

Sports participation serves a dual role in society, functioning both as a leisure activity and as a pathway to professional development. This duality presents an interesting dichotomy: while some individuals engage in sports purely for recreation and personal enjoyment, others view it as a potential career path, with aspirations of achieving professional status. This study aims to explore and compare these two perspectives through a quantitative cross-sectional analysis.

The pursuit of sports as a professional career is marked by a focus on skill development, competition, and achievement. Athletes pursuing professional careers often undergo rigorous training regimes, engage in structured

competitions, and aim for high levels of performance. The professionalization of sports involves not only the development of athletic skills but also a commitment to a lifestyle that supports peak performance, including nutrition, mental conditioning, and adherence to strict schedules (Baker, Cobby, & Fraser-Thomas, 2009).

This study seeks to quantitatively compare the experiences, motivations, and outcomes of individuals who participate in sports for leisure versus those who engage in sports with professional aspirations. A cross-sectional design allows for the examination of a diverse sample of participants, providing insights into the different trajectories and perceptions associated with each

approach to sports participation. The analysis was considering factors such as time commitment, financial investment, psychological impact, and social influences. Sports participation is experienced differently by individuals based on their motivations and goals. By exploring these distinctions, the study aims to inform policy and program development in sports organizations, educational institutions, and community groups, ultimately supporting both recreational and professional sports engagement.

Engagement in sports as a leisure activity is widespread and carries numerous benefits, including improved physical health, psychological well-being, and social interaction (Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity, & Payne, 2013). Leisure sports activities, such as playing soccer in a community league or participating in a casual tennis match, often prioritize enjoyment, relaxation, and social engagement over competitive success or professional advancement. These activities are typically characterized by voluntary participation and intrinsic motivation, where individuals seek pleasure and satisfaction from the activity itself (Stebbins, 2007).

Literature review

Sports participation has long been recognized as a vital component of physical health, mental well-being, and social development. The literature on sports participation spans various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and public health. This review aims to explore the motivations, outcomes, and barriers associated with sports participation in both leisure and professional contexts, drawing on relevant studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The outcomes of sports participation also differ between leisure and professional contexts. Numerous studies have shown that engagement in leisure sports is associated with improved physical health, mental well-being, and social connections. For instance, a study by Eime et al. (2013) found that adults who participate in recreational sports report higher levels of life satisfaction and lower levels of depression compared to non-participants. Despite the numerous benefits associated with sports participation, various barriers can hinder individuals from engaging in both leisure and professional sports. In leisure contexts, common barriers include lack of time, financial constraints,

and limited access to facilities (Sallis et al., 2000). A study by Trost et al. (2002) found that individuals with busy schedules, particularly parents and working professionals, often struggle to find time for physical activity, leading to decreased participation rates. In professional sports, barriers can include intense competition, injury risks, and the pressure to perform. According to a study by Raedeke and Smith (2004), athletes may experience stress and anxiety related to performance expectations, which can deter them from pursuing sports at a professional level. Additionally, the financial instability associated with pursuing a career in sports can be a significant barrier, particularly for athletes from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Baker & Horton, 2004).

According to Deci and Ryan (2000), intrinsic motivations, such as enjoyment and personal satisfaction, play a crucial role in leisure sports participation. Sports participation is a multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses a wide range of activities, motivations, and outcomes. It can be broadly categorized into two main domains: leisure activity and professional development. Understanding the nuances between these two forms of participation is essential for developing targeted policies and programs that cater to the unique needs of different groups of sports participants. Professional sports often develop transferable skills such as discipline, teamwork, and leadership, which can be advantageous in their post-athletic careers. However, the pressure and demands of professional sports can also lead to negative outcomes, such as burnout and mental health issues (Gould et al., 2006).

Furthermore, sports can serve as a platform for promoting diversity and inclusion, as seen in initiatives aimed at integrating marginalized groups into sports programs (Coakley, 2007).

Professional athletes, on the other hand, dedicate substantial amounts of time to training and competition. It is common for professional athletes to train for several hours each day, often following rigorous and highly structured training programs (Baker, Côté, & Abernethy, 2003). This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing research on sports participation, focusing on motivation, time commitment, perceived benefits, challenges, and the impact on overall life satisfaction and well-being.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the differences in motivation between leisure and professional sports participants.
2. To analyze the time commitment required for both groups.
3. To identify the perceived benefits and challenges faced by each group.
4. Assess the overall life satisfaction and well-being of participants in both categories.

Research Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is quantitative in nature, and it is exploratory in nature with respect to institutional internal values of faculty members and student performance in higher education institutes. This quantitative, using a cross-sectional survey method to collect data from faculty members and students. This study descriptive and correlation, trying to establish and measure the extent of the relationship between the two variables. The target population for this study is faculty members and students of HEIs comprising universities. A stratified random sampling technique used to select a sample this sample size around 110 faculty members and 220 students, to ensure that an adequate number of cases are present so that statistically significant results are achieved.

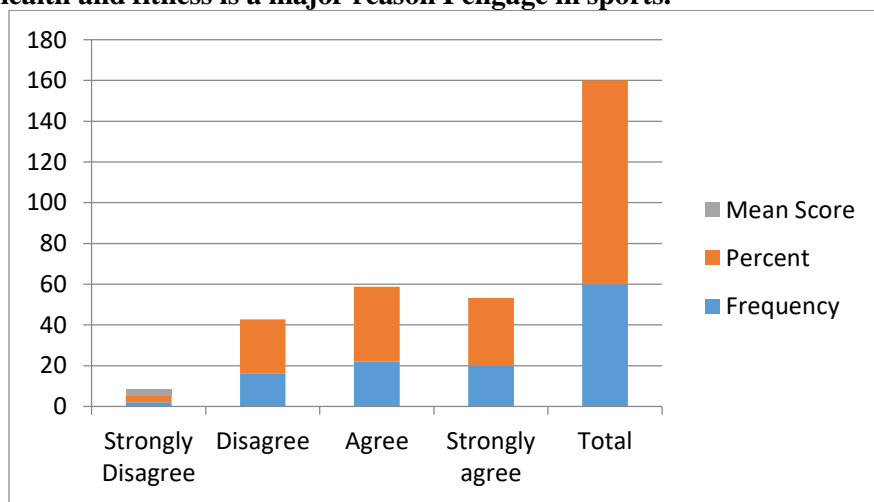
Descriptive statistics mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution a general overview of the data for all variables. The relationship

between institutional internal values dimensions and student performance indicators tested with Pearson's correlation coefficient. Multiple regression analyses establish the predictive power of various dimensions of institutional internal values on student performance outcome variables. These analyses help in determining which specific behaviors bear the most significant impact on student performance. For this study, the sample was including 60 individuals, divided equally between leisure sports participants and professional athletes. The leisure group were recruited from community centers, gyms, and recreational sports clubs, while the professional group were drawn from sports academies, professional teams, and athletic associations. Stratified random sampling will be used to ensure diversity within each group based on age, gender, and sport type, with participants randomly selected within each stratum to avoid bias.

Results

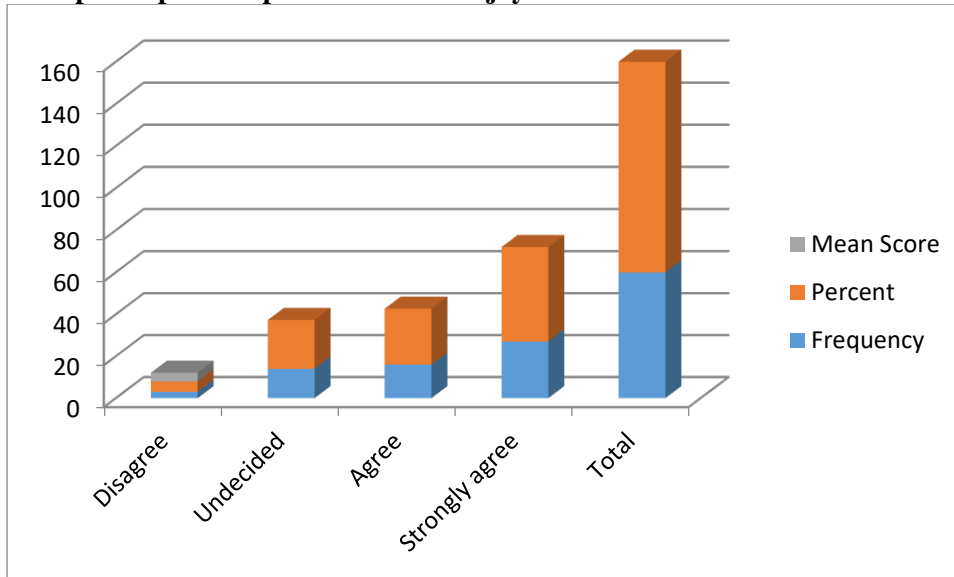
For data interpretation SPSS was applied. The mean score and percentage were computed. The percentage frequency and mean score of the data were used to analyse the data. The responses used in the Lickert scale were scored as follows for data analysis. The aim of this study was to a comparative analysis of sports participation as a leisure activity versus a development profession: a quantitative cross-sectional study. In this chapter data has been analyzed and results were obtained by using SPSS software.

Improving my health and fitness is a major reason I engage in sports.



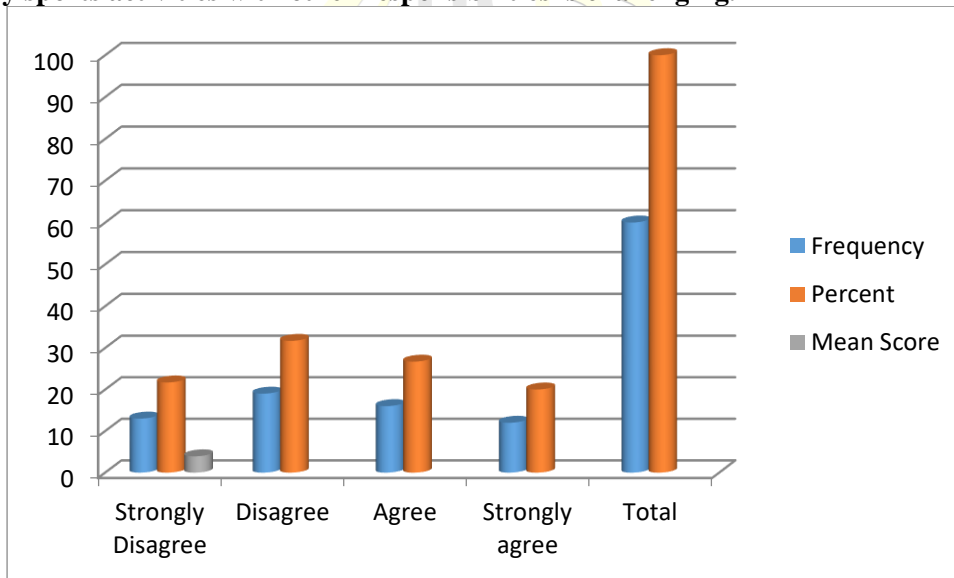
The respondent was agreed with statement improving my health and fitness is a major reason I engage in sports while the average of responses is 3.39 which mean that the level of agreement is high.

I am motivated to participate in sports because I enjoy the social interactions.



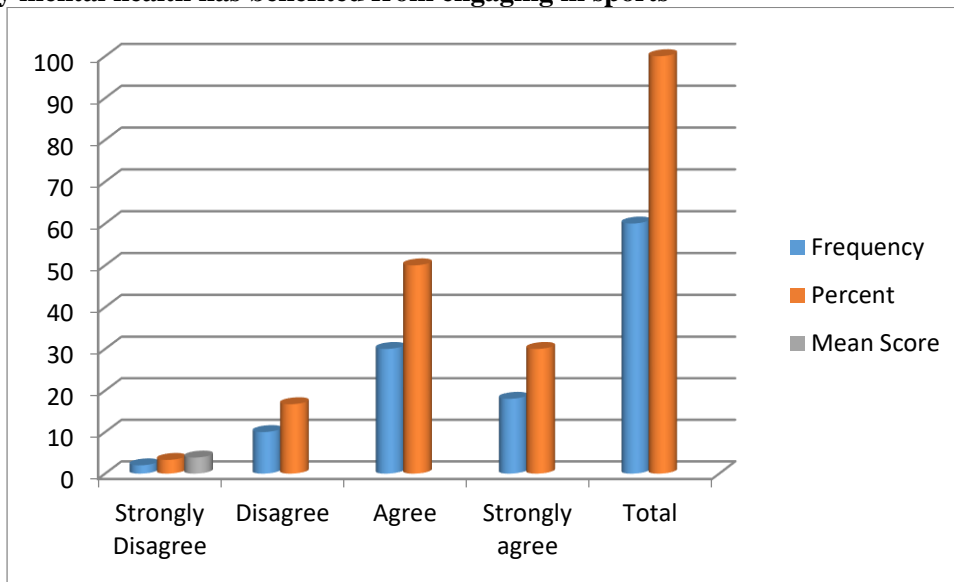
The respondents were agreed with statement I am motivated to participate in sports because I enjoy the social. With an average response rate of 4.12, which mean that the level of agreement is high.

Balancing my sports activities with other responsibilities is challenging.



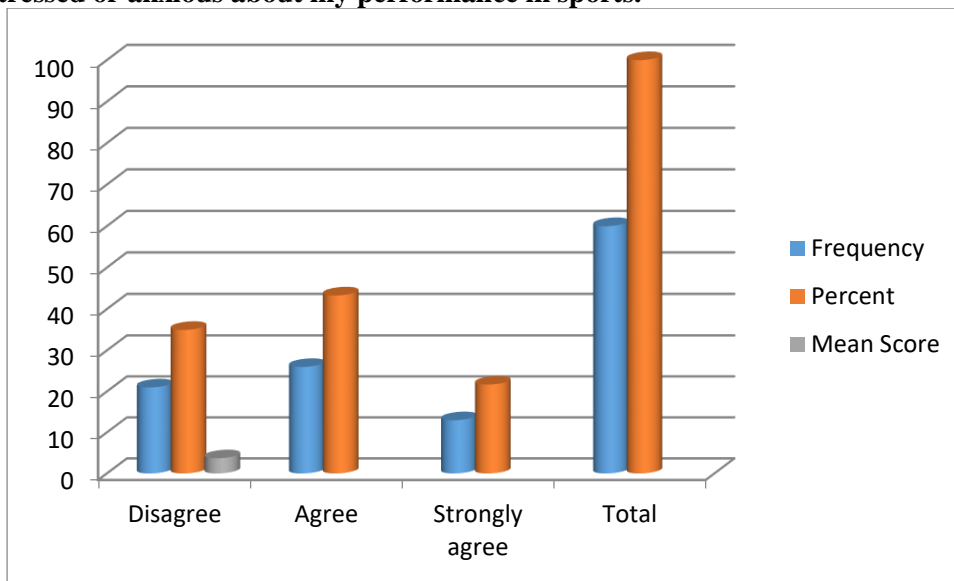
The respondents agreed with the statement balancing my sports activities with other responsibilities are challenging while the average mean is 3.92, indicating a substantial degree of disagreement.

I feel that my mental health has benefited from engaging in sports



The respondents agreed with the statement that doing sports has improved my mental health. With an average mean are 3.87, there is a significant degree of agreement.

I often feel stressed or anxious about my performance in sports.



The respondents agreed with the assertion that experience worry or anxiety regarding how well I perform in sports, With an average mean are 3.71, there is a significant degree of agreement.

Conclusion

Sports professionals navigate a landscape characterized by ambition, competition, and the pursuit of career goals. While they may experience unique benefits such as skill development and networking opportunities, they also face considerable challenges, including job insecurity and performance pressure. Understanding these

dynamics is crucial for developing strategies to support professionals in the sports industry, ensuring their well-being and sustainability in their careers. Both groups experience positive physical and mental health outcomes. However, professional athletes often face higher physical demands and injury risks, necessitating more comprehensive health management strategies.

Leisure participants, while less prone to severe injuries, benefit from the stress relief and physical fitness associated with regular, non-competitive play.

In conclusion, while both leisure and professional sports participation offer substantial benefits, they serve different roles in individuals' lives and society at large. Understanding these distinctions can help inform policy decisions, resource allocation, and the development of programs tailored to maximize the benefits of sports participation across different contexts.

Discussion

This research emphasizes the necessity of tailored approaches to promote sports participation across both leisure and professional contexts. Future studies should continue to explore the intersections between these two domains, examining how experiences in leisure sports may inform professional development and vice versa. By doing so, stakeholders can create more effective programs and policies that enhance sports engagement, ultimately contributing to healthier, more active communities. Leisure sports serve as a vital outlet for personal fulfillment, social interaction, and physical well-being. Sports as a developmental profession provide structured pathways for personal and professional growth, including discipline, teamwork, and resilience. These aspects are less formalized but still present in leisure activities, contributing to personal development in a more flexible and less pressured environment.

Participants in this domain often prioritize enjoyment and relaxation, seeking to enhance their quality of life through recreational activities. However, barriers such as time constraints and financial limitations can impede access and participation, highlighting the need for supportive policies and community initiatives that foster inclusivity.

The comparative analysis of sports participation as a leisure activity versus a development profession reveals significant insights into the motivations, benefits, and challenges faced by individuals in each domain. This study underscores the importance of recognizing the distinct experiences and expectations that shape participation in sports, whether for enjoyment or career advancement. Individuals participating in sports as a leisure

activity are primarily driven by personal enjoyment, health benefits, and social interaction. In contrast, those involved in sports as a developmental profession are motivated by career advancement, skill improvement, and competitive success.

Sports as a developmental profession provide structured pathways for personal and professional growth, including discipline, teamwork, and resilience. These aspects are less formalized but still present in leisure activities, contributing to personal development in a more flexible and less pressured environment. Professional sports significantly contribute to the economy through employment, entertainment, and related industries. Leisure sports contribute to community building and public health, highlighting their value in promoting a healthier society.

Recommendation

- First, promoting accessibility and inclusivity is essential. Community programs should be developed to provide affordable access to sports facilities and equipment, particularly for underrepresented groups. Initiatives that encourage participation among diverse demographics, including women, minorities, and individuals with disabilities, can help create a more inclusive sports culture. By ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to participate, we can foster a greater sense of community and belonging.
- Second, enhancing support systems for sports professionals is crucial. Establishing mentorship programs that connect emerging sports professionals with experienced mentors can provide invaluable guidance, support, and career advice. Additionally, creating workshops and training sessions focused on coping strategies for managing stress and preventing burnout in high-pressure environments can help professionals maintain their well-being and longevity in their careers.
- Collaboration between leisure and professional sectors should also be encouraged. Fostering partnerships between recreational sports organizations and professional sports entities can create pathways for individuals transitioning from leisure participation to professional careers. Organizing events that

showcase the benefits of both leisure and professional sports can highlight opportunities for skill development and networking, thereby bridging the gap between the two domains.

- Increasing awareness and education about the benefits of sports participation is another important recommendation. Launching awareness campaigns that educate the public on the physical and mental health benefits of engaging in sports, regardless of context, can motivate more individuals to participate. Additionally, providing training for coaches and sports professionals on the importance of promoting enjoyment and intrinsic motivation in their athletes, particularly at the grassroots level, can enhance the overall experience of sports participation.

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