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THE IMPACT OF SPORT ACTIVITIES ON STUDENTS' SOCIAL ISOLATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to investigate the correlation between students' sport activity and social isolation. This study is a kind of correlative research and the statistical population consists of students at universities of Miandoab City and 370 ones are selected as the sample size through Cochran formula. The stratified random sampling method is utilized and the subject is investigated through the researcher-made questionnaire. The research findings indicate that there is a negative and inverse correlation between sport activities and social isolation and its dimensions (feelings of helplessness, despair, loneliness, and social tolerance). Accordingly, it can be concluded that the more the sport activities are enhanced in students, the more their social isolation is reduced.

Keywords: *Sport Activities, Social Isolation (Feelings of Helplessness, Despair, Loneliness, and Social Tolerance)*

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, the growth of technology, industry and automation of works has prevented the human motion and reduced the sport activities in the house and workplace. Therefore, the lifestyle without motion has been widespread in most of the developed and even developing countries. This motion poverty causes the failure in sport, mental and thought dimensions in different social classes. The students also constitute a large part of community individuals and thus they will have the social responsibilities as the future professionals.

Therefore, their physical and mental health is extremely important. According to the estimate of the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 500 million people in the world suffered from mental disorders in 1993 and this increase was largely dependent on the population growth and rapid social changes such as the urbanization, changed life style and economic problems (Foroughipour, 1996). Accordingly, the psychology, psychotherapy, physical education and sports science experts have paid more attention to the impact of sport activities on the individual mental health in order to find the appropriate solutions for creating the public health.

On the other hand, we live in an in-transition society and these rapid changes lead to the improved health status and so quick increase of population on the one hand, and the decreased use of physical force on the other hand. Due to the total of these situations, the society will suffer from the motion poverty and thus it increases the prevalence of psychiatric disorders. Because of our young society, these phenomena are going to be the public and even national dilemma among the young generation (Estiri, 2001). The increasing addiction, social libertinism, suicide, dropout, delinquency, etc among the young and adolescence population are the main evidence for the prevalence and spread of mental disorders among this dynamic and energetic and even very vulnerable group. The exercise and sport activities have always been utilized as the appropriate tools for purification of body and mind and creating the exhilaration as well as filling the leisure time in humans. The results of several studies suggest that the mental disorders can be prevented and treated and the physical capabilities increased by creation of physical fitness (ibid). The students participate in these activities for healthcare, positive psychosocial effects, increased stamina, pleasure and accompanying their friends (Tondnevis, 1996). Furthermore, the improved intellectual and

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mental status reduced stress, increased health and strengthened the educational activities and training are the other incentives of this group (Zarei, 2001).

Pronk *et al.*, (1995) have revealed that the intense workout can have great benefits on the mood and behavior and it is associated with the reduced stress and increased self-confidence.

Furthermore, another study indicates that the intense exercise will lead to the changes such as the anxiety, stress, depression and increased self-esteem in people and it is possible that the aerobic exercise causes the increase in self-esteem and depression.

In a study on the occurrence and persistence of depressive symptoms among the Japanese high school students.

Takakura and Sakihara (2001) have found that the pressures of stressors may be the risk factors. On the contrary, the positive health practices, social support and self-esteem may be desirable protective factors of depression which is among the consequences of loneliness (Takakura, 2001).

The exercise has numerous psychological effects such as the reduced anxiety and depression, coping with the stress, increased self-esteem, improved temperament, and development of mental health.

On the other hand, the appropriate health habits or health promoting behavior such as the motion activities and regular exercise have positive impact on the health and quality of life, so that they decrease the infrastructure of psychological and physical disorders and increase the mental health (Faentes, 2010).

Jafari *et al.*, (2010) have found that the type of motivation affects the intensity and duration of performing the students' sport activities; and the health protection, body fitness and social interaction are their main motivations.

Furthermore, the study by Liu *et al.*, (2011) indicates that the students attend in sport activities according to five motivational components namely acquiring the pleasure, attracting the attention, body fitness, competitiveness and social interaction.

Furthermore, both internal and external motivations such as enjoying the sports and attracting the attention have the positive correlation with students' sport activities.

In a randomized controlled clinical trial, Sehuch *et al.*, (2011) utilized the aerobic exercise or dance as a strategy for treating the patients with severe depression.

The results of their study indicate that the physical exercise can be an effective strategy for treatment of severe depression and it improves the symptoms of depression and enhances their quality of life.

Meanwhile, the sports and physical activities are the main and effective factors in individual and social life.

The discussed impact of exercise on individual life indicates the role of sports and exercise on the physical and mental health, happiness and enjoying the physical and mental health and it is not impossible to have such these mentalities because both the motion science and physical education and conducted studies in this regard and also the objective and existing evidence approve these effects.

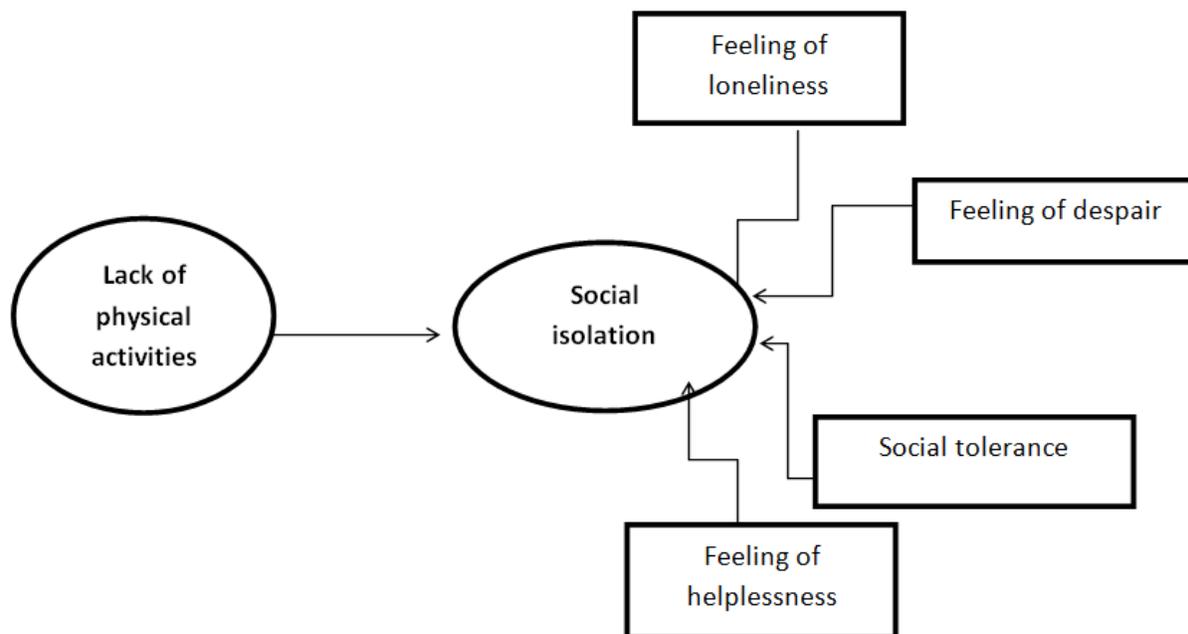
These comprehensive effects are the strong incentives which attract the individuals to sport activities and exercise and it seems that those, who utilize the impact of sport and exercise activities in society, have positive attitudes towards them and if most of the individuals in the society have such a positive attitude, it will be one of the strengths and strong factors in admission of community.

Nowadays, it is proven in human societies that the better compatibility with environment needs the balance and body fitness and composition.

If individuals have no favorable status in terms of physical condition and body composition, they usually become lonely, pessimistic and isolated and thus they will have no proper mental health. Now the question is whether the sport activities can reduce the social isolation?

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Research Model



Source: Research authors

Gould's Theoretical Model

The first model for explaining the participation in sport activities was introduced by Gould and it investigated the young individuals' withdrawal of sports and emphasized on the internal-individual, motivational and situational factors.

According to his viewpoint, the factors affecting the withdrawal of sports are as follows: Interest conflict, lack of success, lack of progress, stress, Anhedonia, injury and lack of interest in coach. He believes that a person measures his own satisfaction with this activity and compares it with other alternative activities through cost-benefit analysis (Sharepour, 2002).

Weiss and Chaumeton's Theoretical Model

According to numerous researchers' viewpoints, the most perfect model for explaining the participation in sports is offered by these two researchers. Using the social cognitive approach, they have emphasized on the way of impact by individual, social and situational factors on each other and their creation of sports participation. They have proposed the special incentive model through numerous important theories. According to this model, the individual motivational orientation is the most important factor affecting the sport participation and its continuity; in other words, whether a person has the internal orientation or the external one focusing on the outcome. A person with internal orientation utilizes a kind of self-reward system. Thus, he has the internal control and favorable perception of competence. These processes enhance the likelihood of his participation in sports. In contrast, a person with external orientation utilizes the outcome abilities (Victory in sports) for judgment on the individual capabilities. Despite the merits of this model, its higher emphasis on the individual motivational orientation has led to the lack of attention to other factors (Ibid, 81).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research has the survey, cross-sectional and explanatory type. The utilization of survey method is considered appropriate due to the large size of statistical population and selected sample. The statistical population of this research consists of all 10000 students at universities of Miandoab City, and 370 ones are selected as the samples according to Morgan Table. The students are relatively selected through stratified random sampling method based on the involvement of each university in statistical population

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and the data analysis is done at the descriptive, explanatory and multivariate analyses levels through SPSS software.

Reliability of Items

Table 1: Reliability of items

Variables	Calculated reliability
Feeling of loneliness	872%
Feelings of helplessness	731%
Social despair	751%
Social tolerance	745%
Social isolation	811%
Sports activity	712%

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Research Hypothesis

There is a significant correlation between the physical activity with social isolation and its dimensions (feelings of loneliness, despair, social tolerance, and helplessness).

There is a significant negative correlation between the predictive variable of sports and physical activities with criterion variable and its dimensions (Feelings of helplessness, loneliness and social despair).

However, there is a significant positive correlation between the sports activities and social tolerance. Furthermore, there is a significant negative correlation between the criterion variable of social isolation (feelings of helplessness, loneliness, social despair, and social tolerance) with follower variable of sports activity.

Table 2: The correlation and significance level between predictive and criterion variables

Criterion variable and its dimensions	Feeling of despair		Feeling of helplessness		Social tolerance		Feeling of loneliness		Social isolation	
	Correlation	Significance level	Correlation	Significance level	Correlation	Significance level	Correlation	Significance level	Correlation	Significance level
Predictive variable of sports activities	-0.66	0.01	-0.47	0.01	0.64	0.00	-0.80	0.00	-0.63	0.00

The Impact of Physical Activity as the Predictive Variable on the Feeling of Helplessness

The results of regression analysis indicate that the physical activity variable has a negative and significant effect on the students' feeling of helplessness and it explains 45% of the total variance in the feeling of helplessness.

Table 3: Results of F test for regression of feeling of helplessness

	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	Significance level
Regression	32.59	1	32.59	6.72	0.00
Residual	2536.48	359	6.89		
Total	360	360			

Adjusted R Square = 0.45, R² = 0.46, and R = 0.50

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Table 4: Coefficients of predictive variable affecting the feeling of helplessness in terms of first step

	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Significance level
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant value	0.18	0.09	-	-1.90	0.06
Sports activities	-0.52	0.08	0.36	5.08	0.00

The Impact of Physical Activity as the Predictive Variable on the Feeling of Despair

The results of regression analysis indicate that the physical activity variable has a negative and significant effect on the students' feeling of despair and it explains 63% of the total variance in the feeling of despair.

Table 5: Results of F test for regression of feeling of despair

	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	Significance level
Regression	204.20	4	51.05	233.26	0.00
Residual	155.80	356	0.22		
Total	360.00	360			

Adjusted R Square=0.63, R²=0.64, and R=0.80

Table 6: Coefficients of predictive variable affecting the feeling of despair in terms of first step

	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Significance level
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant value	0.18	0.07	-	2.71	0.00
Sports activities	-0.38	0.07	0.38	-5.37	0.00

The Impact of Physical Activity as the Predictive Variable on the Feeling of Loneliness

The results of regression analysis indicate that the physical activity variable has a negative and significant effect on the students' feeling of loneliness and it explains 72% of the total variance in the feeling of loneliness.

Table 7: Results of F test for regression of feeling of loneliness

	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	Significance level
Regression	189.48	5	37.90	136.50	0.00
Residual	170.52	355	0.27		
Total	360.00	360			

Adjusted R Square=0.72, R²=0.73, and R=0.85

Table 8: Coefficients of predictive variable affecting the feeling of despair in terms of first step

	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Significance level
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant value	0.68	0.24	-	2.81	0.01
Sports activities	-0.27	0.08	0.27	-3.31	0.00

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The Impact of Physical Activity as the Predictive Variable on the Social Tolerance

The results of regression analysis indicate that the physical activity variable has a positive and significant effect on the students' social tolerance and it explains 67% of the total variance in the social tolerance.

Table 9: Results of F test for regression of social tolerance

	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	Significance level
Regression	174.57	2	87.29	262.58	0.00
Residual	185.43	358	0.33		
Total	360	360			

Adjusted R Square=0.67, R²=0.67, and R=0.82

Table 10: Coefficients of predictive variable affecting the social tolerance in terms of first step

	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Significance level
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant value	0.27	0.09	-	2.86	0.00
Sports activities	0.50	0.08	0.42	6.06	0.00

The Impact of Physical Activity as the Predictive Variable on the Social Isolation

The results of regression analysis indicate that the physical activity variable has a negative and significant effect on the students' social isolation and it explains 79% of the total variance in the social isolation.

Table 11: Results of F test for regression of social isolation

	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	Significance level
Regression	205.82	4	51.45	242.20	0.00
Residual	154.17	355	0.33		
Total	360.00	360			

Adjusted R Square=0.79, R²=0.79, and R=0.90

Table 10: Coefficients of predictive variable affecting the social isolation in terms of first step

	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Significance level
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant value	0.23	0.06	-	3.52	0.01
Sports activities	-0.28	0.07	0.30	-3.75	0.01

Discussion

The sports and physical activities have a special place in today's communities and are able to affect the social flow and trends and cause the fundamental changes in them. The sports activity among the studied students indicates that it affects their interactions and communications. On this basis, it can be concluded that the more the level of sports activity is reduced among the university students, the more their social isolation is increased. The results of this study are consistent with the theoretical model by Weiss and Chaumeton and Gould.

The findings of this research indicate that there is a significant negative correlation between the sport activities and social isolation, and thus the higher sport activity will lead to the lower social isolation in students, and this finding is consistent with the results of research by Tondnevis (1996).

Furthermore, there is a significant negative correlation between the dimensions of social isolation (Feelings of loneliness, despair and helplessness) with sports activities and it is consistent with the

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findings by Takakura and Sakihara (2001), Faentes (2010), Jafari *et al.*, (2010), Liu *et al.*, (2011), Sehuch *et al.*, (2011), and Pronk *et al.*, (1995).

Suggestions for Executive Policies

- 1- Family: It is the first institution which creates the individuals sociable and can lead to the maximum encouragement and support by positive attitude to individual sports particularly the female students. The families can increase the sports activities in the future by registering their student girls in sports centers in order to reduce their social isolation.
- 2- Broadcasting: It can help to institutionalize the sports in the society through providing the advertising with the subject of developing the sports activities among people with the aim at culture building and announcing the entertainment programs which are held by various institutes in different places.
- 3- Municipalities: They provide the infrastructures for widespread participation of young generation, especially the students, in sports through building the indoor and outdoor public sports places with utilization of educated coaches in physical education and holding the recreational group and familial sport competitions in different occasions and distributing the cost-effective sport goods among people.
- 4- Higher education: It can increase the individual knowledge and selection and reduce the students' social isolation through making them familiar with a variety of public sports and developing them at universities, holding the sports competitions in various branches of public and recreational sports and awarding the competition winners as well as educating the students about the sport recreational and local games and holding such these competitions in different occasions at schools and awarding them.

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