

# **DEVELOPMENT OF COMMITMENT AS A LIFE SKILL THROUGH SPORTS: ASSESSING FORMER ATHLETES' PERSPECTIVES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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*The present study was an attempt to assess the perception of government servants in the community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan towards development of commitment as a life skill through sports. The population of this study comprise of doctors, engineers, and teachers who had previously participated in sporting activities in their student lives. Purposive sampling (snowball sampling) technique was used to identify the study participants to complete the self-administered structured questionnaire. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The formulated hypotheses were tested with a significant level of .05. The findings revealed that participants believed that involvement in sports activities develop commitment as a life skill. No gender, as well as category wise differences were found pertaining to the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill. Furthermore, the quality of "commitment" was clearly identified by the stakeholders as being a significant life skill for success in various professions, along with a clear perception that participating in sports would help develop this ability. The findings of the current study will enhance the interest of medical, engineering, and general students and encourage them to participate in sports to be successful as well as advance in their professions.*

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## **Introduction**

Internationally sport has been identified as an institution that has a role to play in helping individuals to become a social and efficient member of society. For many people, the development of positive life skills is, in fact, a

major justification for participation in sports. Life skills not only help youth succeed in sporting activities but if transferred, can also contribute to the individual's success in non-sports setting. These life skills include techniq-

ues and skills that are important and useful for professional lives. The role of sporting activities in teaching life skills is important for both the individual and the society as well.

Jacobs and Wright (2018), highlighted that appropriate quality sports programs develop life skills (self-control, leadership) which play an important role in an academic as well as the social environment. Sports background is more important rather than the classroom learning where youth can face the challenges and learn practical life skills (Turnnidge, Côté & Hancock, 2014). It has been documented since antiquity that sports have the potential to act as a vehicle for personal development (Gould & Carson, 2008; Fraser-Thomas, Côté & Deakin, 2005). Personal development characteristics such as patriotism, commitment, actions, and beliefs can be fostered through sports participation (Hawkman & Van Hom, 2019).

Walker (2019), identified that sports participation associated with participant's potential benefits them in building a sense of belongingness, competence, auto-

nomy and relatedness. Sports context facilitates the positive climate to develop life skills and makes the participants' thriving, functioning and productive citizens (Bean, Kramers, Forneris & Camiré, 2018). Sport has an important role in the modern and contemporary technological age (Super, Verkoojein, & Koelen, 2018), while youth remains helpless concerning the factors such as increased consumption of alcohol and illicit drugs (Kwan, Bobko, Faulkner, Donnelly, & Cairney 2014; Lisha & Sussman, 2010); and racism or negative interaction with peers (Holt, Sehn, Spence, Newton, & Ball, 2012).

A number of life skills can be developed through suitable sports programs in order to help stakeholders survive and thrive in their professions particularly, and in life matters in general (Jacobs, Lawson, Ivy, & Richards, 2017; Dionigi & Son, 2017; Weiss, Stuntz, Bhalla, Bolter & Price, 2013; Camiré & Trudel, 2013).

The development and promotion of the community depends upon the life skills of the different professionals (Hord, 1997). Healthy life skills of the different sta-

keholders motivate community members to act in an effective manner, in this regard, it is clear that sports develop the life skill of the individuals, particularly adolescents and youth (Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2009), because most of the youth sports organizations works upon the social, emotional, and psychosocial development of the participants as one of their prime goals (Carreres-Ponsoda, Escarti, Cortell-Tormo, Fuster-Lloret, & Andreu-Cabrera, 2012).

It is an established fact that doctors, engineers, and teachers are considered as important segments of the society and are signified as highly respected professionals in the Pakistani community. Although, they are serving for the betterment of society from their own perspective skills but improvement in life skills are essential for progression in any profession. Life skill of the stakeholders, particularly those who had participated in various sports activities, forms one of the major variables in the present study. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to ascertain the perception of stakeholders regarding the role of sports in the develop-

ment of commitment as a life skill.

### **Theoretical Background**

Sporting activities demand extensive application of abilities and rigorous potential of its participants. Nature of sports i.e. competitiveness, needs firm dedication and consistency to perform better and efficiently (Swann, Moran, & Piggott, 2015). Sports have the potential to develop the quality of commitment among the participants (Theodorakis, Kaplanidou, & Karabaxoglou, 2015). It is generally believed that committed teams and athletes remain champion, triumphed, and dominant (Frank & Cook, 2010).

Gould and Carson (2008) stated that life skills are those interpersonal assets, skills, and characteristics such as self-esteem, goal driven attitude, diligence, and emotional control which can be developed or facilitated through sports and transferred from one arena to other domains of life. Danish Forneris, Hodge, and Heke (2004), described life skills as behavioral (efficient adults and peer's communication); interpersonal (assertive); cognitive (decision making); and intrapersonal

(goal setting) attributes and dimensions, 'which enable individuals to succeed in a different environment in which they live such as home, school and their neighborhood' (p.60). Commitment as a life skill, is not merely essential for sporting life, but it has also played an important role in non-sports setting.

Scott (2016) and Allen (2013) found that sports develop various life skills i.e. confidence, mental preparation, goal setting, and leadership. Regular sports participation provides bulk of opportunities to develop and build life skills such as commitment and hardworking and bring positive attributes such as self-confidence, which together form resources for non-sporting lives (Eisman, 2014; Jones, Lavalley, & Tod, 2011). Adachi and Willoughby (2014), highlighted that participation in sporting activities plays an important role to foster the positive outcomes through commitment and goal setting.

Sports participation tremendously contributes to the development of positive attributes like fair play, commitment and respect (Coalter, 2013). Eime et al.

(2013) pointed out that sports participation produces the positive characteristics of life such as commitment, which provides greater resilience to control the challenges and stresses of lives. Sports participation has the potential to develop life skills like commitment and cooperation, which leads to the promotion of a conducive environment (Gardner, Browning & Brooks-Gunn, 2012). Gucciardi and Jones (2012) suggested that sports participation and the qualities of mental toughness, as well as commitment links to each other, while Carreres-Ponsoda et al. (2010) highlighted that sports engagement develop the positive features of the participants like self-esteem and commitment.

The development of life skills reported are teamwork, sense of responsibility, self-confidence and integrity, which are essential for professional success (Holt, Tink, Mandigo & Fox, 2008; Forneris, Danish & Scott., 2007; Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007; Brunelle, Danish & Forneris (2007). Sporting participation produce the attribute of commitment along with some other life skills like building teamwork, disregard raci-

sm and ethnic differences, promote constructive time management, foster self-esteem and empathy, which play an important role in non-sports setting (Lasch, 2018; Wilson, 2018 ; Baird, 2018; Adachi & Willoughby, 2016). Sports participants develop the commitment in connection with various constructive personal aspects and features like a sense of control, leadership, which is critically important for the professional lives (Ewing & Seefeldt, 2002; Smoll & Smith, 2002; Davis, 2002; Fredricks & Eccles, 2010; Rosinski, 2010; Head & Alford, 2015; Mahoney, 2000). Lerner (2005; 2002), and Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) stated that sports activities offer those opportunities by which individuals may effectively develop healthy life characteristics such as supportive relationship, commitment and confidence.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This research paper is mainly related to the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill with reference to the views of stakeholders. Therefore, the researchers have focused to achieve the following sub-objectives.

1. To examine the perception of stakeholders regarding the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill.
2. To evaluate the differences between the perception of male and female respondents regarding the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill.
3. To find out the differences among the perception of doctors, teachers, and engineers regarding the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The following hypotheses have been formulated from the literature review and the researchers' personal observations:

**HA1:** The respondents perceive that sports play a significant positive role in the development of commitment as a life skill.

**Ho2:** There are no significant statistical differences between the perception of male and female respondents regarding the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill.

**Ho3:** There are no statistically significant differences among doctors, teachers, and engineers' perceptions regarding the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Population**

All the doctors, teachers, and engineers from public sector institutes from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan constituted the population for this study

### **Sample Size and Sampling Strategy**

Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method used when the number of a population is difficult to locate. Thus, snowball sampling (purposive sampling) technique was employed in the study because other sampling techniques were not feasible due to the nature of the study. The researcher contacted and collected data from 125 respondents, including 97 males and 28 females who had taken part in sports activities during their student lives and were currently working in the public sector ins-

titutes as doctors, engineers or teachers.

### **Instrument used for Data Collection**

A close-ended questionnaire was developed with five responses on a Likert scale (Table 2). The close-ended questionnaire was selected as it is the most economical and inexpensive research instrument available, particularly when data is to be collected from a scattered population.

### **Scoring Process**

The researcher counted the responses of each respondent separately. The collected responses were converted into quantitative research paradigm. The following values were fixed for each option.

**Table 2.** Description of values were fixed for each option

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
05	04	03	02	01

**Statistical tests**

Descriptive Statistics (Total Number, Percentage, Cumulative Percentage, Tables) and descriptive analysis (Mean, Median, Standard Deviations, Tables) of the sample were employed to statistically test the data. Furthermore, inferential statistics (linear regression, t-test, and ANOVA) were also used for data analysis.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**Descriptive Analysis**

Table No. 3 represents the demographic information of respondents included in the survey. For this purpose, percentages are given for gender and category of the respondents.

**Table 3.** Statistics for gender and category of the respondents

	%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	77.60%
Female	22.40%
<b>Category</b>	
Doctors	26.40%
Teachers	53.60%
Engineers	20.00%

Table 3 shows that detailed description of respondents based on their gender and category. According to the table, 77.60 % male and 22.40% female respondents were included in the study. As the Doctors, Teachers and Engineers constituted the study stakeholders, therefore; 26.40% Doctors, 53.60% Teachers and 20.00% Engineers were included in the survey.

**Table No: 4 Responses of stakeholders regarding commitment**

Sr. No	Statement	SDA	DA	UD	AG	SA	Total
1	Participation in an organized team sports develops commitment among participants	0 0.00	2 1.60	5 4.00	37 29.60	81 64.80	125 100 %
2	Sportsman / woman are considered committed in society	1 0.80	3 2.40	3 2.40	39 31.20	79 63.20	125 100 %
3	I consider myself completely committed to my work and workplace	3 2.40	6 4.80	4 3.20	43 34.40	69 55.20	125 100 %
4	I think that I will do everything to accomplish my tasks according to the needs	1 0.80	5 4.00	2 1.60	46 36.80	71 56.80	125 100 %
5	My feelings are really shocking when things are not going well on my part	7 5.60	9 7.20	11 8.80	37 29.60	61 48.80	125 100 %
6	I consider that my duty tasks are more important than anything else	5 4.00	11 8.80	5 4.00	35 28.00	69 55.20	125 100 %
7	I feel happy when I remain involved in work.	3 2.40	5 4.00	2 1.60	51 40.80	64 51.20	125 100 %
8	I like to do interesting and challenging work.	2 1.60	3 2.40	6 4.80	43 34.40	71 56.80	125 100 %
9	I understand where to get help if I have a problem at work.	3 2.40	5 4.00	4 3.20	49 39.20	64 51.20	125 100 %



Table 4 reveals that majority respondents (95.40%) strongly agreed and /or agreed with the statement that sports participation develop commitment among participants, while the small minority of the population opted undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. Likewise, a high percentage (94.40%) of stakeholders perceived strongly agreed and agreed that the sportspersons were considered to be committed in the society, while the rest of population undecided, disagree and strongly disagree.

The majority of respondents believed and strongly agreed and

agreed with the statements such as, completely committed to work and workplace (89.60%), doing everything for the accomplishment of tasks needs (93.60%), feelings shock when things are not going well (78.40%), duty is more important than anything else (83.20%), feelings happy when busy in work (92%), like to do interesting and challenging work (91.20%) and getting assistance when problem arise (90.40%), while the rest of the respondents believed undecided, disagree and strongly disagree with these statements (Table 4).

**Table 5 Regression shows the role of sports in the development of Commitment**

Predictor	Dependent	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	t	B	Sig.
Sports	Commitment	.661	.437	.433	95.574	-3.335	1.487

$\alpha=.05$

The results of the regression (Table 4) describe that hypothesis 02 is accepted. There was a strong indication that respondents believe (43%) that participating in sports play a significant role in the development of commitment. The results show a

P-value (0.00) which is less than alpha level (0.05) which illustrates that participants perceive that sports have a major role in the development of commitment, which is indicated by t score (-3.335). The results also proposed if the predictor (sports

participation) increases, then it will cause an increase in the criterion (commitment) because B (1.487) represents the line or the relationship between the predictor variable and the dependent variable. In addition, the results also explain that sports participation has a significant proportion of variance in commitment  $r^2=.433$ ,  $.437$ ,  $f=95.574$ . The Adjusted R square ( $.433$ ) represent the percentage and

ratio of the variation independent variable affected by the independent variable. The R square ( $.437$ ) also explain the variation in the proportion of independent variables affected by the independent variable. The result of F ( $95.574$ ) represents the significant joint responses of the population. The acceptance of the hypothesis favors that commitment is significantly associated with sports participation.

**Table 6 The statistical differences between the perception of male and female respondents on the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill**

Testing Variables	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.
Commitment	Male	97	4.3979	.33199	123	1.863	.065
	Female	28	4.2661	.32230			

$\alpha=.05$

The result of the t-test (Table 6) reveals that hypothesis 06 is correct. There were no statistically significant differences in the mean score and standard deviation between the perception of male and female respondents regarding the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill. The P-value (0.05) is less

than the variable score of life skill (Table 6). The acceptance of hypothesis 06 demonstrates that there are no significant statistical differences between the perception of male and female respondents regarding the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill.

**Table-7 The mean differences among the perception of doctors, teachers and engineers regarding the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill**

Testing Variable Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	F	Sig.
Doctors	33	4.4082	.33630			
CommitmentTeachers	67	4.3464	.31421	2, 122	.382	.683
Engineers	25	4.3748	.38420			

 **$\alpha=.05$** 

The results of the ANOVA (Table 7) indicate that the hypothesis (03) are accepted. There were no statistically significant differences in the mean score and standard deviation (Table 7) were found among doctors, teachers and engineer's perception regarding the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill. The significant score and results were greater than the P-value (0.05). The results of hypothesis validate that there are no statistically significant differences among doctors, teachers, and engineer's perceptions regarding the role of sports in the development of commitment as a life skill.

## DISCUSSION

The main hypothesis was that the stakeholders would consider that participation in sports has a positive role in the development of commitment as a life skill is confirmed by the data. The ability of commitment in a sustained manner is considered to be a crucial attribute for professionals in Pakistan, and the ability to demonstrate this ability is important for those professionals who are looking to be successful and for professional advancement.

When we consider the two questions relating to the relationship between sport participation and the development of commitment, and the stakeholders were

positive that this relationship existed. Sixty-four and sixty-three percent of the responses, for example, either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements "Participation in an organized team sport develops commitment among participants" and "Sportsman/woman is considered committed in the society".

The stakeholders were also clear that they considered commitment is an important aspect in their professional lives and it was a crucial practice for professional success, while respondents believed that committed persons remain busy in their works, accomplish their tasks on the basis of needs and do interesting and challenging work for personal growth and that they personally demonstrated this ability.

As identified in the literature review a number of studies have considered the development of life skills such as competence and confidence which is directly related to the commitment (Cote et al., 2014; 2106; Dionigi et al., 2011; Eman, 2012; Baker et al., 2010) and associated areas i-e time management as well as persevere (Camiré & Trudel, 2013).

Stakeholders would consider that sports participation create

the sense that duty tasks are more important and be happy while work, Similarly, youth can produce through sporting activities, where they live to be recognized, to do well, fulfil their pursuits and development of leadership skills, citizenship, social success and positive peer relationship, career achievement, which reflects the commitment (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Wright & Cote, 2003; Evan & Roberts, 1987; James, 1995; Manjone, 1998; Elley & Kirk, 2002; Larson & Verma, 1999). Respondents considered that sports participation, develop motivation, determination of specific and realistic goals, improvement in self-grades and constructive utilization of times, which leads to nurture the quality of commitment for their professional lives (Lee et al., 2017; Young et al., 2014; Fraser-Thomas & Cote, 2009). In present study stakeholders believed that sports participation make sure that how to cope the challenging task and resolve the problems, while research endorsed that positive self-concept (self-esteem, mastery, self-worth and sense of control) have the consistent relationship with sports participation as well as sense of self-efficacy (Clark et al., 2015; Camire et al., 2009a).

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