COMPARISON OF THE HAPPINESS AND MENTAL HEALTH OF ATHLETE AND NON-ATHLETE STUDENT GIRLS OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL IN MIANDOAB

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Abstract
In order to run a comparison between the level of happiness and mental health of athlete and non-athlete student girls of the secondary school in Miandoab descriptive-comparative research was conducted. The statistical population of this study was 4343 individuals from which 350 samples were selected in two groups of athletes and non-athletes. The measurement instrument was Oxford Happiness Test (OHT) which was approved by a group of experts in terms of face and content validity. Findings showed that the positive excitement in the athletes was more compared to the non-athletes (P=0/000<0/05). Results of the lack of negative excitement hypothesis test showed that there is a significant difference between the two groups. Findings further showed that athletes have more satisfaction compared to non-athletes (P=0/000<0/05). Comparison of the total mean of happiness and mental health between the two groups proved positive and significant at the error level of 0/05 (T=5/60 P=0/000<0/05), in other words, the level of happiness in athletes is higher than non-athletes.

Key words: excitement, positive, negative, life satisfaction, happiness, mental health

Introduction

With the bloom of technology and development of social welfare, fewer people suffer from hunger and lack of their basic needs. However, there are various problems that many people still suffer from such as bewilderment, lack of having goals, anger, mental weaknesses, depressions, etc. This urges some experts to maintain that more than 50% of the physical illnesses of patients have mental origins (Shamloo, 2005). Meanwhile, changes and developments occur in people’s lives which prompts certain reactions depending on the situations.

Therefore, living environments can either be a place towards which people seek refuge for happiness and welfare and gain satisfaction or, to the contrary, prove to be an impediment of confidence creating a sense of inability and mental problems. Lack of adaptation and having differences are quite conspicuous. In every society, different groups or individual people live who might be in danger of mental problems, among this, students are more volatile (Eshraghi, 2005). Education authorities should be attentive with regard to the excitement and mental issues of students and establish centers for consultation to eliminate the liability to these problems which may prove troubling for students even the smartest ones (Okhovat, 1985). Studies have shown that exercise is both good for physical and mental health and can be effective in mental disorders. Exercise reduces stress, increases self confidence and strengthens self-conception which leads to a sense of happiness. One of the main aspects of health is the mental health.

According to the definition of the World Health Organization, mental health consists in the capability of the harmonic connection with others, reforming the individual environment and settling the differences and personal inclinations in a logical, fair, and appropriate way (Bordbar, 2006). In the late 20th century, psychologists’ attention was drawn to the positive feelings and emphasized this issue. This process had three distinguished approaches which were related to the measurement of happiness, investigating the influential factors on happiness and the methods of increasing happiness (Poursoltani, 2005). Happiness is also defined as the amount of positive value that someone has for himself, in other words, having the positive excitement and lacking negative excitement and ending with the life satisfaction (VecnHoven, 1997).

Education comprises many years of students’ lives and has a vital role in this regard. In this period students earn different experiences and by developing a positive or negative self turn into determined and confident individuals or vice versa. All these personal features that build the foundations of a healthy and happy life are shaped in school (Poshtiban, 2001). Various studies have shown that exercise and physical trainings have positive effects on the body and mind. YantonoTrilavi (1997) examined the effects of physical training on the physical and mental fitness and found it effective in cardiovascular fitness which leads to the mental health and the better communication. Rodin (2006) found out that physical trainings can improve participants’ behaviors, mental health, self-confidence and self-esteem.
McNovil (2003) has introduced nine determining factors in happiness and exercising is one of the most important ones. Leonhardt (2007) rejected the hypothesis which maintained that money can bring about happiness. He believes that exercising is a powerful tool which can reduce mental pressures and bring about happiness. Prokohaim (1996) reported from his study on 16 students who suffered from Asthma and concluded that the children who used to exercise had less stress and handled their illness better compared to the ones who did not participate in physical activities. Kopocristovich (1997) found out in his study on 45 disabled teenagers that social and physical skills are the best predictive factors of emotional adaption. Ross and Holmes (1985) found that students that have been involved in physical trainings had fewer problems with regard to stress or depression symptoms compared to the ones who were not involved. Finding of all studies indicates that there is a positive relationship between exercise and happiness. Hemayat Talab et al. (2003) and Mousavi Gilani et al. (2003) also conducted research on the mental health of athlete and non-athlete university students. Findings showed that the athletes had more self-esteem, satisfaction, efficiency, positive behavior, mental health and happiness compared to the non-athletes. Therefore, the present study examines the relationship between happiness and mental health with exercise and the researchers aims to understand if participation in physical training can have any effects on the happiness and mental health of students.

Materials and Methods

The present study is of the post eventor comparative type. The statistical population consisted of 4343 female students of the secondary school in Miandoab and 350 students were selected as samples using the Morgan Table. The instrument of the measurements of variables included the standard mental health and happiness questionnaire (OHT, 2007). It was comprised of questions about Positive Excitement and Negative Excitement like tolerance in life and time of waking up and 15 questions were related to the positive excitement with titles (happiness, optimism, encouragement in life, enjoying the current situation, have feelings for others, being energetic, loving beauties, consciousness, health, friendliness, making jokes, laughing, attraction, entertainment). Twelve questions also measure life satisfaction variables (life satisfaction, life control, influence on the events, decision making, initiating the tasks, memories, happiness, performance, time management, influencing, commitment, optimism). Likert Scoring (1, 2, 3, 4) was used for scoring the questions. In order to determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaire and resolving the probable drawbacks, an introductory study was conducted on 30 female students of thesecondary school in Malekan County. Experts’ opinions were considered to determine face and content validity. Cronbach’s Alpha was used to determine reliability. Its result for happiness and mental health questionnaire was (α=0.93), to describe the obtained data average, mean, range, variance, collective percentage are used. T-test is used to analyze the research hypothesis. It was calculated with SPSS version 20.

Findings of the Study

Table1. The Descriptive Statistics of the Personal Features of Respondents in the Girls Secondary Schools of Miandoab County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Population</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls Secondary Schools of Miandoab County</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Athlete</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table2: Descriptive Comparison of the Average of the Positive Excitement among Athletes and Non-Athletes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>sd ±M</th>
<th>SD Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Excitement</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>8/56±44/30</td>
<td>0/65692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Negative Excitement</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>8/74±5/51</td>
<td>0/13144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>5/93±3/30</td>
<td>0/45933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Athlete</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>14/50±9/66</td>
<td>0/14666</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings describe the personal features of the respondents in the girls secondary schools (Table1). Findings showed that there is a significant difference between the positive excitement of female athlete students and non-athletes students. It can be observed that the average of the positive excitement of athlete students is equal to (44/30±8/56) with Standard Deviation Error of 65%. It is while the level of positive excitement in the student is equal to (39/26±8/01). Findings showed that there is a significant difference between lack of negative excitement of athlete students and non-athlete students. As can be seen in Table2, the average of lack of negative excitement of non-athlete students is equal to (4/85±1/78). Findings further showed that there is a positive difference between life satisfaction of athletes and non-athlete students. Table 2 shows that life satisfaction in athletes is equal to 23/02±5/9. It is while this amounts to (29/87±5/44) in non-athletes. Findings also showed that the level of happiness and mental health in athletes and non-athletes are significantly different. Table 2 shows that the level of happiness is equal to (82/66±14/50) and this amounts to (79/18±13/24) for non-athletes.

In order to compare the average of the difference among the elements (positive excitement, lack of negative excitement, life satisfaction, level of happiness) of athlete and non-athlete students, t-test was administered.

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The present study showed that lack of negative excitement in athletes is more than non-athletes and it was proved by t-test. Findings of this study were consistent with the findings of Hossein Poursoltani and Rahmaniinia et al. (2005). Their studies showed that physical trainings will increase the mental health and its aspects. Physical trainings also reduce the negative health aspects like stress, anxiety, and depression to a great extent. Danial Tarmast and Sara Tarmast (2006) showed that physical trainings can reduce the state and trait anxiety of students. Another study showed that sport is effective in the reduction of depression among university students (Nejat and Teimouri, 2006). Life satisfaction is a concept unique for each person, followed by positive and negative feelings comprise the three basic elements of psychological health. Life satisfaction denotes an overall evaluation of life which is shaped based on certain goals and the possibility of achievement (Billy, 1998; Habz, 2000) according to Sami Lance. In the present study, findings showed that there is statistical difference between the two groups of athletes and non-athletes with regard to the level of life satisfaction. Consequently, athletes have more satisfaction than non-athlete individuals. Zeinab Khaledian (2006) found that the scores of life satisfaction in extroverted students were higher compared to the introverted students. Birer (2001) also showed that sport has an influential role on self-satisfaction, life satisfaction, competence and efficiency that are elements of mental health. Findings show that sport and physical activities are effective in the reduction of depression, increase of the mental health, improvement of life quality and life satisfaction (Biddle 2000; Morgan 1997; Halse and Travis 1987; Odonogio 2004; Eskeliket 1994). Vang et al. (2004), Ainosores and Theodor-Luke (2005) also showed that physical activities and sport have positive effects on the improvement of mental health, reduction of depression, improvement of welfare, mental and social health, self-confidence, and life satisfaction. Findings of this study on the level of happiness of athlete and non-athlete students indicate that the overall average of happiness between these two groups is significant at 0.05 alpha. In other words, we can say that athlete students are happier than non-athletes. Moharamzadeh and Afrozandeh (2006) conducted a research on the relationship between emotional intelligence and happiness and mental health of athletes and concluded that there is a significant relationship between happiness and mental health. Gholamreza and Naderi’s study showed that aerobic sports have significant effects in self-conception and self-approval, happiness and social acceptance. However, Zandi and Ahmad’s study (2002) in West Azerbaijan did not show any relationship between happiness and sport. Sport, as an important factor for the mental and physical health, can resolve many of the mental problems. With regard to the vital role of regular physical activities, this study investigated the level of happiness among athlete and non-athlete girls so that its findings act as the strategy to prevent different types of physical and mental illnesses.

Table 3 shows that the frequency of data is the same in the two groups for the element of positive excitement (F=0.06 P=>0.05) but the average of the positive excitement of the two groups is significant at the 0.05 alpha (T=5.75 P=0.000<0.05). Therefore, we can say that H0 is rejected and the positive excitement of athletes is higher than non-athletes. Findings further showed that the frequency of lack of negative excitement is the same in the two groups. Therefore, comparison of the averages imply that H0 is rejected at 0.05 alpha. (T=3.61 P=0.000<0.05) Therefore, lack of negative excitement in athletes is higher than non-athletes.Findings showed that the frequency of life satisfaction is the same between the athletes and non-athletes (F=0.37 P=0.54>0.05). Moreover, the hypothesis which indicated the equality of the average of life satisfaction is significant between the two groups. In other words, there is statistical difference between the two groups (T=5.15 P=0.00<0.05). Therefore, athletes have more life satisfaction compared the non-athletes. Results with respect to the level of happiness showed that that the equality of the overall happiness average between athletes and non-athletes is significant at the error level of 0/05 (T=5.60 P=0.000<0.05). In other words, we can say that athletes have higher levels of happiness and mental health compared to the non-athletes.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Athletic subjects were selected as statistic samples from different sport teams and individuals. Based on the information obtained, the positive excitement was calculated via8factors (happiness, optimism, energy, loving beauty, consciousness, laughing, making fun, entertainment) and it became clear that the positive excitement of athlete students is more than the non-athletes. These findings are consistent with the findings of Peymaneh Parsafar and Shahla Hojjat (2006) which showed that one of the influential factors in elevating the intrinsic inspirations for getting happiness and energy is physical activities and sport. Ali Baryar (2006) also found out that physical training can prove to be an effective variable in self-conception of students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T-Test of Equality of Averages</th>
<th>Test of Equality of Variances</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SD Error</td>
<td>Average Difference</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0/8762</td>
<td>5/0399</td>
<td>0/000</td>
<td>5/753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0/18462</td>
<td>0/6671</td>
<td>0/000</td>
<td>3/014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0/61185</td>
<td>3/1528</td>
<td>0/000</td>
<td>5/153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/51383</td>
<td>8/4869</td>
<td>0/000</td>
<td>5/606</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since intrinsic motivational factors like happiness, energy, etc. are of the effective elements in leading people towards sport, families, teachers, and mass media can emphasize these factors to urge motivation and inspiration in people to getting the interested in physical activities and consequently help the society to become more healthy. It is suggested to conduct comparative studies with other sport organizations in Iran with regard to the happiness and mental health and the findings get compared with the present ones. It is hoped that the findings of this study inform the sport organizations of the importance of mental health to that they can move towards generating higher levels of happiness for individuals by strategic and accurate planning.

References

USPOREDBA PROCJENE SREĆE I DUŠEVNOG ZDRAVLJA SPORTAŠA I NE-SPORTAŠA DJEVOJAKA IZ SREDNJE ŠKOLE U MIANDOAB-u

Sažetak
Kako bi se provela usporedba između razine sreće i duševnog zdravlja sportaša i ne-sportaša djevojaka iz srednje škole u Miandoabu provedeno je opisno-komparativno istraživanje. Ukupno je u uzorku ušlo 350 entiteta iz populacije od 4343 entiteta. Formirane su dvije skupine: sportaši i ne-sportaši. Mjerni instrument je bio Oxford Happiness Test (OHT), koji je odobren od strane skupine stručnjaka u pogledu pouzdanosti i valjanosti sadržaja. Nalazi su pokazali da je pozitivnih uzbuđenja kod sportaša statistički značajno više u odnosu na ne-sportaše (P = 0/000 <0/05). Rezultati su pokazali da da postoji značajna razlika između dvije skupine. Nalazi dodatno pokazuju da sportaši imaju više zadovoljstva u odnosu na ne-sportaše (P = 0/000 <0/05). Usporedba ukupnog prosjeka procjene sreće i duševnog zdravlja između dviju skupina pokazala se pozitivna i značajna na razini od 0/05 (T = 5/60 P = 0/000 <0/05), tj. drugim riječima, procjena kaže da je sreća u sportaša veća nego kod ne-sportaša.

Ključne riječi: uzbuđenje, pozitivno, negativno, životno zadovoljstvo, sreća, mentalno zdravlje

Received: August 11, 2013
Accepted: May 30, 2014
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