

Challenges in perspective of life skills acquisition; implication for placement of life skills in university curriculum

Wasim Khan ^{ABCD}, Salahuddin Khan ^{AD}, Tasleem Arif ^D, Sohail Roman Khan ^{CD}
Gomal University, D.I.Khan, Pakistan

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Abstract

Purpose: The main purpose behind the study was to establish the challenges in relation to the acquisition of life skills among university student-athletes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study assessed the extent to which the concern existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude influences life skills acquisition among student-athletes.

Material: Descriptive survey research design was followed to obtain desirable results. The target population of this study consisted of all those who participated in different sport at the university level of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. Amongst them, we selected a representative sample (n=389 fifty 50% of the total population) with the help of a simple random sampling technique. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version, 24 was used to code and analyse the data. The hypotheses were tested by applying statistical tests like Step-wise regression and independents sample t-test. The significance level of 0.05 was fixed to accept or reject the set hypotheses.

Results: Findings of the study indicated that existing resources, facilitators, and trainer/coach attitude significantly influences life skills acquisition among student-athletes (.001, .001 & .000 < .05). The analysed data revealed no significantly difference regarding extent to which specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude influences the acquisition of life skills (.500, .133 & .149 > .05).

Conclusions: The findings of the study revealed that all participants have agreed upon the importance of life skills. Therefore, the life skills course might be considered as an integral part of every educational curriculum of Pakistan. It is suggested that a minimum of 2 hours per week may be included in the educational curriculum of each discipline.

Keywords: challenges, perspective, acquisition, life skills, implication, placement, university curriculum.

Introduction

The youth of the homeland country comprise two-third of its total population. The development of any nation largely depends upon the manpower of its citizens. In this regard, one cannot overstate the role of youth. As a result, there have been many efforts that play an important role in empowering the youth. one of these efforts is through the activities provided in the educational institutions of the country.

Sports and games are an integral part of the academic curriculum [1]. It is necessary for all the educational institutions to make sure the smooth conduct of sports activities and participation. Especially, the participation of university students' who spend most of the time in classrooms, laboratories for research and cut off from social life [2]. The main goal for university sports is the training of the brain and body of young people to keep them physically fit and become a good citizen. Physical activities and sports participation always help the students in higher academic achievements [3].

Sports is believed by many to play an important role in making individuals productive and useful members of society [4, 5]. There is some support in the literature for this view with better positive academic outcomes being reported as directly related are to the time spent

in sports activities [6, 7]. Danish colleagues [8] suggest that participation in high-school sports not only develop life skills among students, but it also contributes to educational achievements. Barber and colleagues [3] reported that sports participation led to higher academic performance, greater autonomy and greater satisfaction in one's first job. While many studies report positive outcome other studies associated with negative outcomes including addiction to tobacco and the use of alcohol [9, 10].

Life skills are those skills that help individuals to successfully work in the environment in which they live [11]. According to Gould and Carson [12] life skills are that personal asset that can be developed in the sports arena and transferred in a non-sports setting. Life skills are those important skills that need in various domains of life, such as family, school, and community [13]. Life skills are important and applicable to everyone who wants successes in various aspects of his/her life and look for a quality life. Life skills at school stage assist students are decision making to select courses for their future career, as well as for selecting a suitable profession [14]. The engagement of young students in dissipated, unsocial and illegitimate activities like smoking, drug abuse, and alcoholism is the result of lack of proper guidance, motivation antisocial behaviour of parents and the use of the internet [15].

The lack of availability of life skills, most of the students is unable to utilize their hidden potentialities in an appropriate manner. Unsocial engagements not only deteriorate the physical but also depreciate the intellectual capacities of the students, the real asset of the nation [16]. In this regard, a well-organized and properly planned program of life skills development can help students to deal with the growing pace and alteration of modern life [17]. Development of basic life skills strengthens the individuals' capabilities to meet the present day demands and helps in dealing with many emerging issues like poverty, famines, suicide, drug abuse, sexual harassment, juvenile delinquency and anti-social activities.

A resource is an aid or support that is needed to assist, to sketch and to achieve something. Life skills do require numerous resources in the shape of required facilities, facilitators, space, positive attitude of trainer, and equipment for its development and improvement. Clearly, one of the most important skill for a trainer is to determine the needs and to identify resources that can resolve these needs and then to require the needed resources. For life skills acquisition, it is highly desirable to have proper qualified and non-qualified trainer/coach, proper space, and proper equipment and gears in relevance with the nature of activity. Without these facilities the program cannot be conducted in a befitting manner. So, for any program identification and facilitation of resources are very much important.

Although life skills acquisition seems most neglected in the curriculum of the educational institutions of Pakistan. The focus is mainly on the curriculum contents already designed especially for university students. However, those students who participate in sport can learn basic life skills to some extent.

Objectives: To examine the influence of specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude upon life skills acquisition among university student-athletes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and to examine the extent to which the influence of specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude is the same between male and female university student-athletes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Hypotheses: Ha1 – The specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude would significantly influence the acquisition of life skills among university student-athletes. Ho2 – The extent to which specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude influences the acquisition of male athletes would not significantly differ from that of female athletes.

Materials and Methods

Participants: Population refers to the full set of individuals or of objects having uniformity in their characteristics. The population for the study comprised of all those students who participated in a competitive sport and were enrolled in Public or Private Sector Universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Research Design: For obtaining desirable information,

the researcher used the survey technique, in which the data were collected at a specified time of the year from different students of both private and public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Sampling Strategy: The province of KP comprises 26 districts in which thirty-six (36) public and private sector universities are established. Amongst, these universities, the researcher selected 18 those universities, whose teams are regularly taking part in Inter-Collegiate, Inter-Varsity, and all Pakistan Inter-Varsity sports events. The researcher then obtained a total number of those students who participated in sports events of Inter-Collegiate, Inter-Varsity, and all Pakistan Inter-Varsity from the respective Directorate of Sports of every university. According to the Entry Form of students 778 students from the sampled universities participated in the Inter-Collegiate, Inter-Varsity, and all Pakistan Inter-Varsity sports competitions. Amongst them, the researcher selected a representative sample (n=389 fifty 50% of the total population) with the help of a simple random sampling technique.

Research Instrument: Questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection in the study. Questionnaire is considered as useful tool as it eliminates bias since respondents are given the same questions [18]. The questionnaire was properly developed by the researchers encompassing all the aspects of the study and validated by the academic staff in the Department of Sports Sciences and Physical Education of Gomal University. Prior to the main study, pre-testing of the developed instrument was conducted between thirty students (males=17 and females=13) from a target population having different sport and socio-cultural background. The students those who participated in the pilot study but were not included in the main study. Mugenda, O. and Mugenda, A. [19] suggests the pretest sample is between 1% and 10% depending on the sample size. This pre-testing of the questionnaire was conducted to identify questions that don't make sense or problems with the questionnaire that might lead to biased answers.

Data Collection Procedure: Prior to data collection, the researchers accorded formal approval from Students Supervisory Committee (SSC), Department of Sports Sciences and Physical Education, Gomal University to conduct survey in the universities. Upon receiving formal approval, the survey began in the first week of January 2019. The researchers collected the required data in four weeks. The coaches and sports organizers of the Sports Directorate of the sampled universities helped the researchers in soliciting the responses from students' athletes. It is important to mention that a total of 389 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents, however; 335 corrected filled questionnaires were received back and used in data analysis.

Statistical Analysis: The responses collected through questionnaires were carefully arranged, tabulated and analysed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version, 24. To assess the influence of existing resources, facilitators, and trainee attitude upon the life skills acquisition of university student-athletes,

step-wise regression was applied; where the acquisition of university student-athletes was considered the dependent variable and existing resources, facilitators, and trainee attitude were taken as the independent variable. Similarly, to examine whether there exist significant differences based on gender (Males and Females) regarding specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude. To address this hypothesis, the independent sample t-Test was used. The aforementioned statistical tests were used considering the requirements of the set hypotheses of the study. The basic aim behind the use of these statistical tests was to test the hypothetical statement for obtaining precise and accurate findings and conclusion.

Results

Demographic Profiles: The gender, ethnicity, and mother tongue were taken into consideration as shown in table 4.1. The distribution of the athletes based on their gender shown in table 1 was 265 (79.1%) male and 70 (20.9%) females. Ethnicity of the respondents was classified into four categories i.e., Pakhtoon, Saraiki, Hindko, and any others; out of 335 student-athletes 261 (77.9 %) were Pakhtoon, 60 (17.9%) Saraiki, 10 (3.0%) were having Hindko ethnicity, and 04 (1.2%) were those having any other ethnicity. Similarly, the mother tongue was analyzed from four categories as shown in table 1 i.e., Pashto, Saraiki, Hindko, and any others; out of 335 athletes 245 (75.8%) were spoken Pashto, 61 (18.2%)

Sariki language, 12 (3.6%) were speaking Hindko, and only 08 (2.4%) were spoken other languages.

Table 1 presented the characteristics of n = 335 participants included in the study. The gender, ethnicity, and mother tongue were taken into consideration as shown in table 1.

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

H 1 – The specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude would significantly influence the acquisition of life skills among university student-athletes.

The above table showing the results of step-wise regression regarding the effect of Existing Resources, Facilitator, and Trainer Attitude upon Life Skills acquisition of the participants. In first model, Existing Resources identified 47.8% effect upon learning Life Skills. The second model Existing Resources and Facilitator produced 48% effect on learning Life Skills. As well as the third model Existing Resources Facilitator, and Trainer Attitude put 48% upon learning Life Skills.

Coefficient Table shows that if one-unit increase in Existing Resources will cause of .676-unit increase in the influence of learning Life Skills, on the other hand if one-unit increase in model two Existing Resources Facilitator will cause of .677 unit increases in the influence of learning Life Skills. If one-unit increase in model three Existing Resources, Facilitator, and Trainer Attitude will cause of .693 units increases in influence of learning Life Skills.

Table 1. Demographics characteristics of participants (n=335)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	265	79.1
	Female	70	20.9
	Total	335	100.0
Ethnicity	Pakhtoon	261	77.9
	Saraiki	60	17.9
	Hindko	10	3.0
	Any other	4	1.2
	Total	335	100.0
Mother Tongue	Pashto	254	75.8
	Saraiki	61	18.2
	Hindko	12	3.6
	Any other	8	2.4
Total		335	100.0

Table 2. Step-wise regression showing the influence of existing resources, facilitators, and trainee attitude upon the acquisition of university student-athletes

Model Summary					
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.
1	.692 ^a	.478	.474	118.303	.000 ^b
2	.693 ^b	.480	.472	59.021	.000 ^c
3	.693 ^c	.480	.468	39.080	.000 ^d

a. Predictors: (Constant), Existing Resources; b. Predictors: (Constant), Existing Resources and Facilitators; c. Predictors: (Constant), Existing Resources, Facilitators, and Trainer Attitude

Table 3. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.165	.210		5.549	.000
	Existing Resources	.676	.062	.692	10.877	.000
2	(Constant)	1.035	.307		3.375	.001
	Existing Resources	.677	.062	.692	10.855	.000
	Facilitators	.037	.064	.037	.585	.000
3	(Constant)	1.063	.328		3.244	.002
	Existing Resources	.693	.091	.709	7.600	.000
	Facilitators	.055	.095	.055	.577	.000
	Trainer Attitude	.041	.166	.029	.248	.000

a. Dependent Variable: learning Life Skills

Table 4. independents sample t-test describing the results of male and female students regarding specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude

Variables	Gender	n	Mean	Std.	T	Sig.
Existing Resources	Males	265	3.2931	.69082	-6.674	.500
	Females	70	3.3736	.84985		
Facilitator	Males	265	3.6365	.72334	1.505	.133
	Females	70	3.4940	.65831		
Attitude of Trainer	Males	265	3.8006	.72974	-1.443	.149
	Females	70	3.9486	.71850		

Hence the hypothesis that the specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainee attitude would influence the acquisition of university student-athletes is hereby accepted.

Hypothesis 2

H 1 – The extent to which specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude influences the acquisition of life skills among male athletes would not significantly differ from that of female athletes.

The independents sample t-test indicated that there are no significant differences in existing resources as challenges in the acquisition of life skills between male and female students ($t(335) = -6.674, p = .500 > .05$). Similarly, there are no significant differences in facilitator as a challenge between male and female students ($t(335) = 1.505, p = .133 > .05$). The table describes, there is no significant differences in attitude of their trainers between male students’ athlete and female students’ athletes ($t(335) = -1.443, p = .149 > .05$). Therefore, the hypothesis that extent to which specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude influences the acquisition of male athletes’ would not significantly differ from that of female athletes is accepted.

Discussion

The researchers focused on to establish the challenges in relation to the acquisition of life skills among university student-athletes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The main hypothesis that the specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainee attitude would influence the acquisition of university student-athletes is confirmed by the analysed data shown in (table 2 & 3). When we analyse the responses of students pertaining to the three questions a) availability of existing resources, b) existing facilitators, c) attitude of trainer/coach, and, all show that student-athletes admitted the influence of existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude influences the acquisition in relation to the acquisition of life skills.

One of the interesting findings of this study tends to indicate the participants had not acknowledged the role of coaches in the development of life skills through sports. Participants in this study reported that university sports program where coaches are not specifically trained to teach life skills, student-athletes still replied they can learn life skills. It may be due to the fact that athletes are not taught in perspective of life skills development through sports in a systematic manner. Similar results have been found by Holt et al [20] that athletes reported a number of skills such as ability of collaborative work,

time management skills, proper planning, ability to compromise, self-efficacy, and leadership abilities, even though their coach did not directly teach them to develop these skills. A study conducted by Shah [21] found that coaches have limited knowledge, especially in the two important areas of sports nutrition and sports psychology. Therefore, efforts must be taken to arrange and participate in sports coaches and trainers in sport psychology interventions. In terms of gender differences regarding extent to which specific challenges such as existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude influences the acquisition of male athletes', the analysed data revealed no significant difference.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that acquisition of life skills is important in educational institution. Although life skill is not included in the program of activities of universities. The acquisition of life skills might be considered as life long process that seeks to help students effectively function in various domains of life, such as family, school, and community. The study concludes that participants both male and female reported that the proper and effective acquisition of life skills is influenced by several factors like existing resources, facilitators, and trainer attitude. The findings of the study revealed that all participants have agreed upon the importance life skills. Therefore, the life skills course might be considered as an integral part of every educational curriculum of Pakistan. It is suggested that a minimum of 2 hours per week may be included in the educational curriculum of each discipline.

Implication

The results of the present study were supporting the participation in sport for promoting remarkable development in the perspective life skills among university students. However, if the obstructive limitations faced by the researcher during the course of study are overcome; the results may be more desirable both the perspectives, i.e; development of life skills and its smooth onward transfer through sport. The findings of the study may help in the expansion of awareness and education on benefits of life skills acquisition among student, as well as addressing the challenges facing in the acquisition of life skills among students through the curriculum.

Limitation

The present study was carried out among the university level students, the researcher is ambitious to inclusion of larger and diverse population would help in adding to the credibility of future research in this area. Likewise, this practice would produce better results that would substantiate the relation of the sport with the development and transfer of life skills among students.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have declared no conflict of interest.

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Information about the authors:

Wasim Khan; (Corresponding Author); <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1888-2975>; wasimkhan2057@gmail.com; Department of Sports Sciences and Physical Education, Gomal University, D.I.Khan; Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Pakistan.

Salahuddin Khan; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1491-9363>; drslahuddinkhan@yahoo.com; Department of Sports Sciences and Physical Education, Gomal University, D.I.Khan; Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Pakistan.

Tasleem Arif; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0718-5330>; Tasleemarif12345@gmail.com; Department of Sports Sciences and Physical Education, Sarhad University of Science and Technology, Peshawar; Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Pakistan.

Sohail Roman Khan; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0505-7538>; Roman614015@gmail.com; Department of Sports Sciences and Physical Education, Gomal University, D.I.Khan; Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Pakistan.

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