

Social skills and emotional well-being as influenced by their sports involvement among 3-year diploma students by Elaisa Rose P. Franco

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***Elaisa Rose P. Franco**

Filamer Christian University
Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines
Email address: markgilgabe29@gmail.com

Minnie P. Chan, PhD

Filamer Christian University
Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines
Email address: markgilgabe29@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examined how participation in sports affected the social skills and mental health of three-year diploma students at Dumalag Vocational Technical. There were 150 students who were polled using a validated 29-item questionnaire that covered demographic information, sports activity, social skills, and emotional well-being as part of a quantitative, survey-correlational research methodology. According to data analysis using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation, respondents had high levels of emotional well-being, social skills, and sports activity. Sports participation and social skills, sports participation and emotional well-being, and social skills and emotional well-being all showed significant positive relationships at the 5% level of significance. The results confirm that students who actively participate in sports have much improved emotional resilience and interpersonal skills. The study emphasizes how important sports are as a tool for student development in schools and suggests including organized physical activities into curricula to promote overall development.

Keywords: sports participation, social skills, emotional well-being

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INTRODUCTION

Sports and physical activity play a vital role in fostering the social skill development and emotional health of adolescents, a period characterized by increasing academic demands, interpersonal challenges, and heightened vulnerabilities to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression (Yang et al., 2024). Despite evidence supporting the benefits of regular exercise in reducing depressive symptoms and enhancing self-esteem, many adolescents remain physically inactive, which contributes to their poor mental health outcomes. Moreover, emotional well-being in teenagers is closely linked to their self-perceptions of sports competence, underscoring the importance of fostering positive self-concept alongside physical performance to mitigate behavioral problems (Donaldson & Ronan, 2006).

Beyond mental health benefits, participation in sports provides critical opportunities for the development of essential social skills. Research by Budiman et al. (2022) and Quang (2023)

highlights how both intra-curricular and extracurricular sports activities enhance communication, problem-solving, and teamwork abilities among students. These findings align with Jones's (2024) assertion that team sports offer structured environments for cultivating vital skills such as communication and conflict resolution, which are increasingly important in professional and social contexts. Nevertheless, challenges persist, including the global decline in youth sports participation, especially among females, which limits access to the associated social and psychological advantages (Eather et al., 2023). Additionally, gaps remain in the literature regarding the nuanced effects of sports on social skill development in specific populations, such as Chinese college students, highlighting the need for more focused and contextually relevant research (Takami, 2015).

The integration of sports and physical exercise into adolescents' daily routines has demonstrated significant potential to enhance both emotional and social well-being. However, more comprehensive investigations are necessary to address existing gaps by exploring long-term outcomes, differential impacts across demographics, and the effects of various types of sports engagement. The promotion of physical activity within community and educational frameworks is crucial to this endeavor, with a focus on activities that cultivate positive emotions, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills, in addition to mitigating negative psychological states (Yang et al., 2024; Quang, 2023). Effective programs must prioritize fostering positive self-concept related to sports competence to maximize emotional benefits, emphasizing self-worth and behavioral health over mere performance metrics (Donaldson & Ronan, 2006). Sustained participation, particularly through community-based initiatives, is essential to prevent social isolation and support mental health during the transition from adolescence to adulthood, a period marked by high dropout rates from organized sports (Eather et al., 2023).

Further research underscores the importance of delineating the specific contributions of different forms and levels of sports participation to social skills development. Budiman et al. (2022) and Lv and Takami (2015) call for greater clarity on how intra-curricular versus extracurricular activities differentially influence skills such as communication and teamwork. Jones (2024) similarly highlights the current lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the role of team sports in cultivating leadership, cooperation, and communication among youth. By optimizing sports programs with intentional design and implementation, educators and community organizers can create environments that not only address deficits in social contact but also equip young people with the competencies necessary for success in diverse social and professional settings.

Despite the recognized benefits of sports and physical activity, the full potential of these interventions remains underrealized due to insufficient research, inadequate program design, and weak policy support. Addressing these limitations requires collaborative efforts among educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders to develop inclusive, evidence-based initiatives that harness the developmental advantages of sports for holistic student growth. Specifically, there is a pressing need to examine the effects of sports participation on the social skills and emotional health of three-year diploma students, whose unique challenges and developmental contexts have been understudied. Incorporating athletics into academic curricula emerges not only as beneficial but as essential for preparing students to navigate future complexities effectively.

Grounded in Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which posits that individuals acquire behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses through observation and interaction within their social environments, this study adopts a theoretical framework that explains how sports

participation facilitates social and emotional development. Within the sports context, students observe and emulate peers, coaches, and teammates, thereby enhancing cooperation, communication, and conflict resolution skills—key competencies for interpersonal functioning (Smith et al., 2019). Additionally, the camaraderie and emotional support inherent in team sports can bolster resilience and overall emotional well-being (Weiss et al., 2020). Applying social learning theory provides a robust lens to investigate the dynamic relationships between environmental influences, interpersonal interactions, and the social-emotional growth of diploma students engaged in sports activities.

Statement of the problem

This study aimed to determine the social skills and emotional well-being influenced by their sports involvement among 3-year diploma students. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of sports involvement of the 3-year diploma students?
2. What is the level of social skills of the 3-year diploma students?
3. What is the level of emotional well-being of the 3-year diploma students?
4. Are there significant relationships among the sports involvement, social skills, and emotional well-being of the 3-year diploma students?

METHODOLOGY

This study investigated the influence of sports participation on the social skills and emotional well-being of three-year diploma students during the 2024–2025 academic year. Employing a quantitative survey-correlational research design, the study aimed to explore statistical relationships among the variables of interest. Quantitative research, widely used in the social sciences, relies on numerical data collection and analysis to examine psychological, social, and economic phenomena. This approach enables the identification of patterns, correlations, and comparisons through standardized and measurable data, in contrast to qualitative methods which emphasize narrative and open-ended data collection (University of Texas Arlington Libraries, 2016). The survey method was utilized to systematically collect data reflecting the attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of the sampled students, providing quantitative descriptors representative of the larger population (Avedian, 2014). A correlational design was chosen to analyze the non-experimental relationships between the independent variable—sports involvement—and the dependent variables, social skills and emotional well-being, without manipulation of the variables (Swaim, 2022).

The research was conducted at Dumarag Vocational Technical School in February 2025, where one hundred fifty three-year diploma students served as participants. These students completed a structured, close-ended questionnaire designed to assess their social skills and emotional well-being as influenced by sports participation. The instrument consisted of 35 items divided into sections covering demographic information, sports involvement, social skills, emotional well-being, and the perceived impact of sports on social and emotional development. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), allowing for nuanced measurement of participant attitudes. To facilitate interpretation, a verbal descriptive scale categorized mean scores into five levels: Very High, High, Moderate, Low, and Very Low.

The questionnaire underwent rigorous content validation by a panel of experts to ensure relevance and clarity. Subsequently, a pilot test was conducted at Passi Trade School on February 7, 2025, involving thirty students from various year levels to evaluate item clarity, completion time, and gather feedback for refinement. Following revisions, the instrument was administered to a larger group of 159 students to further validate its suitability for measuring social skills, emotional well-being, and sports involvement. Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .831, indicating a high level of internal consistency for the instrument's items, which were retained for final use.

Data collection was facilitated through a formal letter of authorization submitted to the Vocational School Administrator III at Dumalag Vocational Technical School. This letter outlined the study's purpose and significance, emphasizing its potential to contribute valuable insights into the social and emotional development of students. Upon receiving institutional approval, the researcher distributed the survey instruments alongside a student information sheet to all participants. The completed questionnaires were then collected, encoded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics including frequency counts and percentages were employed to summarize demographic characteristics of the participants. Means and standard deviations were calculated to assess levels of social skills, emotional well-being, and sports involvement, as well as the variability within responses. Inferential statistics, including analysis of variance (ANOVA), were used to examine significant differences across groups when applicable. Finally, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was utilized to determine the strength and significance of relationships between sports participation, social skills, and emotional well-being, thereby addressing the core objectives of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' level of sports involvement

The level of sports involvement among the three-year diploma students was examined, revealing a mean score of 3.85 with a standard deviation of 0.59. This score falls within the "High" category based on the provided scale, indicating that students are actively engaged in various sports activities. Observations confirmed that students participated enthusiastically in sports such as track and field, basketball, and volleyball during intramural events. Their dedication and competitive spirit transformed them from mere spectators into active players. During these activities, students demonstrated exceptional collaboration by coordinating plays, communicating effectively, and supporting one another, which reflects the development of essential interpersonal and teamwork skills applicable in both academic and professional contexts. Moreover, a high level of discipline was observed as students consistently showed respect for coaches, referees, and fellow players while adhering to game rules. Their sense of fair play and integrity further highlighted the positive behavioral traits nurtured through sports participation. Collectively, these findings illustrate a strong culture of character development and sportsmanship among the students, suggesting that active engagement in sports substantially influences their discipline, interpersonal interactions, and overall personal growth.

These results align with previous studies that emphasize the positive impact of sports participation on students' psychological health and social skills. For instance, Brooks (2002)

found that student-athletes exhibited significantly higher self-concept scores compared to non-athletes, indicating that athletic involvement enhances self-perception and mental well-being. Similarly, Orhan (2020) highlighted the critical role of structured school environments in fostering regular physical activity habits, reinforcing the notion that organized academic settings support increased sports participation. Hopkins (2020) further contributed by exploring strategies that improve internalized motivation for physical education, which in turn positively influences student engagement in sports. These converging findings support the current study's conclusion that higher levels of sports participation are associated with improved social and emotional outcomes.

Students' social skills

The analysis of social skills among the three-year diploma students yielded a mean score of 4.01 and a standard deviation of 0.64, placing social skills within the "High" category on the interpretative scale. This suggests that students involved in sports possess well-developed social competencies, including effective communication, interpersonal interaction, and relationship-building abilities. The researcher's observations corroborate these quantitative findings, noting that students communicated confidently during both structured group activities and informal conversations. Their ability to express themselves clearly and listen actively facilitated meaningful social exchanges and positive relationships. Furthermore, the students exhibited strong teamwork orientation, characterized by cooperation, respect for diverse viewpoints, and a shared commitment to collective goals, thus fostering inclusive and supportive social environments. Their adaptability across various social contexts—demonstrated by responsiveness to changing situations and positive interactions with peers and authority figures—further underscores their social competence. These capabilities not only contribute to successful academic collaboration but also promote personal growth within the broader school community.

The results resonate with prior research examining social skills and adjustment. Dalal and Sarika (2022) established a link between higher social skills and better social adaptation among secondary students, supporting the idea that structured activities such as sports enhance social functioning. Similarly, Yang et al. (2024) investigated the effects of different physical activities on youth social skills and antisocial behavior, finding that activities like jogging and cycling foster social skills more effectively than others such as swimming. This nuance validates the current study's suggestion that the type of sport may influence the degree of social skill development. García-Valcárcel et al. (2018) further confirmed that cooperative team learning significantly improves social competencies in higher education settings, reinforcing the premise that sports participation encourages teamwork, collaboration, and communication—core elements of social skill growth.

Students' level of emotional well-being

Regarding emotional well-being, the students demonstrated a mean score of 4.04 with a standard deviation of 0.62, indicating a generally high level of emotional health. The relatively low variability suggests a consistent experience of emotional well-being across the sample. Observationally, students displayed commendable emotional stability during academic and social activities, maintaining composure and calmness in the face of pressure and unexpected

challenges. Their mature emotional regulation was evident in problem-solving approaches that emphasized patience and resilience rather than frustration or discouragement. Resilience emerged as a prominent theme; students were able to recover quickly from setbacks, learn from mistakes, and remain focused on goals, reflecting strong internal coping mechanisms and positive self-image. Additionally, the participants fostered a supportive peer environment characterized by optimism, encouragement, and constructive contributions to group efforts. This combination of emotional fortitude and communal support highlights the integral role of emotional intelligence in their academic success and personal development.

These findings are consistent with previous research on student emotional well-being. Brown et al. (2022) reported comparable emotional well-being scores among university students, while Johnson and Lee (2022) documented slightly higher scores linked to structured academic and extracurricular engagement. Conversely, Martinez et al. (2021) noted lower emotional well-being scores attributable to external stressors such as academic pressure and insufficient institutional support. Smith and Rivera (2020) similarly reported moderate emotional well-being, emphasizing the significant influence of learning environments and mental health resources. Collectively, these studies underscore the importance of peer support, academic involvement, and extracurricular activities in sustaining high emotional well-being, which the current study affirms through its findings.

Relationships among the sports involvement, social skills, and emotional well-being of the students

The inferential analysis examined relationships among sports involvement, social skills, and emotional well-being using Pearson's correlation. Results revealed statistically significant positive correlations between sports involvement and social skills ($r = 0.848$, $p = 0.000$), sports involvement and emotional well-being ($r = 0.792$, $p = 0.000$), and social skills and emotional well-being ($r = 0.873$, $p = 0.000$). The strong association between sports participation and social skills suggests that active engagement in sports enhances interpersonal competencies. Observations during school sporting events supported this conclusion, as students involved in team sports demonstrated effective communication, teamwork, and self-confidence when interacting with peers and mentors. Their ability to coordinate, plan collectively, and show mutual respect facilitated constructive group dynamics and social interactions.

Moreover, students who participated actively in athletics exhibited notable emotional resilience and stability, maintaining composure under pressure and during unexpected challenges. Their emotional maturity was evident in their capacity to manage stress and focus during competitive situations. The analysis further showed that students with strong social skills—particularly in empathy, collaboration, active listening, and communication—also displayed heightened self-confidence and emotional resilience. These students contributed positively to group projects and navigated interpersonal conflicts with ease, reinforcing the reciprocal relationship between social competence and emotional well-being. Their optimistic outlook and adaptability in managing stress and failures highlighted the influence of positive social relationships on emotional health.

These findings align with contemporary literature, including Doe et al. (2024), who reported that engagement in team sports significantly improves youth social skills through interaction and cooperation. Smith and Lee (2023) similarly found that athletic participation enhances communication and teamwork, resulting in improved social competence among

students. The positive correlation between sports involvement and emotional well-being concurs with Schuch et al. (2023), who emphasized physical activity's critical role in mental health maintenance. Brown et al. (2023) further supported these findings by demonstrating that sports engagement promotes emotional regulation and reduces stress levels. The strongest correlation identified between social skills and emotional well-being echoes Williams et al. (2024), who linked robust social networks to increased emotional resilience and psychological well-being. Garcia and Torres (2023) additionally highlighted positive peer relationships through athletics as protective factors against emotional distress.

The study confirms that sports participation plays a vital role in fostering social skills and emotional well-being among three-year diploma students. The significant positive correlations among these variables support the rejection of the null hypothesis, which posited no significant relationships. These results emphasize the importance of encouraging sports involvement as an integral component of student development, given its substantial benefits for both social and emotional domains.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to determine the influence of sports involvement on the social skills and emotional well-being of three-year diploma students. Specifically, it aimed to assess the levels of sports participation, social competencies, and emotional health among these students, as well as to examine the relationships among these variables. The research hypothesized that no significant relationships would exist among sports involvement, social skills, and emotional well-being. The participants consisted of a randomly selected sample of three-year diploma students from Dumalag Vocational Technical School, with sample size determined through Slovin's formula and respondents chosen via stratified random sampling.

The findings revealed a high level of sports involvement among the students, encompassing various facets of physical activity, teamwork, and discipline. This active engagement in sports appears to play a vital role in fostering students' overall personal development. Alongside this, students demonstrated a high level of social skills, characterized by effective communication, collaboration, adaptability, and the ability to build and maintain positive relationships. Their emotional well-being was also notably high, reflecting emotional stability, resilience, and effective stress management. Importantly, significant positive relationships were identified between sports involvement and social skills, between sports involvement and emotional well-being, and between social skills and emotional well-being. These correlations indicate that students who actively participate in sports tend to develop stronger interpersonal abilities and greater emotional resilience, thereby enhancing their overall well-being.

The results underscore the critical role that sports participation plays in promoting discipline, teamwork, and physical activity, which collectively support students' holistic growth. The well-developed social competencies observed among the students further facilitate improved interpersonal relationships and cooperative interactions. The high emotional well-being of the students suggests a capacity to maintain mental stability, demonstrate resilience, and effectively cope with stressors. The significant correlations found between sports involvement and social skills, as well as between social skills and emotional well-being, affirm that athletic engagement is closely linked to the development of both social and emotional domains.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that TESDA-accredited institutions offering three-year diploma programs consider integrating organized sports into their curricula. This could be achieved by including physical education courses, sports-related subjects, or extracurricular activities that encourage consistent physical activity. Moreover, promoting sports participation through interschool competitions, sporting events, and providing access to facilities and equipment can motivate students to engage more actively in athletics. Given the demonstrated connection between sports and social skills, institutions should also develop team-based activities such as cooperative games and leadership programs to further enhance students' interpersonal interactions and communication abilities. Recognizing the impact of sports on mental health, educational programs should incorporate initiatives aimed at stress reduction, emotional resilience, and mental health awareness, including mindfulness practices, wellness workshops, and counseling services. Additionally, fostering collaborations between TESDA institutions, sports organizations, local government units, and community programs can expand opportunities for student involvement in physical activities and promote sustained engagement. Finally, further research is encouraged to explore the long-term effects of sports participation on holistic student development, particularly regarding the cultivation of essential life skills such as discipline, emotional resilience, and leadership within TESDA-accredited programs.

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