

Sports participation and subjective well-being of adolescents:
mediation of self-esteem and leisure satisfaction

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Abstract

It has been suggested that: (1) participation in sport and exercise is associated with higher adolescent subjective well-being, and (2) leisure satisfaction and self-esteem mediates the relationship. These hypotheses were tested using data from a survey on the behavior and attitudes of high school students from Oradea, a Romanian town. Findings from a representative sample of 1000 subjects indicate that, controlling for age, physical activity is moderately associated with life satisfaction and happiness. A test of mediation of self-esteem and leisure satisfaction was done with structural equation software AMOS, showing no direct causal between sports participation and subjective well-being. The relationship is mediated by self-esteem for boys and leisure satisfaction for both sexes. Finally, implications for promoting physical activity among adolescents were discussed.

Psycho-social benefits of sport participation in adolescence

- Improve academic achievement
- Increase self-esteem
- Reduce depression and anxiety, and suicide attempts
- Increase life satisfaction

Aspects of the relationship between sport participation and life satisfaction

- A moderate association was proved in several all age groups (Donovan, 2002)
- Sports involvement was proved to be correlated with:
 - actual life satisfaction (Thrane, 1999) (Vilhjalmsson, 1992)
 - life satisfaction in adult life {Ajdacic-Gross, 2002} (Varca, 1984) (Serbu, 1997)
- The pattern was different for boys and girls (Varca, 1984)

Mediators of the relationship between sport participation and life satisfaction

- Self-esteem
- Leisure satisfaction
- Health
- Social Integration

Self-esteem as a mediator of the relationship between sport participation and life satisfaction

- Sport participation and self-esteem
 - A well-established empirical relationship in sports psychology (Erkut, 2002)(Delaney, 1995)
 - Causal mechanisms: sports participation foster positive body images, enhanced perceptions of physical competence and predict higher self-esteem (Richman, 2000)
 - Reverse causation possible: those with higher self-esteem are as a group the more frequent participants in sports (Lindner, 1999 #12)
- Self-esteem and life satisfaction: highly correlated

Leisure satisfaction as a mediator of the relationship between sport participation and life satisfaction

- Sport participation and leisure satisfaction
 - Causal mechanism: sports reduce leisure boredom (Gordon, 1996)
- Leisure satisfaction is one of the predictors of life satisfaction.

A test of mediation

- Hypothesis no. 1

Sports participation is associated with higher adolescent life satisfaction

- Hypothesis no. 2

Self-esteem and Leisure satisfaction are mediators of the relationship between sport participation and life satisfaction

Method and sample

- Results are from a survey in Oradea
- A stratified random sample was designed with high-school students.
- Size of the sample: 1000 subjects

Measures

- Life satisfaction scales

Single question 10-points : “Considering the whole situation, how satisfied are you about your daily life?”

0. Very unsatisfied.....10 Very satisfied

- Leisure satisfaction

Single question, 5 points scale

Measures

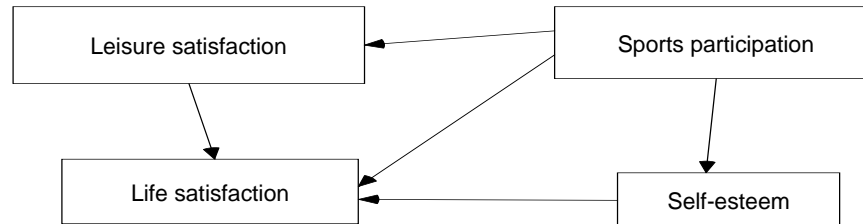
- Self-esteem

Rosenberg self-esteem scale (10 items)

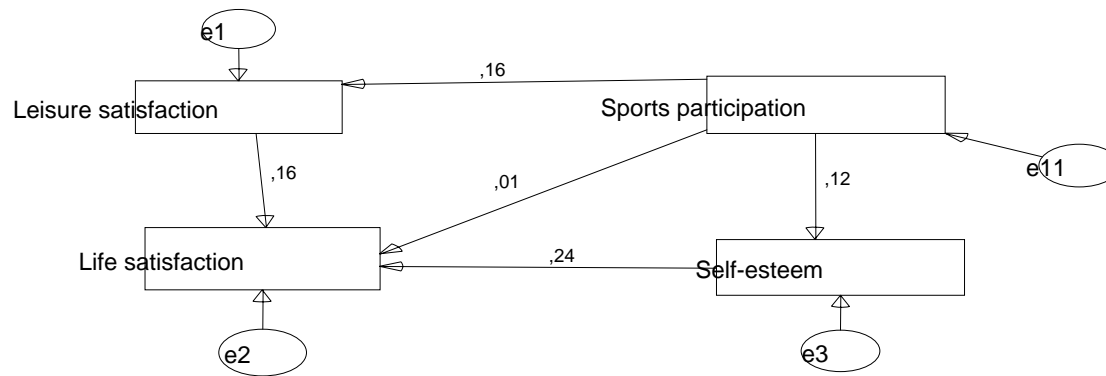
- Sports participation

Single question

Causal model



Structural model



Structural model fit

•	Discrepancy	73,865	0,000	10006,548		CMIN	
•	Degrees of freedom	2	0	20		DF	
•	P	0,000	0,000		P		
•	Number of parameters		26	28	8		NPAR
•	Discrepancy / df	36,933		500,327		CMINDF	
•							
•	RMR				RMR		
•	GFI				GFI		
•	Adjusted GFI					AGFI	
•	Parsimony-adjusted GFI						PGFI
•							
•	Normed fit index	0,993	1,000	0,000		NFI	
•	Relative fit index	0,926		0,000		RFI	
•	Incremental fit index		0,993	1,000	0,000		IFI
•	Tucker-Lewis index	0,928		0,000		TLI	
•	Comparative fit index		0,993	1,000	0,000		CFI

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