

ROLE OF TEAM GAMES IN RAISING SELF-ESTEEM IN STUDENTS

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Abstract. *An individual's motivations and emotions support the success of any enterprise. Increased motivation doubled by balanced emotions is the basic premises of any type of performance. Athletic competitions develop the opportunities for moral conduct, strengthen the character and bring benefits both personally and emotionally. Encouragement and praise when successful or the effort made when not successful develops in athletes a feeling of valorisation and appreciation for one's own person. Team sports have a higher impact on self-esteem compared to individual sports because they develop the feeling of belonging and of mutual support; team games are favourable for social bonding. This paper emphasise the importance of team games in raising self-esteem in athletes. The study is a comparative one and it focused on BUASVMT students that practice successfully team games and BUASVMT students that attend only physical training classes stipulated by the curricula. After applying the Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and after talking to the students and systematically observing them, we could see that, besides obvious physical health benefits, there was also an improvement of their general psychic comfort and, in some cases, even an improvement of their school record. It is thus proven that students that are actively involved in team games have a higher self-esteem than the others do.*

Key words: *sport, football, self-esteem, athletes*

INTRODUCTION

In general, practicing and developing certain physical skills bring forth in individuals a rise of personal satisfaction feelings that later lead to raised self-esteem. Participating in any type of sport improves not only our personal physical skills: it also involves inner factors, psychological ones that mobilise us personally. This type of mobilisation produces inside us major changes: a significant increase of the perception of ourselves and, particularly, of self-esteem.

Sport has been defined as “a complex of physical exercise and games practiced methodically and aiming at developing, strengthening and educating will, courage, initiative and discipline; any of the particular regulated forms of this activity” (DEX).

Seen from another perspective, sport represents a social type of activity because it mobilises several categories of people aiming at improving and developing physically and, above all, at developing one's personality harmoniously. Sport becomes for individuals a factor capable of changing his/her mood thus generating happiness and optimism. This also works for students that practice a certain sport: they become more optimistic, more satisfied, and they have a positive attitude in front of difficulties or of certain situations generating stress or frustration.

Football involves the participation of team members in different athletic competitions. Besides its technical and sport character, football is also a social game that gathers masses of people. The social pressure on football player is constant, and their emotions need to be managed. Thus, a football player's emotions can turn into beliefs that he/she carries into any

competition. On the other hand, the coach is the one responsible for the management of the athlete's moods and for the implementation of different strategies means to alleviate stress in athletes or to manage their emotions. Competition generates emotions even in high-performance, well-experienced athletes who become tensed before the competition. Athletes learn to adapt to this situation, to control their emotions; in a word, they learn to adapt to new challenges. Their body is subjected to different nervous excitation states that produce at biochemical level such conditions as high heart rate, which is, usually, associated with anxiety. A football coach can be of help in such situations by giving an optimistic, positive meaning of the athlete's state. At the same time, he is the one that can suggest optimistic perspectives dismantling states of anxiety and fear thus contributing to a significant raise of self-esteem in the players.

According to a study from 2009 carried out by Elsevier Science and Health, team games have a higher impact on self-esteem than individual sports because they develop a feeling of belonging and of mutual support because of the social bonding. As an educational process, sport contributes fully to the multilateral moulding of the students. Using different methods in accordance with pedagogical and biological principles, physical training has complex influences on the youth strengthening their health, ensuring a harmonious development, establishing a proper body posture, and improving motor activities. Developing and improving multilateral motor activities (hygiene, applicative-utilitarian, sport-like) is the fundamental goal of physical training in youth. Basic applicative-utilitarian motor activities are the basis of an individual's motor skills: they help individuals act proficiently in various life situations.

An individual's motivations and emotions support the success of any enterprise. Increased motivation doubled by balanced emotions is the basic premises of any type of performance. Athletic competitions develop the opportunities for moral conduct, strengthen the character and bring benefits both personally and emotionally. Encouragement and praise when successful or the effort made when not successful develops in athletes a feeling of valorisation and appreciation for one's own person.

Self-esteem is that aspect of feeling that interests the way we assess ourselves as humans. (Birch, 2000, p. 236)

In general, people with high self-esteem have a positive, realistic opinion of themselves and their personal skills. People with medium self-esteem are more conformist, have less thrust in their own forces and need more social acceptance. Individuals with low self-esteem are sad and isolated; they refuse all types of activity and are extremely sensitive to critics. Lack of confidence in one's own forces compromises all types of activity since individual and collective progress are based on self-confidence, on the motivation of developing good things and on the conviction that you can do it (Roco, 2001, p. 105).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Starting from the premises above, we aimed at emphasising the importance of team games in raising self-esteem in athletes.

To do so, we used a sample of 22 subjects, students of the BUASVMT in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years of study. Of the total 22 students, 11 are members of the football team and recorded good performance at national level in students' championships organised by similar higher education institutions; the other 11 students attend only physical training classes stipulate by the curricula.

This study investigated the level of self-esteem in both students of the BUASVMT who practice football within an organised frame with notable performances and students who

attend only physical training classes stipulated by the curricula. To establish the level of self-esteem, we used Rosenberg's self-esteem questionnaire (1965).

This scale was developed initially to measure global level of personal value and of self-acceptance. The scale contains 10 items with four possibilities of response between total disagreement and total agreement.

In ranking the results, we referred to values between 10-16 points (low self-esteem), 17-33 points (medium self-esteem) and 34-40 points (high self-esteem).

Besides the questionnaire used in this study, we also took into account systematic observation during physical training classes, during meetings before competitions, and coach-players debates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After applying the Self-esteem scale and after talking to the students and systematically observing them, we could see that, besides obvious physical health benefits, there was also an improvement of their general psychic comfort and, in some cases, even an improvement of their school record. It is thus proven that students that are actively involved in team games have a higher self-esteem than the others do. Even in situations when the football team was defeated, ambition, perseverance and solidarity of the team members trying to overcome the situation prove a rather good level of self-esteem to support energetically and motivationally future projects and activities.

After applying Rosenberg's self-esteem scale (1965), we could note the following:

- 90% of the members of the football team recorded between 30 and 40 points;
- 67% of the other students recorded between 16 and 30 points.

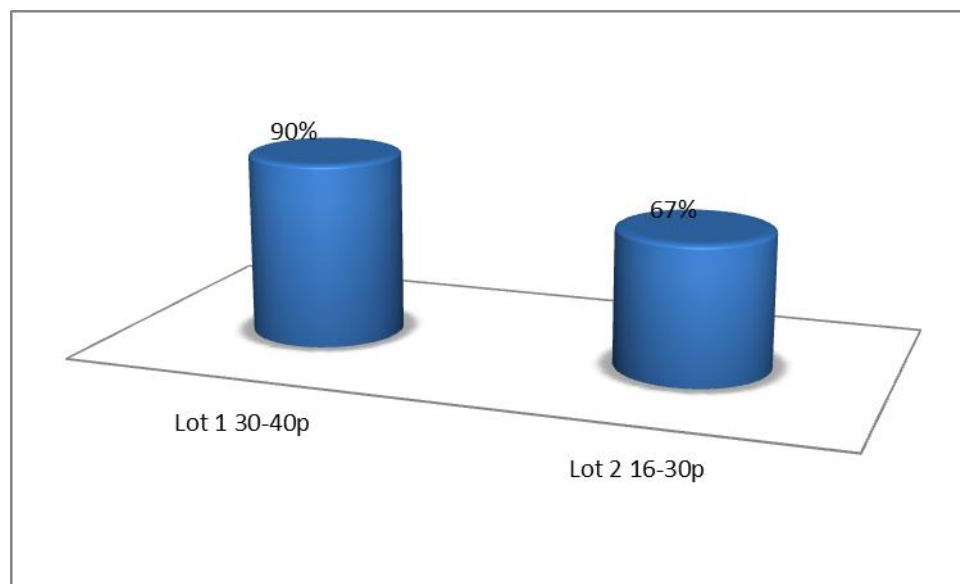


Figure 1. Report self-esteem in the two experimental groups

These results point to the importance of positive emotions and of solidarity among team members that raise the self-esteem necessary to the psychic health of any person.

The high scores in the football team member sample in items no. 1, 3, 4, and 7 make a difference between them and the students that attend only physical training classes: sport results make students assess themselves positively, which raises their self-esteem. On the other hand, the share of responses to the item 3 (regarding the good qualities of a student) was relatively homogeneous in both student samples. Thus, we can say that both samples had the same perception regarding the assessment of personal qualities.

The two samples were relative homogeneous (we tried to select the subjects with about the same school records and that had no diagnosed emotional issues). We did this to avoid other causes to be responsible for the rise or fall of self-esteem level in the subjects.

On the other hand, the fact that the subjects who were members of the football team recorded a high level of self-esteem is a necessary and indispensable premise for future competitions.

CONCLUSIONS

Sport, in general, practiced both individually and as a team, contributes to the moulding of a good competition conduct, moulds characters and prepares the individuals to behave fair play as both a winner and a loser. For athletes, organising time, well communicating, thoroughly planning, and working as a team are essential. Students practicing sports believe that they can contribute to performance only as pairs or collaborators.

Football is among the most practiced and watched sports in the BUASVMT; the high visibility of this true phenomenon contributes largely to the raising of self-esteem among students as our study has shown.

The coach, as an “energetic supporter”, is the one who aims at valorising the athletes; he also shows athletes that, despite all the efforts, they are rewarded. The most important parameter to reach is to raise self-confidence in his students thus contributing to the raising of self-esteem.

We did not aim at studying other beneficial aspects of the raising of self-esteem, but literature shows there is an immutable bond between this aspect and the raising of school performance.

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