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The Impact of Team Sports on Psychological Variables (Anxiety and Depression) and Their Association with Social Adjustment among Middle School Students

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Abstract :

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of team games on specific psychological variables (anxiety and depression) and their association with social adjustment among middle school students. The research sought to determine whether statistically significant differences exist between students who participate in team games and those who do not, by applying tailored learning units.

The study was carried out on a sample of students from *Naïmi El-Hadj Middle School* in Médéa Province. The experimental method was employed, along with a research instrument consisting of a questionnaire addressing anxiety, depression, and social adjustment, in addition to specially designed learning units based on team games.

The results indicated that team games have a positive influence on psychological variables (anxiety and depression) as well as on the social adjustment of participating students

Keywords: team games, social adjustment, anxiety, depression, adolescents

Article info

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1. Introduction:

Today, physical and sports activities of all types have become an outlet for members of society. Owing to this importance, they have been incorporated into school curricula at all educational stages, where physical education is taught as a subject equal to others. Researchers emphasize that individuals go through a critical stage in life where psychological and social problems often emerge—adolescence. Opinions about this stage vary among scholars; some describe it as a "major crisis for the child," while philosophers have referred to it as the "second birth," characterized by morphological and psychological disturbances.

The sudden changes experienced by adolescents—whether physiological, cognitive, morphological, or social—can negatively affect their comfort and well-being. These changes often lead to conflict, beginning with the family, which may over-monitor and interfere in the adolescent's private affairs. This, in turn, drives behavior toward aggression and produces undesirable conduct. Among the most common negative outcomes are anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal, which often serve as external manifestations of repressed emotions.

In this sense, physical education sessions ,particularly team sports,play a fundamental role within schools. They help students overcome such psychological challenges (anxiety and depression) and prepare them to adapt and integrate successfully into society, keeping them away from isolation and negative tendencies.

Through its diverse physical activities, sport seeks to develop the individual in a holistic way. Within the educational context, physical and sports activities are presented through physical education classes, aiming to shape students across multiple dimensions: health, fitness, psychological stability, and social interaction. These classes contribute to raising physical and cognitive performance, enhancing intellectual and emotional capacities, and fostering positive social behaviors through coexistence and interaction with peers (Ibrahim, 1980, p. 45).

From this perspective, it is clear that physical and sports activities—especially team games—play a significant role in reducing or alleviating psychological and physical difficulties among students. This reflects the general agreement among educators and psychologists that engaging in group activities in a structured and scientific manner has a positive effect on the individual's health, both physically and psychologically (Mohammed Mustafa, 1979, p. 289).

The objectives of team sports, in particular, carry an influential and integrative impact on behavior, especially for students. They provide learners with essential social skills needed in their everyday life in general and in their peer relationships in particular (Ali Mousa, 2011).

Accordingly, the following research questions are proposed:

General Research Question:

- What is the impact of team sports on certain psychological variables and their relationship to social adjustment among middle school students?

Sub-questions:

1. Does the level of anxiety, depression, and social adjustment differ between the pre-test and post-test of the control group?
2. Do team sports practiced by the experimental group have a positive effect on anxiety, depression, and social adjustment among middle school students?

. Research Hypotheses.

1. General Hypothesis:

Team sports play a positive role in reducing certain psychological factors (anxiety and depression) and show an inverse relationship with social adjustment among middle school pupils.

.2. Specific Hypotheses:

1. The levels of anxiety, depression, and social adjustment remain unchanged between the pre-test and post-test for the control group.
2. Engaging the experimental group in team sports produces a positive effect on their levels of anxiety, depression, and social adjustment.

3. Research Objectives:

- To examine the influence of team sports on the development of psychological variables such as anxiety and depression, and their link to social adjustment.
- To identify the differences in psychological aspects between students who participate in team sports and those who do not within educational institutions.

4. Significance of the Study:

- To introduce the effective role of team sports in alleviating anxiety and depression among middle school pupils.
- To highlight the positive outcomes of engaging in sports activities, particularly through team games, in enhancing social adjustment.
- To emphasize the value of these activities in fostering psychological well-being across all members of society.

5.Research Terms:

- **Social adjustment**: An internal psychological process through which an individual seeks to achieve a level of acceptance of the prevailing conditions at university, or to overcome barriers that prevent the fulfillment of their desires.
- **Anxiety**: An internal psychological state resulting from internal conflicts related to not accepting the situation.
- **Depression**: A state of mood swings accompanied by sadness and a loss of pleasure and interest in

situations and changes.

6 . Previous and Similar Studies:

- -Abdul Hamid's study: **The role of social upbringing of children of unknown parentage in social compatibilit**

The study aimed to understand We address the root causes of social noncompatibilty among these children and how to integrate them into society through social solidarity to harmonize the social fabric and thus maintain social stability. (Abdelhamid, 2024)

- **Boukhalifa's study(The contribution of recreational sports physical activity in reducing the severity of neuroticism among adolescent**)

The study aimed to explore the contribution of recreational physical activities in reducing neuroticism in adolescents, which is considered one of the most significant dimensions of personalit it was found that recreational physical sports activities help reduce neuroticism in adolescents. (Boukhalfa, aloune, & sakhri, 2025).

- **-Discussion of Previous**: Studies Based on the results of studies that addressed anxiety in adolescents, socialization plays a significant role in shaping a balanced personality, fostering inner satisfaction and balance without grumbling or internal psychological resistance, which can lead to anxiety and depression. Sports practice also contributes to creating the appropriate social environment, namely a group of friends. Through play and contributing to achieving victory, it gives students the opportunity to showcase their talents, change their thinking patterns, and transform a tense psychological state into one of joy. Through the above, our topic seeks to understand the impact of sports practice on achieving social harmony and reducing anxiety and depression. Team games are a micro-social formation that incorporates different thinking patterns that align with each other to provide a state of psychological satisfaction and acceptance of both winning and losing from a spontaneous, joyful perspective.

2 - Research Method:

Given that this study is field-oriented and seeks to determine the extent to which team sports influence psychological variables and their connection with social adjustment among middle school students, the experimental method was deemed most suitable for addressing the research problem.

1. Research Population and Sample

Research Population:

The study population is defined as the group targeted by the researcher, upon which the results can be generalized. It refers to a population sharing at least one common characteristic that differentiates it from others (Rajae Wahid, 2000, p. 183).

Accordingly, the research population was defined by the variables of the study, comprising middle school pupils from *Naïmi El-Hadj Middle School in Djawab – Médéa*, with a total of **388 students**.

2. Research Sample:

The research was conducted on middle school students (Naïmi El-Hadj Middle School – Djawab, Médéa), who were deliberately selected. The sample consisted of:

- An exploratory sample: 40 students.
- The main research sample: 40 students, divided into:
  - (20) students in the **experimental group**.
  - (20) students in the **control group**, who were not engaged in any physical activity (exempted).

Variables	Male	Female	Total
Experimental group	10	10	20
Control group	10	10	20

These variables (age, height, weight) are regarded as among the factors that may influence students' psychological state. To verify this, the researcher employed the *t-test* to identify whether significant differences existed between the mean values of these variables for the control and experimental groups.

Table (02) presents the degree of homogeneity between the two samples (control and experimental):

Variable	Control (n=20)	Experimental (n=20)	t calculated	t tabulated	Level of significance
	M	SD	M	SD	
Chronological age (years)	12.33	8.55	12.32	9.52	1.53
Height (m)	1.64	0.01	1.68	0.00	0.78
Weight (kg)	60.23	46.59	59.49	44.55	0.33

A - Expert Validity: The researcher presented the scale to a group of expert professors consisting of six members. He also provided them with a research summary that included the introduction, objectives, research problem, and hypotheses. After all experts reviewed the questionnaire and provided a set of comments and remarks, the researcher committed to implementing the suggested modifications.

B - Internal Consistency Validity: Internal consistency validity was verified using the SPSS program. The results showed that all questionnaire items achieved statistically significant correlations, with the lowest value being (0.709) and the highest value being (0.925). This indicates that the questionnaire has a high level of internal consistency validity, which reassures the researcher about its use.

Reliability of the Questionnaire: To calculate the reliability coefficients of the 60 items in the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and the split-half method were applied, using the SPSS statistical program.

A - Cronbach's Alpha:

Table (05) shows the overall reliability coefficient using Cronbach's Alpha for the Anxiety, Depression, and Social Adjustment Questionnaire.

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.851	60

We notice from the above table that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient reached **0.851**, which is considered a strong value for the questionnaire on anxiety, depression, and social adjustment. This indicates that the questionnaire has strong reliability, which reassures the researcher in using it for the study.

1. Special learning units for team games: The special learning units for team games consist of several elements that must be followed, including defining objectives, analyzing content, identifying different levels and individual differences among learners, and specifying the time allocated for each learning unit.

2. Presentation, analysis, and discussion of results:

1. Analysis and discussion of the first hypothesis: This hypothesis states that the level of anxiety, depression, and social adjustment does not change between the pre-test and post-test of the control group. Therefore, the appropriate statistical method in this case is the **t-test for two independent samples**.

Table (06) represents the statistical significance of the levels of anxiety, depression, and degree of social adjustment between the pre-test and post-test of the control group

Measurement	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Calculated (t) Value	Tabular (t) Value	Significance Level	Statistical Significance (0.05)
Pre-test	1.22	0.507	0.624	1.98	0.534	Not significant
Post-test	1.28	0.454				

From Table (06), which concerns the pre-test and post-test of the control group, it is observed that there are no significant differences between them, as the calculated *t*-value (0.624) is smaller than the tabulated *t*-value at the 0.05 significance level with 18 degrees of freedom.

Discussion of the first research hypothesis: The first research hypothesis states that the levels of anxiety, depression, and degree of social adjustment are not affected between the pre-test and post-test of the control group. Based on the results presented in Table (06), it was shown that there are no statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-tests regarding the psychological variables (anxiety and depression) and the degree of social adjustment.

3. Analysis and discussion of the second hypothesis: This hypothesis states that the team games applied to the experimental group have a positive effect on the levels of anxiety, depression, and degree of social adjustment among middle school pupils. Therefore, the appropriate statistical method in this case is the *t*-test for two independent samples.

Table (05) represents the statistical significance of the effect of group games applied to the experimental sample and their relation to the level of anxiety, depression, and social adjustment among middle school pupils

Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	Tabulated t-value	Calculated t-value	Significance Level	Statistical Significance (0.05)
Pre-test	1.54	1.034	1.98	3.082	0.003	Significant
Post-test	2.16	0.976				

It is clear from Table (07) that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in the post-test and pre-test of the questionnaire as a whole. The mean value of the pre-test was **(1.54)**, while the mean value of the post-test was **(2.16)**. The calculated *t*-value was **(1.98)**, which is significant at the 0.05 level, as it is lower than the tabular value **(3.082)**. This is in favor of the post-test, indicating an improvement in the level of social adjustment among the experimental sample after applying the group games program, and its impact on reducing anxiety and depression among middle school pupils compared to their peers in the control group.

Discussion of the second research hypothesis: The second research hypothesis states that the group games applied to the experimental sample have a positive effect on the levels of anxiety, depression, and social adjustment among middle school pupils. Based on the results of Table (07), it was shown that there are statistically significant differences between the pre-test and post-test concerning the psychological variables (anxiety and depression) and the degree of

social adjustment, in favor of the post-test. This is due to the essential positive role that group activities of various types play at this developmental stage.

3. Conclusion: Through this study, which investigated the contribution of group games in improving certain psychological variables (anxiety and depression) and their relationship with social adjustment among middle school pupils, both in theoretical and practical aspects, we concluded that sports activities in general, and group games in particular, play a major and effective role in reducing or improving negative psychological factors such as anxiety and stress. This is especially important considering that this age group represents a transitional stage in cognitive, emotional, psychological, and physical growth. We observed that pupils engaged in sports or group games were better able to control their emotions regarding anxiety and depression and were more socially adjusted compared to non-participants.Based on the findings of this study, using the experimental method and statistical analysis of the hypotheses, the results concluded that:Group games have a positive effect on anxiety, depression, and social adjustment among middle school pupils.

4. Suggestions and Recommendations:

1. To give greater importance to group activities and games, considering them an essential part of school and daily life to achieve psychological security and reassurance for pupils.
2. To design and implement group games programs for pupils in other educational stages.
3. To highlight the importance of group sports games due to their significant impact on general health and particularly on mental health.
4. To raise cultural awareness about the role of sports activities, especially group games, in alleviating and overcoming psychological stress, anxiety, and depression.

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