

## Investigating the relation between sports participations of the women from education department of darehshahr and enhanced quality of life indices

Azam Amouzadeh <sup>1,\*</sup>, Nasrollah Pourafkari <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*M.A. candidate of Social Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Shoushtar Branch, Shoushtar, Iran*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Social Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Shoushtar Branch, Shoushtar, Iran*

---

**Abstract:** Global changes and developments in the contemporary life areas have made physical education and sport the necessities which seem to be unavoidable. As an educational and training process, physical education encompasses acquiring and processing movement skills and maintaining physical preparation for health. Acquiring scientific knowledge of physical activities is a means for improving human function which has an effective role in people's growth and exultation. In view of the importance and development of the field of science and physical education and sport, its goals are not limited to specific demographic categories but has spread to all demographic groups. This study is aimed at investigating the relation between sports participations of the women from Education Department of Darehshahr and enhanced quality of life indices and has been carried out by means of descriptive method. The research data have been gathered using the quality of life standard questionnaire, composed of 26 items, with the Cronbach's alpha put at 88%. The questionnaires were distributed among the statistical samples of 330 subjects, divided into 165 athletic women and 165 non-athletic women, and analyzed by means of SPSS application and student's t method. Results suggest that there is a difference between physical wellbeing, job satisfaction, personal development and social relationships of athletic and non-athletic women. Athletic women have scored higher in the aspects in question.

**Key words:** *Quality of life; Sports participation; Women; Education department; Darehshahr*

---

### 1. Introduction

As a topic of reflection, quality of life is historically rooted in the course of human thoughts. Plato argued that human welfare and prosperity is facilitated by maximum acquisition of virtue through observing moral principles and requirements for physical health maintenance even at the price of relinquishing pleasure. Formerly, quality of life was discussed as a tacit issue in social studies, such as those conducted on rural life by William Ogburn (1946) in the USA. At present, quality of life is a central topic in social research. It is indeed a concept beyond physical health and, at the same time, an important index the independent measurement of which in various studies is an essential consequence (King, 2003). On the other hand, identification of effective factors in quality of life could be treated as a requisite for raising the level of health of subgroups in any societies and ultimately a community (Karimzadeh et al., 2008).

Nowadays, different approaches to quality of life have extended its research areas and led to identification of extensive indices for quality of life while they cannot be examined as a whole and each of them relates to a scientific field and is provided with its unique presupposed definition. These approaches include psychological, biological, and

medical explanations, psychosocial approach, symbolic interactions, and theory of social learning, philosophical approach, economic approach and ultimately sociological explanations of the concept of quality of life. The impact of sports participation on target (sociological) indices from the foregoing cases are identified and explored the indices which firstly influence social indices directly or indirectly, and secondly, determine whether the effect of sports participations is limited to these boundaries or not.

### 2. Social Approach:

Currently, the quality of life determined in many developed countries is the main topic of social reports (Schuss and Fisher, 1985).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that the importance of Education Department was pointed out due to its fundamental position in retention of the power and development of a country, personnel and people's performance at this institution is one of the determinants for appraisal of their proper function. That is why teachers and the employees at education agencies are among the most significant people playing distinctive roles in creating and developing human and social capital. On the other hand, considering gender, sociocultural limitations and the family roles restricting performance level of other women, it is more important than ever to conduct research on the relation between independent

---

\* Corresponding Author.

variables and their dependent quantity in order to improve quality (in this study, quality of life is regarded as subspace encompassing effective factors in performance of the women serving with the Education Department).

### **3. Statement of the Question:**

Now, in view of the vital importance of the quality of life which can play a role in social life and organizational performance, and considering the widely recognized impact of sports on enhanced quality, this study deals with the role of sports in quality of life of the women serving the Education Department of Darehshahr. The researcher seeks to answer to this question that how sport can affect the quality of women's life. In other words, how is the nature and level of effect of sport on the indices the quality of life of women general and the women serving with the Education Department in particular?

### **4. General Aim**

This study investigates the relation between sporting of the women serving with the Education Department of Darehshahr and increased indices of quality of life.

### **5. Secondary Aims:**

- 1- Investigating the index of physical wellbeing in athletic women and non-athletic women;
- 2- Investigating the index of personal development in the athletic women and non-athletic women;
- 3- Investing the index of social relations in the athletic women and non-athletic women.

### **6. Definitions of Research Keywords:**

#### **6.1 Sports Participation:**

This term refers to an individual's inclination on and preparation for participation in group and individual sports competitions and activities (Ger Nisiki, 1993).

#### **6.2. Athlete:**

By athlete, the people are meant who have regular daily exercises for 20-30 minutes (Jabbari, 2013:65).

#### **6.3. Quality of Life:**

This term is applied in appraising the general wellbeing of people and societies and is widely used in an extensive variety of areas, including international development, health, and politics. The quality of life should not be taken for the concept of life standard, which is largely based on income, but the indices for standards of quality of life not only

include wealth and employment but also encompass environment, physical and mental health, amusement and leisure time, and social belonging (Basokhan et al., 2011).

### **7. The Relation between Sports and Quality of Life:**

Regardless of the time and place in which humans live, body needs a prerequisite for movement and communication. Therefore, our body is something common across all cultures. With our body, we can communicate, play and move irrespective of our understanding of one another's lifestyle and of what underlies our life. This means a lot for the quality of life. Even under severe, unpleasant conditions, sports and competitions could provide us with fun in our social communications, involvement in strengthening social relations, even under life uncertainties. The term "quality of life" is applied in appraising the general wellbeing of people and societies and is widely used in an extensive variety of areas, including international development, health, and politics. Are the experiences concerning manifestation in children games, physical education contests of the youths and adults' festivals not part of the human right to pleasure in life? Is the quality of life not limited to material wealth? Public sports movement should lead to increased quality of life – the thing which is highly important for the humans.

### **8. Definitions of Social Participation:**

Political participation refers to the voluntary activities of the society members in electing leaders and directly and indirectly participating in public policymaking. Mayrone Winder has provided the following definition for political participation in his well-known article on political participation by mentioning ten participatory operations: political participation refers to any successful or unsuccessful, organized or unorganized, constant or indirect voluntary acts, including legitimate or illegitimate methods for affecting election of leaders, policies and running public affairs at any levels of local or national government. In his article entitled *Investigating the Motives of Participants in Public Sports in Tehran*, Ramezani Khalilabad (1996) treats such factors as acquisition of cheerfulness and pleasure, prevention of diseases, joyous sports and ultimately acquisition of social affections and satisfied need for belonging to groups as the reasons behind people's participation in the public sports. Results of the study entitled *People's Attitude and Tendency towards Motor Activities and Sports*, conducted by Mozaffari (2002), suggest that gaining cheerfulness and physical strength are among the most important reasons and motives for participation in motor activities and sports. Rikman and Hammel (1995) investigated the opinions and views of 154 senior high school students about 7

effective factors in inclination on sports and physical education. They believe that the most important and predictable factors are competitiveness and success, which were significantly observed. Based on a survey carried out on 2000 American men and women, Ort Sanen (1998) sought their motives for participating in public sports and concluded that five factors, namely acquisition of physical preparation, socialization, emotion, acquisition of experiences from nature and escaping from routine work.

### 9. Hypotheses:

1. There is a significant difference in the women doing physical exercises and the women not engaged in such exercises in terms of quality of life (aspect of physical wellbeing).
2. There is a significant difference in the women doing physical exercises and the women not engaged in such exercises in terms of quality of life (aspect of personal development).
3. There is a significant difference in the women doing physical exercises and the women not engaged in such exercises in terms of quality of life (aspect of job satisfaction).
4. There is a significant difference in the women doing physical exercises and the women not engaged in such exercises in terms of quality of life (social communications).

### 10. Theoretical Foundations:

The theory of quality of life has been studied from various perspectives and approaches, including philosophical approach, economic approach, biological approach, and what we consider – and most importantly – sociological approach to the quality of life.

#### 10.1. School of Conflict:

The school of conflict treats the quality of life as originating from social, economic and cultural structures of the class society. Although it does not clearly deal with the quality of life, this school considers the quality of life as arising from social, economic, cultural structures of the class societies such that influential groups authoritatively impose their interests, will and beliefs on the subordinate ones, which leads to division of the society into two high-class and low-class groups and automatically exposes society to class conflict and dissatisfaction and emergence of a special kind of desirable and undesirable quality of life (Mokhtari and Nazari, 2010).

#### 10.2. Theory of Social Learning:

Learning refers to more or less permanent changes in behavior occurring as a result of strengthening and practice. This theory is founded the principle that the quality of life is social action

acquired through social processes, production and re-production. In other words, it emphasizes the mutual effects of behaviors and environment (ibid. 84). At this point, one could point to sports activity which is some sort of mutual, interpersonal interactions which improve people's relationships and spirits through learning of similar movements.

#### 10.2. The School of Symbolic Interaction and the Concept of Quality of Life:

This viewpoint stresses that how one should consider symbolic interactions when discussing the quality of life and emphasizes intellectual and imaginative nature of each and every individual vis-à-vis themselves, because an individual's attitude toward strengths and weaknesses of the surrounding people and their personalities and behaviors has a major impact on their actions, behaviors and quality of life (Cozer, 1998). Among the theoreticians of this school are Charles Hornen Coli and George Herbert Mid, who developed some principles on the quality of life named as looking-glass self and social role model. Coli states in the theory of looking-glass self that social origin of an individual's life is neither the person nor society, but it is formed through a dialectical relation. Self-awareness is the reflection of an individual's thoughts about the others (Gozar, 1998). According to Coli, the concept of looking-glass self relates to the quality of life, and the more meaningful, the stronger the reflection of this concept will be in an individual's quality of life. George Herbert Mid is a founder of the theory of social role and lays the stress on the process of socialization through learning social roles. It can generally be said that in his theory, it is an individual reflection of a systematic style of social or group behaviors, and the control imposed by the society on people is perceived based on the interaction between I and me, and this automatically affects the level of people's quality of life (Mokhtari and Nazari, 2010).

#### 10.3. Anomie Durkheim's Theory:

Durkheim has an organ-like view of the society, differing in that people ultimately die as life passes by but societies are always growing and developing. He points out to paying attention to the quality of life in his most important book entitled *Division of Work*. Division of work is summarized in two fundamentals concepts: [1] structural separation and [2] official distinguishing of roles. The impact of such a separation on social cohesion and the nature of its relation to social factors are explored. Durkheim seeks to demonstrate that the society which is led by a system of values and norms, or rather, morals. People will be more satisfied with their positions in the labor system and this will influence their quality of life (Mokhtari and Nazari, 2010).

#### 10.4. Parsons' Action Theory:

Parsons has attempted in this theory to show that any actions, whether normal or abnormal, are developed by specific forms of social structures. Therefore, an individual's quality of life could be explained according to social conditions and structure and the means and ways for achieving goals. This theory has four phases: [1] setting goals, [2] specifying means and tools for achieving goals, [3] resolving the barriers, and [4] social activity for achieving the goal.

**10.5. Zimmel's Theory:**

Zimmel's theories and views have not specifically considered the quality of life, but he has employed some concepts in his works whereby one could explain the quality of life. In his metropolitan article, he deals with the conditions in which human relations are declining and pays attention to the loss of affective and intimate relationships and dominance of careful, well-thought relationships. According to him, metropolis is the place of wisdom and there is no room for affective relationships. Thus, rational, well-thought relationships could raise the level of quality of life, making people experience higher quality lives. Since, on the other hand, one of the important aspects of the quality of life is paying attention to the people's affective relationships and feelings; this characteristic is missing in metropolises according to Zimmel and has negative effects on the quality of life (Mokhtari and Nazari, 2010).

Among the other perspectives from which the concept of life is discussed are ecological, add ressee-oriented, and agent-oriented perspectives. According to the ecological perspective, humans, unlike other creatures, are able to build culture and impose limitations through norms, customs and etiquettes, and this issue automatically affects the feeling of quality of life and social order of the people in society (ibid. 105).

According to the agent-oriented perspective, society is considered not as a whole but as a deterministic collective, i.e. it supervises people's minds, potentials and abilities more than the social structure or the surrounding environment. In

general, four approaches could be identified towards the quality of life:

1. Utilitarianism or the common good which originates from the works of Jeremy Bentam and John Stuart Mill (Fitter Petrak, 2002:63);
2. Public values approach which states what makes life valuable to an individual and improves the quality of life (Ghaffari and Omid, 2009:18).
3. Need-oriented approach: This starts out from basic needs, which are classified into 3 groups: [1] basic needs, [2] human development and [3] human needs.
4. The fourth approach to the quality of life is the agent-oriented one. This is the method for conceptualizing the quality of life and ultimately appraising human development, people's potentials and abilities and talents for fulfilling useful activities to achieve suitable positions and conditions leading to welfare (Ghaffari and Omid, 2009).

**11. Research Methodology:**

The method adopted in this study is descriptive in terms of nature because it is concerned with the circumstance and facts. The statistical population is composed of all women serving with the Education Department of Darehshahr, coming to 2350 individuals, out of whom a sample of 330 subjects was selected using Cochran's formula. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods are applied in rejecting or verifying the research hypotheses according to the results. The research data are gathered by means of a standard questionnaire and processed using SPSS program.

According to the table for both cases, there is no significant difference as the 000% level of significance is less but there is a significant difference in comparison of the two groups, that is, T is different in athletic and non-athletic women.

According to the table in both cases, there is no significant difference as the significance level of 0000% is less than 5%, while in comparing the two groups, there is a significant difference, i.e. T is different in athletic women and non-athletic women.

**Table 1:**The following table compares physical wellbeing in the athletic women and non-athletic women

95% level		Mean difference	Level of significance	Degree of freedom	T		
High	Low						
12.0629	10.9917	11.52	0%	164	42.495		Athletic women
13.5618	12.7776	13.16	0%	164	66.341		Non-athletic women

**Table 2:** The following table compares personality development in athletic women and non-athletic women:

95% level		Mean difference	Level of significance	Degree of freedom	T		
High	Low						
21.7963	20.2279	21.01	000%	164	52.90		Athletic women
11.5703	10.2721	10.92	000%	164	33.22		Non-athletic women

**Table 3:** It seems that there is a significant difference between the athletic women and non-athletic women in terms of the quality of life vis-à-vis job satisfaction. The following table compares athletic women and non-athletic women's job satisfaction

95% level		Mean difference	Level of significance	Degree of freedom	T	Athletic women Non-athletic women
High	Low					
23.9071	22.0687	22.98	000%	164	49.382	
18.4252	18.4253	19.054	000%	164	59.788	

**Table 4:** It seems that there is a significant difference between the athletic women and non-athletic women in terms of the quality of life vis-à-vis social communications. The following table compares athletic women and non-athletic women's social communications

95% level		Mean difference	Level of significance	Degree of freedom	T	Athletic women Non-athletic women
High	Low					
20.497	19.0786	19.7878	000%	164	55.087	
32.7957	30.6104	31.70	000%	164	57.290	

## 12. Discussion and Conclusion:

The quality of life is closely related to the concept of good life because some of the major indices of good life (wellbeing and mental health) resemble quality of life, and good life has no meaning without mental and physical health. Even the model of relation between stress and life satisfaction and stress and workplace satisfaction and quality of life relates to the job specifications, job relations and fun relationships and passing leisure time. At an individual level, anyone endeavors to take various mental and physical health measures to achieve the quality standards of life among which are participating in sports and fun activities whereby people can benefit from physical and mental advantages of such activities and improve their quality of life and might even experience a higher level in this respect as the quality of life is presumed to be the same as welfare and wellbeing. Major results of this study suggest that the quality of life of the people participating in sports activities is better than that of the individuals who are not involved in such activities. This might be due to the positive role of sports in chief indices of the quality of life (physical, mental and social) of the people engaged in public sports. Results of the studies carried out by Eshraghi, Khodarahimi and Naghavi, Hamedini, Golestani, Hamasitalab Bazazan, and Lahmi, Sedigh and Cadovic and Tati, Niazi and Vaez Mousavi have demonstrated the impacts of participating in sports activities on the male and female faculty members, students, pupils, common mass, sportsmen and various social groups respectively, matching many of the subscales employed in this piece of research. It can therefore be said that participating in common sports and physical activities can be effective and useful in people's quality of life.

A comparison of the subscales of the quality of life between the people engaged in physical and sports activities and those not engage in such activities, the participants have experienced better physical wellbeing, job satisfaction, social

communications, and creative and innovative behaviors whereas there is no significant difference between the participants in the physical and sports activities and non-participants in personal development. These results indicate that doing physical exercise and activities not only results in differences in the subscale of health (physical wellbeing) in relation to the quality of life but leads to differences in people's attitude toward the workplace (job satisfaction) and social communications in social, family and job life.

Although direct, major role of public sports in physical wellbeing is undeniable and clear and its impact on the aged has been verified by Hesamzadeh Ghahramani and Jafarpour, Vahdani Nia and Niva and Taylor, it influences mental and social subscales of the quality of life indirectly too. These findings suggest that the athletes engaged in different sports fields do not only benefit from the physical, mental and social advantages. Although multiple studies have been conducted on health, wellbeing physiology, and weight control using regular exercise plans and special facilities have demonstrated such fruitful and constructive effects, the quality of life and particularly health-related indices could be enhanced through participation in routine, common physical activities. This is highly important according to the age and cultural conditions of our country.

## References

- Asayesh, H. (2001). *Measurement and Quality of Life in 100 Metropolises*. The Quarterly of Urban Development Explorations, Issue 8.
- Asadi, A. (1988). *Public Opinions and Communications*. Tehran: Soroush Publications.
- Aristotle. *Politics*. Hamid Enayat (Trans.), Tehran: Sepehr Publications.
- How Women Pass Leisure Time in Iran: Concentration on Sports and Physical Education Activities*. The

- Association of Women Sports Research, IR Iran Physical Education Organization, 1997.
- Omidi, R. (2007). *Quality of Life in the Iranian Development Plans*. (M.A. thesis at Tehran School of Social Sciences).
- Willini, T. (2008). *Classical Theories of Sociology*. Sedighi (Trans.) Tehran: Ney Publications.
- IR Iran Physical Education Organization (December 2002). *A Brief Plan for the Document of Strategy for Developing the Comprehensive System of Physical Education and Sports*. Raad Saman Co.
- IR Iran Physical Education Organization (March 2003). *Detailed Studies of Developing Culture and Public and Fun Sports*.
- IR Iran Physical Education Organization (June 2003). *Detailed Studies of Developing Culture and Sports*.
- Ghaffari, G. and R. Omidi. (2009). *Quality of Life, Social Development Index*. Tehran: Shirazeh Publications.
- Mokhtari, M. and J. Nazari (2010). *Sociology of the Quality of Life*. Jame'ehshenasan Publications.
- Niknejad, F. (1999). *Surveys of Women's Sports from Women in Tehran*.