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Assessing Social Relationship and Network Strength among Sports Organizations and Athletes: A Study on Rajshahi City Corporation

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Abstract

In countries like Bangladesh, people often do not consider sports as a viable career option, which is why they tend to avoid it. However, nowadays people are becoming more advanced in both body and mind. In this scenario, the level of social interaction should increase between sports organizations and athletes. The aim of this study is to examine the level of relationship between sports organizations and athletes through empirical research that uses both qualitative and quantitative data. The researchers have collected primary data through face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions from a sample of 102 individuals, including 91 athletes and 11 club authorities. The main outcome of this research is that many social development initiatives were undertaken by sports organizations, which brought all the athletes together and formed an incredible social relationship among them.

Keywords: Athletes, Social interaction, Sports career, Sports organizations

Abstrak

Di negara-negara seperti Bangladesh, masyarakat sering kali tidak menganggap olahraga sebagai pilihan karier yang layak, itulah sebabnya mereka cenderung menghindarinya. Namun, saat ini orang menjadi lebih maju baik tubuh maupun pikiran. Dalam skenario ini, tingkat interaksi sosial antara organisasi olahraga dan atlet harus meningkat. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui tingkat hubungan organisasi olahraga dengan atlet melalui penelitian empiris yang menggunakan data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Para peneliti telah mengumpulkan data primer melalui wawancara tatap muka dan diskusi kelompok terfokus dari sampel 102 orang, termasuk 91 atlet dan 11 otoritas klub. Hasil utama dari penelitian ini adalah banyak inisiatif pembangunan sosial yang dilakukan oleh organisasi olahraga, yang menyatukan semua atlet dan membentuk hubungan sosial yang luar biasa di antara mereka.

Kata Kunci : Atlet, Interaksi Sosial, Karir Olahraga, Organisasi Olahraga

INTRODUCTION

Sports play a crucial role in our society as they help teach many values such as empathy, leadership, and handling failure, among others, to our kids (Metzler, 2017). In several countries, sports are considered a career goal that gives easy access to happiness during a child's adolescence (Quarmby et al., 2019). However, in Bangladesh, some people believe that sports make children more vulnerable and pathetic. They also think that sports motivate children to not attend school regularly and play all day, which may lead to an unsuccessful future (Hasan et al., 2020). This kind of mindset discourages students or amateur players from participating in sports, which has a negative impact on society's social development activities, such as tree plantation and blood donations (Moll et al., 2015).

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Bangladesh's sports industry has a variety of complex issues that make it difficult for athletes and sports organizations to develop strong social bonds (Hasan et al., 2020). Because these issues are intricately linked to larger socioeconomic processes and institutional frameworks, developing successful interventions will require a thorough grasp of these issues. The lack of interest in sports as a feasible professional path is one of the main problems facing Bangladesh's sports scene. Numerous factors, such as insufficient infrastructure and institutional support, contribute to this occurrence (Collins, 2014). Athletes are frequently discouraged from pursuing sports as a career due to the lack of strong developmental pathways and chances, which reduces sports to an extracurricular pastime rather than a feasible means of subsistence (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2018). The marginalization of athletics as a profession is further exacerbated by public perceptions of the prestige and stability of conventional job pathways.

The lack of interest in sports as a career path has important ramifications for community social development and athletic performance. First off, Bangladesh's capacity to effectively compete at the international level is hampered by the absence of an environment that is favorable for developing athletic talent (Moll et al., 2015). The nation's underrepresentation in international competitions highlights the pressing need for coordinated initiatives to foster a culture of excellence and sportsmanship. Second, skilled people are deprived of opportunities for upward mobility and holistic development due to the marginalization of sports as a vocation, which maintains socioeconomic inequities within the community (Hylton & Totten, 2013).

Sports have long served as a bridge between individuals with disparate social and age backgrounds. People in our culture of all ages benefit from sports, not just young ones. Social capital is the web of connections among individuals who live and work in a certain society that makes that society function well (Weiss, 2021). It entails the interpersonal connections, mutual understanding, common norms, shared values, trust, collaboration, and reciprocity that enable social groupings to function effectively (Norden, 2021).

Social capital is part of the umbrella of intellectual capital and may mean placing value on social interactions (Sanchez-Famoso et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2021). Moreover, Bourdieu explains that the amount of social capital possessed by an agent depends on a combination of the number of network connections one can mobilize, plus the economic, cultural, and symbolic capital possessed by those comprising the network connections (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieusian studies of sport and social capital are rare, although several scholars who use the two other approaches often refer to his work. Social capital is a vital resource for individuals, groups, and society. Social capital has been described as a lubricant that facilitates getting things done.

It allows people to work together and get benefits from social relationships. Social capital allows modern economies to function efficiently. Our society, economy, institutions, and political system could not exist without social capital. Social capital refers to the internal social and cultural coherence of society. As such social capital has been described as glue (Claridge, 2014). By actively using sports networks, we can boost our social interaction. Proactive networking gives you a benefit by supporting you with a strong network of people who are ready and eager to speak for you on a regular basis. (Skauge, 2022). Being strategic where identifying who you know and who you need to know through sporting associations to help you reach your career goal. Create a diverse network of links by organizing sports competitions. In order to network effectively, a person needs to move out of his comfort zone and identify people who can help his career. Keeping in touch with former colleagues and alums also helps boost social capital for the importance of building a network of contacts to support career goals.

Through an analysis of the social interaction dynamics of Rajshahi City Corporation's athlete community and sports organizations, this research aims to offer comprehensive knowledge of the underlying problems and possible solutions. The study intends to evaluate the degree of linkage between sports organization²² and their members, identifying important variables and impediments to successful social integration. This study has employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods, such as surveys, interviews, and social network analysis, to investigate the complexities of social relationships and organizational dynamics. Additionally, the research has considered how these aspects affect athletic performance and community development. This research also aims to provide important insights that inform organizational strategies, policy interventions, and community initiatives aimed at fostering a vibrant sports culture and nurturing talent for the betterment of society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A very small amount of literature has been reviewed to develop a conceptual framework on the relation between sports and social capital and to identify the research gap in the proposed field of research in Bangladesh. It has been found that some important works, mainly on the relationship between sports and social interaction in Bangladesh, have been done by different writers, both at home and abroad. But as far as knowledge goes, none of the publications exclusively deal with the role of social bonding and sport.

Sport is fundamental to the development of a society. In our society, the level of involvement in games and sports is very effective for the development of our children's bodies and minds (Harbec et al., 2021). At the early stages of human life, they learn most of their values from their family and society. If they get the knowledge of social bonding at an early age, then this could be very important¹⁸ for their future lives. Sports club participation is frequently cited as having the potential to support the social integration of people with disabilities since it can serve as a platform for establishing social networks and connections. Integration, however, is not achieved automatically and is heavily dependent on specific settings and circumstances (Albrecht et al., 2019).

¹⁶ Sport is a very important subject for the development of children's bodies, minds, and social norms. Social capital has as its key element the value of social relationships to generate positive outcomes, both for the key parties involved and for the wider society (Dudley et al., 2017). There is a moral element to such a conceptualization, yet there is scarce discussion of ethics within the social capital literature (Ayios et al., 2014). Due to a lack of supervisory professionals in the sports organization, players are not getting the proper knowledge of social bonding and how their sports competitions can make people happy and get along with each other at the same time.

The learning process has been ineffective in transmitting skills and knowledge to their organizations. Sports always get the attention of people, and we live in a society, so if we want to boost our social capital, we have to interact with every type of person in our society. Thus, social capital will be boosted through sports organizations. By actively using sports networks, we can boost our social interaction. Proactive networking gives you a benefit by providing you with a strong network of people who are ready and eager to speak for you on a regular basis (Skaug, 2022).

The best illustration is Jugl (2021), who did research and found that sports stop many crimes in a society, which means if we can create an effective generation that comes together with the force of sports love, they won't cause any harmful activities in the society. They found a moderate effect of participation in sports programs on crime-related outcomes. Participants showed a significant decrease in outcomes such as aggressiveness or anti-social behavior. They also analyzed psychological outcomes such as self-

²¹ esteem or mental well-being, which also significantly improved when participating in sports programs (Jugl et al., 2021).

Many types of crime create chaos in our society. Children will get into an unhealthy life where they won't get the chance to build a social bond among civilized people. Sports games always help to create social capital. If children get used to competing in sporting events, they'll learn to support their own teammates and will also learn how to behave with opponents and how to accept defeat. When children and players don't get the chance to learn how to behave and accept a defeat, they will use lots of unethical social terms like smoking, drinking, disrespecting parents, not loving their younger ones, and not respecting older ones, resulting in a lack of integration in society, which leads to social disaster. To create social bonding, we need the involvement of an effective functioning social group through interpersonal relationships, a shared sense of identity, a shared understanding, shared norms, shared values, trust, cooperation, and reciprocity (Norden, 2021).

Bangladesh, like other regions of the world, has a long tradition of using sports as a tool for enhancing social interaction. The National Sports Council Act 1974, for example, gave the Minister of Education the authority to designate the development and regulation of sports and the coordination of sports activities in Bangladesh. This means that the ministry has been given the responsibility of ensuring that monitoring and control are carried out. Chairman, members of our society always help to organize sports events. Many people come to see the sporting events, which ensure the social capital of our society. The municipal (city) government is responsible for upholding law and order in the public sector of society. It is the responsibility of the government to make sure that sports fields and arenas are handled in a way that keeps citizens safe because they make up such a significant portion of public society.

Governments can foster goodwill among nations and promote international interactions thanks to sports' broad appeal. Governments utilize sports to do precisely that since they are a wonderful way to foster official bonding and communication as well as build international trust and comradeship. An essential feature of relational goods is that they cannot be produced or enjoyed by an isolated individual but can be shared with others; that is, the production and consumption of this type of good temporarily coincide. Some sporting events involve the presence of many spectators, who are generally prompted to participate by the intrinsic motivation of social interaction (Trail & James, 2001; O'Sullivan, 2009). In particular, attending a sporting event is an occasion in which the company of others is enjoyed and bonds with friends, relatives, and acquaintances are strengthened, especially when interactions are sufficiently frequent. From this viewpoint, consideration should be given to using sporting events and sporting organizations to foster social contact among all societal members.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research employs an empirical approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to comprehensively explore social relationships and network strength among sports organizations and athletes in Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC), Bangladesh. Data collection encompasses primary and secondary sources, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research context. Primary data is gathered through face-to-face interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with officials and stakeholders of sports organizations within the RCC. The selection of participants is guided by specific criteria aimed at including individuals who possess knowledge and consciousness about the process of enhancing social capital through sports. Purposive random sampling technique is employed to select five different sports organizations within the RCC, ensuring diverse representation. The population of the

study comprises all officials and stakeholders of sports organizations in the RCC. From this population, individuals who meet the criteria for knowledge and consciousness regarding social capital enhancement through sports are selected as the unit of analysis. The sample size for the study is determined to be 102, including 91 athletes and 11 officials and stakeholders from the selected sports organizations.

Quantitative data collected through surveys and interviews is analyzed using appropriate statistical models, employing SPSS-27 software. Descriptive statistics are utilized to analyze qualitative data, facilitating a nuanced understanding of social relationships and network dynamics. Results and findings are presented in tabular and narrative formats, accompanied by percentages to provide a comprehensive overview of the research outcomes. The interview and Focus Group Discussion processes are facilitated by trained researchers, ensuring consistency and reliability in data collection. Transparent and ethical practices are adhered to throughout the research process to maintain the integrity and validity of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sports always have an upper hand of bringing special Impact to our society. Human being always tries to live by a society. In a society there's very large or small group of people but they have to come together to form a good interaction with each other for their own goodness. The fundamental understanding that people act toward one another by interpreting the acts of others has permeated the works and thoughts of many experts of human behavior and human group life. Nevertheless, very few of them have made an effort to understand what such an interpretation means about the essence of the human being or about the nature of human relations (Rohall, 2019).

NGOs and organizations are social platforms for the development and expression of social capital (Menn & Dronkers, 2016). But only a small number of studies have examined how participation in sports leagues and competitions by local residents contributes to the development, preservation, and expression of social capital in rural regions. Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to examine the links between developing of social capital and the participation of sports within social members. In a study of social relations in rural Victoria, Elkington (1982) also mentioned the possible integrating function of sport. He asserted that sport serves as a wonderful equalizer, bringing people from different backgrounds together and inspiring admiration for all people, regardless of race.

As many authors suggested that social developing works might helps in increasing the social bonding among a certain members, we have collected these data which indicates how much they involved in participating in social works. See table 1.

Table 1. Involving in different social developing works

Variables	Yes		No	
	f	%	F	%
Response of Participation to the tree plantation of study area	28	35%	50	65%
Response of Participation to the Drug Awareness of study area	47	59%	32	41%
Response of Participation to the blood donating of study area	65	82%	14	18%
Response of Participation to educating illiterate of study area	8	10%	71	90%

Source: Processed by researchers (2024)

Sports Organization like Boikali shangha helps those poor people who are in danger of being flood victim. They arrange money from wealthy people and distribute to them who are in need. Mr. Nuruzzaman said that

“In the early time of our club we help those people who were devastated by the flood. We also help them by cooking food for them”(Nuru, N. 2023)

This is how a Sports Organization can be helpful for our own society that we live in. There is also more type of social work that Sports Organization do for the sake of their own society.

In sports, motivation enables kids and teenagers to concentrate on a crucial objective or result. By doing this, they become unaffected by potential distractions and are able to focus for extended stretches of time. Motivated students of the organizations exhibit goal-oriented behaviors. They demonstrate initiative, resiliency, control their curiosity, care about their work, and appreciate it. They are prepared to plan their own educational course of action. Some ways of motivating players are Set goals, Develop interests, Change behavior, Spark curiosity, Develop competencies, Increase engagement, Plan for the future, Lissom talents (Howthorn, 2021).

Each of us has a distinctive quality that is reflected in our motivation, which enables us to achieve important goals like better performance, improved wellness, personal development, or a sense of purpose. The ability to influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors is accomplished through motivation (Soude, 2019).

The social benefits of sports, such as meeting new people and establishing friends, are a major factor in why 93% of young people in Norway participate in sports for longer or shorter lengths of time. It then becomes crucial to have knowledge of the social aspects of youth sports. Athletes have a variety of social relationships, so to begin; we made a distinction between those who had weak and strong relationships with their teammates. These relationships take into account athletes' social connections outside of athletics, such as whether they attend the same school, participate in the same hobbies, or connect on social media (Dalen, et al., 2021). One of the athletes of Bangla Trac Cricket Academy said that,

“We always give other compliment even though if he fails to perform well. Next day well see that he is performing much well than other day at the field” (Hamza, 2023).

An another player from Bangla Trac Cricket Academy said that,

“When our friends get sad after getting into injuries we go see him in person to give him the inspiration that he needs to come back to the field quickly” (Rahat, 2023)

Sports Organization in Rajshahi City is quite good at these inspiration and motivational works as well as making friends. Their authority always try to help their players whenever they are in need. These things help in improving the social interaction among a group of people as well as in a society. See table 2.

Table 2. Participation to inspiring other teammates

Variables	Yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
Response of Participation to Inspiring other teammates of study area	91	100%	0	0%
Response of Participation to making new friend of study area	91	100%	0	0%
Response of Participation to finding help from coaches and authorities of study area	91	100 %	0	0%

Source: Processed by researchers (2024)

The interactions you have with your coworkers and employees are considered workplace relationships. Employees will struggle to show up and be productive if they don't trust you or each other. While the controversy over quiet resignations rages on, building strong working connections can help keep employees engaged and motivated (Roebuck, 2023).

In our study we have found that every organization has a good overall community that's needed to deliver the right way of social interaction within a society. Sports Organizations is just like a normal society where athlete improves their capabilities. See figure 1.

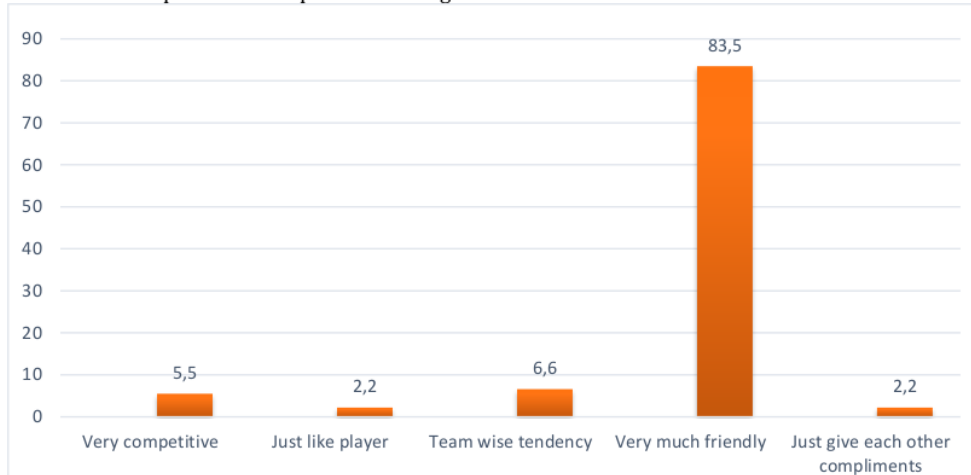


Figure 1. Athletes on overall relationship

It is well known that individuals with severe mental illness frequently have few friends and have difficulty forming new friendships (Huckle et al., 2021). Since social isolation is known to be linked to poor health outcomes (Palumbo et al., 2015), healthcare professionals and nonprofit groups frequently work to address this by offering group activities, day centers, and other social activities.

It is so difficult to bear the pain of psychological stress sometimes that's why we need to express these feelings with our friends and if we get those type of friends who are also our sports buddies then it gets so much easy to express. One of basketball player said,

"I try to talk about my every type of sorrowful thought with my friend and my sports issue to my seniors. They all are so much supportive." (Abdullah, 2023)

Social Capital will be increased if people in a society help each other to ease the physiological and psychological pain (Figure 2). We have found that Sports Organizations in Rajshahi city and their players help each other with discussing their mental health which also increases their performance in game. We have also found that discussing different type of problem can be identical to other teammates there they can fight those difficulties with same intentions and same spirit which make their sporting partnership much strong that helps our country's sports area.

Equality, Social trust, Trusting each other these variable detects the social capital level of a group of members. In this diagram we have shown the relationship level among athletes on the basis of their own trust, respect, and equality in the club members of Rajshahi city sports organizations. See figure 3.

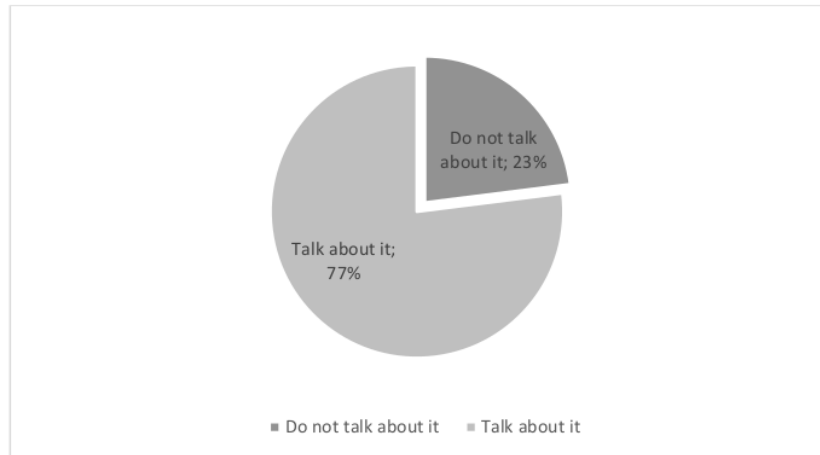


Figure 2. Psychological Health Discussion

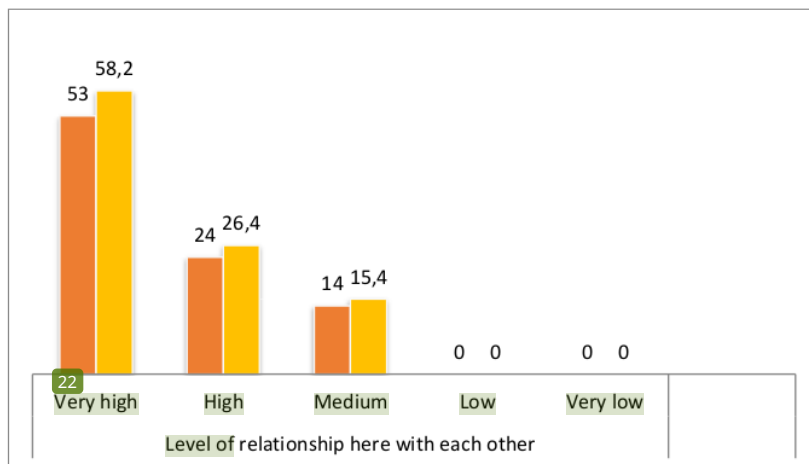


Figure 3. Relationship level among athletes

CONCLUSION

Sports ought to be a significant aspect of our life. It encourages social interaction, physical exercise, and mental wellness in addition to being a kind of entertainment. However, we frequently concentrate on global happenings when we discuss sports. We overlook the distinct local sports cultures that are just as significant and useful. The collective expression of a community's values, traditions, and beliefs is found in

1 local sports culture. Its location, climate, history, and inhabitants all influence it. It is what distinguishes and adds interest to sports. Unique sports initiatives that are distinct from some of the sports we are accustomed to be fostered by local sports cultures.

We have seen that a total of 85.7% athletes are engaged with social developing works in the study area. Standing against drug addiction awareness engagement are 59% of the total athletes. Blood donation is also one of the major participated area of the athletes with total 82% of them directly involved in donating blood regular basis. In tree plantation movement there were about 35% athletes were directly involved in these area. Another interesting fact is that also 10% athletes were involved in educating illiterate human beings of the study which is quite good social developing works as this brings people together. Also 10% athletes helped in flooded people of the area which needed help the most. Motivating in a group of people is inspiring in which whole teammates can create special bonding within the team. In inspiring other club members a total 91 respondents agreed that they always try to improve others psychological state by giving him inspiring thoughts and their percentage is 100%. It is so important in building social capital, helping each other making new friends always help in social interaction among organizations. After collecting all the data we have found out that 100% athletes of the organizations have make new friends and relationship among them is great according to their interviews.

Sport in Rajshahi city is very popular and there are many sports clubs and organizations that are willing to do their job as the player hunt sometimes giving them some job opportunities. Most of the people in these organizations are bound with the social responsibilities and the social interaction. Athletes regularly come here to practice they are the future of Bangladesh's sports area. Although there are some challenges that needed to be fulfilled to get real results from sports organizations. If we concentrate on them we will find many things that are needed to do with these sports organizations so that they can do better with their target as well as they can improve the social capital among them and try to build better social sports organizations in the future.

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