Contextual Factors Affecting the Role of Family in Sports Socialization among the Athlete Relief Workers of the Red Crescent Society

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Original Article

Abstract

INTRODUCTION: Considering the role of socialization factors in encouraging people to participate in sports and the importance of the family in this process, the present study aimed to assess the contextual factors affecting the role of the family in sports socialization among the athlete relief workers of the Red Crescent Society.

METHODS: This exploratory qualitative research used the Glaser Grounded theory. The statistical population of the research included 16 professors of sports sociology and experts of the Red Crescent Society, who were interviewed using a targeted non-probability sampling method with maximum diversity or heterogeneity based on the theoretical saturation index. The data were analyzed based on three stages: open, axial, and selective coding.

FINDINGS: According to the findings, the contextual factors include the two main categories of community conditions and family conditions and six subcategories, including management and structural limitations, financial and facility limitations, little participation of parents in sports activities, little family investment in sports, emotional support, and raising families' awareness of sports.

CONCLUSION: Apart from physical strength, people need to meet other requirements to become an athlete. Moreover, in addition to individual abilities, facilities, access to opportunities, and socialization factors, such as family and community conditions, have also major roles to play in the process of becoming an athlete.

Keywords: Athlete relief workers; Family; Qualitative study; Role of family; Sports socialization

Introduction

Socialization is one of the illustrations of one's social development and is linked to other manifestations of his/her growth, such as physical and physiological (functional), as well as intellectual (cognitive) and emotional (emotional) growth. This starts from the moment a person is born, through his/her social environment, to transform him/her from a purely biological being to a social being. The processes of socialization or normalization always start from the family environment and are completed by attracting the child to other groups, such as the neighborhood playgroup, schoolmates, the sports team, or the youth center. (1)

Socialization takes place through interactions, social connections, and other influential social factors. Games, exercises, and sports competitions can play a role in people's socialization process. Socialization is a process by which a person becomes a member of a group

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or society and learns the dominant cultural contents and accepted behavioral norms. (2) Sport sociology examines how sports activities affect people's socialization. Sports activities, especially group sports, allow a person to have real contact with others and help him/her to be accepted by others. (3)

Another common belief is that participating in sports games teaches people to control their aggressive responses in the face of stress, failure, difficult situations, and pain. Many sociological studies have been conducted on the role of family in children's attitudes and willingness to participate in sports activities. Young athletes need their parents' support to progress, follow the development paths, and gain a prestigious position in sports. Undoubtedly, the family environment is often considered the most important base, exerting marked effects on the level of motivation, a tendency to approach physical activities, choosing the type of sports fields, the amount of sports activities, and attendance at sports fields, competitions, and camps.

Parents' satisfaction with the presence of their children in sports training sessions, their financial and spiritual support for their children, and cooperation with sports officials and coaches are important factors for the effective and continuous attendance of students in sports training (2). Stefansen et al. (2016) reported that parents are intrinsically and environmentally valuable. Of course, the intrinsic value has been the strongest of all. Since they consider sports as a meaningful experience, and according to them, sports are an area for enjoyment and skill experience. It can also be an arena for strengthening skills and competencies that are more important than other features of life (4).

Green (2010) also stated that parents try to meet the demands of their children with the conditions related to doing sports activities for a longer period of time in order to expand their sense of commitment. Moreover, parents give this assurance to their children to get used to sports exercises and therefore turn them into a habit (5). Yao & Rhodes (2015) pointed out that in preadolescence, parents play an important role in social acceptance of physical activities; nonetheless, gradually, in adolescence and after that, the role of peers becomes more prominent.

In general, the first stage of socialization in the family takes place in two ways: direct (conscious) and indirect (unconscious). The first way is

accomplished through education. In this way, parents consciously familiarize their children with values, norms, social and religious attitudes, and culture in general through education. Following that, by encouraging and punishing them, they internalize these values so that children should behave according to social and religious values, norms, and attitudes. Now, families that are not successful in the socialization of their children (such as disorganized or dysfunctional families) cannot expect their children to conform to social and religious values, norms, and attitudes. Based on this, the variable of family structure can be taken into account in explaining children's socialization. Nevertheless, in the second method, based on the theory of social learning, behavior is learnable, and the way to learn behavior is also based on the rules of observational learning. Accordingly, socialization takes place unconsciously (indirectly) by setting an example and adapting the behavior, deeds, and words of parents and other family members (such as brothers or sisters).

Children learn and gradually internalize their behavior, speech, and social attitudes as desirable and appropriate ways of behavior and attitudes without their parents' awareness. Therefore, children acquire an important part of the values, norms, skills, and social attitudes necessary for active participation in social life from their parents, consciously or unconsciously; nonetheless, the effect of parents' objective behavior on children is much stronger (6). Furthermore, a person socialized in sports is bestowed with important characteristics and traits, such as high self-confidence, self-belief, and self-respect, efficiency in communicating with others, respecting the rights of others, respecting and observing laws, values, and social norms, and the ability to solve problems and participate in social activities.

Moreover, membership in a sports team can have characteristics and features, such as acceptance of order in social life, adaptability, cooperation, and collaboration with the group to achieve a goal, conscientiousness, responsibility, as well as creating harmony and unity among people (2). In fact, the role of socialization in sports is special, and Epuran (1998) has expressed this phenomenon in two ways: socialization in sports and socialization through sports. Socialization in sports is basically the form of integration and unity of athletes in the

system of attitudes, skills, needs, and social structures of the sports group and membership in the sports group, which requires knowledge and understanding of its rules (7).

Brohm (2020) believes that socialization through sports activities also aims at a wide range of consequences and outcomes in sports exercises, starting from the development of movement skills and social competencies and continuing to achieve social values and norms (8&9). Therefore, considering the role of the family in the socialization of people, the development of personality, and the creation of a spirit of cooperation and social participation, the present study aimed to analyze the sociological factors affecting the role of the family in sports socialization among the athlete relief workers of the Red Crescent Society.

Methods

This exploratory qualitative research used the Glaser Grounded theory. In this method, the data collected by the grounded theorist to describe the processes includes various types of qualitative data, such as observation, conversations, interviews, documents, respondents' memories, and the researcher's own personal reflections. Grounded theorist uses a methodology that requires the simultaneous and chain-wise collection and analysis of data. The statistical population of the current research included professors and faculty members in sports sociology and experts of the Red Crescent Society who have the necessary expertise and familiarity with this study or at least have articles, books, educational and research experience in this field.

The statistical population of the research included 16 professors of sports sociology and experts of the Red Crescent Society, who were interviewed using a targeted non-probability sampling method with maximum diversity or heterogeneity based on the theoretical saturation index (10). Therefore, in this research, 16 participants were interviewed until theoretical data saturation. By conducting interviews with these people, the researcher and the research group found that the collected information had reached the point of saturation, and there was no need to conduct further interviews.

In order to collect information, the literature and background of the research were reviewed using books, magazines, theses, regulations, and related documents and websites. After preparing the interview guide, participants were referred to, and the required data were collected using open interviews. Each interview lasted 45-60 minutes, and they were recorded by a digital recorder. Before interviewing people, in order to maximize the participation of experts and professors, a letter with the basic details of the objectives of the study and related questions was sent to the participants via email, and they were requested to meet in person.

To analyze the interviews, an editing approach and grounded theory, which is one of the data analysis approaches, were used (10). It should be noted that due to the new approach adopted in the research and possible limitations of the data, the triangulation approach was used. Triangulation refers to the process of using various approaches and sources to collect information in research (11). Due to the use of the triangulation method (use of multiple sources, including library sources, focus groups with experts, and interviews with experts), various sources were used in this research to collect information.

Findings

In the present study, Skinner, Edwards, and Corbett criteria (2014) mentioned in Table 1 were used to measure validity.

In order to calculate the intercoder reliability, a sports management expert who was present in the stages of the research and had adequate knowledge about this research was requested to help in the coding of the research as a colleague. The necessary training and techniques for coding were transferred to the research associate. Thereafter, researchers, together with the colleague, coded two of the interviews, and the inter-coder agreement was calculated.

As illustrated in Table 2, the total number of registered codes and the total number of agreements between the codes is equal to 41. Moreover, inter-coder agreement for the interviews conducted in this research is equal to 78%. Therefore, considering that the reliability is more than 60%, the reliability of the coding was confirmed, and it can be stated that the reliability of the current interview analysis is appropriate. It is worth noting that all statistical analyses were performed in Maxqda-2020 software (12).

Table 1. Validity verification methods

Methods	Implemented method in this study
Prolonged engagement	Increased theoretical sensitivity, practical engagement, and communication with participants to evaluate the researcher's perceptions
Persistent observation	Practical participation of the researcher and presence in the environment of participation and discovery of the details of the participants' experiences
Re-inspection of the way to obtain information	Periodic inspection of the obtained information and codes in order to prevent bias and ensure accuracy by the researcher and a colleague (doctoral student) familiar with the subject under study.
Member check	Checking the information obtained with the help of the research group and surveying the interviewees regarding the results
Triangulation	Using multiple sources to collect data
Continuous comparison	Comparing the data obtained from the investigated sources with other sources continuously throughout the research

Table 2. Reliability calculation

Row	Interview number	Total number of codes	Agreed codes	Disagreed codes	Reliability
1	3	11	4	3	0.72
2	7	13	5	3	0.76
3	14	17	6	4	0.70
	Total	41	15	10	0.73

The contextual conditions provide the analysis of the role of the family in sports socialization among athlete relief workers of the Red Crescent Society. Based on the results obtained from the interviews, the main categories and subcategories are arranged according to the concepts in Table 3 as follows:

According to the obtained results, the contextual conditions include two main categories (society conditions and family conditions) and six subcategories (management and structural limitations, financial and facility limitations, low participation of parents in sports activities, little investment of families in Sports, emotional and spiritual support, and increasing families' awareness of sports.

Contextual factors affecting the role of the family in sports socialization among the athlete relief workers of the Red Crescent Society

According to the analysis of the primary extracted data and the coding performed, the researcher stated the following contextual conditions in the emergence of the studied phenomenon: 1) Community conditions and 2) Family conditions. The participants acknowledged that there are management and structural limitations in society. Regarding their managerial limitations, they referred to little consensus among sports managers, little knowledge of sports managers, little government

support for sports (little government investment in the expansion of sports activities in society and the educational system, little government support for professional athletes and preparing sports equipment), non-guaranteed promotional tools for professional athletes, and the lack of incentive rules for athletes' families. Participant 4 has stated in this regard: "One of the problems is the presence of unrealistic incentives specified by officials and managers for professional athletes. Even the government and officials have not established incentive laws to support the athletes' families".

Furthermore, participants mentioned structural limitations, such as the existence of gender stereotypes (beliefs and attitudes about masculinity and femininity), gender discrimination as reported in the media (lack of media coverage for girls' sports activities), and financial limitations (allocating more sports resources and facilities to boys and allocating less sports resources to schools and public spaces). Participant 8 stated: "Television does not cover girls' sports, nor does it prepare and broadcast sports activities in the form of reports. Unfortunately, National Television only focuses on male athletes, and there is a deliberate indifference regarding the representation of female athletes on television".

Furthermore, participants referred to little participation of parents in sports activities

(doing physical activities, going to clubs, and doing daily activities), little investment of families in sports (little access to sports clubs and insignificant ability to provide sports equipment and supplies), emotional and spiritual support (parents' participation in their children's sports training) and increasing families' awareness of sports (families' awareness of the income generation of some sports activities and the existence of a football school). Participant 14 said: "Of course, due to the cost of these types of activities, families invest less in this regard."

Table 3. Main categories, subcategories and concepts related to contextual factors affecting the role of family in sports socialization among athlete relief workers

Categories	Subcategories		Concepts	
Contextual factors	**Community conditions**	**Management**	Little consensus among sports managers, insufficient knowledge of sports managers, little government support for sports (little government investment in the expansion of sports activities in society, little government investment in the expansion of sports activities in education, little government support for professional athletes and providing sports equipment), non-guaranteed incentive tools for professional athletes; and lack of incentive rules for athletes' families	
		Management & structural constraints		
		Structural	Existence of gender stereotypes	Beliefs & attitudes about masculinity & femininity	Strong boys who take part in championship sports and weaker girls who play girls sports
			Reflecting gender discrimination in the media	Classification of sports by gender	Weightlifting for boys, boxing for boys, and motorcycling for boys
		Financial & facility limitations	Allocating more sports resources and facilities to boys and allocating fewer sports resources and facilities to schools and public spaces	Lack of media coverage for girls' sports activities
	Family conditions	**Little participation of parents in sports activities**	Doing physical activities, going to clubs, and doing daily activities	
		Little investment of families in sports	Little access to sports clubs and insignificant ability to get sports equipment and supplies	
		Spiritual and emotional support	Parents' participation in their children's sports training	
		Increasing the family's awareness of sports	Family's awareness of the income generation of some sports activities and awareness of the existence of the football school	

Discussion and Conclusion

The study of sports has attracted the attention of sociologists since the 1960s, and considering the role that sociologists attribute to socialization factors in encouraging people to sports and also the importance of the family in people's socialization, it is essential to assess the effect of socialization factors, especially family, on sports as one of the behavioral patterns. Sports socialization represents a process of social integration through communication, understanding, participation, and cooperation,

with the role they play in resolving conflicts consciously and actively. This process is formed on the basis of cognitive, emotional, motivational, and individual structures; moreover, it creates the behaviors and performance of sports groups (13).

Furthermore, participants pointed to the low participation of parents in sports activities, low investment of families in sports, emotional and spiritual support (participation of parents in their children's sports training), and raising families' awareness of sports. Green (2010) also investigated sports participation and lifestyle

among Norwegian youth and demonstrated that parents in the middle class with a sports background have a great desire to invest in their children through economic, social, and cultural capital (5). The results of this research are in line with those reported by Troup (2015) (14), who indicated that family support, whether verbal or the parents' own participation in physical activities, exerts a marked effect on children's sports participation.

Moreover, the results of the present research are in agreement with the study by Shamsi et al. (2014), in which family had the strongest effect on explaining the development of sports participation of youths, although they did not ignore the impact of various factors, apart from family (15). In the current study, participants mentioned the contextual conditions that can play a role in the emergence of this phenomenon (the role of the family in sports socialization among the athlete relief workers of the Red Crescent Society), which included community and family conditions. Regarding community conditions, participants admitted that there are management and structural limitations in society.

Concerning managerial limitations, they highlighted little consensus among sports managers, little knowledge of sports managers, little government support for sports and little government investment in the expansion of sports activities in the society and educational system, little government support for professional athletes and preparing sports equipment, non-guaranteed promotional tools for professional athletes; and the lack of incentive rules for athletes' families. In addition, participants acknowledged structural limitations, such as the existence of gender stereotypes, gender discrimination in the media, and financial limitations.

In general, according to the contextual conditions affecting the role of the family in sports socialization among athlete relief workers, it can be stated that sports are tied to the social structure of a society and provide a unique perspective. The government and the media can play a prominent role in sports socialization, especially in social and family structure, by drawing on the abilities of committed human forces in the field of sports. Moreover, the media can take a step towards

culturalization of sports values and norms, as well as sensitizing officials and families, by providing information and suitable content since sensitizing officials and families in order to promote sports socialization decreases gender stereotypes and discrimination in society. In the future, it will be possible to provide a suitable platform for financial sponsors and private sectors in the field of sports to invest in sports, which directly and even indirectly affects the role of the family in sports socialization.

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Conflict of Interests

Authors have no conflict of interests.

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