

Enhancing Social-Emotional Intelligence and Reducing School Violence Through School Sports: A Field Study on Late Childhood.

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Abstract

This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of small-sided sports activities in developing emotional intelligence among students. Conducted at an elementary school in Médéa-Algeria, the research utilized a quasi-experimental design under the supervision of a physical education teacher, involving a sample of 30 students who participated in 10 sports sessions and completed pre- and post-tests using the emotional intelligence scale. After analyzing and discussing the results, the study found the following:

- Small-sided sports activities effectively enhance emotional intelligence among late childhood students.
- There are statistically significant differences between pre- and post-test scores for emotional intelligence in the experimental sample, favoring the post-test.
- Significant differences were also found between pre- and post-tests on the school violence questionnaire among students.

The Issue:

Despite the advancements made in economic and technological fields in recent times, there are concerning negative aspects that have emerged, leading to anxiety, depression, and psychological stress across all demographics and areas of life. Educational institutions are not immune to these phenomena, particularly the rise of school violence, which has significantly increased in recent years. Educators have proposed several recommendations to mitigate this negative phenomenon in all its verbal, symbolic, and physical forms, especially affecting teachers and students, thus hindering the educational process and the achievement of desired goals. Various hypotheses have been suggested to explain the reasons behind school violence, including difficulties in adapting to the environment and emotional or psychological disturbances, particularly among children, as well as low levels of emotional intelligence among individuals.

The concept of emotional intelligence gained attention and was scientifically presented by American scholars John Mayer and Peter Salovey in their book titled "Emotional Intelligence." Daniel Goleman further clarified this term in his own work, stating that emotional intelligence can sometimes be more powerful and influential in a person's life than general intelligence. He noted that it contributes to improved academic performance, reduced aggressive behavior, and better overall functioning, asserting that general intelligence predicts only about 20% of the factors leading to success in life, while 80% is linked to emotional intelligence.

Believing in the significant impact of sports and physical activities on developing emotional intelligence among students—given that they represent a form of play proven effective in enhancing various skills in other groups—this research aims to explore the role of these activities and small-sided sports in fostering emotional intelligence skills among students and helping them achieve emotional balance. This will be conducted under the supervision of a psychologist and a physical education teacher to alleviate manifestations of school violence in all its forms.

The following main questions will be addressed:

- To what extent are small-sided sports activities effective in developing emotional intelligence among students?
- Are there statistically significant differences between pre- and post-test scores for emotional intelligence among the sample of students?
- Are there statistically significant differences between pre- and post-tests on the school violence questionnaire among the sample?

Study Hypotheses:

- There is an effectiveness of the training program based on small-sided sports activities in developing emotional intelligence among students.
- There are statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-test scores for emotional intelligence in the experimental sample, favoring the post-test.
- There are statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-tests on the school violence questionnaire among the sample participants.

Study Objectives:

- The study aims to implement a strategy based on school sports activities to develop and enhance social-emotional intelligence skills among aggressive students, tailored to the developmental stage of the sample.
- To assess the impact and effectiveness of the proposed sports activities using small-sided games on developing emotional intelligence skills among the targeted sample.
- To foster the emotional aspect of students to reduce negative behaviors resulting from a lack of emotional and social skills that can lead to aggressive behaviors.

Theoretical Framework:

- Emotional Intelligence Theory:

Also referred to as emotional or affective intelligence, early studies by psychologists focused on the nature and measurement of intelligence, emphasizing cognitive aspects such as attention, memory, and thinking, while largely neglecting emotional dimensions until the mid-20th century. Some researchers, however, did note the emotional aspect. The concept of human and animal emotions was initially discussed by Charles Darwin in his 1871 work "The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals," where he highlighted the importance of emotional expressions for survival and adaptation.

- Evolution of the Concept of Emotional Intelligence:

The historical development of emotional intelligence has progressed through three main phases:

➤ Phase One (1900-1969):

French psychologist Alfred Binet, along with Simon, developed the first individual intelligence test, revised in 1908 and 1911, to differentiate between normal and intellectually challenged children. In 1958, Wechsler emphasized non-cognitive abilities, noting their significance in predicting success in life as part of general intelligence.

➤ **Phase Two (1970-1989):**

Researchers began to unify the fields of knowledge and emotion. In 1983, Bar-On started studying emotional intelligence at Rhodes University in South Africa.

➤ **Phase Three (1990-Present):**

Salovey and Mayer researched individual differences in emotional ability and published a significant paper in a journal defining emotion and mood, introducing a modern psychological perspective on emotions. In 1995, Daniel Goleman published "Emotional Intelligence," which clarified the concept. In 1997, Bar-On developed the first tool for measuring emotional intelligence, and Goleman published his second book, "Working with Emotional Intelligence," in 1998.

- **Concept of Emotional Intelligence:**

The theoretical perspectives on emotional intelligence are diverse, with scholars and researchers offering multiple interpretations since its emergence. These interpretations vary based on the models they adopt, such as trait models, ability and skill models, and mixed models. The following definitions have been proposed:

John Mayer and Peter Salovey define emotional intelligence as "the ability of an individual to perceive their emotions, which helps in clear thinking, understanding, and knowing the emotions of others, leading to the regulation and development of mental growth related to those emotions" (Madhat Abu Nasr, 2008, p. 107). Daniel Goleman describes it as "the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions and those of others" (Goleman, 2001, p. 47). Bar-On (1997) defines it as "the ability to understand and express one's feelings, maintain a positive self-evaluation, and make full use of one's capabilities to lead a peaceful and happy life. It encompasses understanding how others feel and establishing successful, responsible interpersonal relationships without becoming overly dependent on others. Such individuals are characterized by optimism, resilience, realism, and success in problem-solving and managing stress without losing control."

- **Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence:**

Research from the three primary models—Mayer and Salovey (2002), Bar-On (1997), and Goleman (2000)—as well as other models, indicates that emotional intelligence consists of dimensions that share similar concepts and significance. These dimensions include:

➤ **Self-Awareness:** This dimension involves an individual's understanding of their own emotions, allowing them to make confident decisions. Goleman (2002) describes it as the individual's awareness of their mood, providing a clear view of their emotional state. Mayer and Salovey (2004) define it as the ability to recognize one's own emotions and those of others, enabling individuals to identify emotional cues in others.

➤ **Emotion Regulation:** This refers to self-management of emotions, which helps individuals adapt appropriately to different situations and people. Those who can regulate their emotions are less likely to experience depression and psychosomatic illnesses and are better positioned to channel their emotions toward achieving goals (Grouan, 2007, p. 109).

➤ **Emotion Organization:** This involves managing emotions in a way that aids rather than hinders an individual. It refers to the internal or external processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional responses, particularly intense and fleeting emotions, to achieve personal objectives (Jaber, Mohammed Rabi Abdu, 2006, p. 09).

➤ **Empathy:** Empathy is the ability to perceive and understand the emotions of others and respond positively and spontaneously. It involves emotional resonance with others after recognizing and understanding their feelings. Titchener notes that empathy arises from physically simulating another's suffering, bringing their feelings into one's own experience. For instance, a child may feel emotional when seeing their mother cry, even without tears of their own. Research indicates that differences in children's empathetic responses often stem from how parents train their children in empathy (Goleman, 2000, p. 82).

➤ **Social Skills:** These are the abilities that enable an individual to read and manage the emotions of others through successful relationships, demonstrating genuine interest and building trust. Effective social skills allow individuals to influence others by recognizing their emotions and supporting them appropriately.

- **Measuring Emotional Intelligence:**

There are two types of emotional intelligence assessments: performance tests and self-report measures.

- **Performance tests** include:

- **Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS):** Developed by Salovey and Caruso (2000), it consists of four branches comprising twelve ability tests, focusing on emotional perception, emotional facilitation of thought, emotional understanding, and emotional management.
- **Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT):** This is a more recent assessment that includes eight ability tests instead of twelve.

Self-report measures assess emotional intelligence as a trait and focus on consistency across various situations, evaluating characteristics like empathy, assertiveness, and optimism, in contrast to performance tests that examine emotional intelligence in the context of information processing.

- **Concept Clarifications:**

- **Operational Definition of Emotional Intelligence:** The total scores obtained by students aged 10-12 through their responses to the children's emotional intelligence scale.
- **Operational Definition of Sports Activities:** The researcher defines these as a set of organized, purposeful, and pre-planned activities and games governed by rules suitable for the age group of the sample, supervised by the researcher and the physical education teacher in the designated sports area within the school.

- **Previous Studies:**

- **Study by Boudebza Mustafa (2014):** This study aimed to investigate the impact of a proposed educational program using small-sided games on improving certain cognitive-motor skills among children with learning difficulties. The researchers employed a quasi-experimental design, applying the program to a sample of 10

students with learning difficulties as the experimental group and 10 children as the control group. The study was conducted at Harizia Abed School in Wadi Rhiou for 19 weeks, with three educational units per week. The results indicated that the educational program positively affected the improvement of some cognitive-motor skills for children with learning difficulties.

- **Study by Randa Rizkallah (2004):** This research aimed to design and implement a training program to develop emotional intelligence among sixth-grade students. Conducted as a field study in schools in Damascus, Syria, as part of her doctoral thesis in psychology at the University of Damascus, the study concluded that the research objectives were achieved positively, demonstrating the effectiveness of this type of program.
- **Study by Baksh (2001):** This study focused on the effectiveness of a proposed training program for performing various activities to develop social skills among mentally challenged children who are capable of learning.

- **Methodology of the Study:**

The research relies on a quasi-experimental design, which is appropriate for this study.

- **Study Population and Sample:**

The study population consists of all late childhood students, with the sample comprising students aged 10 to 12 years.

Table 2: Basic Study Sample Data

Age(years)	number	Percentage
9	08	26.66%
10	07	23.33%
11	08	26.66%
12	07	23.33%
Total	30	100%

- **Study Tools:**

The researcher used the following tools:

- **Emotional Intelligence Scale for Children:** Designed by Dr. Afaf Ahmed Awies, this scale measures children's emotional intelligence based on the ability model. It includes eight (08) images representing eight emotions: joy, embarrassment, crying, surprise, anger, thinking, and relief after solving a problem. The scale contains forty (40) items representing three dimensions: understanding emotions, recognizing one's own and others' emotions, and managing emotions.

Table 3: Dimensions and Items of the Emotional Intelligence Scale

Dimension	Number of Items
Understanding Emotions	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8
Recognizing Self and Others' Emotions	9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16
Managing Emotions	17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24
Total	25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40

- **Sports Activities Session:**

The sports activities session is a physical education class that encompasses three dimensions: emotional, behavioral, and cognitive. This session involves an interactive relationship between the physical education teacher and the students, lasting 50 to 60 minutes.

- **General Objective of the Program:**

The primary goal of the program is to develop emotional intelligence skills among late childhood students through small games and sports activities. This aims to help students achieve psychological adjustment, emotional balance, and enjoy good mental health.

- **Specific Objectives:**

The researcher anticipates that students will learn new skills and abilities that enable them to interact positively with others, including:

- **Self-Esteem Skills:** Understanding and recognizing one's self-worth.
- **Self-Motivation Skills:** Enhancing the ability to motivate oneself.
- **Empathy Skills:** Understanding and recognizing the emotions of others.
- **Communication Skills:** Effectively communicating with others and influencing them.
- **Social Skills:** Building effective social interactions.
- **Emotion Management Skills:** Managing one's own emotions and reactions.
- **Regulating Others' Emotions:** Managing and responding to the emotions of others.

- **Procedural Planning for Sports Activities Sessions:**

After conducting a comprehensive review of the literature related to this type of session, the researcher examined the physical, psychological, and emotional characteristics of the sample. Various types of small sports activities were analyzed regarding their nature, objectives, methods of implementation, and suitability. An exploratory study was also conducted to gather the opinions of experts and specialists, including coaches, athletes, and psychologists, on the subject. Based on this information, the initial content of the sports sessions was determined, and a selection of small sports games was made. Ten sports sessions were designed according to principles and foundations to achieve the objectives of developing emotional intelligence for this age group as follows:

- **Reliance on Team Games and Competitive Activities:** Engaging students in group and competitive games.
- **Activation of Leadership Roles:** Incorporating leadership roles and changing teams frequently.
- **Offering Familiar Activities:** Providing activities that are clear and familiar within the Algerian context.
- **Selection of Child-Favored Games:** Choosing games that children enjoy.
- **Immediate Reinforcement and Support:** Employing a continuous reinforcement approach.

- **Adaptation to Participants' Abilities:** Tailoring games to match the capabilities of the sample.
- **Encouragement and Motivation:** Using encouragement and motivational techniques.

- **Resource Identification:**

The necessary material resources were considered, and efforts were made to provide any missing elements to achieve the program's specified goals. This includes physical and human resources, sports and training equipment, as well as additional tools such as records, tests, scales, evaluation forms, small game equipment, and gifts for the children.

- **Techniques and Methods Used:**

A variety of training and sports techniques were employed, integrating psychological guidance methods (cognitive, behavioral, and emotional) suitable for this group. These included discussions, dialogues, lectures, identifying and modifying irrational thoughts, cognitive restructuring, and positive therapy techniques such as insight, interviews, and self-monitoring. Emotional techniques included counseling, role-playing, modeling, and behavioral approaches like homework assignments, relaxation exercises, and positive reinforcement (operant conditioning).

- **Statistical Processing:**

The statistical analysis was conducted using the SPSS software package, employing:

- Percentages (%) and Frequencies.
- Measures of Central Tendency (mean \bar{X} for calculating standard scores and standard deviation).
- T-test to assess the significance of differences between means after ensuring the homogeneity of the two groups.
- Cronbach's Alpha to determine the reliability coefficient of the tests.

- **Presentation and Discussion of Results:**

The results of the experimental sample on the emotional intelligence test were presented.

Table 4: Results of the Experimental Sample on the Emotional Intelligence Test

participant	Number	mean	Standard Deviation
Pre-test score	15	72,5	,17
Post-test score	15	78,5	,16

The table above presents the results of the experimental group on the emotional intelligence scale before and after participating in the guidance program. The pre-test results indicated a mean score of 72.5 with a standard deviation of 1.6. In contrast, the post-test results showed a mean score of 78.5 and a standard deviation of 1.5. Notably, the post-test scores are higher than those of the pre-test.

Table 6: Statistical Significance of Differences Between the Experimental Group's Results on the Emotional Intelligence Scale Before and After the Program Using Tests for Homogeneous Samples:

participant	Number	mean	Standard Deviation	Indicator	Statistical Significance	
Pre-test score	15	68,7	3,2	0,4	0,05	O,01
Post-test score	15	67,9	3,5		Not Significant	

The table above illustrates the statistical significance of the differences between the experimental group's results before and after the training program, using at-test for homogeneous samples. The calculated t-value was 8.38, with a significance level at 0.001, which is lower than the critical value of 0.01. Therefore, the observed difference is statistically significant at the 0.01 confidence level, supporting the alternative hypothesis that the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores on the emotional intelligence scale are statistically significant and favor the post-test results. Consequently, the findings can be considered reliable and generalized to the study population, indicating that they are not due to chance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

- Interpretation and Discussion of Results:

Discussion of the General Hypothesis:

The proposed sports activities based on small games are effective in developing emotional intelligence skills among students. As shown in Table 1, the correlation between the pre-test and post-test scores for the entire sample was represented by a value of 8.38, which is statistically significant at the critical level of 0.01. This confirms the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis.

The researcher believes that several factors may contribute to these changes, including the techniques used in the sports activities that promote the development of emotional intelligence skills in children during late childhood. This underscores the effectiveness of these sports and physical activities.

These findings align with those of Randa Rezkallah (2004), which indicated that the research objectives were achieved positively, demonstrating the effectiveness of such programs in enhancing emotional intelligence skills.

Discussion of the Second Hypothesis:

The results indicate statistically significant differences between the experimental group's emotional intelligence scores before and after the program, as determined by the t-test for homogeneous samples. The findings showed a t-value of 8.38, with a significance level of 0.001, which is less than the critical value of 0.01, favoring the post-test results. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, consistent with the findings of Baksh (2001).

- Conclusion:

After presenting and discussing the results, it is evident that the use of small games in sports activities is effective in developing students' emotional and social intelligence. The role of the physical education teacher within the educational institution is also highlighted. There is a pressing need for students to engage in such well-structured sports programs to enhance their emotional skills, aiding their self-adjustment and interaction with others. This, in turn, can facilitate their adaptation to their environment, improve their integration into the educational process, and reduce issues like violence and bullying prevalent in schools.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations have been proposed:

- **Increased Focus on School Sports:** There should be greater emphasis on incorporating various types of sports and games in educational institutions at all levels to enhance the teaching process, in coordination with administrative staff and educational consultants.

- **Permanent Educational Consultants:** Appoint a dedicated educational consultant in every school to raise awareness among parents about effective methods to support the development of all aspects of their children's personalities.

- **Training for Educators:** Provide teachers and educational counselors with training programs supervised by educational consultants to address students' psychological and emotional issues.

- **Development of Training Programs:** Create diverse training programs based on cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and practical frameworks to enhance various skills, which are crucial for achieving emotional balance among students and improving their social adaptation across all childhood stages—early, middle, and late.

- **Formation of Support Teams:** Establish teams primarily composed of physical education teachers, coaches, and guidance counselors, and activate their roles more effectively.

- **Comprehensive Educational Plan:** Develop a comprehensive plan encompassing all administrative and legal frameworks within the educational system, where physical education teachers play a more active role. Additionally, integrate psychologists into educational institutions to assist training staff in addressing challenges faced in schools and to invest in the sports aspect, which has proven effective in educational contexts in advanced societies.

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