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Sports Anxiety, Emotional Intelligence and Quality of Life among University Athletes

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: The present study was conducted to investigate the relationship between sports anxiety, emotional intelligence and quality of life among university athletes.

Methodology: The sample comprised of 200 university athletes of males and females. Sports Anxiety Scale-2 (2006), Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (2002) and Athlete Quality of Life Scale (2004) were used to measure sports anxiety, emotional intelligence and quality of life of university athletes.

Results: Results showed that sports anxiety negatively effects quality of life and emotional intelligence positively affects quality of life. Emotional intelligence significantly predicts quality of life and sports anxiety inversely predicts quality of life among university athletes. Emotional intelligence moderated the relationship between sports anxiety and quality of life. Athletes with higher emotional intelligence being associated with increased quality of life and decreased sports anxiety. A significant gender difference indicates that male athletes have lower sports anxiety and higher quality of life as compared to female athletes. This study also indicates that non-significant differences were found between sports anxiety and emotional intelligence on individual and team sports. Results also showed that beginners/young athletes have higher sports anxiety as compared to professionals/adult athletes.

Conclusion: The findings of the study will serve as platform for improving the emotional intelligence in university athletes to better cope with sports anxiety and to improve quality of life.

Keywords: Sports Anxiety, Emotional Intelligence, Athlete Quality of Life, University Athletes.

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Introduction

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Sport is an environment where individuals have to motivate themselves to achieve long-term goals through hard training. Moreover, athletes are required to consistently cope with the stress of hard training

and competitive pressure and this includes understanding and regulating their emotions and those of other individuals (Laborde et al., 2016).

Sports participation for individuals of any age is related with a variety of psychosocial medical advantages including strength, improved psychological well-being, a feeling of having a place, more significant levels of self-adequacy, decreased pressure, upgraded adapting and inspiration. Thinking about these advantages, it isn't astounding that individuals taking part in sport report preferable Health Related quality of life over everyone (Houstan et al., 2016; Omorou et al., 2013). Along with these advantages there is also an unavoidable risk of injury, osteoarthritis and mental problems, all of which may negatively impact personal satisfaction (Quality of life).

In light of the various effects of sports activity on Quality of life over the lifespan, it is necessary to unite and incorporate evidence on Quality of life in current sports participants (Filbay et al., 2019). Quality of life is described as a multidimensional concept that includes physical, mental, and social admiration as well as a person's insight of their situation in everyday life, in terms of the life style and value structures in which they reside, based on their goals, assumptions, norms, and concerns. The general well-being of individuals and social orders is referred to as Quality of life.

Competitive anxiety/Sports anxiety is defined as "a predisposition to see challenging conditions as hazardous and to react to these circumstances with nervousness and tension" in the context of sport involvement. Anxiety symptoms are attributed to the burden of sports activity. Stress is triggered by a discrepancy between perceived environmental demands and the athlete's perceived response capability (Dallas et al., 2019).

Pacesova and Smela (2020) evaluated the levels of anger and anxiety trait in non-athletes, combat and non-contact sport athletes, and analyzed the link between aggression dimensions and anxiety trait levels throughout the groups. Non-athletes were observed to be more physically violent than contact sport athletes, as well as having a higher level of rage and hatred (Amjad, 2020; Ahmad & Safdar, 2020).

Sport appears to help people to develop an even more resilient profile and a higher quality of life. Findings also conclude that, the former high-performance athletes showed greater resilience than non-athletes, regardless of the modality practiced and age (Cevada et al., 2012).

Dimick (2017) investigated the connection among athletes' emotional intelligence and age, gender, academics, and sport performance. The results indicate that no association between emotional intelligence and age, academics, and sport-performance exist. The significant relationship was found when comparing gender to emotional intelligence.

Mehmood and Gulzar (2014) looked into the link between emotional intelligence and adolescent self-esteem and stress. Findings showed that the Emotional intelligence has a good relationship with self-esteem and a negative relationship with depression among Pakistani teenagers (Laborde et al., 2016).

Sports activities have a vital role in individual well-being. Sporting activities give event to meet standards and requirement of an individual. Exercise is an important part of sports and psychological well-being is an important part of quality of life, it can be argued that sports has a role to play in the concept of quality of life and they also draw attention to the scarcity of studies on the benefits of sports and exercise to one's quality of life and fitness (Paunescu et al., 2018).

Rationale of Study

Sports are a well-known and widely observed fact in the world. It is the largest and most common communal institution in modern society. It strengthens any society's social hierarchies, which are focused on class, rivalry, gender, and ethnicity (Jahangir & Mansoor, 2019).

A lot of research has gone into finding out how sports can help people build a healthier lifestyle, as well as physical, emotional, and cognitive skills. Furthermore, organized team sports encourages the growth of

qualities such as discipline, increases motivation and trust, and aids in teaching and learning abilities (Gill et al., 2020; Eime et al., 2013; Beamon. 2010; Edwards & Steyn, 2008; Bramston et al., 2005; Conte, 2005; Hughson et al., 2004; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001).

Previous researches on the relationship between emotional intelligence, Q.O.L and sports anxiety is insufficient; therefore, quality of life and emotional intelligence research on the sports side is needed to aid practitioners in obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and formulating policies for improved sports performance.

Based on the findings of previous research studies, the objective of current study is to explore association between Sports Anxiety, E.I and Quality of Life of university athletes'. In Pakistan, only a few studies have been performed to see how anxiety influences sports performance and quality of life in both practice and competition. In the current study, emotional intelligence is predicted to play a moderating role in the relationship between Sports Anxiety and Quality of Life. An individual with high Emotional intelligence has less Sports anxiety than someone with low Emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is often related to a higher level of life satisfaction and as a result, a higher level of quality of life.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of present study are as under:

H 1: Sports Anxiety is negatively related to quality of life and emotional intelligence among university athletes.

H 2: Emotional intelligence and quality of life have a positive relationship among university athletes.

H 3: Sports anxiety and emotional intelligence predicts quality of life among university athletes.

H 4: Emotional intelligence acts as moderator between sports anxiety and quality of life among university athletes.

H 5: Emotional intelligence is higher in team sports as compared to the individual sports among university athletes.

H 6: There is a difference between male and female university athletes on sports anxiety, emotional intelligence and quality of life.

H 7: There is a difference between beginners and professional athletes on sports anxiety, emotional intelligence and quality of life.

H 8: There is a difference between young athletes and adult athletes on sports anxiety.

Method

Instruments

Sports Anxiety (SAS-2) Scale. Competitive Anxiety is measured by using Sport Anxiety (SAS-2) Scale-2 which was developed by Smith and colleagues (2006). It has total 15-items. It is a 4 point scoring system (Likert Scale) that ranges from "1" (not-at-all) to "4" (extremely) (very much). Thus, the alpha reliability co-efficient for overall score based on all 15 elements is 0.91, and the subscale reliability coefficients for Somatic, Worry, and Concentration Disruption are 0.84, 0.89, and 0.84, respectively.

Emotional Intelligence (EI Scale). The Wong & Law Emotional Intelligence (EI- Scale) Scale is 16 items test of emotional intelligence. This scale was originally developed by Wong and Law (2002). Participants use 7 point scoring system (Likert Scale) which ranges from "1 to 7" (strongly agree

to strongly disagree). The Cronbach alpha for the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence (WLEIS) Scale is 0.89

The Athlete Life Quality Scale. The athlete's quality of life or life-satisfaction is measured by using the Athlete Quality of Life Scale which was developed by Noah (2004). It has total 15 items. It has five subscales. Participants responded on, 7point Likert scale ranging from "1 Very Dissatisfied - 7 Very-Satisfied. The Cronbach's alpha is 0.83 of the whole scale.

Sample

The sample comprises of 200 (n=100 Males, n=100 Females) university athletes of age ranging from 18 to 30 years studying in BS (Hons), Msc, Mphil, or PhD. The convenient sampling strategy was adopted to collect the data. The data has been taken from different universities of Islamabad (International Islamic University, Air University, Bahria University, Quaid-e-Azam University and Iqra University) and Rawalpindi (Riphah International University, Fatima Jinnah Women University and Arid Agricultural University). The mean age of the sample for age 18 to 24 is (M=23, SD=6.05) and for age 25 to 30 is (M=29, SD=8.09).

Procedure

University students were approached with the permission of the relevant authorities. After a brief explanation of the report, respondents or authorities was asked to give their informed consent. The data was then being stored and all ambiguities were clarified. The students, who were free at the time of study and willing to participate, will ask to fill in the questionnaires. Furthermore, participants were asked to honestly provide their answers and they were thanked for their support at the end. SPSS was used for descriptive analysis, linear regression analysis, Pearson correlation, moderation analysis and t-testing in order to evaluate the results.

Results

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics and α-Reliability Coefficient of scales (N=200)*

Scales	*K*	*α*	*M (SD)*	Range		Skewness	Kurtosis
				Actual	Potential		
Sports anxiety scale -2 Scale	15	.88	26.88(7.78)	15-51	15-60	0.84	0.46
Wong and Law Emotional Scale intelligence	16	.90	81.36(14.78)	21-105	16-112	-1.41	2.73
Athlete quality of life Scale	15	.91	82.45(14.48)	15-105	15-105	-1.34	2.39

Above table 1 represents the Descriptive statistics, Alpha reliability and number of items of scales. Alpha reliability of sports anxiety is 0.88; emotional intelligence has 0.90 and athlete quality of life has alpha reliability of 0.91. From above data it is concluded that, alpha reliability of all three scales is good it means data is reliable for further analysis. Value of Skewness and Kurtosis of all three scales are between (-1 to +1) which show that the data is normally distributed.

Table 2: *Correlation Coefficient Matrix for study variables (N=200)*

	Variables	1	2	3
1	Sports anxiety	1	-.38*	-.44*
2	Emotional intelligence	-	1	.54*
3	Athlete quality of life	-	-	1

*(*p<0.05)*

Table 2 shows correlation matrix. The outcomes indicate that there is a significant negative correlation of sports anxiety with athlete quality of life (r= -.44, p <.05) and emotional intelligence (r= -.38, p <.05). Emotional intelligence is positively correlated with Athlete quality of life (r = .54, p<.05).

Table 3: *Simple Linear Regression showing Sports Anxiety and Emotional Intelligence as Predictor of Athlete Quality of Life (N=200)*

	B	***SE***	***B***	**T**	***P***
Constant	62.5	6.7		9.31	.000
Sports Anxiety	-.53	.11	-.29	4.66	.000
Emotional Intelligence	.42	.06	.43	7.02	.000
R= .59, R^2= .35					

Note. B=Un-standardized coefficient, SE= Standard Error, β =Standardized Coefficient Beta

Table 3 shows that Sports Anxiety negatively predicts the quality of life with (β = -0.29). Emotional intelligence is a significant and positive predictor of quality of life with (β = 0.43). It indicates that emotional intelligence is significantly and positively affect quality of life. The value of R^2 is 0.35 which show that 35% variation in Athlete Quality of Life (Q.O.L) is explained by Emotional intelligence and Sports anxiety.

Table 4: *Regression Analysis showing Moderating Effect of Emotional Intelligence between-Sports Anxiety and Athlete Quality of Life (N= 200)*

	Athlete Quality of Life					
Variables	R^2	Adjusted R^2	B	β	*T*	*P*
1. constant			104.7		31.6	.00
Sports anxiety	.20	.20	-.83	-.44	6.9	.00
2. constant			62.5		9.31	.00
Sports anxiety	.36	.36	-.53	-.29	4.66	.00
Emotional intelligence			.42	.43	7.02	.00
3. constant			107.8		5.2	.00
Sports anxiety			-2.08	-1.12	3.1	.00
Emotional intelligence			-.12	-.12	.49	.62
Sports anxiety * emotional intelligence	.38	.37	.02	.83	2.30	.02

Table 4 shows the results of moderation analysis to check the moderating effect of emotional intelligence in relationship between athlete quality of life and Sports anxiety. The results are as under: the model 1 sports anxiety has negative effect on athlete quality of life with β =-.44 and it explain 20% variance in quality of life (R^2=.20, p<.01) which indicates that Sports anxiety has significant effect on quality of life it means that higher the sports anxiety lower will be athlete quality of life.

The model 2 shows that E I has a positive effect on athlete QOL with β =.43 and it explains 36% variance in quality of life (R^2=.36) which indicates that Emotional Intelligence is a significant predictor of quality of life which means' that higher the Emotional Intelligence higher will be quality of life. The model 3 shows the significant and positive interaction among Emotional intelligence and sports anxiety in predicting Athlete quality of life, with β =.83 and it explain 38% variance in quality of life (R^2=.38) which indicates that, relationship between Sports anxiety and Athlete quality of life is moderates by emotional intelligence. The findings also signify that emotional intelligence is a moderator among Sports anxiety and athlete quality of life. It shows that higher the Emotional intelligence of athlete lower will be the sports anxiety and in result higher will be quality of life.

Figure 1: Mod-graph

Emotional intelligence significantly moderates' the relationship among sports anxiety and quality of life, it shows that higher the emotional intelligence and lower the sports anxiety is related with better Q.O.L.

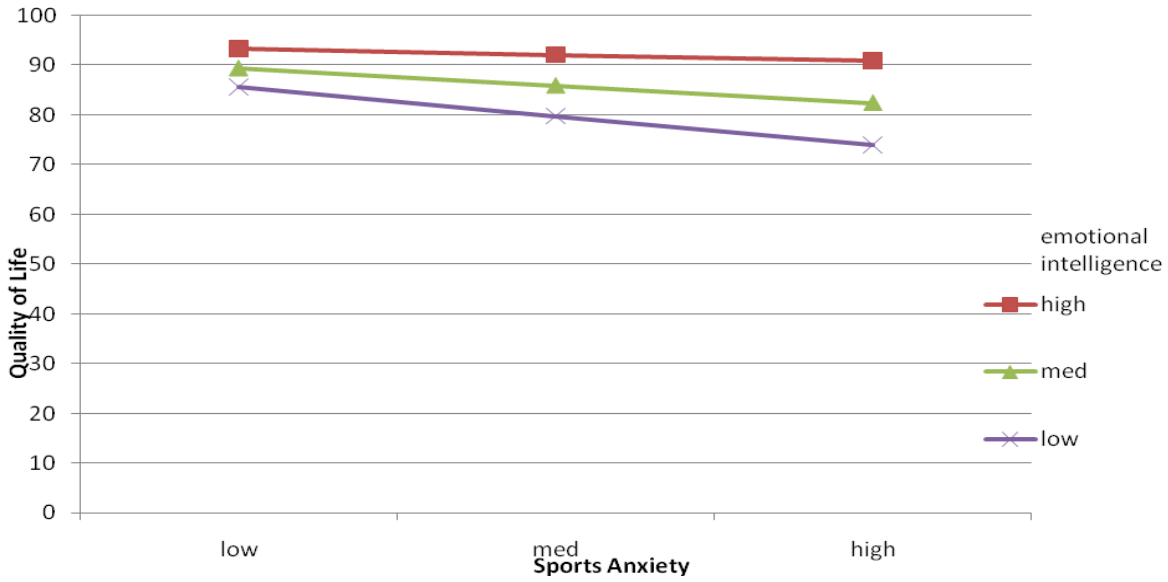

Table 5: *Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values along gender on Variables (N=200)*

Variables	Male (*n* = 100) *M (SD)*	Female (*n* = 100) *M (SD)*	*t*	*p*	95% *CI* *LL*	95% *CI* *UL*	Cohen's d
Sports Anxiety	25.15 (7.54)	28.61 (7.65)	3.22	0.00	-5.58	-1.34	0.46
Emotional Intelligence	82.57 (13.98)	80.16 (15.53)	1.15	0.25	-1.71	6.53	0.17
Athlete Quality of life	84.70 (12.45)	80.21 (15.99)	2.21	0.02	0.49	8.5	0.31

df =198

Table 6 shows difference between male and female athletes on sports anxiety, emotional intelligence and athlete quality of life. The mean column shows that female athletes are higher at sports anxiety (M=28.7, SD= 7.65) than male athletes (M= 25.5, SD= 7.54). Results also point out that male athletes are higher at quality of life (M= 84.7, SD= 12.46) than female athletes (M=80.21, SD= 15.99). Results are significant for both male and female athletes on quality of life and Sports anxiety. The result shows that there exists a non significant difference on E.I of male and female athletes.

Table 6: *Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values along sports participation at university level on Variables (N=200)*

Variables	Professionals (>3) (*n* = 114) *M (SD)*	Beginners(<3) (*n* = 86) *M (SD)*	*t*	*p*	95% *CI* *LL*	*UL*	Cohen's d
Sports anxiety	25.9 (7.94)	28.09 (7.41)	1.92	0.04	-4.3	0.5	0.29
Emotional intelligence	82.10 (13.29)	80.4 (16.59)	0.81	0.42	-2.4	5.9	0.11
Athlete quality of life	84.25 (12.7)	80.1 (16.27)	2.03	0.04	0.1	8.2	0.29

df =198

Table 6 shows differences between beginner and professional athletes in sports participation at university on sports anxiety, emotional intelligence and athlete quality of life. The results' demonstrating that sports anxiety of beginner athletes' is high (M=28.09, SD= 7.41) than professional athletes (M= 25.9, SD= 7.94). Results also indicate that professional athletes is higher (M= 84.25, SD= 12.7) than beginner athletes (M=80.1, SD= 16.27) on Q.O.L. Results also show that there is non-significant differences on emotional intelligence among university athletes.

Table 7: *Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values along age on Variables (N=200)*

Variables	18 to 24 (*n* = 144) *M (SD)*	25 to 30 (*n* = 56) *M (SD)*	*t*	*p*	95% *CI* *LL*	*UL*	Cohen's d
sports anxiety	28.05 (8.07)	23.88 (6.05)	3.504	0.01	18.25	6.5	0.59
emotional intelligence	80.21 (15.5)	84.34 (12.66)	1.78	0.07	-8.69	0.43	0.3
athlete quality of life	81.4 (14.95)	85.16 (12.91)	1.65	0.09	-8.23	0.71	0.32

df = 198

Table 7 represents the differences between young athletes and adult athletes on sports anxiety, emotional intelligence and quality of life. The conclusion demonstrating that the sports anxiety of young athletes is more (M=28.05, SD= 8.07) than adult athletes (M= 23.88, SD= 6.05). There is non-significant difference between young athletes and adult athletes on emotional-intelligence (E.I) and quality-of-life.

Table 8: *Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values along team sports and individual sports on Variables (N=200)*

Variables	Team sports (*n* = 100) *M (SD)*	Individual sports (*n* = 100) *M (SD)*	*t*	*p*	95% *CI* *LL*	*UL*	Cohen's d
Sports Anxiety	26.93 (7.87)	26.79 (7.67)	0.12	0.90	-2.5	2.2	0.03
Emotional Intelligence	82.26 (13.56)	79.54 (7.23)	1.19	0.23	-7.20	1.76	0.25

Athlete Quality of life	82.28 (15.08)	82.70 (13.18)	0.19	0.84	-3.97	4.8	0.01

df = 198

Table 9 shows non-significant differences between team sports and individual sports on sports anxiety, emotional intelligence and Q.O.L.

Discussion

The main aim of the present research was to investigate the association among sports anxiety, emotional intelligence' and athlete quality of life.

Finding of this study shows a significant and negative correlation of sports anxiety with E.I and Q.O.L. An existing Pakistani research was conducted on players of domestic cricketers that show negative relationship between sports anxiety with emotional intelligence and quality of life (Ahmad & Safdar, 2020). The result is supported by a study which was conducted on athletes and non athletes upon gender (Pacesova et al., 2019). The result gathered from the present study are also compatible with a study of (Rice et al., 2019), which shows that emotional intelligence and QOL are negatively affected by sports anxiety. According to another study conducted in Pakistan also revealed the negative impact of sports anxiety on EI and QOL among university students' (khan, 2013). A study was conducted on young Olympic Games participants, which results higher quality of life and emotional intelligence leads to lower anxiety level among Young Olympic Game participants Ledochowshi and colleagues (2012), Fox (1999), Kleine (1990), Ryska (1993) also find that sports anxiety has negative effects on quality of life and negative correlation of sports anxiety and emotional intelligence. The sports anxiety is negativity related to emotional intelligence, these results are consistent to previous literature. (Laborde et al., 2016) study the same negative association between emotional intelligence & sports anxiety' that targeted the sports students. Mehmood and Gulzar (2014) also showed the negative relationship among E.I, depression and Competitive anxiety among adolescents in their study. Same conclusion has been drawn by Lu and colleagues (2010) they examine negative association among emotional intelligence and stress. This research supports that EI increases sports activity in athletes. Meyer and Fletcher (2007) found the same relationship between sports related anxiety and emotional intelligence. The results showed that women have higher emotional intelligence and high sports anxiety than men. Lastly Ungur and Karagozoglu, (2013) examine negative relation between emotional intelligence with sports anxiety and conclude that females has higher emotional intelligence and anxiety as compare to male of physical education students.

Results also showed a positive link among Q.O.L and E.I. These results are also compatible with antecedent literature (Laborde et al., 2016; Mehmood & Gulzar, 2014), there results are consistent with our study findings i-e emotional intelligence and quality of life is positively related (Extremera & Fernández, 2006).

It was hypothesized that emotional intelligence and sports anxiety is significant predictor of quality of life. Finding suggests that emotional intelligence positively predicts quality of life. Same conclusion has been drawn from the study conducted by Lu and colleagues in 2010. It was also found that Sports anxiety negatively predicts quality of life among Pakistani adolescents (Laborde et al., 2016; Mehmood & Gulzar, 2014). The results of current research are consistent with previous results which was a correlational study conducted on male domestic cricketer by Ahmad and Safdar (2020). According to Pacesova and colleagues (2019) emotional intelligence and sports anxiety is significant predictor of quality of life in elite athletes and non athletes in Slovakia.

Our findings of independent t-test revealed that, male have lower sports anxiety and higher quality of life as compared to female. Rice et al (2019) also found that high anxiety in female elite athlete as compared to male elite athletes. His findings were consistent with current study that young athletes have low quality

of life than adult athletes. The study also found that beginners and young female has higher sports anxiety as compared to male, professional and adult athletes. The same conclusion has been made by Pacesova and colleagues (2019) among elite & non-athletes of the Slovakia state. The study concluded that male has fewer problems of stress and emotional distress than female. Dos Santos (2015) has examined the same results as mentioned above. The demographics' of present study were age, gender, individual/team sports and year of participation in sports which suggests no difference with emotional intelligence among the university students. These findings are consistent with Dimick (2017) study in which no relationship was found between emotional intelligence with age, gender and in sports participation. Our results are also matched with that of Alkhadher (2007) study in which no significant results were found in gender on emotional intelligence. The present study also finds that females have low quality of life as compared to males. Another study by Khan (2013) showed the same findings in which comparison was made between US, UK, Norway, Poland, Turkey and Australia with student population of Pakistan. Our study finds no significant difference between sports anxiety, E.I and quality of life on individual/team sports. Several reasons are there that can supports this finding, which includes the cultural difference i-e in western culture psychological training is also provided to the sports students with physical training which is mandatory part of their education system that is not followed by Pakistani culture. In Pakistan the sports coaches' are mostly performance oriented and not focusing on other factors that may enhance their physical performance and emotional stability/wellbeing. Another reason may be is in case of both sports types i-e individual sports and team sports the pressure on the player is the same during the competition, as the athlete faces same type of anxiety or pressure in any competition irrespective of the sports type.

Another hypothesis in this study stated that emotional intelligence act as a moderator in relationship among S.A and Q.O.L. Results' of moderation analysis showed that emotional intelligence have good moderation impact on quality of life and sports anxiety, higher the emotional intelligence, higher the individual has capability to cope the distress and stress level which leads to lower level of sports anxiety and enhance high Q.O.L. According to Bhullar and colleagues (2012) emotional intelligence plays a positive role as a moderator between psychological-distress and life-satisfaction in adults. E.I was related to low level of mental problems and high life-satisfaction. Emotional intelligence weakens the association and relationship with distress and improves life satisfaction. Watson and Watson (2016) studies showed the positive moderation of E.I between educational stresses & coping self efficacy among college student. According to this study emotional intelligence significantly moderates the relationship between stress and self efficacy for the student's surveyed.

Limitations and Suggestions

Following are the limitations and suggestions of the present study:

- Cross sectional research design is used to find out the results did not allow to set up a causal links between Sports anxiety, Emotional-intelligence and Quality of Life, therefore further research should use longitudinal research design to confirm current findings.
- The data was collected from small sample which reduced its generalization therefore further studies should use huge data set.
- Questionnaire method has been used in current study which restricts the responses of the participants. Hence, for upcoming study, it's recommended that interview method should be used to get in depth information about study variables that may increase validity of the research.

Conclusion

The study concludes that sports anxiety is negatively correlated with athlete's emotional intelligence and Q.O.L. Emotional-intelligence is positively correlated with athlete Q.O.L. It indicates that male athletes have better quality of life than in female athletes and there exist non-significant difference between age, gender and sports participation on emotional intelligence. Results also indicate that professional athletes have better quality of life than beginner athletes' and the level of anxiety of beginners are higher than

professional. The findings also demonstrate that the level of anxiety of young athletes age range from 18-24 is higher than adult athletes age range from 25-30. Results also indicate that quality of life of young athletes is lower than from adult athletes. It is also concluded that Sports anxiety negatively predicts the Q.O.L. Emotional intelligence is a significant and positive predictor of quality of life. There were non-significant differences found between individual and team sports. Moreover, it is concluded that emotional intelligence significantly moderates the relationship among sports anxiety and Q.O.L i-e higher the E.I of athletes lower will be the sports anxiety and in results higher will be quality of life.

Implications

This study can contribute significantly to the understanding of the relationship between these variables and their differences thus have implication for the management of sports anxiety, emotional intelligence and quality of life in sports and educational settings. As a player, not only sportsmen performance should be put front but also their mental state to get rid of anxiety and depression. For that officials must arrange seminars, workshops and counseling sessions. Sports psychology insures better mental health which hereby helps the sports person to perform outstanding. It will also important to know the level of sports anxiety and emotional intelligence among primary, middle & high school students in Pakistan. The research will highlights the importance and implication of the impact of emotional intelligence that it places on sports anxiety as well as on quality of life among university athletes participating in sports. The study findings are also adding in existing literature.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors declared no conflict of interest.

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