

## SPORTS IMPACTS ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE

Blerina ALIAJ<sup>1\*</sup>, Mirjeta CENAJ<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Education and Health, Faculty of Movement Sciences, SUT

<sup>2</sup>Department of Education and Health, Faculty of Movement Sciences, SUT

\*Corresponding author e-mail: baliyaj@ust.edu.al

### Abstract

Quality of life is a broad concept that encompasses all aspects of a person's existence. It is defined as the individual perceptions of their life positioning, in the cultural context and in relation to the values of their society, as well as from the viewpoint of personal goals, expectations, standards and concerns. The purpose of this study is to inspect how sports / physical activity affect the quality of human life. The target group of the study were the students at Sports University of Tirana and the respondents of this questionnaire were (n = 106) students in total.

To distinguish how sports affected the students' lives we included a question to differentiate between students engaging regularly in sports/physical activity (n = 53) and students who are not doing any sports or physical activity (n = 53). The instrument used is the Quality-of-Life Scale - WHOQOL - BREF (University of Washington Seattle, U.S.A, 1997) which is divided into 4 main areas: quality of life in general, physical health, psychological health and interpersonal relationships.

The results of the study showed that students who regularly engage in sports / physical activity in all four areas of the questionnaire had better results confirming the hypothesis that sports/physical activity significantly improves the quality of life

*Keywords:* quality of life, sports, physical activity, physical health, psychological health.

### 1. Introduction

The concept of quality of life is related to how an individual perceives the "good" of many aspects of his life. These assessments include emotional reactions, feelings of self-fulfillment, and satisfaction with both work and personal relationships. (Torrance, 1987). The quality of life of people in the fields of physical health, environment, psychology, and social relation is influenced by environment quality. It has been researched that active participation in sport activities is the most dominant factor associated with a better quality of life. (Nurhayati, 2020)

Several studies in adults and adolescents suggest sports participation to be associated with a more favorable Quality of Life. Being physically active in a socially engaged manner by participating in sports activities seems to improve Quality of Life in adults and adolescents (Moeijes, 2019).

Also, according to (Rak, 2014), sport plays a very important role in improving physical health, psychological, social interaction by significantly improving the quality of life of the people who regularly exercise and do sports.

Sport has positive effects on psychological and physical characteristics. Sport, exercise, and physical activity are central to health and serve as the prevention to illness. Exercising and playing sports will guarantee the lifelong benefits, which will be given to their lives and will be converted to higher quality of life and life satisfaction. (Perackova, Peracek, 2019)

The purpose of this study is to look at how sport / physical activity affects the quality of life of adults, making a comparison between students who engage in sports / physical activity and those who do not.

## 2. Methodology

The tool for the gathering of the data was a questionnaire namely quality of life meter which was designed in June 1997 but underwent modifications in December 2014. This meter was designed by the University of Washington Seattle, U.S.A.

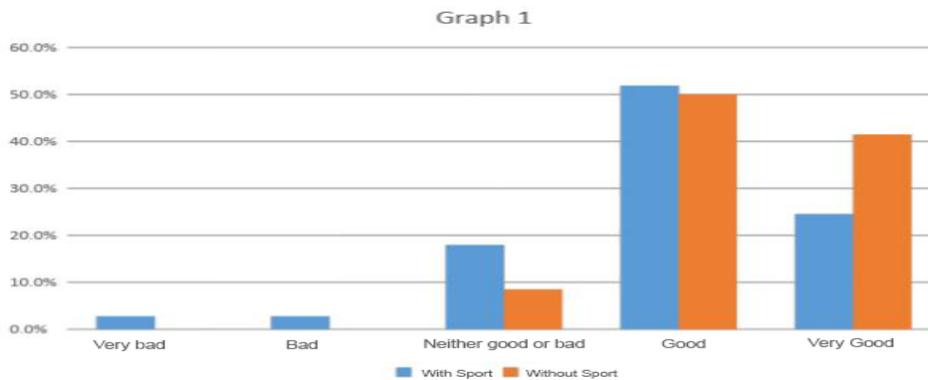
The questionnaire itself aims to measure the quality of life in the last two weeks and is divided into the following main areas: quality of life and health in general, physical health, psychological health, and social relations through questions on these aspects and individuals choose one of the 5 Likert scale.

The questionnaire was drafted on Google forms and was intended firstly, at this first stage of the study, to be addressed to students at Sports University of Tirana and then to other students of this age group, i.e. university students. The aim for this was first to see if there are any differences in the above aspects between students who engage in sport and those who only study sports. Later, we intend to extend the study even to students at other university study programs.

The questionnaire Google forms link is distributed through the students' emails to SUT students and it was returned/submitted by 106 students at Sports University of Tirana participated in this study. 53 of them do not engage in sports / physical activity and 53 students do engage in sports / physical activity. The submitted responses were then processed via Google Excel Sheets.

## 3. Results

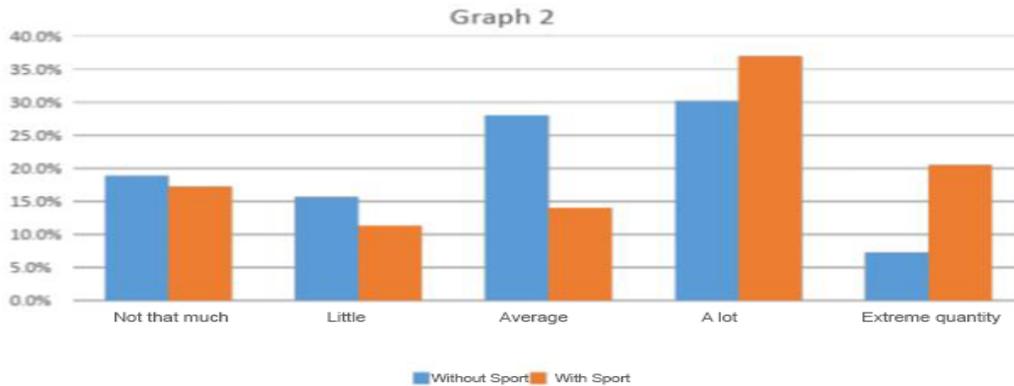
As explained earlier the quality-of-life meter measures four areas and the results of our study for the four areas of study of the questionnaire i.e. quality of life, physical health, psychological health and social interaction are as follows.



**Graph 1.** Quality of Life

Graph 1 presents the students responses about their satisfaction with the Quality of Life in general. It is evident from the responses that 91.5% of students who engage in sports / physical activity rate the quality of life and good health and very good versus 76.4% of students who do not do sports.

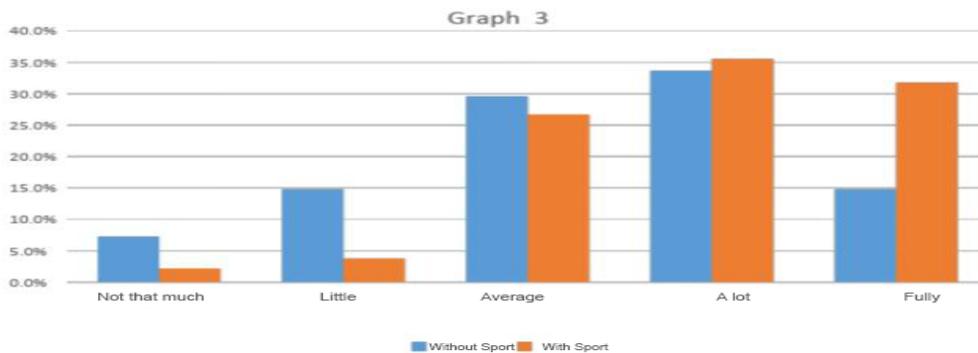
The data in this graph shows that 5.6% of students who do not play sports consider their quality of life and health as bad and very bad, while students engaged in sports estimate these two aspects positively.



**Graph 2. Physical Health**

Graph 2 relating the results on Physical Health. We see that 34.5% of those who do not play sports have answered the question of how satisfied they are with their physical health by choosing the scales: ‘Not so many’ and ‘Few’ compared to 28.6% of students who play sports.

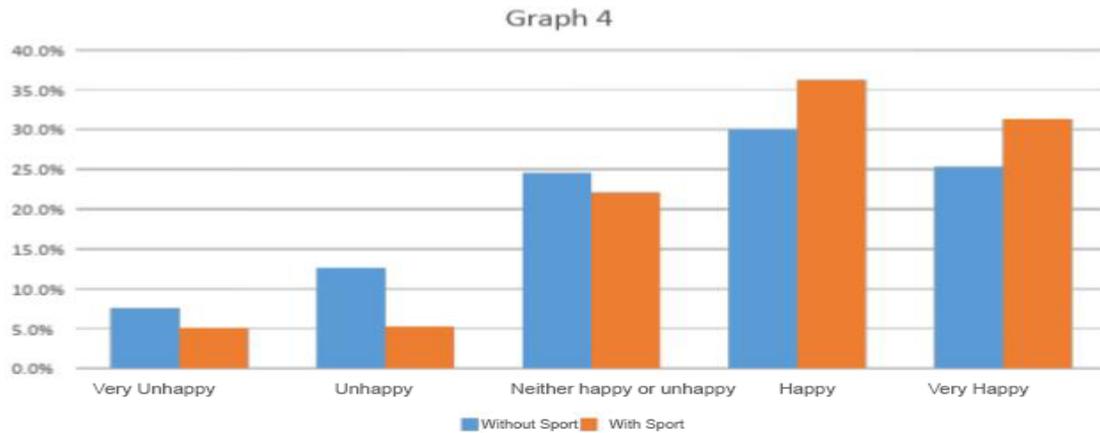
In the Graph we notice that students who do sports lead a more active life and have better physical health as 57.4% of them answered ‘Very’ or ‘Extremely’ versus 37.5% of those students who do not engage in sports.



**Graph 3. Psychological Health**

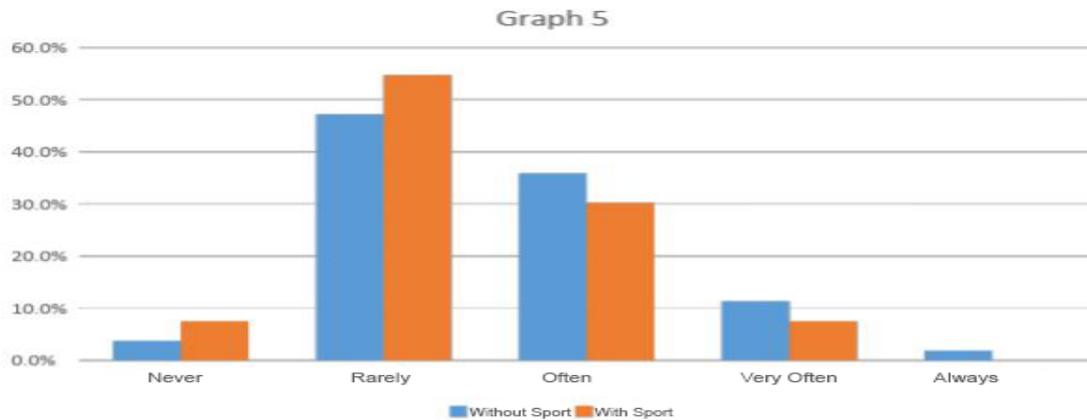
Graph 3 related to how sport affects Psychological Health – satisfaction with one’s own appearance, experiencing positive and negative emotions, self-respect, the ability to think and concentrate. According to the received responses, 67.3% of students who engage in sports / physical activity are very or fully satisfied with their psychological state compared to students who do not engage in sports / physical activity whose percentage at these two scales is lower at 48.4%.

Only a very small percentage of students who engage in sports are not satisfied with their appearance while the group who do not engage in sports the percentage is 22%.



**Graph 4. Social Relations**

The graph on aspect number 4, namely on Social Relations we can see that a higher percentage i.e. 67.5% of students who engage in sports are satisfied with their professional, intimate, social life, etc. While in the group of students who do not do sports the percentage is lower, i.e. 55.3%. 20.1% of students who do not engage in physical activity have expressed that they are unhappy and very unhappy compared to 10.6% of students who engage in physical activity.



**Graph 5. Psychological Health**

Paragraph 5, aims to measure psychological health, the focus is on the question ``How many times do you have negative feelings like sadness, anxiety, depression? `` Once again, the group of students who do sports seems to have experienced these issues at a lesser extent, at 37.7% have answered mostly by choosing ‘often’, ‘very often’ or ‘always’, while students who do not do sports have experienced these feeling more often at 49.1%., often or even always.

#### 4. Conclusions

In all four areas the results showed that students engaged in sports / physical activity have a better quality of life. They have better physical health, better psychological health, better social relationships, lower levels of anxiety, stress, and depression.

Referring to the results, it is very important for children and young people to engage in physical activity to be healthier, both physically and mentally, as well as from a social point of view.

For the abovementioned reasons, there is a need to expand similar studies to identify and promote the benefits of sport in the best interest of the physical, psychological, and psychosocial well-being of children and adults. Moreover, to promote the positive aspects of physical activity, parents' awareness of the importance of sports on the well-being of their children would have a direct positive impact.

The use of physical exercise must be complemented by the pleasant and entertaining free time pastime actively and more outdoors and in nature. If the free time is used wisely, it becomes a mean of forming the human personality, of permanent education.

These activities must be organized together with family, friends, in a non-competitive manner (walks, trips, dynamic games, swimming etc.), as well as in a competitive manner. It is essential that the physical education and sports will be a part of the daily routine of everyone. The gradual accustoming to systematic practice of physical activities and work outs means shaping, consciousness and active participation.

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