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### Original Article

# The comparison between students trends to individual and team sports based on parenting styles, parental attachment styles and psychological well-being

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** The present study was carried out to compare tendency of performing individual and group-based sports among students, in accordance with parenting styles and parents' psychological attachment and well being.

**Materials and Methods:** This was a causative-comparative study. Participants was all parents of elementary pupils at Isfahan city, region six, that have been referred to athletic clubs for doing special sports, besides passing physical education lecture and sport course at the school. A total of 120 subjects were selected via multistage cluster sampling method. The Hazan and Shiver attachment style questionnaire (1987), Baumrind parenting questionnaire (1989) and Ryff's psychological well being (1980) was used for collecting information. Data was analyzed using SPSS-21 software and multivariate variance analysis.

**Results:** The results of this study showed that there is neither significant difference in nor components of psychological well being with parents in tendency to group-based and individual sports ( $P>0.05$ ). According to the results, there is a significant difference between parenting styles and attachment (safe attachment and assertive parenting style) in students tendency to individual and team sports ( $P<0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** It seems that parenting styles and attachment styles can impact on students' tendency to individual and team sports.

**Keywords:** Attachment, Parents, Parenting style, Psychological well being, Sport

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## Introduction

The importance of exercise and physical activities is not hidden from anyone, and exercise improves people's physical and mental health. The effect of sports is such that it affects the formation of human behavior and personality from childhood and adolescence. Physical activity is one of the constructive educational methods to ensure a healthy life for present and future children (1). The increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity in children is the main health problem in society, and the sedentary lifestyle is influential in the growth and spread of this trend (2).

For these reasons, sports and physical activity participation are highly recommended, especially for teenagers and young adults. On the other hand, the importance of sports participation in teenagers and young people to reduce inappropriate social behavior, create a positive physical self-concept, and have favorable psychological consequences is more evident. It ultimately guarantees the continuation of their sports participation in adulthood (3).

Despite this, today's facilities and way of life, especially in urban areas, have made teenagers and young people less willing to participate in sports and physical activity (4).

Various factors such as age, gender, perception of ability, and ability affect the motivation of teenagers to participate in sports, but one of the main influencing factors is important people such as parents. So that the role of parents in children's sports participation has been mentioned in various types of research (5).

Live, Lee, and Ransdell (6) showed that parents' physical activity patterns and levels have a significant relationship with their children's physical activity. Due to the belief that parents play a vital role in the development of sports experiences in adolescent athletes, the interest in investigating parents' influence on adolescents' sports activity is increasing because children have an excellent value for evaluating parents' performance. They believe in themselves. Therefore, expectations and feedback received from parents about their efforts and sports performance are essential for young athletes (7).

It is worth mentioning that parents' expectations and feedback are reflected in their parenting methods. Therefore, raising children is one of the

factors that can aggravate the prevalence of inactivity; Because parents have much influence on their children's behaviors, and these effects are probably revealed in the parenting styles of parents (8). Parenting styles are methods that parents apply in dealing with their children. These styles significantly and profoundly affect the formation and development of their personality and behavior (9).

What is certain is that parenting styles can affect psychological and social development, academic performance, well-being, health, and behavioral problems of children in the future. Current research on parenting styles is influenced by Baumrind's studies on children and their families (10). Based on the two dimensions of love and restraint, he describes four parenting styles: 1- Decisive parents, 2- Autocratic parents, 3- Permissive parents 4- Permissive (indifferent) parents. Decisive parents, while paying attention to their children's needs, express their expectations and apply rules and regulations at home. Authoritarian parents do not accept their children's needs but insist on obeying the rules. Permissive parents are the opposite of authoritarian parents.

This means that they apply a lot of affection and a little restraint. Indifferent parents neglect both dimensions of love and restraint. This means that they neither accept the needs of the children nor supervise their behavior (11). As a result, it can be said that children's sports participation is related to their parents' parenting styles. In this regard, Abdi Moghadam et al. (2), and Jago et al., indicated a significant relationship between the amount of physical activity of children and the amount of physical activity of their children is higher in parents who use an authoritative parenting style.

Along with the factor of parents' parenting styles, attachment styles are a helpful framework for understanding close relationships throughout life. After creating internal performance patterns, children will reflect on them in their interactions and strengthen and modify them.

The influence of these patterns is evident in various fields of life (13). In this way, the influence of attachment styles in sports activities will also be significant. Because attachment style affects important aspects of people's world, such as social relations and lifestyle, one of the

essential areas of lifestyle is leisure time and sports activities. Attachment is one of the most important evolutionary concepts in human development, which has its roots in the family and parent-child relationships. The relationship between parents and children is the first representative of the world of communication for the child, and the feelings of love, intimacy, and security are directly rooted in these relationships (14). From Bowlby's point of view, a child's relationship with parents and attachment between them is significant. Attachment is an emotional bond formed in childhood between the child and his primary caregiver and is effective in the child's social and emotional growth throughout his life (15).

After Bowlby, Ainsworth introduced three general attachment styles: secure attachment style, avoidant insecure attachment style, and ambivalent insecure attachment style. People with secure attachment have a higher level of trust and satisfaction and a lower level of conflict. In contrast, people with ambivalent attachment are characterized by an imbalance in emotions and more conflicts, and people with avoidant attachment are characterized by less satisfaction and intimacy and more conflicts (16).

In his studies on attachment and separation of infants, Bowlby concluded that attachment includes a central motivational force and mother-child attachment is a necessary mediator of human interaction, which has significant consequences for personality function and growth in the future (17). In this regard, French, Smith, and Cox (18) state the importance of the relationship between parents' attachment styles and their children's sports future and that there is a significant relationship between parents' attachment styles and sports activity in children; as secure attachment styles predict higher sports activity.

One of the theoretical models in the study of sports psychology is the positive psychology approach. The main agenda of this approach is to examine and recognize people's capabilities, strengths, talents, and merits. Psychological well-being is one of the normal concepts and constructs of interest and study in positive psychology (19), and it is considered one of the influential factors in sports activities; parents with a higher level of psychological well-being

make their children more active. Sports activities encourage; according to Ryff, parents with lower psychological well-being usually feel helpless in raising, controlling, and managing their children and feel angry and depressed, which directly affects their children and leads to laziness and lack of motivation.

Psychological well-being is defined as the effort of each person to realize his actual potential abilities and the ability to find all his talents. Ryff believes that some aspects of the optimal prism, such as the realization of one's goals, involve legality and much effort, and this may even be in complete conflict with short-term happiness. He believes that well-being should not be considered simplistically, equivalent to experiencing more pleasure instead of pain. Instead, psychological well-being includes striving for perfection and realizing one's potential forces. Psychological well-being includes a positive and general feeling of satisfaction with life, which includes oneself and others in different areas of the family, job, and the like. Therefore, people with a high sense of well-being mainly experience more positive emotions and have a positive evaluation of the incidents and events around them.

On the other hand, people with low well-being evaluate events and situations as unfavorable and experience negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and anger (20). Therefore, the role of parents in the development of sports is vital. Parents deliver children at all levels and rank to the sports system, from simple everyday actions to the participation of athletes at competitive levels, as well as financing to providing encouragement and support for children. If a child is talented and plays sports at a high level, the contribution and role of parents are significant and necessary.

Concerning the mentioned materials, the researcher in this research has decided to answer the question what is the difference between the tendency to individual and group sports activities of students based on parenting styles, attachment, and psychological well-being of their parents. ?

## Materials and Methods

The design of the current research is comparative. The statistical population includes all the parents of elementary school boys in six districts of Isfahan city who go to sports clubs in Isfahan city

for particular sports, apart from physical education and sports classes at school. The sample is selected using a random multi-stage cluster sampling method. The sample of the current research includes 120 elementary school students and their parents, and we divide them into two equal groups, 60 elementary school students in team sports (60 mothers and 60 fathers) and 60 elementary school students in sports. Individuals (60 mothers and 60 fathers) participate. The current research used the data collection of Hazen and Shiver, Cooper, Parenting (Baumrind), and Ryff psychological well-being questionnaires.

#### Research instruments

*A) Attachment style questionnaire (Hazen and Shiver):* The attachment model that was first used by Bowlby in the field of children's development and was used by Ainsworth by Hazen and Shiver in 1987 in three groups: secure attachment, ambivalent attachment, and avoidant attachment. Moreover, it was followed for adult attachment relationships (Mouezni et al., 2013). The adult attachment scale is a 15-question questionnaire, and it measures three attachment types: secure, avoidant, and ambivalent, on a five-point Likert scale from very little-1 to very much-5. The minimum and maximum test scores in the questionnaire are 5 and 25, which were first used by Bowlby in the field of children's development and were used by Ainsworth, and have been standardized in Iran among Tehran University students.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the attachment style questionnaire for the components of secure attachment style, avoidant attachment style, and ambivalent attachment style in the research of Hashamabadi et al. (2013) is equal to 0.86, 0.83, and 0.84, respectively. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the mentioned components was obtained as 0.48, 0.53, and 0.47, respectively.

*B) Parenting Questionnaire (Baumrind):* This is a tool adapted from the theory of parental authority, which was made based on the theory of Baumrind of the three patterns of liberation, authoritarianism, and authority of parents in order to examine the patterns of influence and parenting methods in 1989. This questionnaire

has 30 questions, ten related to absolute freedom, 10 to authoritarianism, and the other 10 to parents' logical authority in raising children. This questionnaire has already been used in Iran by Esfandiyari and Begham, and its Cronbach alpha coefficient in Begham's research for the subscales of liberation (0.81), authoritarianism (0.85), and authority (0.92) and the present study also for the subscales of liberation (0.63), authoritarianism (0.75) and authority (0.72).

*C) Psychological well-being scale:* this scale was designed by Ryff in 1980. The main form consists of 120 questions, but later studies prepared shorter forms of 84 and 54 questions. In this research, an 18-question form will be used. The 18-question short version of this questionnaire, designed in 1980, evaluates the six primary components of the psychological well-being model and has six subscales (each contains three statements).

The answer to each question is determined on a 6-point spectrum (from disagreeing to agree). Questions 1, 4, and 6 are factors of environmental mastery, questions 2, 8, and 10 are factors of self-acceptance, questions 3, 11, and 13 are factors of positive relationship with others, questions 5, 14, and 16 are factors of having a goal, questions 7, 15 and 17 are factors of growth. Individual and questions 9, 12, and 18 measure the independence factor. It is also necessary to mention that questions 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 13, 16, and 17 are marked inversely. A higher score indicates better psychological well-being.

The validity and reliability of psychological well-being scales were found to be 0.77 in the study of Diranduk (2004) and 0.45 in the present study.

The data of this research were analyzed at two levels of descriptive statistics (prevalence, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (multivariate variance analysis test) with the help of SPSS 21 software.

## Results

In order to describe the data related to the sample, first, the central indices and dispersion of the research variables were calculated, which are as follows:

**Table 1.** Descriptive results of research components

Component	Variable	Group type	Mean	SD
Psychological well being	Environmental dominance	Individual	12.75	3.32
		Group	11.89	3.43
	Self-acceptance	Individual	12.48	3.33
		Group	12.69	2.49
	Positive relationship with others	Individual	10.82	2.28
		Group	10.66	2.56
	Individual growth	Individual	11.35	2.45
		Group	10.85	2.13
	Independence	Individual	9.35	3.09
		Group	9.02	2.88
Having aim	Individual	12.56	3.29	
	Group	11.84	3.50	
attachment styles	Secure attachment style	Individual	12.39	2.90
		Group	13.43	3.20
	Avoidance attachment style	Individual	18.10	3.40
		Group	17.36	3.95
	Ambivalent attachment style	Individual	14.76	3.16
		Group	14.11	4.15
Parenting styles	Permissive style	Individual	8.90	4.19
		Group	9.51	4.38
	Authoritarian style	Individual	18.85	4.84
		Group	19.19	5.11
	Logical authoritative	Individual	7.87	4.51
		Group	9.53	5.17

According to the data in the table above, regarding the psychological well-being component, the highest score was given to the environmental mastery component in the individual group. Regarding attachment styles, the highest score was given to the avoidant attachment style component in the individual group, and the highest score was given to the component of parenting styles. The authoritarian parenting style is reserved for group sports.

In this research, the analysis of the statistical variance test has been used due to its suitability and compatibility with the research hypotheses. Regarding the study of the difference in the tendency to group and individual sports of students based on the psychological well-being of parents, a multivariate analysis of variance test was used, the results of which are as follows:

The non-significance of multivariate test indexes, namely Wilks's Lambda, Hotelling's effect, the largest specific root, and Pillai's effect

regarding the psychological well-being component ( $P= 0.018$ ,  $F=3.436$ ) confirms that there is no significant difference in any of the components. There is no psychological well-being of parents in the group and individual sports.

Multivariate analysis of variance test was used to investigate the difference in group and individual sports orientation of students based on parents' attachment styles. The significance of multivariate test indices, namely Wilks's Lambda, Hotelling's effect, the largest specific root, and Pillai's effect regarding the component of attachment styles ( $P= 0.021$ ,  $F=3.290$ ) confirms that there is a significant difference at least in one of the components of parental attachment styles is the tendency to group and individual sports. Therefore, each of these variables has been investigated separately, and the results of this investigation are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** The results of multivariate analysis of variance on the mean of secure attachment style, avoidant attachment style, and ambivalent attachment style in parents in two groups of individual and group exercise

Component	Sum of squares	Freedom degree	Mean of squares	F	P	Trace volume	Statistic exponent
Secure attachment style	64.423	1	64.423	6.890	0.009	0.028	0.744
Avoidant attachment style	25.741	1	25.741	1.889	0.171	0.008	0.278
Ambivalent attachment style	32.947	1	32.947	2.416	0.121	0.010	0.340

The variance analysis results showed a significant difference in the parents' secure attachment style component in the tendency to group and individual sports. However, the two groups have no significant difference regarding the avoidant and ambivalent attachment styles.

As mentioned, there was a significant difference between the secure attachment style of parents in the two groups of individual and group sports orientation. According to the results of Table 1, it can be said that the average score of secure attachment style in parents with children participating in group sports is higher than that of parents with children participating in individual sports, which means that parents with secure attachment style give more of their children to They encourage group sports. The effect size of

the secure attachment style component in the tendency to sports was about 2.8%.

Multivariate analysis of variance test was used to investigate the difference in group and individual sports orientation of students based on parents' parenting styles. The significance of the multivariate test indicators, namely, Wilks's Lambda, Hotelling's effect, the most significant specific root, and Pillai's effect regarding the component of parenting styles ( $P= 0.029$ ,  $F=2.323$ ) confirms that the significant difference is at least In one of the components of parents' parenting styles, there is a trend towards the group and individual sports. Therefore, each of these variables has been investigated separately, and the results of this investigation are presented in the following tables.

**Table 3.** The results of multivariate analysis of variance on the mean of release style, autocratic style, and logical authority style in parents in two groups of individual and group sports

Component	Sum of squares	Freedom degree	Mean of squares	F	P	Trace volume	Statistic exponent
Permissive style	22.204	1	22.204	1.206	0.273	0.005	0.194
Authoritarian style	6.667	1	6.667	0.269	0.605	0.001	0.081
Logical authoritative style	165.004	1	165.004	7.006	0.009	0.029	0.751

The analysis of variance showed a significant difference in the component of parents' authoritative parenting style in group and individual sports, but there is no significant difference in other parenting styles between the two groups.

As mentioned, there was a significant difference between the parents' parenting styles in the two groups of individual and group sports orientation. According to the results of Table 1, it can be said that the average score of authoritative style in parents with children participating in group sports is higher than that of parents with children participating in individual sports, which means that parents with authoritative parenting bring more of their children to sports. This is because

they push a group, and it should be mentioned that the effect of logical authority style on the tendency to exercise is about 2.9%.

## Discussion

This research aims to compare the tendency to individual and group sports activities in students based on parents' parenting styles, attachment, and psychological well-being. The research results showed that there is no significant difference in parents' psychological well-being components in the tendency to group and individual sports. Also, the results showed a significant difference in the parents' secure attachment style component in the tendency to group and individual sports. However, there is no

significant difference in the avoidant and ambivalent attachment styles between the two groups, so it can be said that the average score of The secure attachment style of parents with children participating in group sports is higher than that of parents with children participating in individual sports, meaning that parents with secure attachment style lead their children to group sports. Regarding the difference between the parenting styles of the two groups, it was also concluded that the component of parents' authoritarian parenting style has a significant difference in the tendency to group and individual sports. However, the two groups do not significantly differ in other parenting styles.

The results of the present study are inconsistent with the rural studies of Ardakani, Pour Azar, Kashfi, and Momeni (21) and Qasimpour, Jodet, and Soleimani (22), because these researchers considered psychological well-being as an influential factor in the tendency to exercise. The reason for the discrepancy and contradiction between the present research findings and previous research results can be related to the cultural and social factors and conditions governing different societies, which has reduced the influence of parents on children in various fields. Cultural and social issues in any society are affected by various factors. These factors can influence beliefs, attitudes, and practices. Among them, mass media is one of the essential tools for investigating social, informational, and educational issues and a very influential factor in the formation of values and beliefs, especially in young age groups (23). One of the social and cultural issues that have grown significantly in recent years and have affected people is physical education and sports. In today's society, the sports habits and behavior of people, their attitudes and beliefs in sports issues, and the popularization and development of sports are all under the mutual influence of the trends of the society and the media (24). In such a way, television advertisements regarding the use of sports equipment at home can be a factor for the tendency towards individual sports in children, as a result of which the role of parents in guiding their children will be diminished. Concerning the mentioned materials, it can be said that, in the present study, there is no significant difference between the tendency to group and individual

sports of students based on the psychological well-being of parents.

The results of the present research are in line with the researches of Rahimi and Quaidi Far (25), French et al. (26), and Jago et al (12) because, in their research, they have presented the finding that secure style attachment promotes people towards sports activities and also supports the parents of their children in a timely and appropriate way towards practical activities in various fields such as group sports activities. Parents with a safe attachment style can lead their children to better personal and social development by providing a safe environment so that these parents can transfer experiences full of safety and away from disturbing anxiety to their children, lead to group sports activities and encourage them for more social growth; Because these parents want more interaction and cooperation with others and try to pass this trait on to their children. The transfer of secure attachment to the child leads to a feeling of peace and security, and the child finds himself able to regulate emotions and develop social acceptance and social adaptation (27).

As a result, children can better trust and socialize with others in group circles and positively face conflict and stress. Therefore, the child's adaptation to new contexts is facilitated, and in this way, relationships are happier, more stable, and more compatible (28).

Having these relationships encourages children towards group activities. By having a safe attachment and using social skills, children can find their place in social relations and communication with their peers and adults, be socially accepted, and achieve great success in group activities. (26). According to the materials mentioned above, there is a significant difference between students' tendency toward group and individual sports based on their parents' attachment styles, and parents with a secure attachment style lead their children to group sports activities. The results of the present study are in agreement with the studies given by Kaviani and Abdoli (11), Abdi Moghadam et al. (2), Saunders and colleagues (29), and Jago et al (8). It is consistent because these researchers found the authoritative parenting style of parents to be influential in children's tendency to sports activities. The results of the present study are

inconsistent with the research is given by Benar et al. (31) and Benar and Behrouzi (32) because they did not find any relationship between the parenting styles of the parents in the tendency to exercise, either in groups or individually. In explaining the results of the present research, it can be said that there is a difference in the tendency to group and individual sports of students based on the authoritative parenting styles of the parents. In the authoritative parenting style, parents can support the independence of teenagers and make their children's behavior a positive model. Monitor and control, strengthen independent behavior in teenagers and by teaching, supporting, and being a role model for children, strengthen the strategies for achieving success in them so that in researches such as Hennessy et al. (30) and Jago et al. (8), the vital need of family support for children's sports participation has been proven. As a result, the meaningful relationship of this method with children's physical activity level will be understood. In addition, it can be said that the authoritative parenting style acts as a facilitator and predictor of healthy psychological adaptation and social growth; protects. In a family with an authoritative parenting style, parents are more effective in teaching prosocial behaviors and conveying facts and cognitive insights to their children better than other parents and often make them obey reasoning and logic.

They benefit by expressing their reasonable expectations from their child. They help to create a sense of trust in themselves and others in the child. This self-confidence makes people interact more skillfully and calmly in creating and maintaining close and intimate relationships with others. The characteristic of trusting others makes them have a positive attitude towards interactions with others and use interactions with others for Attractive appearance and confirmation of their use.

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It seems evident that a person who defines himself and others and communicates positively is more accepted and respected by society. As a result, this positive attitude towards oneself and others, which is the result of a family with an authoritative parenting style and a characteristic of people with a secure attachment style, increases acceptance and social participation in people. Concerning the mentioned materials, it can be said that parents with authoritarian parenting styles lead more children to group sports. However, this research also faced certain limitations. Among other things, due to the selected sample, caution should be observed in generalizing the results to people outside the research scope. One of the other limitations of causal-comparative research is that research and examining cause and effect relationships between variables should be done with caution.

Will happen. According to the results of this research, it is suggested that future researchers compare the components of the current research in two groups parents of elite athletes and parents of ordinary athletes. According to the results obtained in the research, it is appropriate to inform the parents and teach them the correct parenting style in the form of pamphlets, educational workshops, special meetings, etc. It is also suggested that educational workshops on increasing the psychological well-being of parents be held in school settings, and psychologists can provide psychological interventions such as adaptive coping methods and stress management training to people with avoidant and ambivalent attachment styles in the program. Include their workshops.

### Conclusion

The results showed that attachment and parenting style affects students' tendency toward individual or group sports.

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