

PERSONAL-SOCIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VARSITY
ATHLETES AND NON-VARSITY ATHLETES AT
GRAMBLING LABORATORY HIGH SCHOOL

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by

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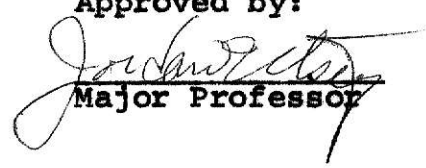
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The contention that participation in interscholastic athletics may affect favorable changes in the personalities of the participants has been frequently made. In previous years these changes in personality development were referred to as the formation of character. More recently, the scope of the changes in personality attributed to an individual's participation in athletics has been expanded to include claims of improvement in the social adjustment of the participants and in the development of desirable human relations.

Typical of studies which claim that extensive benefits are an outgrowth of athletic competition is one by Anderson (1969) who compared personal adjustment and social status measures of non-participants and athletic groups of boys ten to fifteen years of age. Anderson (1969) contended that the intense and challenging situation in athletic competition provides the youth with socially acceptable channels through which he may express his aggressive tendencies and expend his excess energy. Opportunities in which he may control many of his antisocial tendencies through sublimation and in which he may compensate for real or imaginable inadequacies are abundant. In athletics, he can express his emotions vigorously in a socially acceptable manner.

Although these broad claims of the values of interscho-

lastic athletics have not been accepted as valid by many people, considerable debate has resulted. A controversy has risen over the professed values of athletic programs. The athletic coaches have argued that athletics contribute to the highest ideals of American culture. On the other hand, some opponents have countered with a charge that the present form of participation in athletics results in the development of traits which are detrimental to the individual and to society.

Although the evidence is not conclusive, many counselors, coaches, and educators believe that athletic participation can help teach the value of cooperation as well as other desirable habits of conduct. Athletes who participate in regularly scheduled interscholastic athletic programs are said to exhibit characteristic behaviors in common social situations which differ from those of non-participants in such activities. While there is a paucity of evidence to indicate that some differences do exist, the trend of these personality differences are not clear as reported by Biddulph (1954:1-7), Booth (1957), and France (1953).

In order to widen the negligible amount of research pertaining to personal-social adjustment of high school athletes, an investigation was conducted comparing the psychological characteristics of athletes and non-athletes in high school. This study should be of value to counselors, coaches, and physical educators to know whether or not there is a significant relationship between personal adjustment and social adjustment of high school athletes and non-athletes.

Statement of Problem

The values and contributions of interscholastic athletics to the present society have been reported in numerous texts, periodicals, and scholarly research. However, there is a scarcity of datum which appropriately identifies the developmental aspects of personal and social adjustment existing in athletes and non-participants on the high school level. The purpose of this study was to compare the mean scores of athletes and non-athletes on selected measures of personal and social adjustment.

Statement of Hypothesis

In the conduct of this study, answers were sought to the following questions: (1) Does a significant difference exist between varsity athletes and non-varsity athletes in personal adjustment? (2) Does a significant difference exist between varsity athletes and non-varsity athletes in social adjustment?

Procedure

The procedures used in conducting this study were as follows: (1) selection of subjects, and (2) administration of personality test.

The subjects for this investigation were an incidental sample of forty Negro high school students selected from the Grambling Laboratory High School, Grambling, Louisiana. Twenty subjects who participated in interscholastic athletics during the 1972-73 season were selected as the varsity athletes, and twenty subjects who did not participate in the inter-

scholastic athletics were selected as the non-varsity athletes. Each subject selected for this study was classified into one of the two groups which were identified as varsity athletes and non-varsity athletes.

The California Test of Personality, designed by Louis P. Thorpe, Willis W. Clark, and Ernest W. Tiegs was selected to be used in this study. This test was administered to the forty high school boys according to the directions in the accompanying test manual. All test booklets were scored manually by the investigator. The instrument identifies and reveals the status of certain highly important factors in personality and social adjustment usually designated as intangibles. It is organized around the concept of life adjustment as a balance between personal and social adjustment. Its purpose is to provide data for aiding individuals to maintain or develop a normal balance between personal and social adjustment and is primarily a teaching-learning instrument. Individual reactions are obtained, not primarily for usefulness of total or section scores, but to detect the areas and specific types of tendencies to think, feel, and act which reveal undesirable individual adjustments.

The two subtests are Personal Adjustment and Social Adjustment, which are available in Forms AA and BB.

This test was designed to be given within 45-60 minutes. The California Test of Personality uses the Yes-No form for answering the questions in the test booklets.

The norms provided in the manual were given in terms of percentile ranks. They were derived from test data secured on

the secondary level from 3,331 students in grades 9 to 14 inclusive in schools in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and California.

The norms for the California Test of Personality have been based on a sampling of cases which constituted a normal distribution of mental ability, and typical age-grade relationships. Another characteristic given was that about 85 percent of the population was Caucasian and the remainder was Mexican, Negro, and other minority groups.

The coefficient of reliability for Forms AA and BB of the California Test of Personality are .90 for Personal Adjustment and .89 for Social Adjustment. The validity was undetermined.

The raw scores were converted into percentile ranks using a table provided in the test manual, and the means of the subjects' scores on the personal-social adjustment variables of the California Test of Personality were obtained.

The t-test was used to test for statistical significance on the personal-social adjustment variables of the California Test of Personality between the mean scores of the varsity athletes and non-varsity athletes. This statistical procedure was done by the computer department at Kansas State University.

Definition of Terms

In an effort to provide the reader with an understanding of the nature and scope of this investigation, this section presents a working definition of the terms used.

Varsity athletes were those athletes who participated in interscholastic athletics during the 1972-73 season and who

were designated by their respective coaches as being varsity athletes in any sport.

Non-varsity athletes were those athletes who did not participate in interscholastic athletics during the 1972-73 season.

California Test of Personality is an inventory available in five levels and designed to measure one or more of the non-intellective aspects of an individual's psychological make-up (Thorpe, et al., 1953).

Personal adjustment in this study referred to the total score made on the following six components of the California Test of Personality: (1) self-reliance; (2) sense of personal worth; (3) sense of personal freedom; (4) feelings of belonging; (5) withdrawing tendencies; and (6) nervous symptoms.

Social adjustment in this study referred to the total score made on the following six components of the California Test of Personality: (1) social standards; (2) social skills; (3) anti-social tendencies; (4) family relations; (5) school relations; and (6) community relations.

Delimitations of the Study

In the conduct of this investigation, the following delimitations were recognized: (1) only data collected on those forty male students enrolled at Grambling Laboratory High School during the 1972-73 school year were used; (2) only eleventh and twelfth grade students were used; and (3) only the California Test of Personality was used.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

This chapter presents a review of research on certain characteristics of athletes and non-athletes. The presentation has been arranged as follows: (1) comparisons of athletes and non-athletes on personality traits; (2) comparisons of athletes on personal-social adjustment; and (3) summary.

Henry (1945:745) administered a personality inventory, which included items from the Thurstone Neurotic Inventory and ascendance-submission questions to student pilots, track squad athletes, physical education majors, and students enrolled in weight lifting. He reported that athletes and aviators had nearly identical scores and were significantly more neuasthenic than the physical education majors and were less introverted and hypochondriacal than the weight-lifters.

In an effort to determine group differences in attitudes and dispositions of personality between weight-lifters and non-weight-lifters, Thune administered a personality inventory adapted from Nelson's Questionnaire, Henry's Interest and Attitude Inventory, and several standard personality inventories. Thune (1949:296-306) obtained significant differences between weight-lifters and the contact group in the categories of present health, self-confidence, and "manly individualistic." The members of the weight-lifting group felt more strongly

than the controls that their health had improved, that basically they were shy, that they lacked self-confidence, and that they did not obtain satisfaction through participating in more traditional activities.

Harlow (1951:312-323) reported the performance of twenty weight-lifters and a control group of twenty non-weight training subjects using two projective techniques, the Thematic Appreciation Test, and a sentence completion test. Significant differences were found between the means of the groups on thirteen of eighteen variable. He concluded that weight training seemed to be an effort to compensate for feelings of masculine inadequacy and inferiority. These men had identified the male ideal with a type of physique which is generally considered the antitheses of femininity. According to Harlow, they attempted, by overtly assuming an extremely masculine role, to deny any passive or feminine feelings.

Stisch (1950) compared personality characteristics of athletic and non-athletic college men using the Guilford-Martin Personal Inventory as the basis for comparison. Ninety-one subjects were divided into two groups of athletes and non-athletes. The athletes were those who had participated in athletics for at least two years and who had won varsity letters in college. The athletic group was found to be significantly superior in self-confidence. They had a tendency to be more masculine in emotional make-up and attitude.

Weber (1953:471-474) conducted a study to compare the scores of 246 university freshmen on a physical efficiency

profile, and the different personality traits were very low. Schendel (1965:56-57) contended that Weber was in error when he added raw scores rather than standard scores from the nine Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory Scales: he stated that it was inaccurate to report a correlation between physical fitness and personality based on erroneous procedure.

The conclusion drawn by Weber, whether erroneous or not, was supported in an investigation by France, who also used the Minnesota Multiphasic (MMPI) Personality Inventory as a measure of personality traits. France (1951:312-323) administered the test to five hundred and three students from the required physical education classes at Purdue University. The students took both the MMPI and a physical performance battery of an agility run, pull-ups, and the scanding hop-step-and-jump. The correlations between the nine personality traits and the Index of Performance were not significant.

Johnson, et al. (1954:484-485) studied the personality traits of some champion athletes by utilizing the Rorschach Ink Blot Test and the House-Tree-Person Test, as assessment devices.

Analysis of the test findings revealed that the outstanding personality traits of the groups were extreme aggression, uncontrolled affect (emotion lacking strict control), high and generalized anxiety, high level of intellectual aspiration, and exceptional feelings of self assurance. The House-Tree-Person Test further indicated that these subjects were exceptionally able to concentrate personality resources upon desired

objectives: this test also revealed an unusual concern in these subjects for physical power and physical perfection.

Johnson and Hutton (1954:485) reported an investigation of the effects of a combative sport upon personality dynamics as measured by the Buck's House-Tree-Person Test of personality. Eight college wrestlers were tested at three different times; before a wrestling season, four to five hours before the first intercollegiate match of the season, and the morning after the competition. The reported group tendencies indicated a decrement of functioning intelligence, increased neurotic signs in the before match condition. There was a return to the pre-season conditions the morning after the match except for considerably less aggressive feelings in this postmatch period.

Husman (1955:421-425) administered the Rosenweig Picture Frustration study, selected pictures from Murray's Thematic Appreciation Test, and twenty-item Sentence Completion Test to nine college boxers, eight wrestlers, nine cross country runners, and seventeen control subjects at various times throughout the sports season. The aggression of boxers was significantly greater than that of the wrestlers, cross-country runners, and control subjects. The boxers possessed less overall intensity of aggression and were less extra-punitive and more intrapunitive and impunitive than the control subjects.

Booth (1957) at the State University of Iowa, utilized the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory to compare 145 college non-athletes with 141 college athletes. His findings

included the following significant differences between groups: (1) the non-athletes scored higher than the athletes on the interest scale, (2) the varsity athletes scored lower than the freshman athletes on the anxiety scale, (3) the varsity athletes and upperclass non-athletes scored higher than the freshman athletes and non-athletes on the dominance scale, and (4) the upperclass non-athletes scored higher than the freshman athletes and non-athletes and the varsity athletes on the social responsibility scale.

Rasch and Mazee (1963:55-56) made a recent investigation and employed the Mandsley Personality Inventory as a measure of neuroticism and extroversion-introversion in a group of weight-lifters. The weight trainers were divided into two sub-groups: those who trained to compete in physique contests and those who trained only to improve their health and physical fitness. Both of these groups were found to be drawn from a population typical of the normal male university student.

More recently, a number of studies by researchers have been made to investigate whether personality trait differences existed between athletes and non-athletes. Among them were the following: Lakie (1962:566-573); Slusher (1964:539-545); Kroll and Peterson (1965:433-444); and Werner and Gotheil (1966:126-131). These investigators used various psychological tests such as, The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, The Cattell Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (Form A), and The Omnibus Personality Inventory. Some of these researchers found that the athletes ranked lower than the non-athletes on

certain personality traits. Traits such as femininity, hypomania, depression, and hysteria were found to be those that the athletes ranked low in. The non-athletes displayed the following differences: more sociable, tough, dominant, enthusiastic, adventurous, conventional, and group dependent. Some of the above researchers found no personality trait differences between the athletes and non-athletes.

Berger and Littlefield (1969:663-664) stated that Schendel made a study comparing football athletes to non-athletes in the ninth and twelfth grades using the California Psychological Inventory. Schendel found that ninth and twelfth grade athletes generally possessed more desirable personal-social psychological characteristics than the non-athletes.

The California Test of Personality has not been used widely in studying the personal and social adjustment of athletes. The writer was successful in finding only one study using this test.

Biddulph (1954:1-4) compared the personal and social adjustment of high school boys of high athletic achievement with the adjustment of boys of low athletic achievement. He used the following measuring instruments: (1) The California Test of Personality, adult series, to determine the extent to which the individual has developed a normal, happy, and socially effective personality. The test was to indicate the extent to which the individual has achieved a balance between self and social adjustment. (2) The Henmon-Nelson Intelligence Test,

Form A, 1949. He obtained recent scores from this test as a measure of scholastic aptitude.

Four different teachers rated each student on a prepared form, for Biddulph's study, which included six adjustment items with scores ranging from one to seven. Adjustment scores were determined on the following items: (a) social adjustment, (b) scholastic achievement, (c) attitude toward school, (d) general appearance, (e) grooming, and (f) checking of positive and negative traits which best describes the student.

A sociogram was administered to 461 students who took the athletic achievement test in Biddulph's study (1954:5) to determine whether the well-adjusted individuals were chosen more frequently by their associates as friends. Biddulph found that students ranking high in athletic achievement demonstrated a significantly greater degree of personal and social adjustment than did students ranking low in athletic achievement.

This chapter has presented a review of related research on comparison of athletes and non-athletes on various psychological tests.

The findings that were reported on personality traits of athletes were contradictory. Some researchers found significant personality trait differences between athletes and non-athletes. While other researchers found no significant personality trait differences between athletes and non-athletes.

The researcher who compared the athletes on personal-social adjustment as measured by the California Test of

Personality found that students who ranked high in athletic achievement demonstrated a significantly greater degree of personal and social adjustment than did students who ranked low in athletic achievement. The superior athletic group showed a higher mean adjustment score on the California Test of Personality than did the low athletic group.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to (1) compare the mean scores of athletes and non-athletes on selected measures of personal and social adjustment. Data were obtained for twenty high school athletes and twenty non-athletes at Grambling Laboratory High School. Analyses were made by the mean scores achieved by these boys on the California Test of Personality.

The basic statistical procedure used in analyzing the data in this study was to test for significance at the .05 level, the difference between the mean scores on the various measures of personal and social adjustment for the athletes and non-athletes.

The data for this investigation included the scores of forty high school subjects on twelve personality test items. The basic statistical procedure used in analyzing the data were:

1. A t-test was computed between the mean scores of the varsity athletes and non-varsity athletes on the personal adjustment variable of the California Test of Personality.
2. A t-test was computed between the mean scores of the varsity athletes and non-varsity athletes on the social adjustment variable of the California Test of Personality.
3. The .05 level of confidence was acceptable as the statistical significance level.

Six comparisons were made using mean scores on the Personal Adjustment section of the California Test of Personality. One of the six comparisons based on the scores of the Social Adjustment section indicated a significant difference between the mean scores recorded by the two groups of subjects on family relations.

The difference between the mean scores on Personal Adjustment section of the California Test of Personality are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MEANS OF ATHLETES AND NON-ATHLETES IN PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT

Personal Adjustment	df	Means		t
		Athletes	Non-athletes	
Self-reliance	38	10.650	10.750	-0.113
Sense of Personal Worth	38	11.000	11.100	-0.110
Sense of Personal Freedom	38	11.050	11.150	-0.116
Feelings of Belonging	38	12.300	11.400	1.521
Withdrawing Tendencies	38	9.650	8.350	1.423
Nervous Symptoms	38	11.450	10.450	0.990

The high school athletes had a mean total score of 65.6 on the Personal Adjustment measures. This mean score was not significantly higher than the non-athletes mean score of 62.8. None of the comparisons resulted in a significant difference between the mean scores on the components of the Personal Adjustment measures of the California Test of Personality.

The differences between the mean scores on the Social

Adjustment section of the California Test of Personality are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MEANS OF ATHLETES AND NON-ATHLETES IN SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Social Adjustment	df	Means		t
		Athletes	Non-athletes	
Social Standard	38	12.300	11.650	0.886
Social Skills	38	9.850	9.350	0.636
Anti-social Tendencies	38	9.300	9.050	0.230
Family Relations	38	9.300	8.400	1.923*
School Relations	38	9.150	8.250	1.233
Community Relations	38	9.950	9.600	0.408

*Significant at .05

On the Social Adjustment section of the California Test of Personality, the athletes had a mean total score of 61.5. However, this mean score was not significantly higher than the mean score of 56.3 for the non-athletes. Only one of the comparisons resulted in a significant difference between the mean scores on the components of social adjustment. A t score of 1.923 was yielded between the means for the athletes and non-athletes.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was designed to provide information concerning the personal and social adjustment of athletes and non-athletes at Grambling Laboratory High School. Athletes were differentiated through success as participants on interscholastic athletic teams at Grambling Laboratory High School. No attempt was made to ascertain the effects of such competition on the participants.

The California Test of Personality which sought data on personal-social adjustment was administered to forty students at Grambling Laboratory High School, Grambling, Louisiana. Twenty of these students participated in interscholastic athletics during the 1972-73 season and were designated by their respective coaches as being varsity athletes in any sport. Twenty of these students did not participate in interscholastic athletics during the 1972-73 season. They were selected as the non-varsity athletes.

The questions for which the study sought answers inquired of significant differences between the varsity athletes and the non-varsity athletes on personal-social adjustment.

The t-test was used (as a statistical procedure) for independent groups comparing the mean scores on the various measures of personal-social adjustment. The differences were accepted as significant when the .05 level was attained on

the test.

The answer to the first question was that the varsity athletes evidenced a higher level of personal adjustment than did the non-varsity athletes at Grambling Laboratory High School. Although the varsity athletes evidenced a higher level of personal adjustment, it was not significantly higher.

The answer to the second question was that the varsity athletes evidenced a higher level of social adjustment than did the non-varsity athletes at Grambling Laboratory High School. While a higher level of social adjustment was evidenced by the varsity athletes, it was not significantly higher. Also, the athletes seemed to be more tractable toward family relations.

The results of this study support the position that there is no significant differences between the personal adjustment and social adjustment of athletes and non-athletes.

The above conclusions were based upon analysis of the results of the measures of personal adjustment and social adjustment of the California Test of Personality administered to the forty high school athletes and non-athletes.

In the review of related research, some researchers found significant personality trait differences between athletes and non-athletes, while other researchers found no significant personality trait differences between the two groups. One study found that students who ranked high in athletic achievement as measured by the California Test of Personality demonstrated a significantly greater degree of personal-social

adjustment than did students who ranked low in athletic achievement.

The investigator found results in her study that were similar to the results that were reported by the various researchers in the review of related research. There existed no significant differences between the personal-social adjustment of the varsity athletes and non-varsity athletes at Grambling Laboratory High School as was measured by the California Test of Personality. The athletes did seem to be leaning more toward family relations than did the non-athletes. No significant personality trait differences were found to exist between the two groups of subjects.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to compare the mean scores of athletes and non-athletes on selected measures of personal and social adjustment. Data were obtained for 20 high school athletes and 20 non-athletes at Grambling Laboratory High School, Grambling, Louisiana.

In this study, answers were sought to the following questions: (1) Does a significant difference exist between varsity athletes and non-varsity athletes on personal adjustment? (2) Does a significant difference exist between varsity athletes and non-varsity athletes on social adjustment?

The California Test of Personality was administered to forty eleventh and twelfth grade Negro male students during the Fall of 1972. This inventory-type instrument was designed to measure the degree of Personal Adjustment and Social Adjustment. The Personal Adjustment sections of the test include: (1) sense of personal worth; (2) sense of personal freedom; (3) feeling of belonging; (4) self-reliance; (5) withdrawing tendencies; and (6) nervous symptoms. The Social Adjustment sections of the test include: (1) social standards; (2) social skills; (3) anti-social tendencies; (4) family relations; (5) school relations; and (6) community relations. Mean scores

were computed on each of the sections of the test as well as a total personal adjustment score and a total social adjustment score.

The statistical procedure used in this study was a t-test for independent groups (.05 level) comparing the difference between the mean scores on the various measures of personal-social adjustment for the athletes and non-athletes.

The high school athletes had a mean score of 65.6 on the Personal Adjustment measures. This mean score was not significantly higher than the non-athletes' mean score of 62.8. None of the comparisons for the subjects resulted in a significant difference between the mean scores on the Personal Adjustment components of the California Test of Personality.

On the Social Adjustment section of the California Test of Personality, the athletes had a mean score of 61.5. However, the mean score of this group was not significantly higher than the mean score of 56.3 for the non-athletes. Only one of the comparisons for the subjects resulted in a significant difference between the mean scores on the components of social adjustment. A t-score of 1.923 was yielded between the means for the athletes and non-athletes on family relations; this mean difference was significant at the .05 level of confidence. None of the other social adjustment comparisons resulted in significant differences between the mean scores recorded by the high school athletes and non-athletes.

The following conclusions were made as a result of this study:

1. When the California Test of Personality was used as a basis of comparison, the athletes evidenced a higher level of personal adjustment than did boys who had not participated in interschool athletics at Grambling Laboratory High School. Although the varsity athletes evidenced a higher level of personal adjustment, it was not significantly higher.

2. When the California Test of Personality was used as a basis of comparison, the athletes evidenced a higher level of social adjustment than did boys who had not participated in athletic activities at Grambling Laboratory High School. While a higher level of social adjustment was evidenced by the varsity athletes, it was not significantly higher. The athletes seemed to be more tractable toward family relations.

3. The results of this study support the position that there is no significant difference between personal adjustment and social adjustment of athletes and non-athletes.