

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM, SELF-CONFIDENCE AND ANXIETY FOR ADOLESCENT ATHLETES AND NON-ATHLETES OF KAUNAS CITY

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ABSTRACT

Background. It is stated that the anxiety issue of adolescent pupils has been increasing a concern in teachers and society (Lee & Hankin, 2009; Mocus, Schoot, Klimstra, & Branje, 2011). The analysis of the reasons affecting a poor emotional state, anxiety processes and low self-esteem of adolescents leads to the following factors: socio-economic status, parenting styles (Cohen, Mansoor, Gagin, & Lorber, 2008), insecure attachment and non-functional beliefs (Lee & Hankin, 2009), adaptation difficulties, relationship with peers (Mocus et al., 2011), emotional pressures at school (Klizas, Ramanauskienė, Dumčienė, & Linonis, 2010). Meanwhile, it was found that involvement in sports activities positively affects adolescents' self-esteem, contributes to adolescents' identity and positive self-evaluation development, encourages cooperation with peers, develops physical skills, character, creativity, and value system, distracts from harmful habits, and helps to integrate into society (Dunn, Dunn, & Bayduza, 2008; Šniras & Malinauskas, 2006). Thus, it is evident that today's adolescents, facing growing demands in environment, society, experience more anxiety, which may affect their self-evaluation, self-confidence, self-esteem and vice versa, deteriorate their quality of life and mental health. So, it is highly important for educators (school teachers, coaches, etc.) to understand what causes anxiety in adolescents and how such factors as sport may have an influence on it. *Research aim* was to determine the relationship between the self-esteem, self-confidence and anxiety for adolescent athletes and non-athletes. *Research object* was the relationship of adolescents' self-esteem, self-confidence and anxiety.

Methods. The pilot survey was carried out in Kaunas, in 2013. Adolescent athletes and non-athletes aged 16 were selected for the research. The study employed questionnaires survey method.

Results and conclusions. It was discovered that the self-esteem and self-confidence of athlete adolescents was higher compared with non-athlete adolescents. The results showed that comparing the different anxiety factors of athlete and non-athlete adolescents no significant differences were found with the exception of anxiety related to social stress experience, and it is lower for athlete respondents. The analysis of self-esteem, self-confidence and anxiety relationship, depending on the sport activity, determined that the sport element had little relevance to these factors.

Keywords: students, self-determination, anxiety, sport.

INTRODUCTION

It is stated that the anxiety issue of adolescent pupils has been increasing a concern in teachers and society (Juškelienė, Proškuvienė, Černiauskienė, & Zlatkuvienė, 2003; Klizas et al., 2010; Lee & Hankin, 2009; Martišauskienė, 2004; Mocus et al., 2011). The feeling of experiencing

anxiety can be attributed to adolescents due to their search for authenticity, desire to separate from adults' opinion, free themselves from parental care while preserving their own selves among peers.

Anxiety experienced by adolescents can have a positive impact on their activities, learning success

unless the influence received becomes too strong. Otherwise, it may impair the success of learning and impede activities and activeness (Kepalaitė, 2011). According to Burghes (Nasvytienė & Balnonytė, 2006), the children who tend to worry and feel fear, have low responsiveness threshold – they are easily excitable and very sensitive to impressions. They also have a tendency to inhibit their activeness. Longitudinal studies suggest that emotional issues can negatively affect the quality of life and mental health in later life due to the interaction between multiple risk and protective factors in adolescence (Nasvytienė & Balnionytė, 2006).

A close interrelation was identified between the high anxiety level and low level of self-esteem among adolescents. The study results of many researchers suggest that an increase in self-esteem results in a decline of internal and reactive anxiety, and vice versa – an increased internal and reactive anxiety diminishes self-esteem (Erol & Orth, 2011; Lee & Hankin, 2009; McCarroll, Lindsey, MacKinnon-Lewis, Chambers, & Frabutt, 2009; Zaeema, Nasreen, Riaz, & Sarwat, 2013). Storch, Brassard, and Warner (2003) determined a direct correlation between the sense of loneliness and social anxiety while measuring pupils' social anxiety.

The analysis of the reasons affecting a poor emotional state, anxiety processes and low self-esteem of adolescents leads to the following factors: socio-economic status, parenting styles (Cohen et al., 2008; Malinauskiene & Žukauskienė, 2004), insecure attachment and non-functional beliefs (Lee & Hankin, 2009), adaptation difficulties, relationship with peers (Mocus et al., 2011), emotional pressures at school (Klizas et al., 2010). Meanwhile, sports activities appear to be singled out among the factors that can help in the prevention of these processes. It was found that involvement in sports activities positively affects adolescents' self-esteem, contributes to adolescents' identity and positive self-evaluation development, encourages cooperation with peers, develops physical skills, character, creativity, value system, distracts from harmful habits, and helps to integrate into society (Dunn et al., 2008; Šniras & Malinauskas, 2006).

For instance, the analysis of self-esteem of adolescent athletes and non-athletes discovered that the general self-esteem of adolescent athletes was higher than that of non-athletes (Laskienė, Laskytė, Šertvytienė, & Jamantienė, 2010; Masiliauskas, 2009; Vainienė & Kardelis, 2008), the same can be said about the self-confidence of adolescent athletes

(Čepelionienė, Ivaškienė, Velička, Vyskupaitis, & Danilevičienė, 2012; Malinauskas & Juodsnius, 2012; Masten, Tušak, & Faganel, 2006). It is also indicated that participation in sports reduces anxiety and negative emotions, a tendency to depression, hostility towards others (Batutis & Kardelis, 2002; Kardelis & Stakytė, 2003; Scully, Kremer, Meade, Graham, & Dudgeon, 1998). The study carried out by Griciūtė and Cibulskytė (2010) pointed out that people involved in sports activities had better ability to handle the anxiety-evoking situations and lower anxiety level. In their study of interrelation of self-esteem and anxiety of team and individual sport athletes, Arous, Baccouche, Trabelski, Masmoudi, and Elloumi (2013) show that the level of anxiety and self-esteem depends on the characteristics of the sport – the representatives of team sports are characterized by low self-esteem and a high level of anxiety, while the representatives of individual sports possess a high level of self-esteem and low anxiety level. However, some research findings also show that sports activities will not necessarily help suppress the anxiety states, for example, Donti, Theodorakou, Kambiotis, and Donti (2012) found that girls not participating in competitions had lower anxiety levels than those taking part in the competition. Scientists explain this finding that an anxious athlete can achieve better results in sports, if they discover more confidence-reinforcing resources (Cresswell & Hodge, 2004; Hanton, Mellalieu, & Hall, 2003).

Thus, it is evident that today's adolescents, facing growing demands in the environment, society, experience more anxiety, which may affect their self-evaluation, self-confidence, self-esteem and vice versa, deteriorate their quality of life and mental health. So, it is highly important for educators (school teachers, coaches, etc.) to understand what causes anxiety in adolescents and how such factors as sport may have an influence on it.

Research aim was to determine the relationship between the self-esteem, self-confidence and anxiety for adolescent athletes and non-athletes. Research object was the relationship of adolescents' self-esteem, self-confidence and anxiety.

METHODS

Procedure. The pilot survey was carried out in Kaunas, in 2013. Adolescent athletes and non-athletes aged 16 were selected using random sampling strategy. Distribution of the respondents

by gender and sport is presented in Table 1. As many as 150 questionnaires were distributed to the subjects, 126 of them were completed correctly and thus used in the study.

Table 1. Distribution of adolescents by sport activity and gender

Sport activity	Gender				Total	
	Girls		Boys			
	abs. num.	%	abs. num.	%	abs. num.	%
Athletes	24	48.0	57	75.0	81	64.3
Non-athletes	26	52.0	19	25.0	45	35.7
Total	50	100	76	100	126	100

Methodology. The research questionnaire was based on the self-esteem methodology of D. Bogdanov and J. Kiseliiov (Palaima, 1984; questionnaire reliability and validity procedures are described according to Galinauskas, 2007). The respondents had to evaluate 20 personality traits using a 20-point scale, appointing twenty points for the most significant trait and one point for the least significant trait. Self-esteem was divided into low, high (adequate) and too high levels.

The survey methodology was based on the self-confidence methodology by V. Stolin (Столин & Пантлеев, 1987; questionnaire reliability and validity procedures were described in the article of Тилиндене и др., 2014) included 14 questions. The respondents were asked to choose one of two response options: “yes” or “no”. Self-confidence was divided into the following levels: low, normal (adequate) and too high (excellent).

The approved methodology “Assessment of Adolescent Anxiety” by Petrulytė (2003) consisted of 30 anxiety-evoking situations, each situation was assessed using a 5-point system: 5 points – a situation of very high anxiety level; 0 points, respectively – the situation, including no anxiety, is neutral. Anxiety structure includes three components: school anxiety, self-esteem anxiety and interpersonal anxiety. School anxiety is anxiety associated with a group (team) work; interpersonal anxiety – anxiety associated with interpersonal relations in a group (team) and self-esteem anxiety - the anxiety associated with the person’s self-esteem. Research showed good internal consistency for all subscales, all of them Cronbach (α) were higher than 0.7.

The test by Fillips “For Determination of Pupils’ Anxiety Level” (Поров, 2001; test reliability and validity procedures were described

“Bendrojo ugdymo klasėje besimokančio specialiuju ugdymo(-si) poreikiu vaiko socialinės – psichologinės charakteristikos atskleidimas”, 2003). The test consists of 58 questions; each answer choice includes the answers “yes” or “no”. The methodology includes the eight factors of anxiety: the general level of anxiety at school; social stress experience; frustration in achieving goals; fear of self-expression; knowledge assessment fear; fear not to meet somebody’s expectations; low physiological resistance to stress; problems and fears in relation to teachers. The test was to evaluate the factors by their non-compliance to the key methodology techniques. Three levels were identified. Very low and low anxiety levels included those answers of the respondents, whose non-compliance to the key methodology techniques was lower than $\frac{1}{2}$, increased anxiety level – higher than $\frac{1}{2}$, high anxiety level – higher than $\frac{3}{4}$.

Statistical analysis. The research data were processed using the SPSS program (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), version 17.0. The arithmetic means and percentage frequencies were calculated. The *t*-test and Chi-square test and Gamma coefficient were applied in the study.

RESULTS

The self-esteem study of adolescent athletes and non-athletes revealed that low self-assessment was attributed to even 82.2% of adolescent non-athletes, and one-third of pupils engaged in sport were characterized by high self-evaluation (Figure 1) ($p < .05$, $\chi^2 (2) = 15.652$).

The study found out that adolescent athletes are more self-confident than non-athletes, 25.9% of adolescent athletes had great self-confidence characteristics, while low self-confidence was noted by 13.3% of adolescent non-athletes (Figure 2) ($p < .05$, $\chi^2 (2) = 6.940$).

The analysis of anxiety results of athlete and non-athlete respondents showed that there are no statistically significant differences among the general anxiety ($p > .05$, $t = -1.346$), school anxiety ($p > .05$; $t = -1.456$), interpersonal anxiety ($p > .05$, $t = -1.522$) and anxiety related to self-assessment ($p > .05$, $t = -0.457$) (Figure 3).

With the help of the methodology by B. Fillips the anxiety level of the respondents was established referring to 8 anxiety factors. It shows that a statistically significant difference was found in experiencing social stress, it being lower for adolescent athletes (Table 2).

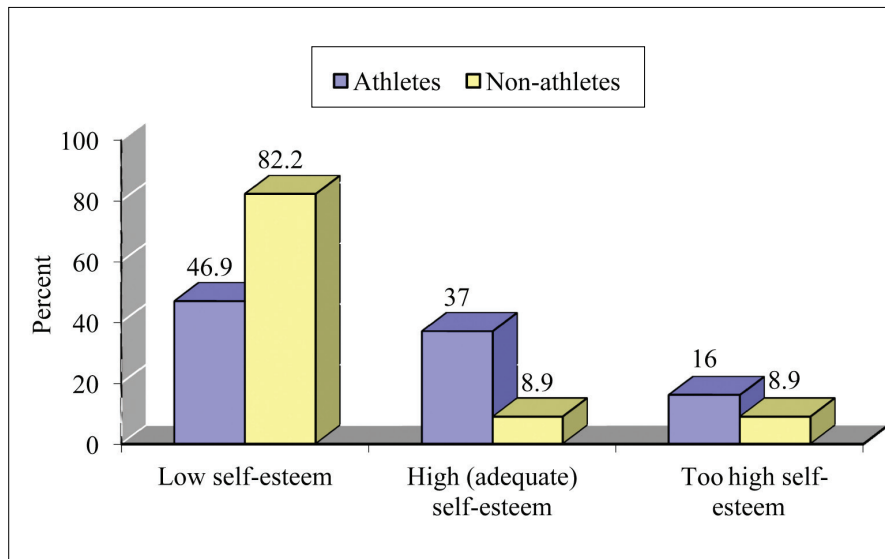


Figure 1. Self-esteem of adolescent athletes and non-athletes

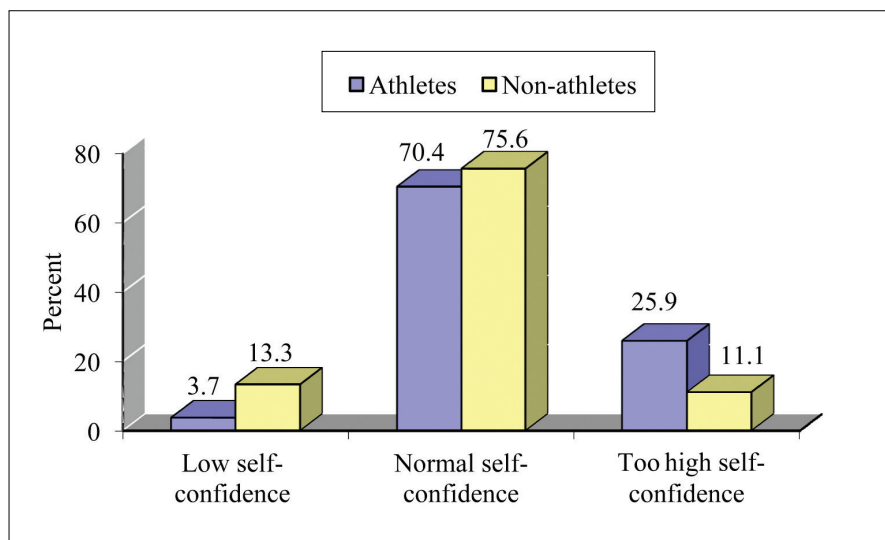


Figure 2. Self-confidence of adolescent athletes and non-athletes

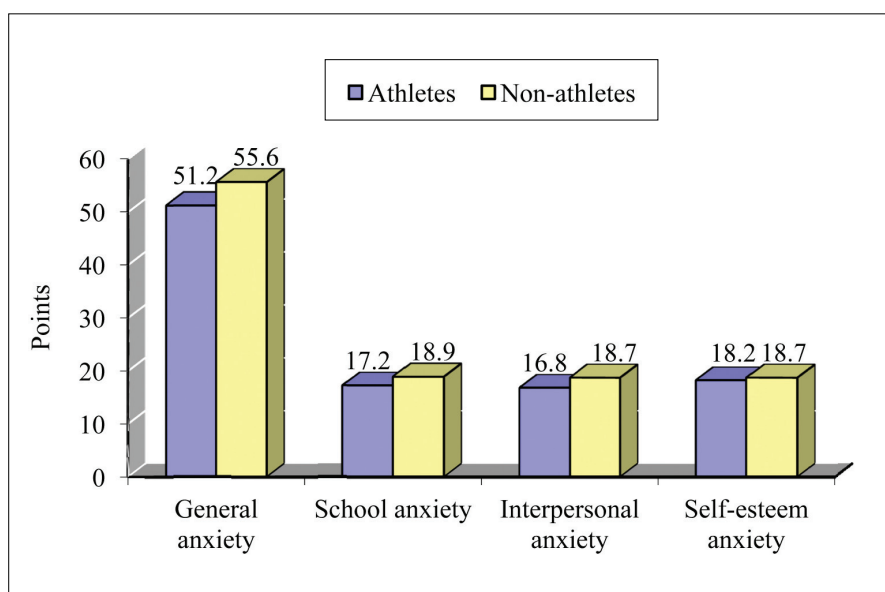


Figure 3. Anxiety evaluation of athlete and non-athlete adolescents (points)

Table 2. Comparison of anxiety factors in adolescent athletes and non-athletes

Factors of anxiety	Low anxiety (%)		Increased anxiety (%)		High anxiety (%)		χ^2 and p
	Athl.	Non-athl.	Athl.	Non-athl.	Athl.	Non-athl.	
General school anxiety	67.9	71.2	29.6	24.4	2.5	4.4	$p > .05$; $\chi^2(2) = 0.67$
Experiencing social stress	74.1	46.7	25.9	51.1	0	2.2	$p < .05$; $\chi^2(2) = 10.43$
Frustration of achieved task	77.8	66.7	21.0	24.4	1.2	8.9	$p > .05$; $\chi^2(2)=4.91$
Self-expression anxiety	61.7	60.0	28.4	33.3	9.9	6.7	$p > .05$; $\chi^2(2) = 0.58$
Fear of checking knowledge	46.9	49.0	43.2	44.4	9.9	7.6	$p > .05$; $\chi^2(2) = 0.37$
Fear of not justified expectations of people	59.2	64.5	27.2	13.3	13.6	22.2	$p > .05$; $\chi^2(2) = 3.91$
Low physiological immunity to stress	63.0	64.4	19.8	6.7	17.2	28.9	$p > .05$; $\chi^2(2) = 5.11$
Fear of relationships with teachers	53.1	64.4	43.2	26.7	3.7	8.9	$p > .05$; $\chi^2(2) = 4.17$

The analysis of self-esteem and general anxiety of adolescent athletes and non-athletes did not reveal the relationship between these variables referring to the analysis results of school, interpersonal and self-esteem anxiety (athletes – $\chi^2(6) = 9.75$, $p > .5$, $\gamma = .08$; $p > .05$; non-athletes – $\chi^2(6) = 7.50$, $p > .05$, $\gamma = .05$, $p > .05$) as well as general school anxiety (athletes – $\chi^2(10) = 8.51$, $p > .5$, $\gamma = .02$, $p > .05$; non-athletes – $\chi^2(10) = 5.84$, $p > .05$, $\gamma = .01$, $p > .05$). The same tendency continued in the search for a link among the self-confidence of adolescents and school, interpersonal and self-esteem anxiety (athletes – $\chi^2(6) = 3.16$, $p > .5$, $\gamma = .12$, $p > .05$; non-athletes – $\chi^2(6) = 4.71$, $p > .05$, $\gamma = .15$, $p > .05$) respectively, and general anxiety at school (athletes – $\chi^2(10) = 12.26$, $p > .5$; $\gamma = .13$, $p > .05$; non-athletes – $\chi^2(10) = 8.56$, $p > .05$; $\gamma = .05$; $p > .05$).

DISCUSSION

The research results demonstrated that the self-esteem of adolescent athletes was at a higher level. These findings contradict to most of studies where it is stated that athlete adolescents are more confident and their popularity level among classmates is high (Dunn et al., 2008; Masiliauskas, 2009), therefore they gained appreciation and respect among coevals (Bump, 2000) and higher social integration (Šniras & Malinauskas, 2006; Šukys & Jankauskienė, 2008). However, studies that exhibit the opposite view can be found, for example, Zajančauskaitė-Staskevičienė & Milerytė (2010) argue that too

much involvement in sport activities disturbs the social relationships of adolescents, restricts their relationship with peers and self-perception.

Research literature suggests that non-athletes are less self-confident as compared to athletes and physically active pupils (Dunn et al., 2007; Rutkauskaitė & Miškinis, 2009; Weinberg & Gould, 2003). Our study also revealed such tendency.

The researchers point out that participation in sports reduces anxiety and negative emotions, a tendency to depression, hostility towards others (Batutis & Kardelis, 2002; Henker, Whalen, Jamner, & Delfino, 2002; Kardelis & Stakytė, 2003; Schumacher & Seiler, 2010) and positively affect health and psycho-emotional well-being (Dumčienė & Leiputė, 2010). Meanwhile, our study revealed that the school, self-esteem and interpersonal anxiety rates of athlete and non-athlete respondents were not statistically significant.

According to Fillips' methodology based on the analysis of 8 anxiety factors, it was found that the results differ only when anxiety is associated with social stress experience and it is more common (higher) among adolescent non-athletes than their peer athletes. Thus, our results has not confirmed the opinion of some authors that participation in sport reduces anxiety (Batutis & Kardelis, 2002; Kardelis & Stakytė, 2003; Scully et al., 1998), but it confirms the findings of other researchers who found no significant differences in the anxiety of athletes and non-athletes (Griciūtė & Cibulskytė,

2010) or a higher level of anxiety was determined in the athletes participating in competitions than in the subjects not involved in sports and competitions (Donti et al., 2012).

Relationships between the self-esteem, self-confidence and anxiety of athlete and non-athlete adolescents were not found. It means that sport has no significant impact on these variables, although the studies (Cresswell & Hodge, 2004; Hanton et al., 2003; Schumacher & Seiler, 2010) show that more self-confident athletes have lower levels of anxiety.

CONCLUSIONS

It was discovered that the self-esteem and self-confidence of athlete adolescents was higher compared with non-athlete adolescents. The results showed that comparing the different anxiety factors of athlete and non-athlete adolescents no significant differences were found with the exception of anxiety related to social stress experience, and it was lower for athlete respondents.

The analysis of self-esteem, self-confidence and anxiety relationship depending on the sport activity determined that the sport element had little relevance to these factors.

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