

The Role of Zurkhane sports on the reduction of nervous tensions, and as a facilitator of social relations

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Abstract

Background: The objective of this study is to determine the contribution of ZoorKhane sports on reducing nervous tensions and facilitating social relationships. The research method is descriptive and analytic.

Materials and Methods: The statistical population of this study includes ZoorKhane and non ZoorKhane athletes whose experience ranges from one month to over one year. The size of the statistical population at the time of research consisted of eight ZoorKhanes in Isfahan with 1600 athletes and 106 state bodybuilding gyms with 5250 members. With regards to Morgan's table and by using available sampling method, 316 classical athletes and 384 non-classical athletes were selected. For data collection, questionnaires were used to determine nervous tensions, social relationships and individual characteristics of the athletes. The results showed a reliability coefficient of 0.86 for nervous tensions and 0.92 for social relationships. Data analysis is conducted through descriptive and inferential statistics ($\alpha = 0.05$). In the inferential statistics were used dependent and independent t-tests and Chi-square tests.

Results and Discussions: The results indicate that there is a significant difference between the nervous tension scores in both the groups ($t=0.52$, $p=0.000$). With regards to the fact that the nervous tension scores of the non ZoorKhane athletes is higher than the ZoorKhane athletes, therefore the amount of nervous tension in the non ZoorKhane athletes is higher than the ZoorKhane athletes. There is a significant difference between social relationship scores in both the groups ($\chi^2=0.53$, $p=0.033$), where – with regards to the average scores in social relationships—the ZoorKhane athletes were better than the others. Peace of mind, sense of security, happiness and bliss are some of the conditions in obtaining mental health, an essential human need, which can be obtained through sports, in this case the traditional sports such as zoorkhane.

Conclusion: Zoorkhane is a sport which builds body and nourishes muscular strength and Zoorkhane sports contain special social and cultural characteristics and Zoorkhane is a universal sport.

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Introduction

A brief look into Iran's past history and culture shows that physical activities and sport have been prevalent in this vast country from ancient times (five thousand years), and is deeply connected with the social and cultural life of the Iranian people in various forms (Christine, 1996).

As it is evident from its name, the Iranian classical sport is the core of the country's physical education, which has developed and continued into a multi-dimensional system of sports, culture and art. This system includes a social behavioral, educational, sport (physical education, body building, etc.), music, architecture, aesthetics and cultural dimensions and related elements. This branch of sport has survived the ups and downs of Iran's history, and its followers have effectively influenced the social, behavioral and even political spheres of this land; so much so that from a cultural anthropological, chivalry and athletics perspective, it is considered to be a basis of the Iranian culture, and heroic character is always connected with this classical sport, its Morshed (master) and ZoorKhane (Bahar, 1974, Chalpy, 2005).

It is due to its constructive role and unique combination that makes maintenance and development of Zoorkhane important culturally, socially in behavioral and sport sense. Paul Chartier states: the disciplines of classical sports represent a mix of rhythmic movements, sportsmanship, aesthetics and goodness. These movements nourish the mind and the soul with wisdom, righteousness and coordinative power, just as it does the body. These values, which show the highest level of aspirations that a human being may follow, have helped in attracting athletes to this classic sport (Nadrian, 2009. Nadrian, 2005).

The opinions of Froebel, Pestalozzi and Rousseau indicate that: sport is an instrument for the growth of moral virtues and compliance of an athlete with the social norms. Sejafat, founder of physical education, believes that "physical education provides the grounds for moral education in an athlete, and the young people learn about traits such as control over matters, innovation and creativity, restraint and aesthetics on the sports fields, making him compliant with social norms (Anvaralkholi, 2001, Anvaralkholi, 2004).

Other functions of Zoorkhane sport which helps the nurturing of social relationships is the meaning of social interaction. It may be stated that the role of sport as a creator of contact and communication is one of its primary functions. Most researchers believe that social contacts are one of the most important

reasons for taking up sports. Interaction in sports may be interpreted as intermixing, friendship and searching for new bonds. Sporting atmosphere not only provides for verbal interaction, but also non-verbal interactions in sporting activities; this brings about a sense of understanding and solidarity (Abedi, 2004).

Social adaptation is one of the main factors in the process of socialization through sports. Social adaptation relates to positive behavior among people. This behavior can be identified through characteristics such as heroism, respecting the rights of others, goodness, having positive social views and the ability to end enmities or hostile feelings. Researches have shown that sporting experiences contribute to upgrading the level of athletes' social relationships (Caspem, 1995).

In a statement the International Sports Psychology Association has announced that although 20 to 30 minutes of physical activity may be sufficient for stress reduction, 60 minutes of physical activity causes greater psychological benefits. According to the views of the American College of Sports Medicine, 20 to 30 minutes of physical activity with a minimum of 3 times per week and with 60-90% intensity of heart beat has far greater psychological benefits (Aarnio & et al, 2002).

Without doubt, scientific, educational and research investments for the growth and development of Zoorkhane sports and training of eligible manpower will be welcomed by world nations and soon the sporting skills and heroic behavior of this sport orientation will shine as an competitive pole opposite similar sports, and will attract more athletes into its arena.

Professor Yurgen Palm, the head of International Federation for Universal Sports, states: in comparison with other Asian sports which are known in various parts of the world, Zoorkhane is considered to be a new discovery as it contains special features and specifications. Firstly, zoorkhane is a sport which deals with physical and muscular development; today we do not need aerobic exercises like cycling and athletics, rather we need a sport that can develop all body parts and muscles. Zoorkhane sports have these characteristics. Secondly, Zoorkhane sports contain special social and cultural characteristics. It is these characteristics that have turned Zoorkhane into a special and unique sport. Thirdly, Zoorkhane is a universal sport. This sport can be generalized to include athletes from different age groups, from a child of 7 to an 80 year old adult. This is because Zoorkhane activities include ability, power, special music (Zarb, drum and a bell) and a spirit of poetry

and philosophy. Zoorkhane is the only sport that is distinguished from other fields due to its spiritual characteristics: chivalry and generosity among its athletes. Classic sports are not just games; rather sports which belong to the unique culture in a society (Ensafoor, 1996, Partoobeyzaieh, 1985).

Soccer is a sport that has its own values, which are not real; it is either commercialized or manipulated for propaganda. However, in classical sports no athlete is after income or title, rather, in Zoorkhane the athletes are after obtaining the spirit of chivalry and sportsmanship which are the main criteria and value in addition to supporting the club financially (Abdoli, 2007).

With regards to the stated views and conducted studies results, unfortunately major popular sports in the world which are under the supervision and management of institutions and official organizations such as federations and Olympic committees in various continents, are introduced to the whole world through mass media, who in turn is after championship sports, results, medals and sport fans to gain fame. Therefore, an epistemic review of world sports should take place. One method by which the sporting values may be reinstated is through reviewing national and traditional sports of various nations. In this process, one of the spots which can be considered is the Zoorkhane sports of Iran. This is because in classical sport activities no athlete is after material goods or championship, rather chivalry and sportsmanship is the core value.

Materials and Methods

The research method here is descriptive and comparative. In order to control the disruptive variables, the following method is used. To prevent the anxiety of the addressee while answering the questionnaire and their anonymity, which may prevent incorrect answers, they were assured of the confidentiality of the same. To ensure the recovery of the said questionnaire from the addressees, these were sent out through administrative coordination with the help of physical education experts.

The statistical population of the present research includes classical (ZoorKhane) and non-classical (body building gyms) athletes whose experience ranges from one month to over one year. The size of the statistical population at the time of research consisted of eight ZoorKhanes in Isfahan and 106 state bodybuilding gyms. With regards to the fact that the total athletes in the Zoorkhanes of Isfahan consisted of 1600 athletes and the non-Zoorkhane athletes (gyms) with 5250 athletes, and also with regards to the Morgan table, 316 classical athletes and 384 non-classical athletes were chosen. The classical

athletes were chosen from all 8 Zoorkhane and the non-classical athletes were chosen from 8 body building gyms in close vicinity to the Zoorkhane — 50 athletes from each gym. Since the most common method for data collection is through questionnaires, therefore in this research too the same has been applied using three separate forms, i.e., a questionnaire for nervous tension (the rate of athlete's psychological readiness), a questionnaire for social relationship and one for individual characteristics. In this research, the face validity and the contents of the questionnaire have been approved by the physical education experts. In order to determine the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used. This method is used to calculate the inner coordination of the measuring tools such as the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire for nervous tension is set at 0.86 and for social relationship at 0.92. The data analysis is performed through statistics software in two levels, descriptive and inferential statistics. In the descriptive statistic section statistical characteristics such as abundance, percentage, average and standard deviation is used, and in the inferential statistic the section t-test and Chi-square for the two independent samples is used ($\alpha = 0.05$) (Azar&Momeni, 2002, Gall, 2005).

Results and Discussions

As per the result of the research, the Zoorkhane athletes in the 45-55 age group (35.3%) and in the non-Zoorkhane athletes in the 25-34 year age group (39.8%) were the most active participants to this questionnaire. The majority of the Zoorkhane athletes (51.1%) did not have high school diploma; 44.4% of the non-Zoorkhane athletes held high school diploma. Only 11.4% of the non-Zoorkhane athletes held post graduate or higher degrees. About 54.7% of the Zoorkhane athletes and 46.4% of the non-Zoorkhane athletes were self-employed.

The highest average for an answer in the nervous tension section in the Zoorkhane and non-Zoorkhane groups (4.20 and 4.14%, respectively) was given to "I expect to succeed in sport and in life".

About 8.77% of the Zoorkhane athletes had acceptable social relationship behavior as compared to the 8.37% of the non-Zoorkhane athletes. The highest reason and motivation in having social relationship for the classical athletes, with 37.8%, was for "interest for communication with friends" and for the non-classical athletes the figure stood at 26.6%.

The highest percentage for the least motivation for social relationship among the classical athletes is for "in not having many friends" with 11.1% and for

non-classical athletes it is 19.0% for “interest in individual activities”.

As for the effects of motional activities as a way for social relationship, the Zoorkhane athletes scored 48.9%, whereas the non-Zoorkhane athletes scored 69.4%.

Results and Discussions

In the following illative analysis for reviewing the significance level, a t-test with a =a 0.05 level was used.

The obtained average of 3.46, which is higher than the intermediate level (3) is presented in Table 1, therefore the rate of nervous tension among the Zoorkhaneathletes is higher than the average level.

Table 1. Results of the relative t-test, the average nervous tension of the Zoorkhane athletes with an average level of 3

m level	m	sd	t	p
3	3.466	0.53	15.37	0.000

The obtained average of 3.46, which is higher than the intermediate level (3) is presented in table 2, therefore, the rate of nervous tension among the Zoorkhane athletes is higher than the average level. According to Table 2 and with regards to the obtained average of 3.65, which is higher than the intermediate level (3), the rate of nervous tension among the non-Zoorkhane athletes is higher than the average level.

Table 2. Results of the relative t-test, the average nervous tension of the non-Zoorkhane athletes with an average level of 3

m level	m	sd	t	p
3	3.65	0.55	22.26	0.000

According to Table 3 and with regards to the obtained average of 1.22, which is lower than the intermediate level (1.5), therefore the rate of social relationship among the Zoorkhane athletes is lower than the average level.

Table 3. Results of the relative t-test, the average social relationship of the Zoorkhane athletes with an average level of 1.5

m level	m	sd	t	p
1.5	1.2	0.41	-11.84	0.000

According to Table 4 and with regards to the obtained average of 1.16, which is lower than the intermediate level (1.5), therefore the rate of social relationship among the non-Zoorkhane athletes is lower than the average level.

Table 4. Results of the relative t-test, the average social relationship of the non-Zoorkhane athletes with an average level of 1.5

m level	m	sd	t	p
1.5	1.16	0.37	-17.27	0.000

There is a significant difference between the scores of the nervous tension of the Zoorkhane and non-Zoorkhane athletes and with regards to the fact that the average score for nervous tension in the non-Zoorkhane athletes is higher than the Zoorkhane athletes therefore this difference is in favor of the latter (see Table 5). This means that the nervous tension is higher among the non-Zoorkhane athletes as compared to the other group.

Table 5. Comparing the average scores for nervous tension obtained by Zoorkhane and non-Zoorkhane athletes

variable	group	m	sd	t	p
Nervous tension	Zoorkhane	3.46	0.53	0.52	0.000
	Non-Zoorkhane	3.65	0.55		

With regards to the fact that significant level calculated in Table 6 is equal to 0.033 and is therefore lower than 0.05, according to the obtained information, the null hypothesis in the significance level is 0.05, and we may conclude that there is a significant difference between the Zoorkhane and non-Zoorkhane athletes.

Table 6. The results of Chi-square test about the comparison of social relationship between Zoorkhane and non-Zoorkhane athletes

Variable name	chi-square	df	p
Zoorkhane and Non-Zoorkhane	0.053	2	0.033

Conclusion

Nervous tension or stress can be witnessed to a large extent in our daily life. Worries about job, family, social problems, economic problems, various needs, organizations’ expectations from its staff, management difficulties and employee expectations etc., causes people to experience different excitements, tensions, fears and hopes from the time they wake up until they fall asleep again. Sometimes this may be proportionate to their physical limits sometimes not. These tensions may lead to physical ailments such as ulcer, blood pressure and heart diseases. It may also lead to consequences such as headache, visual problems, mental disorder, distress,

depression, insomnia and negative attitudes, and other nervous and psychological problems. Therefore, as it is recommended by many doctors and experts, that physical activities (sport) can minimize the above mentioned ailments. According to Froubel, Pastalzorand Sou sports are instruments for growth and education of moral virtues, and athletes 'compliance with social norms. Sajaf, founder of physical education in the Soviet Union believes that "physical education provides for behavioral education in an athlete and the younger generation learns about attributes such as controlling affairs, innovation and creativity, aesthetics and self-restraint in the sporting arena. One of the sports that is a reminder of our ancestors and customs is the sport of Zoorkhane. There are various strategies to ensure that this 400 year old Iranian sport retains its heroic and sportsmanship character. In most traditional sports, due to the lack of enthusiasm among the younger generation, the older sportsmen are left to themselves and are soon forgotten; while in case of Zoorkhane sports the case is different (Chitsaz, 2010).

It requires a strong physic and encompasses activities that are interesting to the younger generation. Firstly, Zoorkhane is a sport which builds body and nourishes muscular strength; where the aerobic exercises such as cycling and athletics in today's sports are not required. Secondly, Zoorkhane sports contain special social and cultural characteristics. It is these characteristics that have turned Zoorkhane into a special and unique sport. Thirdly, Zoorkhane is a universal sport. This sport can be generalized to include athletes from different age groups, from a child of 7 to an 80 year old adult. This is because Zoorkhane activities include ability, power, music and a spirit of poetry and philosophy. Zoorkhane is the only sport that is distinguished from other fields due to its spiritual characteristics, chivalry and generosity among its athletes. Classic sports are not just a game; rather it's a sport which belongs to the culture of a society (Haji-Rasouli, 2005).

Soccer is a sport that has its own values, but these values are not real; either they play for money, or they are after recruiting players or other matters are involved. However, in classical sports no athlete is after income or title, rather, in Zoorkhane the athletes are after obtaining the spirit of chivalry and sportsmanship which are the main criteria and value. The results of past and present researches have shown that sport is not only an instrument for physical health but helps to cure various ailments, while closely connected to mental health. Sport reduces stress and depression and increases self-confidence. During rigorous physical activities the secretion of endorphins increase which gives the athletes a relaxed

feeling. Research shows that sporting activities help in socialization, a sense of cooperation, obtaining skills and also acquainting with new people and friends. In fact the results show that sport is an important part of social life and it can be used to eliminate social problems and difficulties, and also improve common social economic conditions. The results indicate that healthy environment has a direct effect on sports as more people are willing to spend their free time in a safe and healthy environment. Without doubt, scientific, educational and research investments for the growth and development of Zoorkhane sports and training of eligible athletes will be welcomed by world nations and soon the sporting skills and heroic behavior of this sport will shine as an competitive pole opposite similar sports and will attract more athletes into its arena.

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