



Comparative Study on the Mood of Sports Persons and Non-Sports Persons during the Pandemic



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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented challenges, affecting mental health and well-being. It has severely affected the various attributes of the personality of an individual. Sports persons, who often rely on structured routines, physical activity, and social interactions for their mental health, faced unique challenges during the pandemic. Similarly, non-sports persons encountered their own set of challenges, such as disrupted daily routines and social isolation. This study aimed to compare the mood of sports persons and non-sports persons during the pandemic using the Profile of Mood States (POMS) questionnaire. A sample size of 30 individuals, 15 for each group (sports and non-sports), aged between 20 and 25 years, was selected. Sports persons were those who participated in inter-university competitions, and non-sports persons were those who did not participate in any sports activity. The t-test was used for statistical analysis to compare the data of both groups. The results showed a significant difference in mood disturbance levels between the two groups, with non-sports persons exhibiting higher levels of mood disturbance. The findings suggest that engaging in sports activities can have a positive impact on mental health during the pandemic.

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1 Introduction

Psychology, the scientific study of the mind and behaviour, encompasses a wide range of subfields and applications. According to the American Psychological Association, psychology investigates mental processes, brain functions, and behaviour. As a "Hub Science" (Boyack et al., 2005), psychology intersects with medical sciences, social sciences, and education. Among its various branches, sports psychology is particularly relevant in understanding the psychological impact of sports and physical activity. Sports psychology focuses on how psychological factors influence sports, athletic performance, exercise, and physical activity. It examines how participation in sports can enhance health and well-being, and it helps athletes utilize psychological principles to improve their performance and mental well-being. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is a global outbreak of coronavirus, an infectious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Cases of novel coronavirus (nCoV) were first detected in China in December 2019, with the virus spreading rapidly to other countries across the world. This led WHO to declare a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on 30 January 2020 and to characterize the outbreak as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. A pandemic is defined as "occurring over a wide geographic area and affecting an exceptionally high proportion of the population. The last pandemic reported in the world was the H1N1 flu pandemic in 2009. This pandemic has had a devastating effect on the world's demographics, resulting in more than 5.3 million deaths worldwide. The virus has inflicted billions of lives across the globe in many ways, e.g., physically, psychologically, and socially. The impacts on sport and active living have been transformative, complex, and highly uneven. Sport mega events and sport leagues have been cancelled/closed, or postponed, and fitness centers, rehabilitation centers, and sport clubs have all been negatively impacted. Closed schools require changes to the physical education. Sport businesses have been threatened with bankruptcy, and exercise professionals have lost their jobs. At the same time, online physical training is more available than ever. The loss of training facilities as social locations has potentially huge health impacts for the individuals (Terry & Lane, 2000). Today, we do not define well-being just in terms of physical fitness, but it also includes mental, social, emotional, and spiritual fitness. And, one can think of a healthy mind only in a healthy body. Both physical and mental well-being are the prerequisites of great achievements in one's life. Sports participation promotes physical fitness, instils discipline, fosters teamwork skills, and make psychologically strong. It develops cognitive ability and boosts self-esteem. Engaging in sports also offers a constructive outlet for stress, anxiety, and depression. Sports have long served as a global unifier, transcending race, religion, politics, socioeconomic status, and gender (Burke et al., 1991). As Nelson Mandela famously said, "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does." During the COVID-19 pandemic, the unifying power of sports became even more crucial as people faced isolation due to closed borders and stay-at-home mandates. Sports provided a means for individuals to connect and support each other, demonstrating the strength of collective unity over individual endeavours. A **mood** is a state of mind or a general feeling that can influence your thoughts, behaviours, and actions. It refers to an affective state that is typically less intense and more prolonged than emotions. Moods can last for hours, days, or even longer, and unlike emotions, they are not usually tied to a specific stimulus or event. Moods can influence cognition, behaviour, and perception, and they can significantly impact an individual's overall mental health and well-being (McNair et al., 1971; Pemberton & Tyszkiewicz, 2016).

Types of Mood:

- 1) *Positive Mood:* Includes feelings of happiness, contentment, and excitement. Positive moods are generally associated with better physical and mental health, improved social relationships, and higher productivity.
- 2) *Negative Mood:* Includes feelings of sadness, anxiety, anger, and irritability. Negative moods can lead to or exacerbate mental health issues such as depression, anxiety disorders, and stress-related conditions.
- 3) *Neutral Mood:* A state where an individual does not feel particularly positive or negative. Neutral moods are less likely to influence behaviour and cognition strongly.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, every individual was affected both physically and psychologically, whether he is a sports person or a non-sports person. The present research intends to study the mood of sports persons and non-sports persons during the pandemic. The objectives of this study are: First, to determine the positive or negative mood states of sports persons and non-sports persons; second, to assess the mood states of sports persons and non-sports persons (Morgan & Johnson, 1978).

2 Materials and Methods

In this study, we have comparatively analyzed the mood of sports and non-sports persons during the pandemic. Written consent was taken from all the participants before participating in the research study.

Samples:

For this study, the subjects were selected using random sampling from university-level sports persons and non-sports persons involved in office work. A total of 30 subjects (15 sports persons and 15 non-sports persons) aged 20-25 years were selected.

Tools used:

The *Profile of Mood States (POMS)* questionnaire, a validated psychological test developed in 1971 by Douglas M. McNair, Maurice Lorr, and Leo F. Droppleman, was used to assess mood states. The questionnaire consists of 65 words/statements that describe various feelings.

Procedure:

The study was conducted on sports and non-sports persons, aged 20-25 years. A total sample of 30 persons (15 for each) was selected. After that, the above-mentioned tool was administered on the selected subjects with proper instructions and procedure-

- 1) The assistant explains the test protocol to the subjects: "Read each word/statement below, decide how you have been feeling in the past week and today, and select the appropriate statement: 'Not at All,' 'A Little,' 'Moderately,' 'Quite a Lot,' or 'Extremely' to indicate your feeling."
- 2) The subject responds to the 65 words/statements on the questionnaire without a time limit.
- 3) The assistant determines and records the subject's mood state scores.

The obtained responses were analyzed with the help of a standard procedure.

Assessment:

The Total Mood Disturbance (TMD) score is calculated by adding scores for Tension, Depression, Anger, Fatigue, and Confusion, and subtracting the Vigour score. The test provides scores for each mood state and the total mood disturbance.

3 Results and Discussions

The statistical analysis of the data obtained by administering the *Profile of Mood States (POMS)* questionnaire, a validated psychological test, was done by using the 't-test' method.

Table 1
Comparison between sports and non-sports persons based on mood states during the pandemic

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	df	p-value
Sports persons	15	22.20	13.41			
Non-sports persons	15	62.07	36.50	3.96	28	0.05

The analysis shows that the mean and standard deviation (S.D.) of sports persons and non-sports persons are 22.20 ± 13.41 and 62.07 ± 36.50 , respectively. The t-value of 3.96 is significant at the 0.05 level with 28 degrees of freedom, indicating a significant difference between the mood states of sports persons and non-sports persons. Further, it shows that the profile of mood state for non-sports persons is significantly higher (62.07) than that of sports persons (22.20).

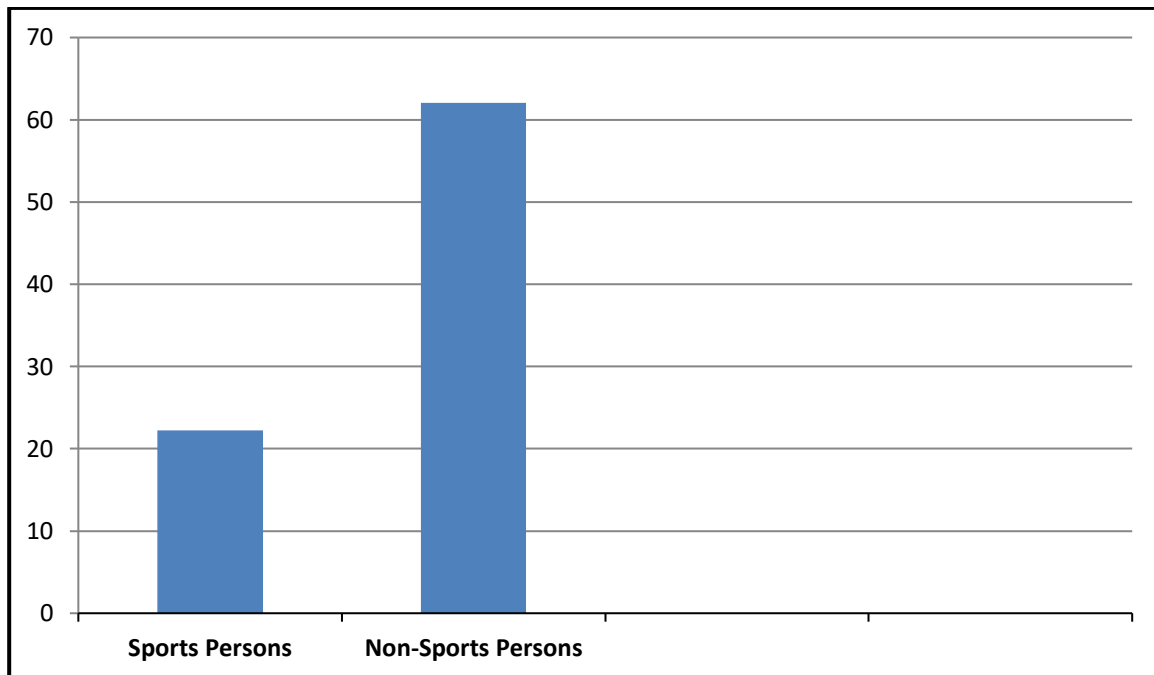


Figure 1. Mean Comparison of sports and non-sports persons based on mood states during the pandemic

4 Conclusion

The study reveals a significant difference in the mood states of sports persons and non-sports persons during the pandemic, which indicates that engaging in sports activities on a regular basis enables individuals to gain a deeper insight into their emotional landscape and improves their ability to manage and regulate their emotions effectively. Sports persons exhibited lower levels of mood disturbance compared to non-sports persons. Exercise and physical activity release endorphins, which interact with brain receptors to reduce pain perception and induce a "feel-good" sensation, known as the runner's high. Non-sports persons are encouraged to engage in physical activity to maintain psychological and physiological health. Participating in physical activities can elicit various mood states in different situations, which can help an individual build resilience and develop a strong mindset to tackle challenging situations in daily life ([Vora et al., 2018](#)).

Conflict of interest statement

The authors declared that they have no competing interests.

Statement of authorship

The authors have a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The authors have approved the final article.

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