

EXAMINING THE LEVELS OF INTEREST OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

R.X. Kadirov

Professor, Department of Physical Culture
Asia International University

Email: rashidkadirov500@gmail.com

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to analyze the levels of interest of university students in physical education classes from the perspective of certain demographic variables. In the data collection process, the “Interest Level Scale” and the “Personal Information Form” developed by the researcher were used. The analysis of the data collected within the scope of this study revealed that they were normally distributed. In accordance with the research design and statistical assumptions, descriptive statistical methods and independent samples t-tests were employed. The analyses were carried out using the SPSS software, and the significance level in the study was set at $p < 0.05$.

Keywords: sport, level of interest, student, physical education, healthy lifestyle

Introduction

Research on interest levels indicates the existence of two types of interest [1,2]. The dualistic model of interest [3,4] explains it as a motivational construct and defines it as a strong inclination toward an activity that is integrated with one's identity and values, considered important, incorporated into one's self-concept, and invested with considerable time and energy. The first type of interest is harmonious interest, which arises when an individual engages in an activity freely, through conscious choice, and in a purposeful manner. In such cases, other aspects of life are also in harmony with the individual's personal values.

The second type of interest is obsessive (compulsive) interest. In this situation, the individual experiences internal or external pressure while engaging in the activity and often performs it under conditions beyond their own will. As a result of obsessive interest, the person participates in the activity with an internal sense of obligation and frequently neglects other areas of life. According to the dualistic model, research conducted across different age groups, genders, cultures, and domains of activity shows that harmonious interest generally leads to positive psychological outcomes, whereas obsessive interest is usually not directly associated with such outcomes [3,5].

The dualistic model of interest is defined as a strong inclination toward an activity that an individual loves, considers important, and invests significant time and energy in. This model also distinguishes between two types of interest-harmonious interest and obsessive interest [5]. Harmonious interest reflects the individual's willingness to freely engage in a preferred activity. In this case, the activity becomes part of the person's overall self-structure, but it does not dominate personal identity excessively [6]. Therefore, harmonious interest is expected to be associated with adaptive outcomes not only during the activity itself but also in subsequent processes.

On the other hand, obsessive interest is explained by an uncontrollable internal drive toward the activity. Although the activity becomes a part of the individual's identity, people with obsessive interest tend to perceive it as an overwhelmingly dominant aspect of their self-concept. As a result, obsessive interest is more likely to be associated with maladaptive outcomes [6].

Interest does not merely reflect short-term involvement. Because passionate individuals devote substantial time and energy to their chosen activity, this activity occupies a central place in their lives. Previous studies have highlighted the impact of how important the activity is perceived to be, as well as the degree of emotional engagement and the accuracy of affective forecasting [7,8]. Based on this, the aim of the present study is to examine the role of harmonious and obsessive interest in the accuracy of affective forecasting toward a particular activity. When interest in sports activities is supported in a harmonious form, the process of participation aligns with the individual's personal values and other areas of life. This situation reflects the idea of "*I want to play because the activity expresses qualities that I enjoy*" [4].

Research model and participants

In this study, the survey model was employed. The survey model is defined as a scientific approach that aims to determine the relationship and/or degree of association between two or more variables. Within the scope of this research, the interest levels of students engaged in team and individual sports were analyzed. The study sample consisted of a total of 24 university students (12 female and 12 male; mean age = 16.30 ± 1.283) who voluntarily participated in physical education classes at higher education institutions.

Table 1

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results for the distribution of research data

N	Obsessive Level	Interest	Harmonious Level	Interest
	24		24	
Normal distribution parameters (Mean)	3.65		4.17	
Std. Deviation (SD)	1.56		1.65	
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	1.218		0.988	
p	0.103		0.283	

Note: The analysis of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results revealed that the data were normally distributed. Therefore, the use of parametric tests in the study was considered appropriate. Based on these results, statistical analyses consistent with the research objectives were conducted.

Table 2

Comparison of obsessive and harmonious interest levels by gender

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Obsessive Interest					
Female	12	3.10	1.50	-4.210	0.000
Male	12	4.05	1.40		
Harmonious Interest					
Female	12	3.45	1.60	-4.520	0.000
Male	12	4.60	1.45		

Note: As seen in Table 2, there is a statistically significant difference among students according to gender ($p < 0.05$). When comparing the mean scores, it was found that male students ($M = 4.05$)

had a higher level of obsessive interest than female students ($M = 3.10$). Similarly, the level of harmonious interest was also higher in males ($M = 4.60$) compared to females ($M = 3.45$). This result indicates that male students participate more actively in physical education classes and demonstrate a higher degree of interest in sports.

Table 3

T-test results of students' interest levels according to participation in sports

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Obsessive Interest					
Sport participants	12	4.55	1.44	4.210	0.000
Non-participants	12	3.50	1.53		
Harmonious Interest					
Sport participants	12	5.30	1.66	4.793	0.000
Non-participants	12	3.95	1.58		

Note: As shown in Table 3, there is a statistically significant difference among students according to the factor of sports participation ($p < 0.05$). It was found that students who participate in sports ($M = 4.55$) have a higher level of obsessive interest compared to those who do not participate ($M = 3.50$). Likewise, students engaged in sports ($M = 5.30$) also demonstrated a higher level of harmonious interest compared to non-participants ($M = 3.95$). These results indicate that sports activities represent an important factor that enhances students' levels of interest.

Conclusion and recommendations

As designed, the study sample comprised students enrolled in various higher education institutions who were continuing their sports activities. A total of 24 students (12 females and 12 males) voluntarily participated. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test indicated that the data were normally distributed, and on this basis the use of parametric tests was deemed appropriate. Accordingly, statistical analyses aligned with the research objectives were conducted.

Analyses by gender showed statistically significant differences in both obsessive and harmonious interest levels. Comparing the means, male students exhibited higher levels of both obsessive and harmonious interest than female students. These findings were partly consistent with, and partly divergent from, results reported in some prior literature. With respect to sports participation, significant differences were also observed in students' interest levels: students who engaged in sports demonstrated higher obsessive and harmonious interest than those who did not. Accordingly, elevated interest levels among students who participate regularly in sports are to be expected. This may be related to the capacity of sport to foster positive affective experiences and to reduce stress and anxiety.

In terms of gender differences, male students showed higher obsessive and harmonious interest than female students. Regarding the factor of sports participation, students regularly involved in sport displayed significantly higher interest levels than non-participants. This underscores sport as an important factor that supports personal development and motivation.

Based on these findings, the differences between obsessive and harmonious interest should be taken into account when working with students. Future research should examine interest levels in relation to other psychological variables. Moreover, it would be advisable to investigate more

deeply the effects of regular participation in sports on personal development, psychological resilience, and motivation.

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