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RESEARCH ARTICLE

COMPARISON OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN PARTICIPANTS AND NON-PARTICIPANTS IN SPORTING ACTIVITIES (THE CASE STUDY: SAPCO STAFFS)

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims at comparing the quality of life and quality of working life in SAPCO participants and non-participants in sporting activities (public sports). In so doing, the checklist of individual characteristics, quality of life questionnaire developed by Vaez Mousavi (2000), and Walton's (1973) quality of working life questionnaire were distributed among 302 people including 162 athlete staffs and 162 non-athlete ones. As the first phase of the study, coordinating with the Supplying Automotive Parts Company (SAPCO), affiliated with Iran Khodro Industrial Group, the researcher obtained the letter of permission as well as the reference letter. Then, 350 questionnaires were distributed among participants who filled out them on the spot. 302 questionnaires have been filled out properly, which were later analyzed. The questionnaires were distributed and subsequently collected in May, 2014. For data analysis, descriptive statistics (in the format of tables and graphs), Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, dependent T-test, and Two-way ANOVA using SPSS 16 (at the level of significance: 0.05) were applied. The study yielded the result that there is a significant difference between active and inactive people in terms of quality of life, individual well-being, social relations, altruistic behavior, and job satisfaction.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's mechanical life, physical activities are losing their roles in performing different tasks. This type of life style increased the number of obese people, which subsequently decreased people's physical strength due to a sedentary lifestyle. Therefore, the prevalence of physical problems such as cardio-vascular diseases, hyperlipidemia, obesity, etc. is going to be an intrinsic part of everyday life. Different scientific studies show that regular physical activities contribute to improving the mental and physical health and preventing or treating Coronary artery disease, hyperlipidemia, high blood pressure, uncontrolled weight gain, osteoporosis, some types of diabetes, stroke, clinical depression, and even some cancers. All in all, such activities lead to an increase in longevity (Vaez Mousavi, 2000).

Sports and physical activities, as vital elements in today's society, play an important role in improving people's general health and increase quality of life. Diseases and disabilities prevailed due to inactivity, increase humans' problems and exerts a negative influence on the quality of their lives. People encouraged in a kind of sedentary lifestyle, are basically more vulnerable to cardio-vascular and some other types of diseases (Hamedinia & Rezaei, 2004). Quality of life and the role of sport are so important that a great bulk of studies with different results have been so far done in this realm. Some of them are as follows:

Quinn *et al.* (2008) investigated the effects of physical activity educational program on obese women's physical mobility, physical fitness, quality of life, and also their attitude toward sports. The results of their study confirmed that not only women changed their attitude toward physical activity, but also they take pleasure in doing such activities. This may lead to a change in their life style in order to lose their weight (Quinn *et al.*, 2008). Examining the role of sporting activities in the quality of the life of people afflicted with pelvic injuries,

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Harvey *et al.* (2011) found out that pelvic fracture can tremendously reduce the quality of life. However, good sporting activities would ameliorate such a negative effect. Yazicioglu *et al.* (2012) investigated the effect of sport on the quality of life and life satisfaction in people who are physically handicapped. Their study yielded the result that in comparison to non-athlete handicapped people, athlete handicapped ones gain higher scores in the components of quality of life and life satisfaction. On the other hand, given that human resources are regarded as the most important element of any organization and that achievement of each organization depends on efficient human resources, it seems necessary to evaluate the quality of life and quality of working life of SAPCO staffs. Therefore, understanding and then, improving the effective factors enables staffs to utilize their potential abilities to provide patients and other people of the society with decent services.

Nowadays, more and more people are willing to improve the quality of their lives and this critical issue has been the focus of attention of different walks of life, especially efficient and professional human resources in the realm of science, industry, and technology. Not only the scientific community, but also the ordinary people of the society are now well aware of the deep effects of life style on the quality of life. Hence, authorities must do their best to meet people's needs since any negligence or inattention to such an important issue would lead to waste of time or money. Also, our religion has greatly highlighted the significance of mental and physical health, e.g. our body is a divine gift created on the basis of goodness and dignity (Shafiei, 1994). Considering all the above-mentioned points that emphasize the importance of quality of life, neglecting such a critical issue in staffs' lives not only causes them a great loss in their working life, but also influences their private life outside working place.

Officials in charge of planning and development in manufacturing companies such as SAPCO have not paid enough attention to the notion of quality of life and nor have comprehensive researches been done on improving the quality of life of the participants in public sports. Therefore, the present study seems to be necessary for increasing people's information about the condition of the quality of life in people who participate in public sports. It is hoped that the present study sheds light on the role of sporting activities in improving the quality of the staffs' lives. The results of the study may encourage the non-athlete staffs to take part in sporting activities, provided that the higher level of quality of life of athlete staffs is confirmed by the findings. Moreover, the findings of this study may be to the benefit of SAPCO managers, officials, staffs, and their families as well since they can take advantage of the obtained information in this research to make more precise decisions for the future.

## METHODS

This study is a causal-comparative field research. The statistical population of the study incorporates the staffs of the Supplying Automotive Parts Company (SAPCO), affiliated with Iran Khodro Industrial Group. In the early 2014, the number of its staff was 1385 and the number of the samples must be 302 participants based on Morgan table.

The questionnaires were distributed to the two groups of 162 participants, i.e. the group of athlete participants (staffs who have done sporting activities three times a week, at least 30 min per session) and the group of non-athlete participants. The specifications of the questionnaire and checklist are as follow:

**The checklist of individual characteristics:** this questionnaire includes the participants' individual and occupational characteristics including gender, age, occupation, education, marital status, number of people in family, economic status, starting time of the activities, duration of one session, the number of sessions per week.

**Quality of life questionnaire** developed by Vaez Mousavi (2000) which includes 72 questions and measures 6 components of the quality of life (as the dependent variable), i.e. physical well-being (12 questions), individual growth (12 questions), job satisfaction (12 questions), social relations (12 questions), creative behavior (12 questions), and altruistic behavior (12 questions). according to Houshangi (2006), the quality of life has been performed by Sadeghi and Delavari on a sample of 140 participants and the overall reliability was 0.85.

However, the questionnaires of the present study were distributed among two groups of statistical samples (participants and non-participants in the public sport) and its reliability was proved to be 0.84. Finally, descriptive statistics was used for categorization of the raw scores, frequency distribution table, and calculation of indices such as mean and standard deviation. In order to determine whether parametric test or non-parametric test is needed, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was carried out to determine if the variables are distributed normally or not. Depending on whether the data has normal distribution or not, Student T-test and Mann-Whitney U Test and two-way ANOVA were applied.

## RESULTS

The study yielded the result that out of 324 participants who were under examination, men constitute 80.6% of the population and women constitute 19.4% of it. 78.7% and 21.3% of the population are married and single, respectively. Moreover, the highest frequency (44.75%) was observed in the age range 45-60 and the lowest one (9.88%) was in the age group above 60. The highest frequency (26.54) had a 15-year experience and 142 samples out of the whole samples (43.83) hold BA degree. It was also revealed that there is a significant difference between active participants and inactive ones in terms of quality of life ( $p=0/002$ ), individual well-being ( $p=0/003$ ), social relations ( $p=0/001$ ), altruistic behavior ( $p=0/04$ ), and job satisfaction ( $p=0/04$ ).

**Table 1. Comparison of Quality of life in Participants and Non-participants in Public Sports**

Variable	Group	No.	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	Df	Sig
Quality of Life	Active	162	40/80	10/12	4/12	322	0/002*
	inactive	162	36/60	8/20			

\*Level of significance:  $P \leq 0.05$

**Table 2. Comparison of the components of Quality of life in Participants and Non-participants in Public Sports**

Variable	Group	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	mann-whitney u test	Z	Sig
Physical Well-being	Active	162	7/20	1/80	52499/500	-3/054	<b>0/003*</b>
	Inactive	162	6/50	1/75			
Social Relations	Active	162	8/03	2/67	54254	-2/12	<b>0/001*</b>
	inactive	162	7/52	2/14			
Altruistic Behavior	Active	162	6/83	2/73	53279	-1/72	<b>0/04*</b>
	inactive	162	6/40	2/10			
Satisfaction with Life	Active	162	6/85	2/23	1/0003285	-2/12	<b>0/04*</b>
	inactive	162	6/32	2/54			

\*Level of Significance:  $P \leq 0.05$

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A great bulk of studies has been done on the quality of life. In fact, it is a part of mental well-being. According to a recent definition, quality of life refers to a set of mental, physical, and social well-being perceived by a person or group of people, such as happiness, satisfaction, and honor in our lives. Some other examples include health, marriage, family labor, economic achievements, educational opportunities, autonomy, creativity, sense of ownership, cooperation with the others. Quality of life is defined as people's understanding of the extent to which they can meet their own needs and the chances to reach their goals and wishes. Quality of life is an inherent multidimensional factor incorporating cognitive factors (satisfaction) as well as emotional ones (happiness). In order to achieve the standards of quality of life, people try to make some changes in their mental and physical health; in so doing, they resort to sport and recreational activities. Needless to say that those who are engaged in different types of sports and recreational activities enjoy both the physical and mental advantages of such activities and also improve the quality of their lives. They may even hit the highest position in this realm.

The main results of the present study confirmed that people who participate in public sports enjoy a higher level of quality of life, in comparison with people who do not do such activities. The reason can be attributed to the positive effects of sport on the main components of quality of life (mental, physical, and social components) in participants in public sports. The results of the present study is in line with the findings of the studies carried out by Harvey *et al.* (2011), Yazicioglu *et al.* (2012), Vahdaninia (2005), and Sobhatiha *et al.* (2010). On the other hand, it was revealed that there is a significant difference between participants and non-participants in sporting activities in terms of their physical well-being. Therefore, people who are engaged in sporting activities show more altruistic behaviors, in comparison with those who are far away from sport. This is in line with the results of the researches conducted by Bonhauser (2005) who confirmed the relationship between quality of life and mental or physical health. Social relations are regarded as one of the components of quality of life. The present study showed that there is a significant difference between the social relations of participants and those of non-participants. Thus, people who actively do sport are different from the inactive group in terms of social relations. Also, Qute (2006) confirmed the effect of sport on social relations. The statistical data revealed that there is a significant difference between participants and non-

participants in public sports in terms of job satisfaction ; that is to say, people who do sporting activities enjoy a higher level of job satisfaction , in comparison with those who are not engaged in such activities. This finding of the study expands upon all the researches which confirm the positive and significant relationship between some factors of physical fitness and satisfaction with life. Watless and Haris (2003) came to the result that job satisfaction has a positive and significant relationship with cardio-vascular endurance and participating in physical activities leads to an increase in participants' cardio-vascular fitness, which subsequently decreases depression and anxiety and increases job satisfaction. Finally, the results confirmed that there is a significant difference between participants and non-participants in public sports in terms of altruistic behavior. Therefore, in comparison with inactive people, those who are active in doing sport enjoy stronger social relations, and consequently, show more altruistic behaviors. Putting emphasis on the social effects of sport, Spiratez and Snider believe that sport activates individuals' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects.

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