

Development and Improvement of Social Skills among Children through Football

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Abstract: Social skills are the most important for an individual to succeed. Social skills are useful for establishing and sustaining friendships and connections as well as for having talks with other people. In essence According to Lynch and Simpson (2010), social skills are behaviors that encourage constructive interactions with others. The objective of the study was to examine that football can improve children's social skills—like leadership, empathy, teamwork, confidence, communication, and conflict resolution. The methodology used for the study is survey method with a sample size of 57 children in the age group of 10-13 years old who are a part of a Football academy. The children were administered for six social skills important in everyday life. The findings of the study demonstrates that football serves as a powerful catalyst for enhancing essential social skills. Through the game, players learn *teamwork*, collaborating seamlessly on the field. *Leadership* emerges as captains and decision-makers guide their teams. *Effective communication*, both verbal and non-verbal, becomes second nature. *Empathy* flourishes as players care for one another. Overcoming challenges builds *confidence* and resilience. Lastly, navigating conflicts during intense moments enhances *conflict resolution* abilities. These skills extend beyond the pitch, shaping individuals into better team members, leaders, and empathetic human beings.

Keywords: social skills, sports, football, teamwork, leadership, effective communication, empathy, confidence, and conflict resolution

Introduction to Social Skills

Social skills are the most important for an individual to succeed. Social skills are useful for establishing and sustaining friendships and connections as well as for having talks with other people. In essence According to Lynch and Simpson (2010), social skills are behaviors that encourage constructive interactions with others.

Social skills play a crucial part in preparing youth to be responsible adults who thrive in their positions within the family, community, and career. People with social skills find it easier to adapt in social situations and succeed in their academic, personal, and future professional endeavors.

Definition of social skills: The qualities that enable us to engage and communicate with others—verbally, nonverbally, in writing, or visually—are known as social skills. These abilities are picked up early on, either on their own initiative or with assistance from others. Stated differently, they are not intrinsic, and as such, they can be developed and refined in the same way as any other ability.

Importance of Sports

The most important and advantageous activity for improving students' physical and mental health is sports. Sports have a direct link to physical health since they keep children engaged and physically fit. Participating in sports broadens children's perspectives and fosters positive relationships with classmates, friends, family, and peers in addition to leading to a healthy lifestyle. Students who participate in sports also learn how to overcome hurdles and setbacks. Participating in sports of any kind will eventually improve kids' abilities, strength, and self-worth. Children who participate in organized sports, workouts, and physical activities reap numerous social and psychological advantages. Playing has advantages beyond only physical activity.

One of the effective sports which builds the social skills among children is Football. Playing football as a child has several advantages for one's physical health. Because there is constant movement throughout the game, it improves agility, stamina, and cardiovascular fitness. The development of motor skills is aided by the combination of strength, balance, and coordination needed for activities like running, dribbling, passing, and shooting. Playing football is an excellent full-body exercise that increases bone density, joint flexibility, and muscular mass. Frequent participation lowers the chance of obesity-related health problems and helps with weight management. Furthermore, football improves players' spatial awareness, which helps them anticipate moves and respond quickly both on and off the pitch. For today's youngsters, football is more than just a sport; it's a means of development. Its psychological, social, and physical advantages help people develop into robust, self-assured, well-rounded adults.

Rationale of Study: Understanding the link between football and social skills offers insights into leveraging the sport's inherent dynamics to address social challenges and enhance community cohesion. Thus, exploring the importance of football in social skill enhancement informs strategies for harnessing its potential as a powerful tool for fostering positive social change.

Statement of Problem: Popular sports with social, mental, and physical components include football. Football has been proven to help children who play the sport develop their basic motor abilities, self-confidence, teamwork, and respect. Nevertheless, there is a shortage of empirical data regarding the impact of football on children's social abilities, including leadership, empathy, communication, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, the impacts of football may differ according to the children's age, gender, and cultural background in addition to the length, frequency, and nature of football practice.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the best methods for utilizing football as a tool and to investigate how football affects children's social skills from various origins and contexts.

Objective: To examine that football can improve children's social skills—like leadership, empathy, teamwork, confidence, communication, and conflict resolution.

Methodology: The research methodology used in this research is quantitative in nature. The data was collected through a survey questionnaire. The Survey method is a suitable research method when studying children as it allows researchers to collect information without directly interfering with children’s daily lives. Surveys can be administered to a large number of children simultaneously, making them efficient for gathering data from diverse age groups. Surveys provide structured, quantifiable data. Researchers can analyze responses statistically, identifying patterns and trends. The analysis of data was conducted using Descriptive statistics.

Sample: The study will be conducted with 57 children in the age group of 10-13 years old who are a part of a Football academy.

Variables: For the study 6 variables for social skills were administered. The variables were selected based on existing literature on social skills. These variables are Leadership, Empathy, teamwork, Confidence, Communication and Conflict resolution.

FINDINGS

❖ Leadership skills

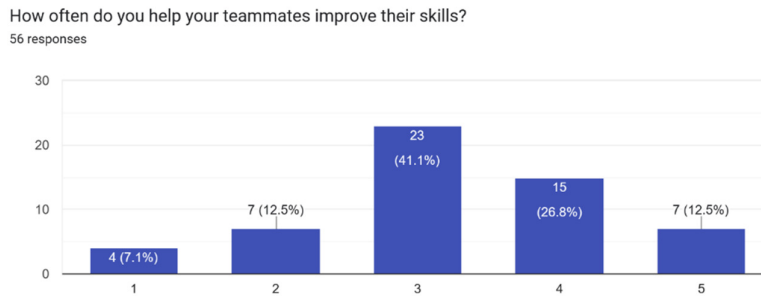


Figure 1: Shows how often individual helps teammates improve their skills

41.1% of children rated 3 and 26.8% of children rated 4 when we talk about helping teammates to improve their skills.

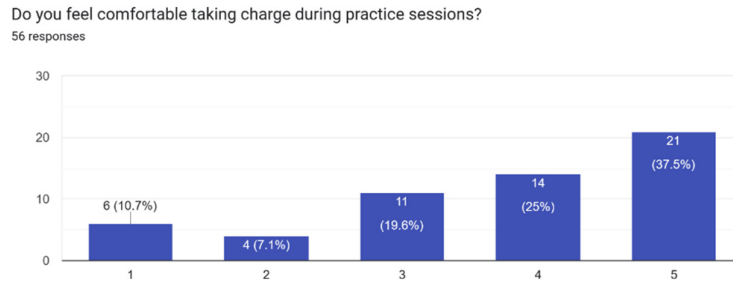


Figure 2: Shows comfort level to take charge during practice sessions

37.5% of children rated 5, 25% of children rated 4 and 19.6% of children rated 3 when we talked about their comfort level while taking charge during practice sessions. But there were 10.7% of children that only rated 1 which says that they are not comfortable taking charge during practice sessions.

❖ Empathy skills

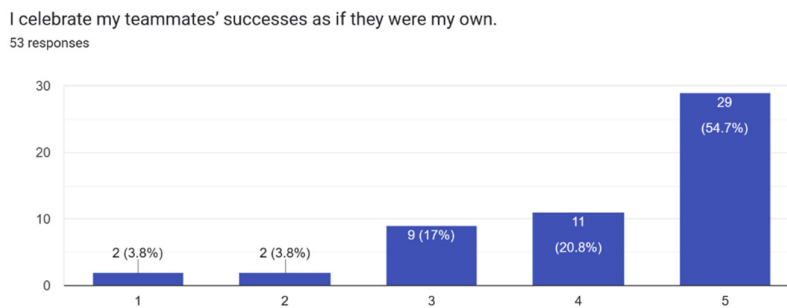


Figure 3: Shows individuals celebrating teammates successes as their own

54.7% of children rated 5 and 20.8% rated 4 when asking children if they celebrate their teammate's success as if they were their own.

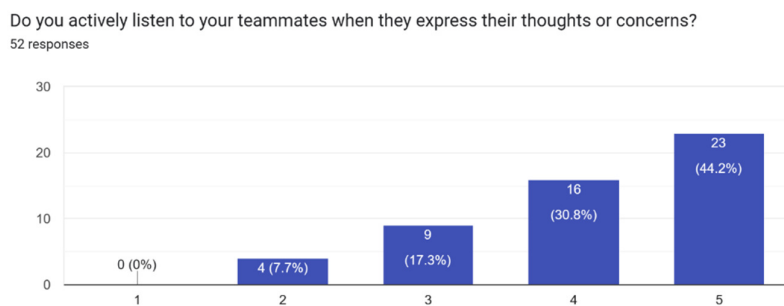


Figure 4: Shows whether individuals actively listen to their teammates

44.2% of children rated 5, 30.8% of children rated 4, and 17.3% of children rated 3 when talking about actively listening to teammates while they express their thoughts and concerns.

❖ **Teamwork and collaboration skills**

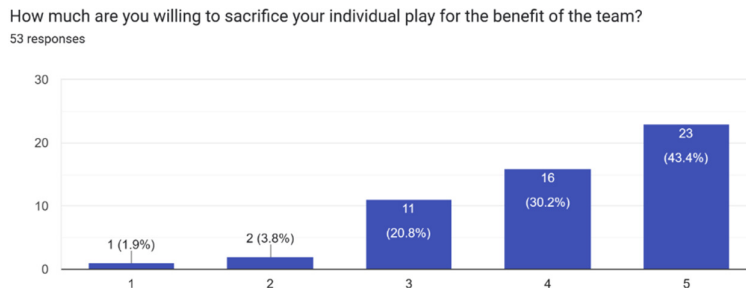


Figure 5: Shows willingness to sacrifice individual play for the benefit of the team

43.4% of children rated 5, 30.2% rated 4, and 20.8% rated 3 for willingness to sacrifice individual play for the benefit of the team.

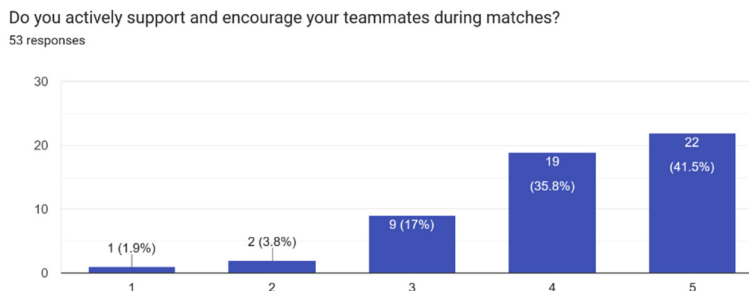


Figure 6: Shows individuals supporting and encouraging teammates

41.5% of children rated 5, 35.8% of children rated 4, and 17% of children rated 3 when asked about support and encouraging teammates during matches.

❖ **Confidence**

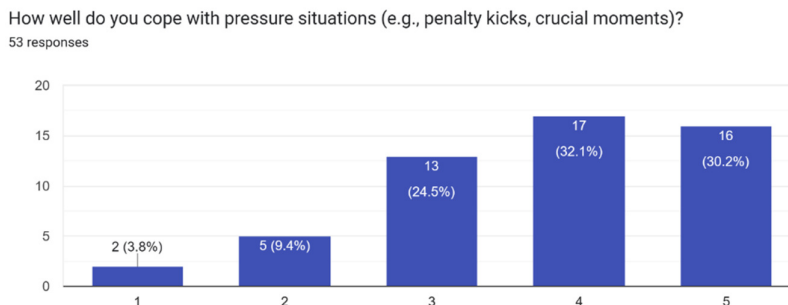


Figure 7: Shows the level of coping skills during a pressure situation

32.1% of children rated 4, 30.2% of children rated 5, and 24.5% of children rated 3 when asked about their coping skills while under pressure.

Participating in football has improved my social skills, making me more confident in social situations off the field.
52 responses

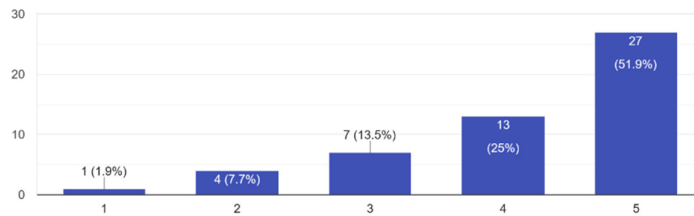


Figure 8: Shows how many of them believe that football helped improve social skills

51.9% of children rated 5 and 25% of children rated 4 which shows that the majority of children believe that football has improved their social skills and made them more confident.

❖ **Effective communication**

On a scale of 1-5, how well do you communicate with your teammates during a match?
53 responses

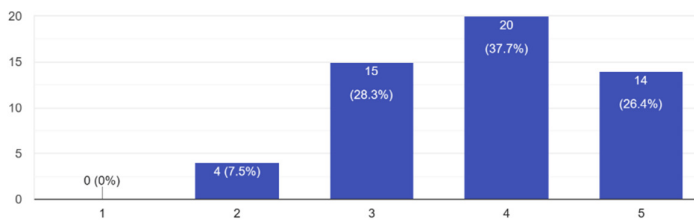


Figure 9: Shows the rating of how well the individual feels they communicate

37.7% of children rated 4, 28.3% of children rated 3, and 26.4% of children rated 5 for their communication skills during a match.

Do you actively listen to your teammates' instructions?
53 responses

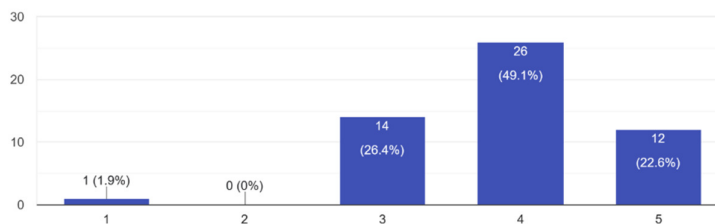


Figure 10: Shows how well individuals listen to their teammates' instructions

49.1% of children rated 4, 26.4% of children rated 3, and 22.6% of children rated 5 for their active listening skills.

❖ **Conflict resolution skill**

How well do you stay calm and focus when discussing issues during argument in the match?
53 responses

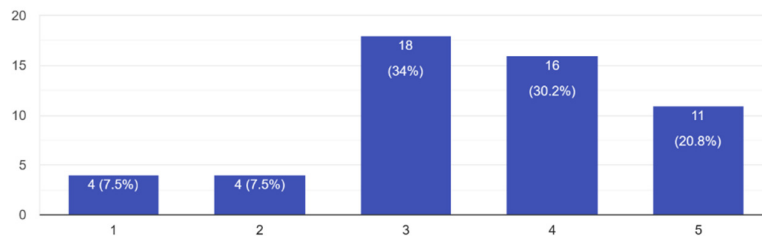


Figure 11: Shows how well to individual stays calm during arguments

34% of children rated 3, 30.2% of children rated 4, and 20.8% of children rated 5 for staying calm and focused when discussing issues during argument in the match.

How well do you try to understand teammates perspective in disagreement?
53 responses

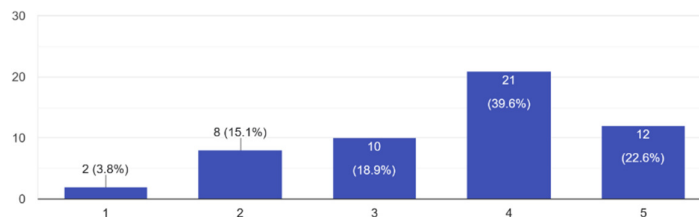


Figure 12: Shows how well individuals try to understand perspectives during disagreements

39.6% of children rated 4, 22.6% of children rated 5, and 18.9% of children rated 3 when asked about their understanding of their teammates during disagreements.

Discussion

Leadership skill: When combining the percentages of children who rated 4 (good) and 5 (excellent), 39.3% of children actively contribute to helping their teammates improve their skills. 62.5% of children feel comfortable taking charge during practice sessions. However, it’s important to note that 10.7% of children rated their comfort level as 1, indicating discomfort in taking charge. Overall, it’s heartening to see that the majority of children demonstrate good leadership skills, contributing positively to team dynamics.

Empathy Skills: When combining the percentages of children who rated 4 (good) and 5 (excellent), 75.5% celebrating their teammates’ success as if it were their own is a beautiful display of camaraderie. It fosters a sense of unity and shared achievement within the team. 75% actively listening to teammates while they express their thoughts and concerns is crucial for effective communication. Indeed, these statistics reveal that the majority of children exhibit the valuable skill of empathy, not only toward their

teammates but also toward their opponents. It's heartening to see young athletes embodying these qualities, as they contribute to a positive and supportive sports environment.

Teamwork and collaboration skills: When combining the percentages of children who rated 4 (good) and 5 (excellent), 73.6% of children are willing to sacrifice individual play for the benefit of the team. 77.3% of children support and encourage teammates during matches. These findings emphasize the importance of teamwork, communication, and mutual support in sports. When young athletes learn to collaborate and encourage each other, they not only improve their performance but also develop valuable life skills.

Building confidence: When combining the percentages of children who rated 4 (good) and 5 (excellent), 62.3% of children demonstrate the ability to cope effectively under pressure. This skill not only benefits them in football but also in various life situations. 76.9% of children credit football with enhancing their social skills. Being part of a team fosters communication, teamwork, and camaraderie. Football not only builds physical skills but also shapes character, resilience, and self-assurance. These young players are not just kicking a ball—they're growing into confident individuals.

Effective communication: When combining the percentages of children who rated 4 (good) and 5 (excellent), 64.1% of children communicate well with their teammates during a match. Clear instructions and coordination are vital for successful gameplay. 71.7% of children actively listen, they absorb information, respond appropriately, and contribute effectively to their team. These communication skills extend beyond football they prepare these young athletes for success in various aspects of life.

Conflict Resolution Skills: When combining the percentages of children who rated 4 (good) and 5 (excellent), 51% of children are able to maintain composure during arguments is crucial. It helps prevent escalation and promotes constructive dialogue. 62.2% of children comprehend their teammates' perspectives during disagreements, it fosters better teamwork. Football isn't just about kicks and goals it's also about learning valuable life skills like conflict resolution.

Conclusion: In summary, **football** serves as a powerful catalyst for enhancing essential social skills. Through the game, players learn *teamwork*, collaborating seamlessly on the field. *Leadership* emerges as captains and decision-makers guide their teams. *Effective communication*, both verbal and non-verbal, becomes second nature. *Empathy* flourishes as players care for one another. Overcoming challenges builds *confidence* and resilience. Lastly, navigating conflicts during intense moments enhances *conflict resolution* abilities. These skills extend beyond the pitch, shaping individuals into better team members, leaders, and empathetic human beings.

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