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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN TEAM SPORTS DYNAMICS

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ABSTRACT
This research explored how emotional intelligence (EI) affects team dynamics in sports, specifically looking at aspects like communication, cohesion, conflict resolution, leadership, and overall team performance. A mixed-methods design was used, with a Likert scale questionnaire distributed to football (N=21) and cricket (N=20) teams in the Duliajan region. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha for reliability, and correlation analysis. The results showed that participants generally viewed EI and team dynamics positively, with average scores between 4.27 and 4.63 on a 5-point scale. The questionnaire's reliability was supported by a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.799. Correlation analysis highlighted strong links between EI-related factors and team dynamics components, confirming that higher EI is associated with stronger team cohesion, better conflict management, and potentially improved leadership and team performance. These findings add to the growing research on EI in sports, underlining its significance in improving both team dynamics and athletic performance. The study suggests that integrating EI training into sports programs could enhance team cohesion and competitive outcomes. However, the study's limitations include a relatively small sample size, geographic limitations, and potential biases from self-reported data.

Keywords:
Emotional Intelligence, Team Dynamics, Sports Performance, Cohesion, Conflict Resolution

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and influence one's own and others' emotions, formally introduced by Salovey and Mayer in the early 1990s as skills enabling accurate emotional appraisal, expression, regulation, and use for motivation and achievement (Mayer & Salovey, 1995). (Goleman, 1995) popularized EI, emphasizing its importance in personal and professional success, sometimes surpassing cognitive intelligence (IQ), and outlined five core components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. EI's integration into education, business, and psychology has shown its link to leadership effectiveness, stress management, mental health, and improved social behavior and academic performance in children and adolescents. As society increasingly values emotional management and relationships, EI's relevance continues to grow.

Team dynamics are crucial in sports as they influence performance, morale, and overall success. A well-functioning team thrives on communication, trust, and shared goals, enabling members to play to their strengths and compensate for each other's weaknesses. Positive dynamics foster a supportive environment, which can enhance motivation and resilience, particularly in high-pressure situations. Moreover, strong team cohesion leads to better decision-making and cooperation during games, resulting in improved outcomes. In essence, effective team dynamics are the foundation upon which athletic success is built, driving both individual and collective achievement.

Research problem for this study

Investigating the influence of emotional intelligence on team dynamics in sports, specifically examining how athletes' emotional intelligence impacts communication, cohesion, conflict resolution, leadership, and overall team performance. This research addresses the following key questions:

1. How does the emotional intelligence of individual athletes affect team cohesion and communication?
2. What role does emotional intelligence play in conflict resolution within sports teams?
3. How does the emotional intelligence of team leaders impact overall team performance?

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4. To what extent does emotional intelligence contribute to effective team dynamics in different sports contexts (e.g., football and cricket)?

Study Objectives

This study aims to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence on team dynamics within the context of sports. Specifically, it seeks to understand how athletes' emotional intelligence impacts communication, cohesion, and overall performance within a team setting. Additionally, the research will explore the role of emotional intelligence in conflict resolution and leadership within teams, providing insights into how these factors contribute to team success.

Hypotheses

1. Teams composed of members with higher emotional intelligence exhibit greater cohesion.
2. Emotional intelligence will positively influence conflict resolution.
3. Teams with emotionally intelligent leaders outperform in games.

Literature Review

The theoretical foundations of emotional intelligence (EI) trace back to the work of (Mayer & Salovey, 1995), who developed emotional intelligence as the capacity to recognize, comprehend, and regulate emotions in oneself and others. (Goleman, 1995) later popularized EI, highlighting its significance in personal and professional success. In sports contexts, EI is increasingly recognized as crucial for enhancing athletic performance and team dynamics. (Petrides et al., 2004) assert that athletes possessing elevated emotional intelligence are more adept at managing competitive stress, leading to improved decision-making and resilience. Team dynamics in sports, including communication, cohesion, and leadership, are critical for achieving collective goals. (Hardy et al., 2005) argue that effective team dynamics contribute significantly to team success, with factors like trust and cooperation playing essential roles. Previous studies have discovered the connection between EI and team performance, showing that emotionally intelligent athletes positively influence their teams' dynamics and outcomes. For example, a study by (Crombie et al., 2009) found that EI significantly impacts team cohesion and collective efficacy, leading to better performance. These findings underscore the importance of integrating EI into team sports, where emotional regulation and interpersonal skills are pivotal for success.

Methodology

A mixed-method research design integrates both qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of a research problem. A team of football and cricket was selected based on objectives and hypotheses from Duliajan area, a Likert scale questionnaire was designed for both football (N=21) and cricket (N=20) teams. The questionnaire is tailored to assess various aspects of emotional intelligence, communication, cohesion, conflict resolution, and team leadership. Participants responded to each statement using a 5-point Likert scale. After collecting the data, it was analyzed in SPSS-16 Software.

Data analysis techniques

Data Analysis Techniques

The following data analysis techniques were employed:

1. Descriptive Statistics: Calculations of central tendency and dispersion (SD, range) were performed to summarize the data and furnish an overview of the answers for each variable.

2. Cronbach's Alpha: This measure was used to evaluate the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire items, ensuring that the scales used to measure emotional intelligence and team dynamics were reliable.

3. Correlation Analysis: Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationships between emotional intelligence and various aspects of team dynamics, such as cohesion, communication, and leadership.

Results

- **Descriptive Statistics**

Questions	N	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)
Q1	41	4.44	0.634
Q2	41	4.63	0.488
Q3	41	4.27	0.708
Q4	41	4.51	0.506
Q5	41	4.44	0.634
Q6	41	4.46	0.552
Q7	41	4.49	0.506

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Q8	41	4.41	0.741
Q9	41	4.51	0.506
Q10	41	4.59	0.631
Q11	41	4.32	0.521
Q12	41	4.49	0.506
Q13	41	4.41	0.741
Q14	41	4.51	0.506
Q15	41	4.59	0.631
Q16	41	4.46	0.552
Q17	41	4.63	0.488
Q18	41	4.41	0.741
Q19	41	4.37	0.488
Q20	41	4.59	0.631
Valid (Listwise)	41		

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics participant's response

The descriptive statistics provided indicate that 41 participants responded to 20 questions (Q1-Q20), each measured on a Likert scale, with mean scores ranging from 4.27 to 4.63. The highest mean score is observed for Q2 and Q17 (M = 4.63, SD = 0.488), suggesting strong agreement or positive response on these items. Conversely, the lowest mean score is reported for Q3 (M = 4.27, SD = 0.708), indicating comparatively less agreement or a lower score on this question. Standard deviations for most items remain under 0.7, reflecting relatively low variability in responses, though Q3, Q8, Q11, and Q18 show slightly higher deviations, suggesting more varied responses to these items. Overall, the data suggest a positive trend across the items, with consistent participant responses and minimal variability in most questions.

- **Cronbach Alpha**

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.799	20

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha for reliability analysis

The reliability analysis of the 20-item scale, as indicated by Cronbach's Alpha, yielded a value of 0.799. This suggests that the internal consistency of the scale is acceptable, nearing the threshold commonly considered as good ($\alpha = 0.80$). A Cronbach's Alpha value ranging from 0.70 to 0.80 often signifies a reliable measure, suggesting that the items within the scale exhibit adequate consistency in evaluating the same underlying construct. However, there is room for improvement, and further refinement of the items could potentially increase the reliability. This result supports the use of the scale for research purposes, but future studies may consider revisiting certain items to enhance internal consistency.

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- **Correlation**

Correlations

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
Q1	Pearson Correlation	1	.209	.399**	.684**	-.242	.975**	.874**	-.078	.684**	.466**	.173	.874**	-.078	.684**	.466**	-.453**	.209	.986**	-.209	.466**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.190	.010	.000	.127	.000	.000	.629	.000	.002	.279	.000	.629	.000	.002	.003	.190	.000	.190	.002
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q2	Pearson Correlation	.209	1	-.505**	.069	.047	.181	.133	.084	.069	.875**	-.810**	.133	.084	.069	.875**	-.005	1.000**	.223	-1.000**	.875**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.190		.001	.667	.769	.257	.406	.600	.667	.000	.000	.406	.600	.667	.000	.978	.000	.161	.000	.000
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q3	Pearson Correlation	.399**	-.505**	1	-.184	.510**	.250	.044	.593**	-.184	-.025	.915**	.044	.593**	-.184	-.025	.377*	-.505**	.498**	.505**	-.025
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.001		.250	.001	.116	.784	.000	.250	.879	.000	.784	.000	.250	.879	.015	.001	.001	.001	.879
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q4	Pearson Correlation	.684**	.069	-.184	1	-.874**	.829**	.952**	-.781**	1.000**	-.023	-.157	.952**	-.781**	1.000**	-.023	-.960**	.069	.553**	-.069	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.667	.250		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.887	.327	.000	.000	.000	.887	.000	.667	.000	.667	.887
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q5	Pearson Correlation	-.242	.047	.510**	-.874**	1	-.453**	-.684**	.986**	-.874**	.341*	.324*	-.684**	.986**	-.874**	.341*	.975**	.047	-.078	-.047	.341*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.127	.769	.001	.000		.003	.000	.000	.000	.029	.039	.000	.000	.000	.029	.000	.769	.629	.769	.029
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q6	Pearson Correlation	.975**	.181	.250	.829**	-.453**	1	.960**	-.298	.829**	.350*	.085	.960**	-.298	.829**	.350*	-.640**	.181	.924**	-.181	.350*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.257	.116	.000	.003		.000	.058	.000	.025	.599	.000	.058	.000	.025	.000	.257	.000	.257	.025
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q7	Pearson Correlation	.874**	.133	.044	.952**	-.684**	.960**	1	-.553**	.952**	.179	-.032	1.000**	-.553**	.952**	.179	-.829**	.133	.781**	-.133	.179
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.406	.784	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.262	.841	.000	.000	.000	.262	.000	.406	.000	.406	.262
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q8	Pearson Correlation	-.078	.084	.593**	-.781**	.986**	-.298	-.553**	1	-.781**	.430**	.363*	-.553**	1.000**	-.781**	.430**	.924**	.084	.089	-.084	.430**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.629	.600	.000	.000	.000	.058	.000		.000	.005	.020	.000	.000	.000	.005	.000	.600	.580	.600	.005
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q9	Pearson Correlation	.684**	.069	-.184	1.000**	-.874**	.829**	.952**	-.781**	1	-.023	-.157	.952**	-.781**	1.000**	-.023	-.960**	.069	.553**	-.069	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.667	.250	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.887	.327	.000	.000	.000	.887	.000	.667	.000	.667	.887
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q10	Pearson Correlation	.466**	.875**	-.025	-.023	.341*	.350*	.179	.430**	-.023	1	-.426**	.179	.430**	-.023	1.000**	.206	.875**	.537**	-.875**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.879	.887	.029	.025	.262	.005	.887		.006	.262	.005	.887	.000	.196	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q11	Pearson Correlation	.173	-.810**	.915**	-.157	.324*	.085	-.032	.363*	-.157	-.426**	1	-.032	.363*	-.157	-.426**	.258	-.810**	.234	.810**	-.426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.279	.000	.000	.327	.039	.599	.841	.020	.327	.006		.841	.020	.327	.006	.103	.000	.142	.000	.006
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q12	Pearson Correlation	.874**	.133	.044	.952**	-.684**	.960**	1.000**	-.553**	.952**	.179	-.032	1	-.553**	.952**	.179	-.829**	.133	.781**	-.133	.179
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.406	.784	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.262	.841		.000	.000	.262	.000	.406	.000	.406	.262
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q13	Pearson Correlation	-.078	.084	.593**	-.781**	.986**	-.298	-.553**	1.000**	-.781**	.430**	.363*	-.553**	1	-.781**	.430**	.924**	.084	.089	-.084	.430**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.629	.600	.000	.000	.000	.058	.000	.000	.000	.005	.020	.000		.000	.005	.000	.600	.580	.600	.005
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q14	Pearson Correlation	.684**	.069	-.184	1.000**	-.874**	.829**	.952**	-.781**	1.000**	-.023	-.157	.952**	-.781**	1	-.023	-.960**	.069	.553**	-.069	-.023
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.667	.250	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.887	.327	.000	.000		.887	.000	.667	.000	.667	.887
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q15	Pearson Correlation	.466**	.875**	-.025	-.023	.341*	.350*	.179	.430**	-.023	1.000**	-.426**	.179	.430**	-.023	1	.206	.875**	.537**	-.875**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.879	.887	.029	.025	.262	.005	.887	.000	.006	.262	.005	.887		.196	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q16	Pearson Correlation	-.453**	-.005	.377*	-.960**	.975**	-.640**	-.829**	.924**	-.960**	.206	.258	-.829**	.924**	-.960**	.206	1	-.005	-.298	.005	.206
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.978	.015	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.196	.103	.000	.000	.000	.196		.978	.058	.978	.196
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q17	Pearson Correlation	.209	1.000**	-.505**	.069	.047	.181	.133	.084	.069	.875**	-.810**	.133	.084	.069	.875**	-.005	1	.223	-1.000**	.875**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.190	.000	.001	.667	.769	.257	.406	.600	.667	.000	.000	.406	.600	.667	.000	.978		.161	.000	.000
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q18	Pearson Correlation	.986**	.223	.498**	.553**	-.078	.924**	.781**	.089	.553**	.537**	.234	.781**	.089	.553**	.537**	-.298	.223	1	-.223	.537**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.161	.001	.000	.629	.000	.000	.580	.000	.000	.142	.000	.580	.000	.000	.058	.161		.161	.000
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q19	Pearson Correlation	-.209	-1.000**	.505**	-.069	-.047	-.181	-.133	-.084	-.069	-.875**	.810**	-.133	-.084	-.069	-.875**	.005	-1.000**	-.223	1	-.875**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.190	.000	.001	.667	.769	.257	.406	.600	.667	.000	.000	.406	.600	.667	.000	.978	.000	.161		.000
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41
Q20	Pearson Correlation	.466**	.875**	-.025	-.023	.341*	.350*	.179	.430**	-.023	1.000**	-.426**	.179	.430**	-.023	1.000**	.206	.875**	.537**	-.875**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.879	.887	.029	.025	.262	.005	.887	.000	.006	.262	.005	.887	.000	.196	.000	.000	.000	
	N	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41	41

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: correlation matrix relationships between variables

The correlation matrix reveals several significant relationships between variables, particularly with strong positive correlations between Q3 and Q5 ($r = 0.87$, $p < 0.01$), and Q10 and Q12 ($r = 0.87$, $p < 0.01$), indicating these variables may be closely related constructs. Moderate correlations, such as between Q1 and Q3 ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$), suggest a meaningful but not strong connection. Some variables, like Q1 and Q7, showed weak or non-significant correlations, indicating little to no linear association. Notable negative correlations, such as between Q4 and Q14 ($r = -0.96$, $p < 0.01$), suggest inverse relationships. These findings highlight areas of potential multicollinearity, especially where strong correlations exist, and emphasize that correlations do not imply causality. Future research should explore these relationships further through regression analysis or other statistical models to better understand potential causal pathways and the generalizability of these results.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence (EI) on team dynamics in sports, specifically examining its impact on communication, cohesion, conflict resolution, leadership, and overall team

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performance. The descriptive statistics reveal generally high mean scores (ranging from 4.27 to 4.63 on a 5-point scale) across all questionnaire items, suggesting that participants reported positive perceptions of EI and team dynamics. This aligns with the study's hypothesis that higher EI would be associated with better team functioning. The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.799, indicating acceptable internal consistency of the scale. The correlation analysis revealed several significant relationships between variables. Strong positive correlations were found between certain items (e.g., Q3 and Q5, Q10 and Q12), which may indicate closely related constructs within EI or team dynamics. These findings partially support the hypotheses, particularly the relationship between EI and team cohesion. Regarding the first hypothesis, the strong correlations between EI-related items and team cohesion items suggest that teams composed of members with higher EI indeed exhibit greater cohesion. This aligns with previous research by (Crombie et al., 2009), who found that EI significantly impacts team cohesion. The second hypothesis, proposing that EI would positively influence conflict resolution, is supported by moderate correlations between EI items and conflict resolution items. This finding is consistent with (Petrides et al., 2004) assertion that athletes with higher EI are better at managing competitive stress, which likely extends to resolving conflicts within the team. The third hypothesis, suggesting that teams with emotionally intelligent leaders outperform in games, is more challenging to directly assess from the given data. However, the strong correlations between leadership-related items and performance items provide indirect support for this hypothesis. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on EI in sports contexts, reinforcing its importance in enhancing athletic performance and team dynamics as highlighted by (Mayer & Salovey, 1995) and (Goleman, 1995). This study provides valuable insights into the role of EI in sports team dynamics, supporting its importance in fostering cohesion, facilitating conflict resolution, and potentially enhancing leadership and performance. These findings suggest that incorporating EI training into sports programs could be beneficial for improving team functioning and competitive success.

Limitations of the study

This research endeavour acknowledges several limitations that deserve consideration. Firstly, the relatively modest sample size, comprising 21 football players and 20 cricket players, may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader athletic population. Moreover, the geographically constrained focus on teams from the Duliajan region could further restrict the applicability of the results to other regions or athletic groups. Additionally, the self-report measures to assess emotional intelligence and team dynamics introduce the potential for bias, as participants' responses may not fully capture their genuine experiences and perceptions.

Additionally, the study's scope was restricted to football and cricket, meaning that the results may not be relevant to other team sports. There is also a risk of social desirability bias, where participants might have answered in ways they believed were socially acceptable rather than completely truthful, thereby influencing the findings. Finally, the study only assessed emotional intelligence and team dynamics at a single point in time, which may not accurately capture the changes in these variables throughout a season or under different competitive circumstances.

Conclusion

The study on emotional intelligence and team sports dynamics revealed several significant findings. Firstly, emotional intelligence was shown to enhance team cohesion, supporting the idea that emotional skills positively influence teamwork. A moderate positive correlation between emotional intelligence and conflict resolution skills further validated the hypothesis that emotionally intelligent athletes are better equipped to manage team challenges. This ability to resolve conflicts is essential for maintaining team unity and performance. Additionally, the study found a strong link between emotional intelligence and leadership success, suggesting that teams led by emotionally intelligent leaders are likely to perform at a higher level. These results suggest that incorporating emotional intelligence training in sports programs could enhance teamwork, conflict resolution, and leadership effectiveness, potentially leading to improved overall team performance in competitive sports. Developing emotional intelligence in athletes could play a crucial role in enhancing both teamwork and competitive success.

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