

Original Research

Cultivating Resilience in Youth: Assessing the Psychological Benefits of Sport-Based Development Programs

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This study investigates the effectiveness of a 20-week Sport-Based Positive Youth Development (SBPYD) program aimed at enhancing resilience among inner-city adolescents. The research focuses on how participation in structured sports activities can improve key resilience factors, including self-esteem, self-efficacy, and sense of belonging.

Methods: The intervention involved a combination of physical activities, small group remedial lessons in language, reading, and mathematics, and individual coaching sessions to set personal developmental goals. To assess the outcomes, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was used to measure self-esteem, while the Sense of Belonging Scale from the OECD's PISA study evaluated adolescents' sense of belonging. Additionally, self-efficacy was assessed using the self-efficacy statements from the Sense of Mastery Scale. Participants completed surveys at the beginning and end of the intervention to capture changes in these constructs.

Results: The findings indicated significant improvements in adolescents' self-esteem. Equally, participants reported a stronger sense of belonging in the intervention context compared to the school context. These results suggest that the SBPYD program effectively fostered resilience among adolescents.

Discussion: The findings suggest that SBPYD programs effectively enhance resilience in adolescents by fostering self-esteem and a sense of belonging through structured

sports activities. The study highlights the importance of such interventions in promoting positive youth development and suggests that future research should include control groups and larger sample sizes to further validate these results and explore the long-term impacts of SBPYD programs.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical period marked by psychological, biological, and social changes. As adolescents navigate this phase, they enhance social skills, personal competence, and independence through interactions with peers (Godor, van der Horst, & Van der Hallen 2023; Graber & Petersen, 1991). Developing cognitive and behavioral strategies to address challenges becomes vital, with the establishment and maintenance of positive peer relationships (Petersen, Kennedy, & Sullivan, 1991; Rich, 2003).

Resilience is the ability of a dynamic system to withstand and recover from significant challenges that threaten its stability and development (Masten, 2018). Adolescents' self-esteem, self-efficacy and sense of belonging are generally viewed as foundational building blocks for one's resiliency (Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013). These elements can be viewed as either protective factors or risk factors. Protective factors act as buffers against adverse experiences, while risk factors increase the susceptibility to negative outcomes such as social or health problems (Godor, van der Horst, & Van der Hallen, 2023).

Resilience in adolescents is a crucial life skill in navigating the complexities of childhood and adolescence (Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2014). From early experiences

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within the family unit (Godor, van der Horst, & Van der Hallen, 2023) to interactions with peers, children encounter a myriad of challenges that test their emotional and psychological well-being (Graber & Petersen, 1991; Petersen, Kennedy, & Sullivan, 1991; Rich, 2003). Resilience serves as a protective factor, enabling children to effectively cope with adversity, bounce back from setbacks, and continue to thrive despite obstacles (Masten, 2018). Moreover, resilience fosters healthy development by promoting positive adaptive coping behaviors (Van der Hallen, Jongerling, & Godor, 2020; Godor & Van der Hallen, 2022; Godor, van der Horst, & Van der Hallen, 2023).

The promotion of resilience through targeted initiatives can be essential in fostering adolescents' ability to cope with adversity, bounce back from setbacks, and thrive in the face of challenges. For example, school-based programs play a role in the development of promoting a growth mindset and building positive peer relationships. Equally, community-based initiatives utilizing sports as a context to foster resilience can play a crucial role in promoting holistic development and well-being among individuals, particularly youth (Holt, 2016; Hodge et al., 2017). These initiatives harness the power of sports to instill essential life skills, cultivate positive relationships, and build a sense of belonging and empowerment within communities (Newman, Anderson-Butcher, & Amorose, 2020; Maleté et al., 2022). Moreover, community-based sports initiatives provide a space for individuals to build strong social connections, receive support from peers and mentors, and develop emotional regulation skills essential for navigating life's ups and downs (Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013, 2014).

Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development (PYD) can be characterized as an answer to the previously dominant paradigm of approaching youth problems from a deficit perspective (Benson, 2006). For example, historically, issues were identified (i.e. truancy or obesity) subsequently, funding was provided for research to be conducted to prevent these issues by the development of appropriate interventions. However, Benson argues that these interventions are only generally moderate in their effects and are not cost-effective (2006). PYD can be seen as being contained within the conceptual framework of positive psychology in the sense that this strength-based approach focuses on increasing personal empowerment (Bundick 2011). Various PYD models, including Lerner's 5Cs (Lerner et al., 2005), Catalano's 15 PYD constructs (Catalano et al., 2002), Benson's 40 developmental assets and social-emotional learning (SEL); (Benson, 2003) generally focus on three

major notions: strengths of young people, developmental plasticity, internal developmental assets and external developmental assets (Shek et al., 2019).

Sport-based positive youth development

The concerns for potential risk factors in adolescents as well as, eventual adolescent problem behaviors, have led to an expansion of PYD programs towards sports-based initiatives (Sport-based positive youth development (SBPYD) (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005). SBPYD initiatives are based upon the notion that adolescents already spend a significant amount of time in "structured leisure activities" (Larson, 2000, p. 171) and that these activities are well-suited for PYD in that they contain elements of self-initiative and hold a high potential for self-development.

Additionally, participation in sports provides a unique opportunity for individuals to develop resilience through the experience of adversity. Sport participation offers numerous chances to encounter various stressors, such as performance failures, injuries, and team demands, which challenge their ability to cope and adapt (Mellalieu et al., 2009; Galli & Gonzalez, 2015). These adversities can foster personal growth and positive adaptation, as they opportune a possibility to learn to rebound from setbacks and cultivate essential coping strategies (Galli & Vealey, 2008; Tamminen, Holt, & Neely, 2013). The dynamic nature of the sporting environment, characterized by both expected and unexpected challenges, serves as a fertile ground for building resilience, ultimately enhancing athletes' overall psychological well-being and performance (Galli & Gonzalez, 2015).

The benefits of these structured activities in terms of affective context, supporting youth development, and providing opportunities for positive growth have been well demonstrated (Larson, 2000; Kahne et al., 2001; Bundick, 2011; Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012). Specifically, SBPYD has been shown to increase leadership skills, self-concept, as well as, academic performance (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005; Turnnidge, Côté, & Hancock, 2014; Turnnidge & Côté, 2018).

Equally, participation in SBPYD has been shown to increase life satisfaction in youths (Gilman, 2001). It must be kept in mind that youth sport does not unquestionably lead to positive personal development. Hodge et al. (2017) states that the health and welfare of youth can increase only when they are taught these life skills in an "intentional and systematic" fashion (p. 36). Additionally, it is not just a well-developed program that could ensure positive development, but Newman, Anderson-Butcher, & Amorose (2020) have clearly demonstrated that "influence of key

adult figures on youth life skill and transfer of learning outcomes within the context community sport-based PYD” form essential elements that greatly predict “youth life skill and transfer of learning outcomes” (p. 276). These notions have also been asserted by McDonough et al. (2013) who specifically links program staff as “important for optimizing outcomes” (p. 433).

Resiliency Theory

Many Positive Youth Development (PYD) programs aim to create protective factors in adolescents, aligning with the development of resilience, which Masten (2018) defines as the capacity to successfully face challenges without threatening positive development. Prince-Embury & Saklofske (2013, 2014) propose a model of resilience comprising three central elements: Sense of Mastery (optimism, self-efficacy, adaptation), Sense of Relatedness (comfort, trust, tolerance, support), and Emotional Reactivity (sensitivity, recovery, impairment). Both Sense of Mastery and Sense of Relatedness are considered characteristics that can reduce the chances of life experiences posing a threat to positive development. These elements are generally called “protective factors.” Conversely, emotional reactivity is generally considered a threat to one’s positive development or a “risk factor.”

In the context of sports, resilience theory encompasses both individual traits and contextual factors that facilitate positive adaptation in the face of adversity (Galli & Gonzalez, 2015). Resiliency theory, with its key elements of sense of belonging, self-efficacy, and self-esteem, is fundamentally integrated into Sport-Based Positive Youth Development (SBPYD) programming. SBPYD initiatives are designed to foster these resilience components, aiming to address protective factors (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005). Sense of belonging is cultivated through sports activities that promote positive peer relationships and a supportive team environment (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005). Self-efficacy is developed as participants engage in challenging activities and set personal goals, enhancing their belief in their ability to succeed (Bandura, 1978, 1997). Self-esteem is bolstered through positive reinforcement, skill mastery, and goal achievement (Martín-Albo et al., 2007; Ouyang et al., 2020). By incorporating these elements, SBPYD programs aim to create protective factors that enhance adolescents' resilience (Rak & Patterson, 1996; Walsh et al., 2020). This aligns with Prince-Embury & Saklofske's (2013) model of resilience, emphasizing Sense of Mastery, Sense of Relatedness, and Emotional Reactivity. Thus, resiliency theory underpins SBPYD program development, guiding the creation of interventions that build crucial psychological resources.

Protective and Risk Factors

Reviewing current literature, Prince-Embury & Saklofske (2013) have identified three commonly researched categories of protective factors that have: personal characteristics, the direct family environment, and the environment outside one’s family. Equally, the existence of these characteristics decreases the chances that life experiences will negatively affect one’s development. In other words, protective factors are characteristics that can act as a buffer towards negative life experiences (Rak & Patterson, 1996; Walsh et al., 2020). Especially for SBPYD, Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin (2005) report that sports activities can aid in the development of protective factors thus leading to higher levels of positive peer relationships and lower levels of school dropout. Conversely, risk factors are the existence of characteristics that can increase the chances that life experiences will negatively affect one’s development. The presence of these risk factors can lead to negative outcomes in terms of social or health problems such as difficulty establishing a career or finding stable employment (Forrest-Bank et al., 2015). Zolkoski & Bullock (2012) report higher levels of divorce rate and teenage pregnancy as potential negative effects of the presence of risk factors.

Self-efficacy

Bandura (1978, 1997) describes self-efficacy or “efficacy expectations” as “the conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes” (p. 193) and is at the heart of all human functioning (Bandura, 1978, 1997). Often described as “task-specific self-confidence” (Artino Jr., 2012. p. 76), self-efficacy is the confidence that complements task specific knowledge and skills. This combination and interaction of these elements is defined by Bandura as reciprocal causation (1978, 1997). The performance of one element is partially reliant on the performance/existence of the other.

Self-efficacy as a protective factor

Having confidence in one’s ability to perform a task can lead to a positive development of skills. For example, higher levels of self-efficacy leads to better self-regulation of one’s learning process (Lee et al., 2020). Additionally, Usher & Pajares (2008) report that self-efficacy is related to students’ decision to stay in school. One’s positive perception of their own self-efficacy in life skills has been related to higher levels of reported resiliency (Sagone et al., 2020). Sagone (2020) further asserts that higher levels of self-efficacy act as a buffer and supports one’s ability to face hardships and setbacks in life. Specifically in a sports

setting, higher levels of self-efficacy generally lead to higher levels of sport participation as well as, the persistence in that sport (Birkimer et al., 1996; Annesi & Mareno, 2015; Ouyang et al., 2020).

Self-Esteem

Rosenberg (1979), in his seminal work “*Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*” describes self-esteem as an attitude towards an object: the self. He notes that this concept is often viewed as a mysterious and diffuse object, however, it is built upon “facts, opinions, and values with regard to the self” (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 5). While this attitude is similar to attitudes towards other objects, it differs in the sense that it is reflective in that the object holding this attitude is also the subject of that attitude. Moreover according to Rosenberg (1979), this attitude remains completely unique in three aspects: *immediate experience*; only the subject can truly know with certainty if they are experiencing these facts, opinions, and values about themselves, *unexpressed thoughts*; these facts, opinions, and values about ourselves remain completely inaccessible to anyone else, and *unique perspective*; these facts, opinions, and values about ourselves are perceptually different than facts, opinions, and values about outside objects. To illustrate this latter point, Rosenberg asserts that “most people hearing their voices played back on a recorder for the first time feel that they sound strange” (1979, p.10). Additionally, Martín-Albo et al. (2007) note that self-esteem is a mechanism to assess one’s self-concept or an appraisal of one’s self-image utilizing received feedback from both individuals as well as, stemming from social interactions.

Self-Esteem as a Protective Factor

Self-esteem serves as a crucial protective factor in sport-based positive youth development (PYD) programs, fostering resilience and personal growth through adversity. High levels of self-esteem have been linked to several positive outcomes such as healthy social relationships, positive perceptions by peers, persistence in the face of failure, and improved coping and self-regulation skills (Trzesniewski, Donnellan, & Robins, 2003). These elements form the foundation for resilience (Prince-Embury 2008; Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013, 2014). Ouyang et al. (2020) assert that self-esteem can offset the negative effects of life events by promoting adolescents’ positive adaptation to challenges, thus acting as a psychological buffer. Furthermore, Mann (2004) highlights the importance of self-esteem as a protective factor, particularly in its contribution to health and quality of life when individuals face stress or physical disease.

In addition to its psychological benefits, higher levels of self-esteem have been linked to increased sports participation (Birkimer et al., 1996; Ouyang et al., 2020). Bowker (2006) reports a positive correlation between self-esteem and sports participation among young adolescents. Sport-based PYD programs leverage this connection by creating environments that nurture self-esteem through skill development, goal achievement, and positive peer interactions. As youth face and overcome obstacles in their sporting activities, they develop a sense of mastery and competence, further enhancing their self-esteem. This increased self-esteem contributes not only to their overall health and quality of life but also to their ability to navigate adversity both on and off the field.

Sense of belonging

The sense of belonging can be characterized by a deep emotional connection, strong identification, and allegiance to a particular social setting, cultivating sentiments of inclusion and approval (Anant, 1967). Moreover, a sense of belonging is an inherent human emotion demonstrating connectedness to a social, spatial, cultural, group or community (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Sargent et al., 2002; Esters, Godor, & Van Der Hallen, 2023). Individuals can gain a sense of security through experiencing a sense of belongingness which has been linked to positive mental health (Anant, 1967). The notion of belongingness has been posited as a fundamental human necessity driving behaviors aimed at establishing and perpetuating meaningful, enduring, and mutually beneficial relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Valued involvement denotes the perception of oneself as valued, accepted, and indispensable within one's surroundings, while fit pertains to the sense of alignment between one's traits and the characteristics of the environment (Oyanedel & Paez, 2021).

Sense of belonging as a protective factor

Sense of belonging has been associated with numerous benefits across various aspects of life. Research has shown that individuals who report a sense of belonging to groups and networks tend to exhibit positive psychological functioning, including higher self-esteem, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction (Allen & Bowles, 2012). Additionally, Allen & Bowles (2012) assert belongingness has been found to protect against psychopathology and stress. Equally, Baumeister & Leary (1995) demonstrate that strong sense of belonging offers numerous benefits across emotional, psychological, and physical well-being through enhancing emotional stability, happiness, and overall well-being, while also promoting psychological health and

resilience in coping with stress. Furthermore, a sense of belonging fosters resilience (Walton & Cohen, 2011), enabling individuals to navigate challenges more effectively by providing a support system during difficult times. Ultimately, according to Walton & Cohen (2011) a strong sense of belonging contributes to higher self-esteem, a sense of identity, and an overall feeling of being valued and accepted by others, enriching one's well-being and quality of life.

Research Question

This article investigates the effectiveness of a Sport-Based Positive Youth Development (SBPYD) program in enhancing resilience among inner-city adolescents. The objectives are threefold: first, to assess the program's impact on key resilience factors, specifically self-esteem, self-efficacy, and sense of belonging; second, to examine the extent to which structured sports activities, combined with academic support and individual coaching, can foster these psychological constructs; and third, to provide empirical evidence supporting the use of SBPYD programs as a tool for positive youth development.

This research is important because it addresses a gap in the literature by examining a holistic SBPYD approach that integrates physical activity with academic and personal development components, offering a comprehensive strategy for fostering resilience. Furthermore, it contributes to the understanding of how SBPYD programs can be tailored to meet the specific needs of inner-city adolescents, a population often facing significant challenges. To meet these objectives, the study employs a pre- and post-intervention design, utilizing validated scales such as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Sense of Belonging Scale, and self-efficacy statements from the Sense of Mastery Scale to measure changes in the constructs of interest.

Main research question: To what extent does participation in a structured, 20-week Sport-Based Positive Youth Development (SBPYD) program influence the resilience capacity of inner-city adolescents facing academic or socio-emotional challenges, as evidenced by measurable changes in self-esteem, self-efficacy, and sense of belonging?

To address this overarching question, the following sub-research questions were investigated:

- **Sub-Research Question 1:** Does participation in a 20-week SBPYD program lead to changes in adolescents' self-esteem?
- **Sub-Research Question 2:** Does participation in a

20-week SBPYD program influence adolescents' self-efficacy?

- **Sub-Research Question 3:** Is there a difference in adolescents' sense of belonging between the SBPYD intervention context and their school environment?

METHODS

Intervention Background and Execution

The context of the current research is a 20-week Sport-Based Positive Youth Development (SBPYD) intervention designed to enhance adolescents' resilience through targeted support and skill development. This intervention incorporates several key elements, including physical activities aimed at fostering resiliency, small group remedial lessons for language, reading, and mathematics, and individual coaching meetings to establish personal developmental goals. Built on four fundamental principles—making students feel valued, providing context-rich learning, creating a motivation-driven environment, and offering challenging yet attainable tasks—this program aims to help students cultivate essential soft skills such as self-control, cognitive self-confidence, and teamwork abilities.

The remedial lessons play a crucial role in fostering self-efficacy, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging—key components of resilience. By providing targeted academic support, these lessons create opportunities for mastery experiences that enhance self-efficacy and self-esteem while promoting a sense of community among peers. As students overcome challenges in small group settings, they develop a stronger belief in their abilities and a more positive self-image. This growth not only occurs academically but also extends to other life areas, as increased self-efficacy, self-esteem, and sense of belonging contribute significantly to overall resilience. Ultimately, this holistic approach equips adolescents with the psychological tools necessary to navigate future challenges with confidence and perseverance. This after-school intervention is executed through the cooperation of a large-scale European football team. This intervention focuses on inner-city youth and participants are nominated by their teachers.

Some students are nominated to participate in the 20-week Sport-Based Positive Youth Development (SBPYD) intervention to enhance their academic performance, providing them with necessary support for success in school. In contrast, others are selected for the personal development opportunities offered by the sporting activities, which focus on building essential life skills and emotional resilience. This dual approach addresses the

unique challenges faced by inner-city youth, including academic underperformance and social skill deficits stemming from their environments. By integrating these objectives, the program fosters a well-rounded development experience that empowers students to thrive both academically and personally.

Each student receives one hour of remedial lessons and one hour of physical activity per week. The staff (coaches) in this initiative is a combination of professionally trained teachers with a support system of internships students who are enrolled in a related study program in tertiary education. All interns receive specialized training prior to the intervention's start. The impetus for these trainings is the notion that the quality and competencies of program staff play an essential role in the eventual learning goals (McDonough et al., 2013; Newman et al., 2020).

Stemming from staff professionalization, the concept of transfer according to Bean et al. (2018) is explicitly designed and followed in this intervention: 1) structuring the sport context; each session begins with a goal-setting meeting, 2) facilitating a positive climate; goal setting meetings are always framed in a positive light while setbacks are being discussed, 3) discussing life skills; discussions surrounding setbacks or obstacles are discussed in terms of how to succeed during these setbacks, 4) practicing life skills; coaches work with adolescents in developing new goals, 5) discussing transfer; discuss apply these outside the context of the intervention (home life or school), and 6) practicing transfer; follow up coaching sessions discuss outcomes and new strategies.

Method

Participants

During the fall of 2022, 51 primary school-aged adolescents participated in a 20-week SBPYD intervention and completed both the pre and post-test data gathering waves. Due to privacy concerns, no demographic information could be collected on these participants. All participants were in the last two final years of primary school where the ages range from 10.5 to 12. Equally the reason for nomination to the program is not registered. Process that takes place in the primary schools and outside the purview of the program. Regular meetings are scheduled with the primary school partners to align the recruitment focus into this program. Adolescents filled in an online survey on the first day of the project. In the last week of the intervention, adolescents filled in the second phase of this research project. Tablets were provided to facilitate this process. Written parental consent was obtained prior to the commencement of this study.

Instruments

To assess adolescents' self-esteem, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1979) was employed. Developed in 1965, it is a self-report instrument designed to assess an individual's global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale comprises 10 statements related to overall self-esteem. Examples include "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" and "At times, I think I am no good at all," with the latter being one of the negatively worded items that require reverse scoring. Scoring involves reversing the responses for the negatively worded items and summing the scores for all ten items, resulting in a total score that ranges from 0 to 30. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem, with scores between 15 and 25 considered normal and scores below 15 suggesting low self-esteem. Examining the relationship between self-esteem and participation in sports-based youth development initiatives is justified, as it may reveal important factors that influence long-term personal growth, goal-setting abilities, and the development of a positive self-image during formative years.

The Sense of Belonging Scale employed in this study was the scale developed by PISA (OECD 2012). PISA is a global study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This Sense of Belonging Scale comprises nine items aimed at measuring social connectedness, such as the ease of making friends or feeling awkward and out of place. Four of these items were negatively worded and thus recorded. Examples include "things are ideal at school" and "satisfied at school."

To assess adolescents' self-efficacy, the self-efficacy statements of the Sense of Mastery Scale contained in the Resiliency Scales for Children & Adolescents (RSCA) was employed (Prince-Embury, 2008; Prince-Embury & Saklofske 2013). Developed by Prince-Embury, the RSCA is designed to measure various dimensions of resilience and psychological well-being in young individuals, with self-esteem being a critical element within this framework. The self-efficacy scale measures a child's belief in their ability to influence events and outcomes in their life. It reflects the child's confidence in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments. Items on the self-efficacy scale are designed to capture the child's sense of control and competence in various situations. For example, statements may ask children to rate their agreement with statements such as "I can solve most problems if I try hard enough" or "I am confident in my ability to handle difficult situations."

The scales employed in this study—the Rosenberg

Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), the Sense of Belonging Scale from the OECD's PISA study, and self-efficacy statements from the Sense of Mastery Scale—demonstrate varying levels of reliability as reported in the literature. Martín-Albo et al. (2007) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .87 for the Spanish version of the RSES, while Ouyang et al. (2020) found an alpha of .86 for the RSES in a sample of Chinese adolescents. The OECD (2013) PISA study, while not providing Cronbach's alphas, assesses measurement invariance across countries, indicating rigorous attention to reliability within its international scope. For self-efficacy measures, Prince-Embury & Saklofske (2014) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .70. These reliability metrics suggest that the scales used in this study possess adequate internal consistency, supporting their use in assessing self-esteem, sense of belonging, and self-efficacy among adolescent participants.

RESULTS

From 51 participating students, 42 completed the pre and posttest with this study. The completed 42 surveys were screened for missing values, however the online survey system did not allow students to skip questions therefore the data set was complete. All analysis was completed in SPS version 25.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of a SBPYD intervention on adolescents' self-esteem over two time points: pre-intervention and post-intervention. Mean self-esteem scores increased over time. At pre-intervention (Time 1), the mean self-esteem score was 35.60 (SD = 7.61), at post-intervention (Time 2), the mean was 37.35 (SD = 8.57). The repeated measures ANOVA revealed a significant effect of time on self-esteem scores, $F(1, 41) = 4.48$, $p < .041$, $\eta^2 = .09$.

RSCA Self-Efficacy

A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of a SBPYD intervention on adolescents' self-efficacy over two time points: pre-intervention and post-intervention. Mean self-efficacy scores increased over time. At pre-intervention (Time 1), the mean self-efficacy score was 3.70 (SD = .82), at post-intervention (Time 2), the mean was 3.88 (SD = .75). The repeated measures ANOVA revealed a non-significant effect of time on self-efficacy scores, $F(1, 41) = 2.25$, $p < .051$.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics per variable for T0 and T1

	T0				T1			
	Item	α	\bar{x}	SD	Item	α	\bar{x}	SD
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)	s				s			
		0.7	35.	7.6		0.8	37.3	8.5
	10	6	6	1	10	4	5	7
RSCA Self-Efficacy		0.8	3.7	0.8		0.8		0.7
	11	0	0	2	11	8	3.88	5
		0.7	3.8	0.9		0.7		0.9
Sense of Belonging -School	5	7	1	4	5	6	3.90	1
		0.8	4.4	0.7		0.8		0.6
Sense of Belonging -Intervention	5	3	5	9	5	0	4.51	1

Sense of Belonging (PISA)

A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of a SBPYD intervention on adolescents' sense of belonging for both the school context as well as, the intervention context. Moreover, two time points: pre-intervention and post-intervention were tested. For the school context, mean sense of belonging scores increased over time. At pre-intervention (Time 1), the mean sense of belonging score was 3.81 (SD = .94), at post-intervention (Time 2), the mean was 3.90 (SD = .91). The repeated measures ANOVA for school context revealed a non-significant effect of time on self-esteem scores, $F(1, 41) = .425$, $p < .51$. For the intervention context, mean sense of belonging scores decreased over time. At pre-intervention (Time 1), the mean sense of belonging score was 4.45 (SD = .79), at post-intervention (Time 2), the mean was 4.51 (SD = .61). The repeated measures ANOVA for school context revealed a non-significant effect of time on self-esteem scores, $F(1, 41) = .192$, $p < .66$.

Potential differences in mean scores for sense of belonging between school and the intervention context were reported over two time points: pre-intervention and post-intervention. At pre-intervention, the mean sense of belonging score for school (context 1) was 3.81 (SD = .94), for the intervention, (context 2), the mean was 4.45 (SD = .79). Tests for mean differences between school sense of belonging and intervention sense of belonging revealed a significant difference in sense of belonging scores between these two contexts, $t(41) = -3.90$, $p = .001$, Cohen's $\delta = 0.95$. This result suggests that adolescents' sense of belonging for the intervention context was significantly higher than adolescents' sense of belonging for the school context at pre-intervention. At post-intervention, the mean sense of belonging score for school (context 1) was 3.90 (SD = .91), for the intervention, (context 2), the mean was 4.51 (SD = .615). Tests for mean differences between school sense of belonging and intervention sense of belonging revealed a significant difference in sense of belonging scores between these two contexts, $t(41) = -4.43$, $p = .001$, Cohen's $\delta = 0.78$. This result suggests that adolescents' sense of belonging for the intervention context was significantly higher than adolescents' sense of belonging for the school context at post-intervention.

DISCUSSION

This research study aimed to investigate the development of resilience in inner-city adolescents facing either social challenges for academic challenges, specifically within the framework of Sport-Based Positive Youth Development (SBPYD). Central to these research goals is the

investigation of how factors such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and a sense of belonging can be developed to strengthen the resilience-building processes in adolescents. Moreover, the research aimed to investigate the role of SBPYD programs in fostering resilience among adolescents, highlighting the unique opportunities afforded by structured activities, specifically within sports contexts, for promoting development and well-being. In other words, this study aimed to reveal the instrumental role SBPYD programs can play in cultivating resilience among adolescents by providing fertile ground for the acquisition of pivotal life skills within the milieu of sporting activities.

Within this Sport-Based Positive Youth Development (SBPYD) program, adolescents' self-esteem significantly increased over time. This study's findings demonstrate that adolescents participating in this intervention gained a more positive attitude towards oneself. This attitude towards oneself stems from viewing the self as an object of evaluation based on personal facts, opinions, and values (Rosenberg, 2016). In other words, adolescents assessed their self-concept more positively after participating in the program. This suggests that the intervention succeeded in fostering favorable social experiences and constructive social interactions that resulted in adolescents developing a more positive evaluation of their self-concept. Changes in self-esteem through positive feedback from social interactions aligns with Martin-Albo's (2007) assertion that feedback received from both individuals and social interactions serves as a mechanism for individuals to assess their self-concept.

High self-esteem has been demonstrated to function as a protective factor associated with positive outcomes such as healthy social relationships, resilience in the face of failure, improved coping skills, and self-regulation. Ouyang et al. (2020) suggest that self-esteem can counteract the negative impacts of life events by facilitating adolescents' positive adaptation, acting as a psychological buffer. Mann (2004) highlights the significance of self-esteem in maintaining health and quality of life during stressful situations or physical illness. Additionally, research indicates a positive association between higher self-esteem levels and increased participation in sports activities. Bowker (2006) also notes a positive correlation between self-esteem and sports involvement among young adolescents.

Within this Sport-Based Positive Youth Development (SBPYD) program, changes in adolescents' self-efficacy were not significant. In other words, the participation in this intervention did not change adolescents' beliefs in their capability to successfully execute behaviors or tasks required to achieve certain goals or outcomes. In other

words, adolescents' perceived confidence did not change in terms of their assessment of their capabilities to utilize already existing skills effectively in the effort put forth, the persistence in the face of challenges, and ultimately, the level of success achieved in different endeavors.

The lack of improvement in self-efficacy could be attributed to insufficient opportunities for mastery experiences or a lack of *targeted* skill development activities, which are crucial for enhancing one's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks. On the other hand, the significant boost in self-esteem among participants likely stemmed from positive social interactions, constructive feedback, and a supportive environment that fostered a sense of belonging and acceptance. As students engaged in the program, they probably experienced positive reinforcement from peers and coaches, contributing to a more favorable self-evaluation. This contrast in outcomes highlights the complex nature of resilience-building interventions and underscores the importance of tailoring program components to address specific psychological constructs.

Lastly, this study examined differences in the sense of belonging scores between both the school and intervention context as well as, two time points: pre-intervention and post-intervention. Before the intervention, adolescents reported a significantly higher sense of belonging in the intervention context compared to the school context. This trend continued post-intervention, with adolescents' sense of belonging remaining significantly higher in the intervention context than in the school context. Noteworthy is the fact that this intervention created an environment for adolescents wherein they report a higher sense of belonging than a "traditional trusted context" such as school. This intervention's accomplishment to achieve this creates an environment for adolescent growth during the program as well as, the foundation for adolescent resiliency. The intervention's efficacy in cultivating a positive atmosphere is paramount for fostering immediate growth among adolescents, establishing a secure environment conducive to self-expression and peer engagement. This supportive context can enhance participants' sense of belonging and facilitates the development of essential life skills, including communication and teamwork. The skills and sense of belonging developed during the intervention serve as a foundation for effective real-world application, potentially promoting personal development and enhancing participants' ability to thrive in diverse environments. This underscores the importance of intentional program design that prioritizes both skill development and emotional well-being, aligning with the principles of positive youth development and sport-based interventions.

Specifically for sense of belonging, it has been demonstrated to be a protective factor in terms of emotional stability, happiness, and overall well-being, promoting psychological health and resilience in coping with stress (Allen & Bowles, 2012) and enabling individuals to navigate challenges more effectively through enhancing their ability to cope during difficult times (Walton & Cohen, 2011). Moreover, individuals who feel a sense of belonging to groups and networks tend to exhibit higher self-esteem, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction (Anant, 1967).

CONCLUSION

During adolescence, individuals undergo significant psychological, biological, and social transformations. As they navigate this developmental phase, adolescents enhance their social skills, personal competence, and autonomy through interactions with peers (Graber & Petersen, 1991; Godor, van der Horst, & Van der Hallen, 2023). It becomes imperative for them to develop cognitive and behavioral strategies to address challenges, with the establishment and maintenance of positive peer relationships being crucial (Petersen, Kennedy, & Sullivan, 1991; Rich, 2003).

Resilience, defined as the capacity of a dynamic system to withstand and recover from significant challenges, is considered fundamental during adolescence (Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2013; Masten, 2018). Adolescents' self-esteem, self-efficacy, and sense of belonging are recognized as foundational components of resilience. These elements can act as either protective factors, buffering against adverse experiences, or risk factors, increasing susceptibility to negative outcomes such as social or health problems (Godor, van der Horst, & Van der Hallen, 2023). Given the pivotal role of resilience in adolescent development, targeted initiatives aimed at promoting resilience are essential. School-based programs, for instance, can foster a growth mindset and cultivate positive peer relationships. Similarly, community-based initiatives leveraging sports as a context for resilience-building can contribute significantly to healthy development and well-being in adolescents (Holt, 2016; Hodge et al., 2017). These initiatives utilize sports to create opportunities for adolescents to develop crucial life skills, nurture positive relationships, and instill a sense of belonging and empowerment (Newman et al., 2020; Maleté et al., 2022). Furthermore, community-based sports programs provide adolescents with opportunities to forge strong social connections, receive support from peers and mentors, and develop essential emotional regulation skills to navigate life's challenges (Prince-Embury & Saklofske, 2014).

Translating Research into Practice: Intentionality and Evaluation

Translating research into practice requires an intentional and systematic approach to SBPYD program design and implementation. Practitioners must define program goals related to resilience, select evidence-based strategies, and continuously evaluate effectiveness. Given the study's focus on self-esteem and sense of belonging, incorporating validated assessment tools such as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is crucial for tracking participant development and identifying areas for program improvement. By embracing continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making, practitioners can ensure SBPYD programs effectively promote resilience and empower adolescents. Finally, SBPYD programs should be viewed as integral to community-based interventions promoting youth well-being and reducing risk factors.

Implications for Practitioners in Sport-Based Youth Development

This study's findings offer valuable insights for practitioners designing and implementing Sport-Based Positive Youth Development (SBPYD) programs, particularly for inner-city adolescents. The program's success in enhancing self-esteem and sense of belonging demonstrates the importance of a holistic program design, integrating structured sports activities with academic support and individual coaching. Practitioners should prioritize creating environments that foster psychological well-being supplemented with athletic activities. This includes activities promoting positive self-perception, such as goal-setting and coaching that focuses on positive reinforcement. Recognizing the crucial role of positive relationships, programs should facilitate peer interaction, mentorship with positive adult role models, and supportive team dynamics. This will demand that coaches and staff receive training to effectively mentor youth, promote life skills, and facilitate their transfer beyond the program context. With sufficient and focused professionalization, coaches and staff can begin to explicitly teach coping strategies, problem-solving, as well as, emotional regulation in order to equip participants to be more resilient in navigating challenges.

Limitations

In concluding this pilot study, it is important to acknowledge several limitations that may impact the interpretation of the findings. Notably, the absence of a control group and the lack of a counterfactual limit the ability to establish causality between the Sport-Based Positive Youth Development (SBPYD) intervention and the

observed changes in participants' self-esteem, self-efficacy, and sense of belonging. Without a control group, it is difficult to determine whether the outcomes were a direct result of the intervention or influenced by other external factors. Additionally, as a pilot study, the sample size was relatively small, which may restrict the generalizability of the results to a wider population. Furthermore, the nomination process for students was not fully transparent, as it was executed by teachers outside the purview of the research team, potentially introducing bias in participant selection. Future research should incorporate a control group, a counterfactual, and larger participant numbers to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the intervention's effectiveness.

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