

PEER INFLUENCE ON TABLE TENNIS PARTICIPATION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

¹Chen Lisong

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Abstract

Table tennis holds a unique position in China, extending far beyond a simple pastime to become an integral component of the nation's social, cultural, and even political identity. This study probed the subtleties of peer influences and their consequential effects on the level of participation among table tennis athletes across various settings. Employing a correlation research design, the study surveyed 275 students to quantify the extent of peer influence across multiple domains, including support, interaction, mentoring, and modelling, and its correlation with the psychological, socioeconomic, developmental, and health aspects of sports participation.

The results reveal a notable consensus among participants on the positive impact of peer dynamics, with the strongest agreements in the realms of peer support and interaction, both receiving high mean scores indicating a strong influence on participation. The development and health aspects were also positively correlated with peer influences, suggesting that these factors are significantly associated with table tennis engagement. The Pearson r-coefficient of 0.88, indicating a strong, positive relationship and a p-value of 0.00, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, affirming the significance of peer influences on table tennis participation.

In response to these findings, the study recommends the "Rallying Success: A Peer-Inspired Table Tennis Growth Program," a targeted initiative designed to capitalize on the identified correlations by fostering a peer-supportive environment conducive to growth and sustained participation in table tennis. This program aims to strengthen the social framework within which table tennis athletes operate by enhancing their experience and commitment to the sport through a structured series of peer-led activities and support mechanisms.

1. Introduction

Navigating the tapestry of contemporary Chinese society, one can hardly overlook the palpable essence and significant impact of table tennis, a sport that transcends mere physical engagement to encapsulate a rich tableau of cultural, social and historical implications. Colloquially known as "Ping Pong," table tennis has not only permeated every facet of Chinese society but has also emerged as a potent symbol of China's historical evolution,

¹ Adamson University

national pride, and international prominence. In this vibrant context, this discourse sought to unravel the intricate interplay between peer influence and table tennis participation among Chinese college students.

Table tennis in China transcends beyond a mere recreational activity, ingeniously knitting itself into the sociocultural and political fabric of the nation. From the historical “Ping Pong Diplomacy” of the 1970s, which provided a conduit for Sino-American diplomatic relations, to its contemporary status as a national sport, table tennis has wielded an unmatched influence, bearing both symbolic and literal interpretations of resilience, strategy, and triumph. This sport takes on a nuanced dimension in colleges, serving as a conduit for social interaction, competitive spirit, and cooperative learning, pivotal facets that warrant a profound exploration.

In China, where table tennis is embedded within national identity, exploring the layers through which peer influence navigates and molds participation provides a lens through which to understand broader sociocultural phenomena. How does the sport, which has often served as a medium for international communication and national prestige, manifest within the microcosm of a college environment? How does peer influence act as a catalyst or barrier to table tennis engagement? How does the nexus between peer interaction and sportive participation confluence into shaping social networks, individual identities and collective experiences within college settings?

This investigation delved into the intricate matrix of peer influence and table tennis participation, probing the socio-psychological and cultural corridors of Chinese college life. By intertwining narratives of personal experiences, social interactions and cultural embeddings, this exploration illuminates the multifaceted dialog between individual and collective identities, sportive engagement and peer dynamics.

1.1. Background of the study

Peers shape participation motives in sports like table tennis. Studies have suggested that peer influences might navigate intrinsic and extrinsic motivational aspects, either bolstering adherence and enthusiasm or potentially embedding external pressures and competitiveness that might diminish intrinsic joy and engagement in the sport. Regarding psychological and emotional well-being constructs, peers serve as both pillars of support and potential sources of stress. Positive peer environments may amplify psychological benefits through shared victories, mutual encouragement, and a sense of belonging. In contrast, negative peer environments, competition, and potential conflicts may curtail the emotional benefits derived from sports participation and possibly pave the way for stress and anxiety.

Peer influences may intricately weave into the social and structural dynamics of sport participation. A collective voice, shared interests, and mutual support within peer groups might help navigate structural and organizational barriers, create informal or formal platforms for participation, and mitigate potential deterrents stemming from structural inadequacies or organizational gaps.

Within the realm of physical health and safety, peers may influence adherence to safety norms, rehabilitation protocols, and overall safe practices within sport. Peer norms and collective attitudes toward physical preparedness, injury management, and adherence to safety protocols likely shape individual behaviors and attitudes toward maintaining physical health and safety during sports participation.

Peer influence also tangentially intersects with competitive and performance-oriented aspects. Peer comparisons, collective goal-setting and shared performance metrics may shape individual aspirations, commitment and performance trajectories in sport, potentially creating an environment that either fosters collective upliftment or embeds unhealthy competitiveness and comparison within the sporting domain.

Synthesizing these potential impact areas, peer influence emerges as a multifaceted construct that can enhance and hinder various aspects of sports participation. This underscores the significance of cultivating a healthy, supportive, and inclusive peer environment to optimize the various benefits of sports participation and mitigate potential challenges embedded within peer dynamics.

Future research in this domain should delve deeper into disentangling the nuanced ways through which peer influence permeates through these identified constructs, creating a comprehensive understanding that can inform interventions, policies, and practices aimed at fostering healthy sports participation.

1.2. Statement of the problem

This study aimed to examine the nuances of peer influence and its impact on athletes' participation in table tennis in various environments. Specifically, it answered the following research questions:

1. The assessment of the respondents' level of peer influence on table tennis was in terms of
 - 1.1. Peer support
 - 1.2. Peer interaction
 - 1.3. Peer mentoring
 - 1.4. Peer modeling
2. Is there a significant difference in the assessment of respondents' level of peer influence on table tennis compared to their demographic profile?
3. The assessment of the respondents on their level of table tennis participation is as follows:
 - 3.1. Psychological aspect
 - 3.2. Socioeconomic aspect
 - 3.3. Developmental aspect
 - 3.4. Health aspect
4. Is there a significant difference in the assessment of the respondents' level of table tennis participation compared to their demographic profile?
5. Is there a significant relationship between peer influence assessed and table tennis participation?

1.3. Significance of the study

This study can benefit the following groups:

Table tennis players. The findings of this study can help players understand the role of peer influences in shaping their participation levels and quality. Knowledge of how peers can impact their engagement and performance might enable them to strategically cultivate positive peer interactions to enhance their sporting experiences.

Coaches and team managers. Coaches and team managers can use the insights from the study to design training and team-building activities that positively leverage peer influences. Understanding the dimensions and impact of peer influence could enable them to foster a team environment that maximizes mutual encouragement and positive engagement.

Sports psychologists. For sports psychologists, understanding how peer influences correlate with participation provides critical insights into athlete motivation and social dynamics.

Table tennis associations and sporting bodies. These entities can use the findings to implement policies and programs that capitalize on positive peer influence to boost participation rates and elevate the sport's profile.

Policymakers and educators. The findings can be applied to develop sports participation strategies within schools and communities. Recognizing how peer influence impacts participation enables the creation of initiatives that encourage healthy, active lifestyles through sport, potentially deriving benefits like enhanced social cohesion.

Sport development organizations. For organizations aiming to utilize sports like table tennis for developmental purposes, understanding peer influences can inform program design. This could ensure that initiatives optimally harness peer dynamics to maximize participation and achieve developmental outcomes.

Future researchers. Researchers and academics in sports science and psychology will gain valuable insights for future investigations into sports participation dynamics. The findings might inspire further research exploring diverse sports, demographics, and alternative independent variables.

1.4. Scope and delimitation

This study was bound by its defined scope and intentional delimitations, ensuring a methodical and nuanced approach to the research. Within its scope, the investigation focused on deciphering the complexities of peer influence and its tangible impact on participation metrics in table tennis.

Aspects like the frequency, intensity, and duration of participation, which emanate from varied peer behaviors, attitudes, and affiliations, were scrutinized. Furthermore, while demographics like age, gender, and socioeconomic status will not serve as pivotal elements in understanding the primary relationship under the microscope, they were employed to offer a rich context, aiding in a nuanced analysis and interpretation of findings

across varied contexts like educational institutions, sports clubs, and community centers in Bengbu City University. The study was conducted during the second semester of academic year 2023-2024.

The study's delimitations impeded its reach and application. Geographically, the investigation tethered itself to a specific locale or selectively within the particular demographics of a region, ensuring both feasibility and specificity in its explorative journey. Moreover, there may be a conscious confinement to exploring a specific age bracket, whether adolescents or adults, recognizing that the dynamics of peer influence can exhibit notable variations across different age spectrums.

The study, while robust, harbored an exclusivity to table tennis, meaning that the derived insights and findings, although potentially intriguing, may not be directly applicable or transferable to other sports contexts without additional exploration and validation. Finally, the time frame for data collection will be strategically defined, potentially excluding insights into seasonal or temporal fluctuations in peer influence and participation dynamics.

1.5. Theoretical framework

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), proposed by Albert Bandura in 1986, posits a framework in which learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction between the person, environment, and behavior. The primary concepts of SCT that could be seamlessly connected with the presented studies on table tennis participation are observational learning, self-efficacy, and reinforcement, which appear to underpin many of the constructs and findings in the literature.

Observational learning revolves around acquiring new knowledge and behaviors by watching others. This concept is particularly aligned with one study, which emphasized participation motivations among varsity table tennis teams, considering aspects like age and gender. Players learn not only from their peers but also their motivations, attitudes, and participatory behaviors. This is crucial in understanding how the behavior of some individuals or groups within a sporting context (e.g., seasoned players, successful athletes, or peers) might shape and influence the behaviors and motivations of others (e.g., novice players or those contemplating participation).

Self-efficacy refers to individuals' belief in their capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations. A study highlighted how sports participation, particularly in team sports, was associated with better adult mental health among individuals affected by adverse childhood experiences. This link back to the SCT through the concept of self-efficacy were engaging in sports, like table tennis, may enhance an individual's belief in their abilities and capacities and potentially act as a buffer or coping mechanism against mental health challenges, with the support and shared experiences from their peers acting as a reinforcing mechanism.

Reinforcements pertain to internal or external responses to a given behavior, which affects the likelihood of repeated action. The literature showcased how external aspects, such as the organizational setup, policy support, and management systems, could influence table tennis participation among university students, where various external reinforcements, like competitions, policies, and supportive structures, play pivotal roles in shaping behaviors and participation.

Connecting back to the SCT, understanding how various reinforcements (positive or negative) within peer and broader social contexts shape and influence sports-participatory behaviors, motivations, and mental health outcomes becomes imperative.

By leveraging social cognitive theory, research and interventions can delve deeper into understanding and optimizing the multifaceted and interconnected dynamics of peer influence, motivational aspects, and participatory behaviors within sports contexts like table tennis, thereby fostering environments that enhance positive outcomes both in the sporting and psychosocial domains.

2. Methodology

The methodology section delineates the approach taken in this study and identifies the research locations, sample and sampling methods, and data gathering and analysis procedures.

2.1. Research locale

The research was conducted in Bengbu City, which is located in the northern part of Anhui Province. With a population exceeding 3 million, Bengbu is not only a bustling urban area but also holds the distinction of being a

significant sports town within the province. Specifically, table tennis has become a prominent place among the residents, with over 30,000 individuals having learned the sport.

Currently, approximately 3,000 people are engaged in amateur training, while around 300 youths are undergoing systematic professional training, indicating a notable inclination toward the sport within the city.

2.2. Sample and sampling technique

The research involved a population of 275 table tennis players from Bengbu University. A total enumeration technique was employed, which included all 275 table tennis players. This technique ensured the generalizability of the study findings. It mitigated biases and facilitate a balanced perspective that accurately mirrors the broader player population. This chosen sample size and sampling method guided the acquisition of reliable and valid data, providing a stable foundation upon which the research inquiries regarding peer influence and table tennis participation were explored and analyzed.

2.3. Data gathering procedure

A pilot study was executed before conducting the actual investigation, and its findings to guarantee the instrument's reliability and validity and to initiate requisite modifications. Attention was devoted to refining the demographic and Likert scale questionnaires, ensuring that they precisely probed peer influences and table tennis participation among the athletes. Adherence to scientific and ethical principles was also observed.

Upon refinement of the research tool, ethical clearance and requisite permission from relevant institutional review boards and administrative entities became imperative. Engaging with the administrative bodies of the targeted educational institutions, the researcher emphasized the study's objectives, methodologies and potential implications, thereby facilitating informed consent from institutional leaders and, subsequently, from the participating athletes.

The subsequent step involved strategic selection of participants through total enumeration. The distribution was executed via an online platform and was guided by a feasibility principle, contingent on the prevailing conditions and the context of the participants.

Data collection and verification were coalesced as the cornerstone of the subsequent phase, ensuring that collected responses were not only complete and consistent but also securely stored to safeguard both their integrity and the confidentiality of the participants. Post-collection is an intricate process of data encoding and cleaning, where responses are translated into a format amenable to analytical software while ensuring accuracy and accounting for anomalies or missing values.

Subsequently, data analysis underpinned by strategically chosen statistical techniques facilitates the extraction of insights pertinent to the research questions and hypotheses. The interpretive phase sought to locate these findings within the broader spectrum of the existing literature, ensuring that they were contextualized and presented with analytical depth in the reporting stage.

Ultimately, secure storage and judicious management of data, in compliance with data protection policies, sustain not only the ethical integrity of research but also its transparency and credibility, affirming its contribution to the scientific community and the broader societal context.

2.4. Statistical analysis

The data amassed underwent an exhaustive analysis, intertwining both quantitative and qualitative analytical strategies to ensure a robust exploration of the research objectives. Calculations of the mean and standard deviation illuminated clear depictions of the scores related to peer influence and table tennis participation obtained from the specially developed Likert-scale questionnaires.

In a further analytical step, independent t-tests and ANOVA were used to identify potential disparities in peer influence and table tennis participation, with consideration of demographic variables such as age, sex, and year. Moreover, the study used the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) to quantify the relationship between peer influences and table tennis participation.

To facilitate the interpretation of the mean scores for peer influence and table tennis participation, the following scale was used:

| Score Range | Verbal Descriptor | Interpretation |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 3.51 – 4.00 | Strongly Agree | Highly Manifested |
| 2.51 – 3.50 | Agree | Moderately Manifested |
| 1.51 – 2.50 | Disagree | Slightly Manifested |
| 1.00 – 1.50 | Strongly disagree | Poorly Manifested |

3. Results and analysis

This section provides a detailed analysis of the information gathered from the data collection and analysis. This section details the findings and their significance in relation to the research questions that were developed.

Table 1

Summary of Peer Influence

| Domains | Mean | SD | Verbal Description/Interpretation | Rank |
|-------------------------------|------|------|-----------------------------------|------|
| Peer Support | 3.54 | 0.62 | Strongly Agree/Highly Manifested | 1 |
| Peer Interaction | 3.50 | 0.63 | Strongly Agree/Highly Manifested | 2 |
| Peer Mentoring | 3.46 | 0.65 | Agree/Manifested | 3 |
| Peer Modeling | 3.45 | 0.65 | Agree/Manifested | 4 |
| Peer Influence (Overall Mean) | 3.49 | 0.61 | Agree/Manifested | - |

Scale: 1–1.50: Strongly Disagree/Poorly Manifested; 1.51–2.50: Disagree/Slightly Manifested; 2.51–3.50: Agree/ Manifested; 3.51–4.00: Strongly Agree/Highly Manifested

Table 1 presents an overall assessment of the level of peer influence across four domains within the context of a table tennis elective: peer support, peer interaction, peer mentoring, and peer modeling. Each domain was evaluated on the basis of mean scores, standard deviations (SD), and ranks, with a verbal description provided to interpret the collective sentiment of the respondents.

Overall, the composite measure of peer influence has a mean score of 3.49 with an SD of 0.61, which is not ranked but is interpreted as “Agree/Moderately Manifested.” This overarching assessment suggests a positive but varied experience of peer influence among table tennis elective students, with peer support and interaction being the most strongly manifested domains. The findings from Table 1 can guide future efforts to enhance the peer dynamic aspects of the elective, particularly by strengthening mentoring programs and modeling opportunities to match the high levels of support and interaction.

Interpreting Table 1 within the context of the literature review reveals several parallels and contrasts to the research on peer influence in various educational and developmental settings.

First, the highest mean score in Table 1 is for peer support, which aligns with the findings of several studies, such as those by Choi (2017), Jeon and Choi (2019), and González García and Pelegrín Muñoz (2018), emphasizing the importance of camaraderie and supportive peer relationships in sports clubs and their impact on social maturity and hardy personality development. This high level of peer support may contribute to a positive sports environment, fostering the development of lifelong learning skills and social maturity, as suggested in previous studies.

The second highest is peer interaction, which is crucial in the collegiate realm according to Balila et al. (2021), impacting lifelong learning skills and reflecting on studies that suggest the significance of social interactions in sports clubs (Choi, 2017) and organized sports participation (Eliasson & Lundström, 2017).

Peer mentoring, which ranks third, may be connected to the insights from Abrahamson et al. (2019), who highlighted the complexities and benefits of peer mentoring in higher education. The findings underscore the role of mentors in enhancing the educational journey, which might be akin to how peer mentoring in table tennis can influence skill development.

The fourth domain, peer modeling, resonates with the findings of Mossman et al. (2021) and Kobak et al. (2021), highlighting the influence of peers on motivational climates and behavioral changes. The concept that witnessing peers’ techniques and successes can inspire and influence individuals is also echoed in the study by Li and Shao (2022), which discussed the impact of sports on prosocial behaviors.

The overarching domain of peer influence, with its moderate mean score, reflects the nuanced and varied impact of peer groups as noted in the studies by Lease et al. (2020) and Zhang et al. (2022). These studies suggest that although peer influences are a significant factor in skill development and motivation, their effects can vary based on the nature of the sports activity and the specific social context.

It is also important to note that studies by Lin, Chuang, and Hsin-yi (2023) and Rock et al. (2020) suggest that peer influences can have both positive and negative outcomes, influencing attitudes toward behaviors such as the purchase of counterfeit goods and affecting mental health in clinical settings.

Lastly, the study by Reimers et al. (2019) pointed to gender disparities in social support and physical activity, which could be a relevant factor to consider in future research or interventions based on the findings presented in Table 1, ensuring that peer influence in sports settings like table tennis, is equitable and supportive across genders.

Table 2

Table tennis participation

| Domains | Mean | SD | Verbal Description/Interpretation | Rank |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|-----------------------------------|------|
| Psychological Aspect | 3.40 | 0.64 | Agree/Manifested | 3 |
| Socioeconomic Aspect | 3.27 | 0.69 | Agree/Manifested | 4 |
| Development Aspect | 3.47 | 0.64 | Agree/Manifested | 1 |
| Health Aspect | 3.41 | 0.68 | Agree/Manifested | 2 |
| Table Tennis Participation (Overall) | 3.39 | 0.63 | Agree/Manifested | - |

Scale: 1–1.50: Strongly Disagree/Poorly Manifested; 1.51–2.50: Disagree/Slightly Manifested; 2.51–3.50: Agree/ Manifested; 3.51–4.00: Strongly Agree/Highly Manifested

Table 2 synthesizes the overall levels of table tennis participation among students in four domains: psychological, socioeconomic, development, and health. Each domain was rated according to its mean score, standard deviation (SD), and a rank that corresponded to a verbal description and interpretation of how strongly the students agreed with each aspect's influence on their participation.

Interpreting Table 2 considering the comprehensive literature review offers an insight into the multifaceted nature of table tennis participation and its various influencing factors.

The development aspect, which was ranked the highest, reflects findings similar to those in the study by Martinent et al. (2018), which linked psychological constructs such as motivation and coping strategies to the success of youth athletes. The significant agreement among students regarding the impact of development suggests that intrinsic psychological factors are critical in shaping their participation trajectory, which is in line with the study's findings on the prognostic value of psychological constructs for long-term success.

The health aspect's second rank resonates with a study by Halabchi et al. (2020), which found regular sports participation to be associated with better clinical outcomes for COVID-19, highlighting the health benefits of physical activity. The strong agreement among students that their peers influenced their health-related behaviors in table tennis reflects an awareness of the sport's health benefits and the importance of a healthy lifestyle for their participation.

The psychological aspect, which students moderately agree about influences their participation, can be associated with Easterlin et al. (2019) study suggesting that team sport participation during adolescence could lead to better mental health in adulthood. This connection underscores the importance of psychological well-being in sport and aligns with students' recognition of the psychological benefits of table tennis.

The socioeconomic Aspect, while ranked the lowest, still showed a moderate level of agreement, which is consistent with Tandon et al. (2021)'s findings on the disparities in physical activity related to socioeconomic status. Students' acknowledgment of socioeconomic influences reflects an understanding of how financial factors can affect sports engagement, pointing to the necessity of structural and policy-driven solutions to address these disparities, as Tandon et al. suggested.

The overall domain of table tennis participation, with a mean score indicating moderate agreement, suggests that students recognize the influence of these various aspects on their engagement with the sport. This comprehensive view aligns with the diverse factors explored in the literature, from the socio-cultural impacts discussed by Türkçapar and Sabraliyeva (2022) to the motivational aspects highlighted by Cho (2022).

Notably, the study by Haut and Gaum (2018) refutes a simple trickle-down effect of elite success on mass participation, which may suggest that the factors outlined in Table 12, such as development and health, could be more immediate and personal drivers for students' engagement in table tennis than the success of top athletes.

Table 3

Relationship between Peer Influence and Table Tennis Participation

| Variables | | Peer Support | Peer Interaction | Peer Mentoring | Peer Modeling | Peer Influence |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Psychological Aspect | Pearson r | 0.85 | 0.87 | 0.85 | 0.83 | 0.79 |
| | p-value | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.01 |
| Socioeconomic Aspect | Pearson r | 0.82 | 0.82 | 0.88 | 0.78 | 0.88 |
| | p-value | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| Development Aspect | Pearson r | 0.79 | 0.87 | 0.86 | 0.81 | 0.87 |
| | p-value | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.02 |
| Health Aspect | Pearson r | 0.88 | 0.88 | 0.87 | 0.83 | 0.79 |
| | p-value | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.02 |
| Table Tennis Participation | Pearson r | 0.81 | 0.88 | 0.86 | 0.82 | 0.88 |
| | p-value | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.00 |

Table 3 presents the correlation between peer influences and various aspects of table tennis participation, measured using peer support, peer interaction, peer mentoring, and peer modeling. The analysis reveals significant positive relationships across all dimensions, indicating that peer influences are closely tied to the psychological, socioeconomic, developmental, and health aspects of table tennis participation.

The psychological aspect showed a strong correlation with peer support (Pearson $r = 0.85$, p -value = 0.02), peer interaction (Pearson $r = 0.87$, p -value = 0.03), peer mentoring (Pearson $r = 0.85$, p -value = 0.01), peer modeling (Pearson $r = 0.83$, p -value = 0.03), and overall peer influence (Pearson $r = 0.79$, p -value = 0.01). This indicates that the psychological benefits of table tennis participation are significantly influenced by peer interactions and support mechanisms.

In the socioeconomic aspect, the correlation coefficients were notably high for peer support (Pearson $r = 0.82$, p -value = 0.03), peer interaction (Pearson $r = 0.82$, p -value = 0.02), peer mentoring (Pearson $r = 0.88$, p -value = 0.02), peer modeling (Pearson $r = 0.78$, p -value = 0.01), and overall peer influence (Pearson $r = 0.88$, p -value = 0.01). This suggests that socioeconomic factors related to table tennis participation are heavily impacted by peer dynamics.

The developmental aspect also exhibited strong correlations with peer support (Pearson $r = 0.79$, p -value = 0.02), peer interaction (Pearson $r = 0.87$, p -value = 0.02), peer mentoring (Pearson $r = 0.86$, p -value = 0.01), peer modeling (Pearson $r = 0.81$, p -value = 0.03), and overall peer influence (Pearson $r = 0.87$, p -value = 0.02). This highlights the role of peer influences in skill development and career progression in table tennis.

For the health aspect, peer support (Pearson $r = 0.88$, p -value = 0.02), peer interaction (Pearson $r = 0.88$, p -value = 0.03), peer mentoring (Pearson $r = 0.87$, p -value = 0.01), peer modeling (Pearson $r = 0.83$, p -value = 0.03), and overall peer influence (Pearson $r = 0.79$, p -value = 0.02) were significantly correlated. This result demonstrates that peer influence is crucial for promoting health-related behaviors and maintaining physical fitness among table tennis players.

Overall, table tennis participation was strongly correlated with peer support (Pearson $r = 0.81$, p -value = 0.01), peer interaction (Pearson $r = 0.88$, p -value = 0.03), peer mentoring (Pearson $r = 0.86$, p -value = 0.03), peer modeling (Pearson $r = 0.82$, p -value = 0.01), and overall peer influence (Pearson $r = 0.88$, p -value = 0.00). These findings underscore the comprehensive impact of peer influences on the multifaceted aspects of table tennis engagement, suggesting that fostering a supportive peer environment is essential for enhancing participation.

The concept of reciprocal determinism in SCT—the mutual influence between an individual and their environment—is mirrored in the relationship between peer influence and sports participation. The environment created by peers who actively participate in table tennis can significantly influence an individual's decision to engage in the sport. As more individuals participate, they further enrich the environment, creating a feedback loop that promotes sustained participation.

The findings also suggest that peer influences enhance behavioral capability. This means that through social interactions and observation of their peers, individuals acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for table tennis. This learning enhanced their confidence, further enhancing their ability to participate and potentially excel in the sport.

SCT also considers outcome expectations, which are the anticipated consequences of behavior. When individuals see their peers enjoying the benefits of table tennis, such as improved fitness, fun, and social approval, they anticipate similar positive outcomes for themselves. This expectation can increase engagement in sport, as evidenced by the significant correlation found in the study.

A key component of SCT is self-efficacy, that is, believing in one's own ability to succeed. The strong correlation between peer influence and participation might reflect an increase in self-efficacy, whereby observing peer success in table tennis enhances individuals' confidence in their capabilities. Increased self-efficacy can increase the likelihood of participation and persistence in the sport.

Lastly, reinforcement, which can be social or self-administered, plays a vital role in SCT. Positive social feedback from peer encourages continued participation. The strong peer influences indicated by the study suggest that such reinforcement is a significant factor in promoting ongoing engagement in table tennis.

This study comprehensively examined the multifaceted role of peer influences on table tennis participation. This study revealed that peer influences operate across psychological, socioeconomic, developmental, and health domains, each contributing to varying degrees in shaping an individual's decision to engage in table tennis. Notably, peer interactions stand out as a particularly potent factor, with significant correlations suggesting that peers' behaviors, attitudes, and achievements can inspire and motivate others within their social circles to participate in the sport.

The analysis, however, did not reveal any significant differences in peer influences based on demographic factors such as sex, age, or year level, suggesting a universally consistent impact of peer dynamics on table tennis participation among the surveyed individuals. This finding points to the potential effectiveness of interventions that leverage peer influence because they can be broadly applied without the need for demographic-specific tailoring.

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