
**EXPLORING AGGRESSION, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, AND LONELINESS:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF OUTDOOR SPORTS ENTHUSIASTS AND
ONLINE GAMERS AMONG YOUNG MALES**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined whether young males engaged in outdoor sports differ from online gamers in aggression, emotional intelligence, and loneliness. A sample of 210 male college students, equally divided between outdoor sports players and online gamers, completed the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire, Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale, and UCLA Loneliness Scale. A one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences between the two groups across all variables. These findings challenge prevailing stereotypes that link online gaming with increased aggression or outdoor sports with superior emotional well-being. Both activities offer unique yet comparable opportunities for social interaction and emotional engagement. These results suggest that factors such as personality traits, quality of social connections, and coping strategies may play a more decisive role in shaping aggression, emotional intelligence, and loneliness than the specific nature of recreational activities. The study underscores the importance of developing holistic mental health strategies that support young adults across various recreational preferences.

Keywords: aggression, emotional intelligence, loneliness, outdoor sports, online gaming

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, recreational patterns among young males have witnessed a dynamic shift, as outdoor sports and online gaming have emerged as two of the most prominent activities. Both offer unique experiences that engage participants physically, mentally, and socially. Outdoor

sports, characterized by physical exertion and face-to-face interaction, have long been associated with fostering teamwork, emotional resilience, and social cohesion. Conversely, online gaming provides immersive digital environments where players engage in virtual collaboration and competition, often building extensive social networks in the process.

Despite their differences, both recreational activities present potential psychological implications, particularly concerning aggression, emotional intelligence, and loneliness. Outdoor sports promote direct interpersonal communication, emotional regulation, and empathy, while online gaming encourages strategic thinking and emotional management in fast-paced, competitive scenarios. However, concerns have been raised about the negative effects of excessive gaming, including increased aggression and social isolation, although empirical findings remain inconsistent.

Given the growing integration of digital entertainment in everyday life, especially among college-aged males, understanding how these activities influence psychological well-being is increasingly important. Young adults actively participate in both online and offline recreational environments, making them an ideal population for examining potential emotional and social differences between these groups.

This study aims to explore whether engagement in either outdoor sports or online gaming correlates with differing levels of aggression, emotional intelligence, and loneliness. By examining these psychological variables, the research seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the psychosocial impacts of modern recreational choices. The findings may offer valuable insights for educators, mental health professionals, and policymakers to design targeted interventions that support emotional well-being in young adults, regardless of their preferred mode of recreation.

Aggression

Aggression is a behavior characterized by actions or intentions to cause harm, whether physical, emotional, or psychological, to oneself, others, or objects. It can manifest in various forms, including overt aggression, such as physical violence, or covert aggression, such as verbal hostility and passive-aggressive behavior. Aggression is often categorized into two primary

types: hostile aggression, which is motivated by anger and aimed at causing harm (e.g., fighting after an argument), and instrumental aggression, which is goal-oriented and where harm is a by-product of achieving a specific objective (e.g., tackling aggressively in sports). While aggression exists on a spectrum, ranging from mild irritability to extreme destructive behavior, it is influenced by multiple biological, psychological, and environmental factors.

Biological factors contributing to aggression include brain function and structure, genetics, and neurochemical imbalances. The amygdala, prefrontal cortex, and hypothalamus play critical roles in emotional regulation and aggression, and dysfunctions in these areas can increase aggressive tendencies. Genetic predisposition has also been suggested, with certain markers being linked to higher aggression levels. Furthermore, imbalances in neurotransmitters such as serotonin, dopamine, and testosterone are associated with increased aggression, with elevated testosterone levels often correlating with heightened aggressive behavior.

Psychological factors also play a significant role in aggression. Personality traits such as impulsivity, low frustration tolerance, and narcissism have been linked to aggressive behavior. Emotional states, including anger, frustration, and stress, can act as triggers, particularly when individuals lack effective coping mechanisms. Additionally, mental health disorders such as antisocial personality disorder, borderline personality disorder, and intermittent explosive disorder can exacerbate aggressive tendencies.

Environmental and social factors further shape aggression. Childhood experiences, such as exposure to violence, neglect, or inconsistent discipline, can increase the risk of developing aggressive behavior later in life. Social learning theory suggests that aggression can be learned through modeling, where individuals imitate aggressive behaviors observed in parents, peers, or media. Cultural norms also influence aggression, as some societies normalize or even reward aggressive behavior, particularly in competitive settings. Moreover, stressful situations, including economic hardships, workplace stress, and peer rejection, can intensify aggression by creating frustration and emotional instability.

Studying aggression is crucial for understanding human behavior and its broader societal implications. By examining the mechanisms behind aggression, researchers can gain insights

into conflict resolution, cooperation, and social harmony. Additionally, aggression is often linked to mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, and personality disorders. Understanding aggression allows for early identification and intervention, reducing the risk of harm to both individuals and society.

Research on aggression also facilitates the development of effective interventions. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), anger management techniques, and educational programs focused on emotional regulation and empathy are some of the strategies used to mitigate aggressive tendencies. Furthermore, aggression can severely impact interpersonal relationships, leading to conflicts in personal, social, and professional settings. By identifying triggers and manifestations, researchers can help develop policies that promote healthier communication and cooperation.

Aggression is a significant societal concern, contributing to issues such as domestic violence, bullying, criminal behavior, and workplace conflicts. Studying aggression helps policymakers and law enforcement design effective prevention and intervention strategies. In the digital era, aggression has also taken new forms, including cyberbullying and toxic online gaming environments. Understanding how virtual interactions influence emotions and social behaviors is essential in addressing these emerging challenges.

Ultimately, studying aggression is not merely about understanding harmful behaviors but also about fostering environments that promote emotional regulation, empathy, and social development. By addressing aggression at individual and societal levels, we can contribute to the creation of more balanced individuals and harmonious communities.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EQ) refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and influence emotions—both one's own and those of others. It is a critical skill that helps individuals navigate social complexities, make informed decisions, and maintain healthy relationships. EQ is often categorized into five core components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness involves recognizing and understanding one's emotions and their impact, while self-regulation allows individuals to manage emotions

effectively and respond appropriately to situations. Motivation plays a role in using emotions constructively to achieve goals, and empathy enables understanding and sharing the feelings of others. Finally, social skills help in building and maintaining positive relationships through effective communication and conflict resolution.

EQ influences various aspects of life, from emotional regulation to workplace success. It plays a vital role in managing emotional responses to stress, anger, and frustration, helping individuals build rapport and resolve conflicts effectively. Additionally, emotional intelligence enhances decision-making by balancing emotions and logic, leading to well-informed choices, particularly in high-pressure situations. In professional settings, EQ contributes to leadership, teamwork, and overall productivity. It also plays a crucial role in mental health, enabling individuals to process and cope with emotions during challenging times.

One of the most significant benefits of high EQ is its impact on emotional regulation and stress management. Individuals with strong emotional intelligence can handle stress more effectively, preventing emotional overwhelm and reducing the risk of mental and physical health issues such as anxiety and heart disease. Furthermore, EQ fosters improved interpersonal relationships by enhancing one's ability to understand and respond to others' emotions, which strengthens trust, cooperation, and meaningful connections in both personal and professional settings.

In decision-making, EQ helps individuals strike a balance between emotional and logical reasoning, allowing for rational and informed choices. For instance, someone with high EQ can recognize when emotions such as fear or excitement are influencing their judgment and take corrective actions. Additionally, EQ enhances cognitive flexibility, enabling individuals to adapt to new challenges, perspectives, and environments with greater resilience and open-mindedness. Emotional intelligence is also linked to academic and professional success. Students and employees with high EQ can effectively handle feedback, manage deadlines, and excel in team-oriented environments. Furthermore, it serves as a protective factor against mental health challenges like depression, anxiety, and burnout. By understanding and managing emotions, individuals develop resilience and maintain a positive outlook even in difficult circumstances.

Another key aspect of EQ is empathy, which fosters compassion and encourages altruistic behaviors. High EQ individuals are more likely to contribute to their communities and build strong social support networks, which in turn enhance their well-being and that of others. Moreover, emotional intelligence has a significant cognitive impact, improving attention by filtering out emotional distractions, enhancing memory by linking emotions to significant events, and facilitating problem-solving by allowing individuals to approach challenges creatively and effectively. It also plays a crucial role in critical thinking, as it enables individuals to analyze situations objectively without being overly influenced by emotions.

In conclusion, emotional intelligence profoundly affects how individuals think, feel, and interact with the world. By cultivating EQ, people can enhance their personal and professional lives, build resilience, and improve cognitive clarity. As a fundamental aspect of mental and emotional well-being, EQ serves as a powerful tool for navigating life's challenges and fostering positive relationships.

Loneliness

Loneliness is a subjective emotional state where an individual feels isolated, disconnected, or lacking meaningful social connections. It is not merely about being alone but rather the perceived gap between the desired and actual level of social interaction. Loneliness can be temporary, situational, or chronic, depending on its duration and underlying causes. While everyone experiences loneliness at some point, prolonged loneliness can have serious psychological, emotional, and physical consequences.

One of the most significant impacts of loneliness is on mental health. Persistent loneliness is closely linked to depression and anxiety, leading to feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and excessive worry. It can also lower self-esteem, making individuals feel unworthy or inadequate due to the lack of social support. In addition to its psychological effects, loneliness also takes a toll on physical health. Chronic loneliness has been associated with a weakened immune system, increasing susceptibility to illnesses. Furthermore, it raises the risk of chronic conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and obesity. Sleep disturbances are also common among lonely individuals, contributing to further health complications.

Cognitive decline is another consequence of prolonged loneliness. Studies have shown that social isolation is linked to memory loss, impaired decision-making, and an increased risk of dementia, particularly in older adults. Additionally, loneliness often leads to social withdrawal, creating a cycle of isolation where individuals avoid interactions due to fear of rejection or negative experiences. This withdrawal further exacerbates feelings of loneliness, making it increasingly difficult to break free from its grip.

The effects of loneliness extend beyond emotional well-being, influencing various aspects of life. It can lead to feelings of emptiness, sadness, and dissatisfaction, intensifying negative emotions and making it harder to cope with stress. Loneliness can also strain relationships, causing misunderstandings, irritability, or difficulties in expressing emotions effectively. Moreover, it can impact productivity and motivation, reducing focus, energy levels, and overall performance in academic, professional, and personal pursuits. In some cases, loneliness may lead individuals to engage in risky behaviors, such as overeating, substance abuse, or excessive screen time, as a way to cope with their emotions.

Addressing loneliness requires intentional efforts to build and strengthen social connections. Reconnecting with friends and family, joining groups or clubs, and participating in volunteer activities can create meaningful interactions and a sense of purpose. Developing emotional awareness is also crucial; recognizing feelings of loneliness and practicing gratitude can help shift one's emotional state toward positivity. Engaging in fulfilling activities, such as pursuing hobbies, learning new skills, or participating in physical exercises, can also boost mood and provide opportunities for social engagement.

Another important step in managing loneliness is reducing excessive reliance on technology. While social media can facilitate connections, over-dependence on virtual interactions can sometimes worsen feelings of isolation. Prioritizing face-to-face communication whenever possible can help create more meaningful and supportive relationships. Additionally, seeking professional support, such as therapy or support groups, can be beneficial in addressing the underlying causes of loneliness and learning effective coping strategies.

Finally, fostering self-compassion is essential in overcoming loneliness. Individuals should avoid self-criticism or blaming themselves for their feelings of isolation. Practicing mindfulness, self-care routines, and maintaining a positive self-view can improve emotional well-being and resilience. By taking proactive steps to build connections, nurture emotional health, and seek support when needed, individuals can significantly enhance their mental, emotional, and physical well-being, leading to a more fulfilling and balanced life.

Rationale for the Study

Sports and gaming are two dominant recreational activities among young males today, each shaping personality and behavior in unique ways. While outdoor sports are often associated with teamwork, discipline, and social bonding (Eime et al., 2013), online gaming fosters virtual competition, strategic thinking, and digital interaction (Granic, Lobel, & Engels, 2014). Despite their differences, both activities may have psychological effects, influencing aggression levels, emotional intelligence, and feelings of loneliness. Research suggests that sports participation enhances social skills and emotional regulation (Taylor & Wilson, 2005), whereas gaming environments can both promote social connectivity and, in some cases, contribute to social withdrawal (Kowert, Domahidi, & Quandt, 2014). Given these contrasting perspectives, it is essential to explore whether individuals engaged in these recreational choices differ significantly in their emotional and social functioning.

Curiosity about the psychological impact of these activities prompted this investigation. College students, who are highly engaged in both sports and gaming, serve as an ideal population for this study, providing insights into how these contrasting recreational choices shape their psychological profiles. In an era where digital gaming is becoming increasingly prevalent and sometimes replacing traditional sports (Anderson et al., 2010), understanding the psychological effects of both activities is crucial. By analyzing these factors, this study aims to highlight the potential benefits and risks of each activity, ultimately helping students, educators, and mental health professionals promote a balanced approach to recreation that nurtures both social and emotional well-being.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

a) Aggression in Outdoor Sports and Online Gaming

The relationship between recreational activities and aggression has been the subject of considerable academic attention. Outdoor sports, particularly team-based disciplines, are often linked to positive behavioral outcomes, including emotional regulation and reduced aggression (Unver et al., 2019). Participation in structured physical activities provides an outlet for emotional expression while fostering discipline and respect for rules, which can mitigate aggressive tendencies.

Conversely, online gaming environments present a more complex picture. Competitive games can trigger heightened emotional arousal, potentially leading to aggressive reactions, especially when players experience frustration or "tilt" during gameplay (Cregan et al., 2024). However, Soylu et al. (2023) emphasized that the intensity of aggression in gaming is less about the activity itself and more about emotional regulation deficits among players. Further, Anwar et al. (2023) observed higher physical and psychological strain among esports athletes compared to outdoor sports players, suggesting that the high-pressure nature of competitive gaming environments can exacerbate aggressive responses.

Tres and Zeliha (2019) also identified that loneliness and emotional dysregulation in gaming communities may create cycles of hostility and frustration, further amplifying aggression. These findings suggest that while both sports and gaming involve competitive elements, the context and emotional coping mechanisms of participants play a crucial role in determining aggressive behaviors.

b) Emotional Intelligence Across Activity Types

Emotional intelligence (EI) is essential for managing emotions effectively in both personal and social contexts. Participation in outdoor sports has been shown to enhance EI by promoting teamwork, empathy, and resilience (Sari et al., 2021). The interpersonal nature of sports encourages athletes to interpret teammates' emotions accurately and regulate their own emotional responses during competition.

However, Pavalache-Ilie and Țimbălău (2021) reported that problematic gamers tend to exhibit lower levels of emotional competence, impairing their ability to manage frustration and

increasing emotional dysregulation. Similarly, Cudo et al. (2019) linked emotional intelligence deficits in gamers to greater emotional distress and higher susceptibility to aggressive behavior.

Interestingly, Anti and Emmanuel (2022) explored the use of a mobile application aimed at improving emotional awareness among young adults. While the intervention showed modest improvements, it could not fully substitute for the real-world emotional growth typically cultivated in physical social environments. Anwar et al. (2023) echoed these findings, noting that outdoor sports participants displayed higher emotional resilience, likely a result of direct interpersonal interactions and physical exertion that naturally foster emotional control.

Collectively, these studies underscore the pivotal role of emotional intelligence in both outdoor and digital recreational activities. Regardless of the context, enhancing emotional intelligence appears to be a protective factor against negative psychological outcomes.

c) Loneliness and Social Connectivity

Loneliness, defined as the subjective feeling of social isolation, is influenced by the nature and quality of social interactions. Outdoor sports inherently provide opportunities for face-to-face communication and teamwork, which help to cultivate social bonds and reduce loneliness (Unver et al., 2019).

In contrast, while online gaming platforms facilitate digital socialization, they may not always fulfill deeper emotional and social needs. Cudo et al. (2019) identified loneliness as a significant predictor of problematic gaming behaviors, especially among individuals with low emotional intelligence. Tres and Zeliha (2019) further demonstrated that loneliness can both motivate and result from excessive gaming, creating a reinforcing loop of isolation.

Sundberg (2018) noted that while gaming may temporarily alleviate feelings of loneliness, it often fails to provide the enduring social support that face-to-face interactions offer. Similarly, Whitty and McLaughlin (2017) argued that superficial online interactions may exacerbate feelings of disconnection over time, particularly when virtual relationships do not transition into meaningful offline connections.

Despite these concerns, it is important to acknowledge that both outdoor sports and online gaming can serve as valuable social outlets when engaged in healthily. The critical factor lies in

the depth and quality of social connections rather than the medium through which they are formed.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, comparative research design to explore differences in aggression, emotional intelligence, and loneliness between outdoor sports players and online gamers. Utilizing a survey methodology, standardized psychometric instruments were administered to collect data. This approach allowed for objective measurement and statistical comparison between the two distinct groups without experimental manipulation.

Participants

The study sample comprised 210 male college students between the ages of 18 and 30. Participants were equally divided into two groups: 105 outdoor sports players and 105 online gamers. Inclusion criteria required participants to be actively engaged in their respective activities on a regular basis. The focus on male college students ensured a homogeneous sample, minimizing confounding variables related to gender and age while capturing a population highly involved in both recreational domains.

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling was employed to recruit participants who met the inclusion criteria. Surveys were distributed in person to eligible respondents, and participation was voluntary. While convenience sampling limits generalizability, it was deemed appropriate for timely data collection and accessibility to the target demographic.

Measures

To ensure reliable and valid assessment of the psychological variables, the following standardized instruments were used:

- **Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ):**

This scale measures aggression across four dimensions: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. It is widely validated and suitable for assessing aggression in diverse populations.

- **Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS):**

The SEIS assesses emotional intelligence by evaluating the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions. It is appropriate for use among young adult populations and provides a comprehensive assessment of emotional competence.

- **UCLA Loneliness Scale:**

This scale measures subjective feelings of loneliness and perceived social isolation. It is a robust tool commonly used in psychological research to evaluate social connectedness.

Procedure

Participants were informed about the study's purpose and assured of confidentiality and anonymity. After obtaining informed consent, they completed a demographic form followed by the three standardized questionnaires. The surveys were self-administered in a paper-based format, and responses were collected immediately upon completion to maintain data integrity.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were computed for each variable. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare levels of aggression, emotional intelligence, and loneliness between the two groups. The significance level was set at $p < .05$.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Confidentiality of responses was maintained, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize aggression, emotional intelligence, and loneliness scores for the overall sample ($N = 210$), as well as for each group (outdoor sports players and online gamers).



Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Variables (N = 210)

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Aggression	30	128	80.13	18.46	-0.13	-0.06
Emotional Intelligence	45	159	111.54	19.34	-0.17	0.21
Loneliness	35	60	47.33	4.06	-0.02	0.42

Note. Higher scores indicate higher levels of the respective variable.

The mean aggression score was 80.13, indicating moderate aggression across the sample. The mean emotional intelligence score was 111.54, reflecting a relatively balanced emotional competence, while the mean loneliness score was 47.33, suggesting moderate levels of perceived loneliness. Skewness and kurtosis values indicated a normal distribution for all variables.

Inferential Statistics

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether significant differences existed between outdoor sports players and online gamers in terms of aggression, emotional intelligence, and loneliness.

Table 2

ANOVA Results Comparing Outdoor Sports Players and Online Gamers

Variable	F (1, 208)	p-value
Aggression	0.24	.628
Emotional Intelligence	2.67	.104
Loneliness	0.10	.747

Note. Significance level set at $p < .05$.

The analysis revealed no significant differences between outdoor sports players and online gamers across any of the variables:



- **Aggression:** $F(1, 208) = 0.24, p = .628$
- **Emotional Intelligence:** $F(1, 208) = 2.67, p = .104$
- **Loneliness:** $F(1, 208) = 0.10, p = .747$

These findings suggest that the type of recreational activity—outdoor sports or online gaming—does not significantly influence aggression, emotional intelligence, or loneliness among young males in this sample.

DISCUSSION

Overview of Findings

This study set out to explore whether young male outdoor sports players and online gamers differ in their levels of aggression, emotional intelligence, and loneliness. Contrary to the initial hypothesis, the analysis revealed no statistically significant differences between the two groups across any of the measured variables. These findings suggest that recreational choice—whether outdoor physical activities or digital gaming—does not distinctly shape psychological profiles concerning aggression, emotional intelligence, or loneliness in this population.

Interpretation of Results

The absence of significant differences may be explained by the shared psychological and social experiences inherent in both activities. Outdoor sports players benefit from teamwork, structured environments, and face-to-face social interaction, which promote emotional regulation and social engagement. However, online gaming communities also foster social connectivity through team play, cooperative missions, and virtual communication, providing a sense of belonging for many players.

Aggression, often linked to competitiveness and frustration, can be present in both contexts. Competitive sports naturally involve physical confrontation and emotional intensity, while gaming environments can trigger frustration through competitive losses or perceived unfairness. Despite these similarities, participants in both groups likely engage in healthy coping strategies and maintain social support systems that mitigate extreme aggressive tendencies.

Emotional intelligence plays a pivotal role in moderating emotional responses in both sports and gaming. Outdoor sports cultivate emotional intelligence through in-person

collaboration and real-time social cues, while gamers develop parallel emotional management skills in high-pressure virtual environments. The comparable emotional intelligence scores between the groups reflect these shared opportunities for emotional development.

Regarding loneliness, both groups reported moderate levels, indicating that neither activity inherently increases nor reduces feelings of isolation. Outdoor sports players experience social bonding through shared physical activities, while online gamers often form meaningful digital communities. This reinforces the idea that the quality of social interactions, rather than the medium, is critical in addressing loneliness.

Implications of the Study

The findings challenge widespread assumptions that online gamers are inherently more aggressive or lonelier than their counterparts engaged in physical sports. Instead, they highlight the importance of considering individual differences, coping mechanisms, and the quality of social connections when assessing psychological well-being.

These results carry important implications for mental health practitioners, educators, and policymakers. Programs aimed at promoting emotional well-being should focus less on the type of recreational activity and more on enhancing emotional intelligence, fostering meaningful social connections, and supporting healthy coping strategies across diverse recreational pursuits.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this study offers valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the use of convenience sampling and a male-only sample restricts the generalizability of the findings. Future research should incorporate larger, more diverse samples, including female participants and different age groups, to provide a broader perspective.

Second, the reliance on self-report measures may introduce response biases. Incorporating qualitative methods or behavioral observations could yield richer data. Additionally, future studies might explore variations within each group, such as differences between individual versus team sports, or casual versus competitive gaming.

Lastly, while this study focused on aggression, emotional intelligence, and loneliness, future research could expand to include related constructs such as stress, resilience, self-efficacy,

and social competence. Such investigations would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how recreational activities influence psychological health.

Practical Applications

For mental health professionals, this study underscores the importance of promoting emotional intelligence and social support across all recreational contexts. Interventions could include workshops on emotional regulation for athletes and gamers alike, as well as community-building initiatives that foster meaningful connections.

Educational institutions and community organizations can integrate both physical and digital recreational activities into wellness programs, ensuring balanced opportunities for socialization and emotional development. By recognizing the benefits of both outdoor sports and online gaming, stakeholders can better support the diverse interests and well-being of young adults.

CONCLUSION

This study explored whether engagement in outdoor sports or online gaming influences levels of aggression, emotional intelligence, and loneliness among young males. The findings revealed no significant differences between the two groups, suggesting that the type of recreational activity alone does not determine these psychological outcomes. Both outdoor sports and online gaming provide meaningful opportunities for social interaction, emotional development, and coping, which may contribute to similar psychological profiles in these areas.

These results challenge conventional assumptions that online gaming fosters heightened aggression or loneliness, or that outdoor sports inherently promote superior emotional intelligence. Instead, the study emphasizes that individual factors such as personality traits, coping strategies, and the quality of social interactions play more decisive roles in shaping emotional and behavioral outcomes than the recreational activity itself.

The implications of this research are both practical and theoretical. Mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers should adopt a more nuanced perspective when designing interventions aimed at young adults. Rather than categorizing recreational activities as inherently beneficial or harmful, efforts should focus on enhancing emotional intelligence,

fostering supportive social environments, and promoting healthy coping strategies across all forms of recreation.

While the study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The sample's demographic homogeneity and the reliance on self-reported measures suggest the need for future research involving diverse populations and mixed-method approaches. Expanding the scope to examine additional psychological variables, such as stress management and social competence, would further enrich understanding in this field.

In conclusion, this research highlights the evolving nature of recreational activities and their psychological impacts. By recognizing the potential benefits of both outdoor sports and online gaming, stakeholders can better support the emotional well-being of young adults, encouraging balanced and fulfilling lifestyles that embrace diverse interests and modes of engagement.

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