

## **A Comparative Analysis of Social, Spiritual, Emotional and Stress Control Wellness between Male and Female Sportspersons**

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**DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.10.5281/zenodo.22694206](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10.5281/zenodo.22694206)**

### **ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** The study aimed to compare the differences between the levels of social wellness, spiritual wellness, emotional wellness and stress control wellness experienced by male and female sportspersons.

**Method:** 90 male and female sportspersons (45 each) of different colleges, universities, and sports centres of Gujarat were selected based on random sampling, with ages ranging from 18 to 25 years, from Summer Camp 2017, organized by the Sports Authority of Gujarat. Gender was considered as an independent variable; social, spiritual, emotional and stress control wellness were considered as dependent variables for the present study. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the nature of the data, followed by the Shapiro-Wilk test and an Independent Sample t-test for inferential analysis, along with Cohen's d for effect size analysis.

**Result:** The findings revealed statistically significant gender differences across all four dimensions of wellness ( $p < .001$ ). Female athletes demonstrated significantly higher levels of social wellness, emotional wellness, and stress control wellness compared to male athletes, who reported significantly greater spiritual wellness. The observed differences were associated with a large to very large effect size.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that wellness among sportspersons is a multi-dimensional and varies significantly according to gender. While both male and female athletes demonstrated a favourable level of wellness, female athletes exhibited stronger social connections, emotional well-being and better stress management, whereas male athletes demonstrated greater spiritual wellness.

**Keywords:** Social wellness, Spiritual Wellness, Emotional Wellness, Stress Control Wellness, and Gender.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Social wellness refers to the quality of relationships established and maintained, and the way they interact with others emphasizing effective interpersonal functioning and

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meaningful social relations (Hettler, 1980; Roscoe, 2011). Our relationships can offer support during difficult times. Social wellness involves building healthy, nurturing, and supportive relationships as well as fostering a genuine connection with those around you. Conscious actions are important in learning how to balance your social life with your academic and professional lives. Social wellness also includes balancing the unique needs of intimate and romantic relationships with other important domains of life while promoting communication, social responsibility, and mutual respect (White & Jha, 2023)

The relationships between sports and religions have shifted and evolved across different historical periods and cultural contexts (Coakley, 2021). Physical activities and sports in many pre-industrial societies were linked to religious rituals. This remains true today in traditional cultures where physical games and challenging activities may be incorporated into cultural rituals that are linked to spiritual or supernatural beliefs (Coakley, 2021). For example, the histories of many Indigenous cultures in North America include long traditions of games and races that are regarded as having spiritual significance and are performed as a part of religious or ceremonial observances (Gillreath-Brown, 2023).

As per Lazarus (1991) and Gross (2015), emotion is a psychological state that results from an individual's appraisal of internal and external stimuli, inspiring ideas and actions aimed at accomplishing certain objectives or fulfilling individual personal needs. Since emotional experiences cause physiological and psychological responses that affect an individual's behaviour towards particular goals, emotion is a fundamental motivating factor (Izard, 2010; Tyng et al., 2017). Emotions are an essential component of human functioning and have a significant impact on interpersonal relationships, cognition, decision-making, and overall psychological well-being (Petrova & Gross, 2023).

Stress management refers to the practice of identifying stress and adopting effective cognitive, behavioural, and lifestyle strategies to reduce its detrimental effects on physical and mental health (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Individuals often have greater control over their responses to these difficulties than they think, even though many stressors, such as work pressure, financial obligation, and family responsibilities, may not be completely eliminated (Park & Iacocca, 2014). Effective stress management involves taking responsibility for one's lifestyle, thoughts, emotions, and coping behaviours to adapt successfully to stressful situations (Pascoe et al., 2020). Adopting good coping strategies, such as regular exercise, relaxation methods, social support, and positive cognitive appraisal, can help reduce stress, improve resilience, and regain control over daily life regardless of the level of stress encountered.

## **Objectives of the Study**

1. To compare the level of Social Wellness between male and female sportspersons.
2. To compare the level of Spiritual Wellness between male and female sportspersons.
3. To compare the level of Emotional Wellness between male and female sportspersons.

4. To compare the level of Stress Control Wellness between male and female sportspersons.

## Significance of the Study

The current study examines the gender differences in the social, spiritual, emotional and stress control wellness by contributing to the understanding of athletes' wellness. This research takes a holistic approach by emphasizing psychological and social factors that affect athletes' overall well-being, compared to other studies that focus mostly on the physical performance of athletes. Additionally, the study identifies variations across multiple dimensions of wellness in a sports setting, which helps to integrate the psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being of athletes rather than limiting training to physical conditioning alone.

## Research Procedure:

**Research Design:** A cross-sectional comparative design was used to compare levels of social, spiritual, emotional, and stress-control wellness between male and female athletes in Gujarat. The cross-sectional approach enables measurement of subjects' data at a single point in time, and the study's comparative design examines gender-based differences in aspects of wellness among male and female athletes.

**Participants:** A total of 90 subjects (45 male and 45 female) aged between 18 and 25 years from different colleges, universities and sports centres of Gujarat were selected through a random sampling method.

**Table No. 1:** Distribution of Participants as per Gender and Sleep Duration (N = 90)

| Characteristics | Grouping | Number of Participants | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|----------|------------------------|----------------|
| Gender          | Male     | 45                     | 50.00          |
|                 | Female   | 45                     | 50.00          |

**Selection of Variables:** The study considered gender as an independent variable, and social wellness, spiritual wellness, emotional wellness and stress control wellness were considered as dependent variables.

- **Social Wellness:** Social wellness is defined as the quality and extent of interaction with others and the interdependency between the individuals, others, the community, and nature. Additionally, it comprises the skills and comfort level that one can express in the context of interpersonal interaction, as well as the motivation, action, intent, and perception of those interactions (Proctor et al., 2023).
- **Spiritual Wellness:** Hettler, (1980) conceptualizes spiritual wellness as seeking meaning and purpose in life, developing a value system, and maintaining harmony between one's

beliefs and actions. It encourages individuals to identify a unified force or purpose that guides their lives.

- **Emotional Wellness:** Emotional wellness consists of several psychometrically defined concepts, which include positive mental health, psychological well-being, health-related quality of life, and subjective wellness (Feller et al., 2018).
- **Stress Control Wellness:** Stress control wellness refers to an individual's ability to recognize source of stress, regulate emotional and physiological responses, effectively use different coping strategies, and maintain normal physical and psychological functioning when faced with daily challenges (Ong et al., 2004).

**Questionnaire:** Lifestyle was assessed by the Lifestyle Assessment Inventory developed by Anspach, Davids, Michael, H. Hamrich and Frank D. Rosato. Validity of the questionnaire in Indian Conditions is found .89.

#### Administration of Questionnaire

The inventory contains a total of 80 questions. These questions/statements were evenly divided into Social Wellness, Spiritual Wellness, Emotional Wellness and Stress Control Wellness. The data was measured using a five-point ordinal scale; the maximum response score from the total inventory is 100, and the minimum is 10. The normative response intervals for Social, Spiritual, Emotional and Stress Control Wellness assessment scores are shown in Table 2:

**Table No. 2:** Standard Normative Score for Lifestyle Assessment Inventory

| Range of Scores | Standard Norms    |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 86-100:         | Excellent         |
| 70-85:          | Good              |
| 50-69:          | Average           |
| 30-49:          | Below average     |
| Less than 30:   | Needs improvement |

#### Collection of Data

The data were collected during Summer Camp 2017, organised by the Sports Authority of Gujarat at Manjalpur, Devgagh-Baria, and Nadiad. The subjects were given 15 to 20 minutes, along with the necessary instructions required before filling out the questionnaire.

**Statistical Test:** The SPSS 27 edition was used for statistical analysis of the data collected from subjects. To describe the nature of the data across different dimensions of wellness, descriptive statistics, that is, mean and standard deviation, were used. To check the normality of the data across male and female subjects, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used at 0.05 significance. Based on the *p*-value of the Shapiro-Wilk test, the independent-samples t-test was used for further analysis, along with Cohen's *d* to assess the effect size between the two genders.

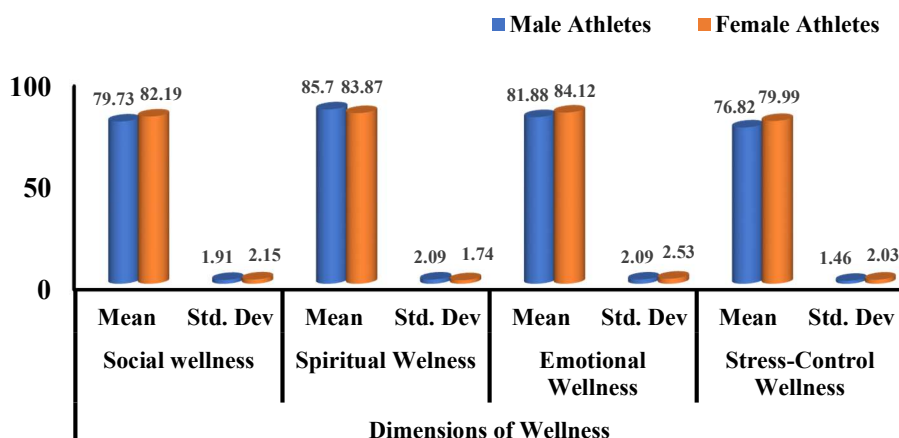
### Result:

**Table No. 3:** Descriptive Statistics of the four dimensions of Wellness

| Parameters              | Male  |          | Level of Dimensions of Wellness | Female |          | Level of Dimensions of Wellness |
|-------------------------|-------|----------|---------------------------------|--------|----------|---------------------------------|
|                         | Mean  | Std. Dev |                                 | Mean   | Std. Dev |                                 |
| Social Wellness         | 79.73 | ± 1.91   | Good                            | 82.19  | ± 2.15   | Good                            |
| Spiritual Wellness      | 85.70 | ± 2.09   | Excellent                       | 83.87  | ± 1.74   | Good                            |
| Emotional Wellness      | 81.88 | ± 2.09   | Good                            | 84.12  | ± 2.53   | Good                            |
| Stress Control Wellness | 76.82 | ± 1.46   | Good                            | 79.99  | ± 2.03   | Good                            |

Table 3 demonstrates that both male and female subjects revealed almost similar levels of wellness across dimensions, with the maximum score falling within the good category. Male athletes showed the highest mean value in spiritual wellness, which was categorized as “excellent”, suggesting a stronger sense of purpose, intrinsic values, and spiritual well-being. The other dimensions, i.e., social wellness and emotional wellness and the level of stress control among male athletes were classified as “Good”, demonstrating adequate interpersonal relationships, emotional stability, and optimum stress management ability.

Female athletes, compared to males, showed a higher mean value in emotional wellness, closely followed by spiritual wellness. Although having a high mean value on spiritual wellness, it was classified as “Good” rather than “Excellent”. Along with spiritual wellness, the remaining dimensions, such as social wellness and stress control wellness, are categorized as “Good”, reflecting healthy social interactions within society or the community and effective stress coping strategies.



**Figure No. 1:** Graphical Representation of Mean Values and Std. Deviation of Different Dimensions of Wellness Across Male & Female Athletes

As shown in Table 4, the  $p$ -value of the Shapiro-Wilk test across all the dimensions of wellness is above 5% significance, thus the assumption of normality of the data across male and female athletes in social, spiritual, emotional, and stress control wellness is satisfied. The independent sample t-test will be used for further analysis and to assess whether the mean differences shown in Table 3 are statistically significant or not.

**Table No. 4:** Result of the Shapiro-Wilk Test for Normality of Wellness Dimensions

| Dimensions              | Gender | W-Statistics | df | $p$ -value | Decision     | Interpretation       |
|-------------------------|--------|--------------|----|------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Social Wellness         | Male   | 0.986        | 45 | 0.871      | Accept $H_0$ | Normally Distributed |
|                         | Female | 0.978        | 45 | 0.554      | Accept $H_0$ | Normally Distributed |
| Spiritual Wellness      | Male   | 0.992        | 45 | 0.985      | Accept $H_0$ | Normally Distributed |
|                         | Female | 0.972        | 45 | 0.339      | Accept $H_0$ | Normally Distributed |
| Emotional Wellness      | Male   | 0.992        | 45 | 0.986      | Accept $H_0$ | Normally Distributed |
|                         | Female | 0.982        | 45 | 0.713      | Accept $H_0$ | Normally Distributed |
| Stress Control Wellness | Male   | 0.988        | 45 | 0.912      | Accept $H_0$ | Normally Distributed |
|                         | Female | 0.972        | 45 | 0.349      | Accept $H_0$ | Normally Distributed |

**Table No. 5:** Result of Independent Sample t-Test across Different Dimensions of Wellness of male and female athletes

| D                       | t     | df | Sig. | M     | C     | E          | Interpretation         |
|-------------------------|-------|----|------|-------|-------|------------|------------------------|
| Social Wellness         | -5.70 | 88 | .001 | -2.45 | -1.20 | Large      | Significant Difference |
| Spiritual Wellness      | 4.50  | 88 | .001 | 1.83  | 0.95  | Large      | Significant Difference |
| Emotional Wellness      | -4.57 | 88 | .001 | -2.23 | -0.96 | Large      | Significant Difference |
| Stress Control wellness | -8.50 | 88 | .001 | -3.17 | -1.79 | Very Large | Significant Difference |

**Symbols:**

**D- Dimension, t- t value, s-Sig.(2-tailed), M- Mean Difference, C- Cohens d, E- Effect size**

Table 5 presents the findings of the independent sample t-test used to assess gender differences across four dimensions of wellness among athletes. The result demonstrates a statistically significant difference between male and female athletes in all wellness dimensions ( $p < .001$ ), suggesting that variation exists in male and female athletes in social, spiritual, emotional, and self-control wellness. A significant difference was observed in social wellness ( $t = -5.70$ ,  $df = 88$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that female athletes reported a higher level of social wellness compared to male athletes. Along with having a significant difference, the effect size of social wellness was large (Cohen's  $d = -1.20$ ), indicating that the magnitude of this difference is considerable and practically meaningful. As opposed to social wellness, male athletes report significantly higher spiritual wellness than female athletes ( $t = 4.50$ ,  $df = 88$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with a positive mean difference (1.83). These differences go beyond statistical significance with a large effect size (Cohen's  $d = 0.95$ ), which is practically considerable.

Similarly, there was a significant difference in the level of emotional wellness between male and female athletes ( $t = -4.57$ ,  $df = 88$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The effect size (Cohen's  $d = -0.96$ ), along with a negative mean difference (-2.23), suggests that female athletes report a higher level of emotional wellness, along with having better emotion management abilities and maintaining psychological well-being, compared to male athletes. Among all four dimensions of wellness, the highest disparities between male and female athletes were observed in stress control wellness. Female athletes reported significantly higher scores than males, as suggested by the negative mean difference (-3.17) and a highly significant  $t$ -value ( $t = -8.50$ ,  $df = 88$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

The effect size was very large (Cohen's  $d = -1.79$ ), demonstrating that the statistical difference is both highly meaningful and practically important. Overall, the findings suggest



that while male athletes had much higher levels of spiritual wellness, female athletes have significantly higher levels of social, emotional, and stress control wellness. Additionally, their consistently large effect sizes across the four dimensions indicate that these differences are both statistically significant and practically meaningful.

## Discussion

The present study focused on how athletes' social, spiritual, emotional, and stress-control wellness varied between male and female sportspersons. The findings suggest significant differences across all four dimensions of wellness. Although both male and female athletes reported well-being levels that fell within the “Good” category, female athletes reported much higher levels of social, emotional, and stress control wellness, compared to male athletes demonstrating significantly higher spiritual wellness. These differences are not only statistically significant but also practically meaningful, as evidenced by the large to very large effect size.

These results emphasize the increasing understanding that the development of athletes goes beyond physical conditioning and necessitates equal consideration of psychological and emotional dimensions of well-being, along with physical dimensions. The result revealed that female athletes demonstrate significantly higher in social wellness compared to male athletes. The ability to build supportive networks, social connections, and the quality of interpersonal interaction are all indicators of social well-being. Female sportspersons experience higher social wellness and tend to make closer emotional bonds and communicate more openly in social settings. Prior studies conclude that women are more likely than men to actively engage in collaborative social interactions, seek emotional support, and maintain close interpersonal relationships (Umberson & Montez, 2010). Ryff and Keyes (1995) observed similar results that healthy interpersonal interactions are important to psychological well-being and contribute significantly to overall life satisfaction.

Compared to females, male sportspersons demonstrated significantly greater spiritual wellness. Beyond religious beliefs, spiritual wellness consists of inner harmony, personal values, meaning and purpose of life (Hettler, 1980). Participating in competitive sports often exposes athletes to challenging experiences requiring discipline, perseverance, and resilience. These experiences may be interpreted by male athletes within a broader personal value system that strengthens their self-belief and a stronger sense of purpose. As per Park, (2013) study, an individual who perceived greater meaning in life exhibits higher levels of psychological adjustment and resilience under pressure. Similarly, Watson and Nestik, (2005) argued spirituality can be a valuable psychological resource that helps athletes deal with uncertainty, competition, injury, and performance pressure.

The increased spiritual wellness reported by male sportspersons in this study may indicate a greater dependency on internal belief systems during athletic participation. However, it should be noted that the differences do not mean that female athletes have less spiritual



development. The fact that both groups scored in the “Good” to “Excellent” range shows that, regardless of gender, spirituality is still an important aspect of an athlete's fitness.

Additionally, female athletes compared to males showed significantly greater emotional wellness. Emotional wellness involves recognizing, understanding, and controlling emotions while maintaining psychological equilibrium (Feller et al., 2018). Female athletes often receive greater encouragement to express emotions and openly seek emotional support when facing challenges. Such actions may encourage improved emotional control and adaptive coping mechanisms. Effective emotion regulation improves psychological functioning and lowers susceptibility to stress-related diseases (Gross, 1998). Lane et al., (2011) concluded that effective emotional regulation enhances focus, self-assurance, and the ability to make decisions under pressure, jointly benefiting athletic performance. The largest difference was observed in stress control wellness, with female athletes scoring significantly higher than male athletes. Stress management may be one of the most significant gender related differences found in the present study, along with a very large effect size. As per Lazarus and Folkman (1984) different studies have highlighted that effective stress management relies on adaptive coping strategies rather than total absence of stress. Resilience and psychological well-being are typically higher among athletes who use problem-focused coping, emotional regulation, and social support. Athletes using adaptive coping strategies report improved psychological adjustment and reduced competitive anxiety (Nicholls & Polman, 2007). Female athletes in the present study may have been more likely to employ such adaptive coping mechanisms, contributing to their significantly higher stress control wellness.

## **Conclusion of the Study**

The study concludes that athletes' wellness is a multi-dimensional construct that includes social, spiritual, emotional, and stress control wellness, all of which contribute to overall well-being. Although both male and female athletes demonstrated good levels of wellness, significant gender differences were observed across all dimensions of wellness. Female athletes had elevated levels of social, emotional, and stress control wellness, emphasizing enhance interpersonal interaction, efficient emotional regulation, and better stress coping strategies. Compared to male athletes, who exhibited an increased level of spiritual wellness, reflecting a stronger sense of purpose and personal values. The large to very large effect size indicates that these differences are both statistically significant and practically relevant.

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