

Impact of Long-Term Sports Participation in Athletic Running Events; Performance at Sports Schools in Sri Lanka

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This study aimed to understand the impact of long-term sports participation on athletic running event performance and academic subject stream choices among athletes in sports schools in Sri Lanka. A descriptive survey design was applied, involving 50 advanced-level athletes selected through total population sampling from each province based on their performance in recent years. The factors considered for long-term participation included education, sports, social background, family, injuries, and nutrition. Data were collected via a questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS software with ANOVA to determine the significance of the model. The results showed that education background ($p < 0.05$), sports background ($p < 0.05$), and social background ($p < 0.05$) were statistically significant. The majority of the athletes (70%) opted for the Art stream, with 16% in Commerce and 14% in Technology. Performance levels indicated that 68% were national-level athletes, 26% provincial, 4% district, and 2% zonal. These findings suggest the need for improved facilities and support for athletes to balance sports and academic pursuits. This study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing long-term participation in sports among advanced-level athletes in Sri Lanka. The results emphasize the importance of supporting athletes' educational and social needs to enhance their performance and sustain their involvement in sports. Improved facilities and targeted support can help balance the demands of sports and academics, contributing to the overall development of athletes.

Keywords: *advanced level athletes, long-term participation, performance, sports school*