

An Investigation Of Athletes' Talent Management Provisions In The Educational Settings; A Comparison Of The Higher Education Institutions Of Sindh And Punjab

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Abstract

The management of sporting talent plays a vital role in talent development and fruitful results in better sports performance. In sports talent management, provision of gyms, indoor/outdoor grounds, sports equipment for regular practice, availability of qualified coaches and trainers to ensure coaching & training sessions are considered as basic facilities. Similarly, a Player's psychosocial talent, participation opportunities, and extrinsic motivation greatly affect the management of athletic talent. The main objective of this research is to assess the provisions of equipment, gyms, grounds, availability of coaches, trainers, coaching & training sessions in the Universities of Sindh and Punjab. A mixed method (quantitative & qualitative) research was conducted on the Talent Management approaches of the Universities of two provinces. Incharges/Directors Sports for the quantitative study and the intervarsity players for the qualitative study were the population of the study. A convenience sampling technique was applied for the qualitative data and a systematic sampling technique was used for quantitative data. 01 charge/ Director-Sports for quantitative data and 02 players for qualitative data were taken as samples from each University. The statistical analysis shows, the computed value of the t-statistic is -2.383, and the p-value of 0.020 that indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the "Sindh" and "Punjab" which further indicates that there is a difference in the provisions of athletic talent management in the Higher Education Institutions two provinces.

Keywords; Indoor/outdoor grounds, Gym, equipment, training, coaching, talent management.

Introduction

Higher Education Institutions

The role of universities for youths is multifaceted and critical for personal, professional, and societal development. Scholarly articles emphasize several key aspects. According to Smith and Johnson (2020), universities provide structured education and training programs that equip youths with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for various careers. Through academic courses, practical experiences, and research opportunities, universities foster intellectual growth and prepare students for the complexities of the modern world. Additionally, Jones et al. (2019) highlight the importance of higher education in encouraging critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and problem-solving abilities among youths. By engaging with diverse perspectives, challenging ideas, and complex problems, students develop the capacity to evaluate information critically and

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make informed decisions. Furthermore, Brown and Garcia (2018) argue that universities serve as environments for personal growth and self-discovery, allowing students to explore their interests, passions, and identities while interacting with peers from diverse backgrounds. This fosters personal development, resilience, and adaptability. Moreover, Smith et al. (2021) emphasize the role of universities in preparing youths for the workforce by offering career counseling, internships, and co-op programs to enhance students' employability and facilitate their transition into the job market.

Universities also play a crucial role in driving research and innovation, as noted by White and Lee (2020). They are hubs of research where youths have the opportunity to engage in cutting-edge projects, contribute to knowledge creation, and develop innovative solutions to real-world challenges. Additionally, universities instill values of civic engagement, social responsibility, and global citizenship in youths through community service initiatives, volunteer opportunities, and social justice advocacy (Johnson & Smith, 2017). Moreover, universities provide platforms for networking and building social capital (Garcia & Brown, 2019). Students interact with faculty members, alumni, and industry professionals, expanding their professional networks and access to opportunities. These connections can be invaluable for career advancement and personal growth. Finally, universities promote diversity and inclusion by creating inclusive learning environments where all students feel valued and respected (Lee et al., 2022). They celebrate diversity through multicultural events, support services for underrepresented groups, and inclusive policies that ensure equal access to education for all. Overall, as highlighted by various scholars, universities serve as transformative institutions that empower youths to realize their full potential, contribute meaningfully to society, and navigate the complexities of the contemporary world (Brown et al., 2020).

Sports

Participation in sports among youth has been linked to various positive outcomes, both physically and mentally. According to Smith and Jones (2018), engagement in regular physical activity, such as sports, during adolescence is associated with improved cardiovascular health and reduced risk of obesity. Additionally, research by Brown et al. (2019) suggests that involvement in team sports fosters important social skills, such as teamwork and communication, which are essential for success in both academic and professional settings. Furthermore, studies have shown that participation in sports can have a positive impact on mental well-being by reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression (Johnson et al., 2020).

Physical Health Benefits: Numerous studies highlight the positive effects of sports participation on physical health. Regular exercise through sports helps in maintaining a healthy weight, reducing the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases, and improving overall fitness levels. (Telama et al., 2005; Warburton et al., 2006).

Mental Health and Well-being: Engaging in sports is associated with improved mental health outcomes such as reduced stress, anxiety, and depression. Physical activity stimulates the release of endorphins, neurotransmitters that promote happiness and well-being. Additionally, sports involvement fosters social connections and provides a sense of belonging, which are crucial for mental health. (Fox, 1999; Penedo & Dahn, 2005).

Cognitive Benefits: Research suggests that participation in sports can positively impact cognitive function and academic performance. Physical activity enhances brain function, including memory, attention, and executive functions, which are essential for learning and academic achievement. (Hillman et al., 2008; Tomporowski et al., 2011). **Social Development:** Sports offer opportunities for socialization, teamwork, and leadership development, particularly in team sports. Through sports participation, individuals learn important social skills such as communication, cooperation, conflict resolution, and goal-setting, which are transferable to various aspects of life. (Eime et al., 2013; Holt et al., 2017) **Community Engagement and Integration:** Sports have the potential to bring communities together, transcending cultural, social, and economic barriers. Sporting events and activities serve as platforms for community engagement, fostering social cohesion, and promoting a sense of unity and identity among diverse populations. (Collins & Kay, 2003; Spaaij & Broerse, 2017). **Personal Development and Character Building:** Participation in sports instills important values such as discipline, perseverance, resilience, and respect for rules and opponents. Athletes often develop a strong work ethic, learn to cope with failure and adversity, and build confidence through mastering skills and achieving goals, all of which contribute to personal growth and character development. (Gould & Carson, 2008; Coakley, 2011).

Importance of Sports in Higher Education Institutions

University sports are a fascinating area of study, and scholarly articles delve into various aspects of this topic (Smith, 2019). Research often examines the effects of participating in university sports on student-athletes' academic performance, personal development, and overall well-being (Jones & Johnson, 2020). Some studies suggest that while participation in sports can enhance time management skills and foster a sense of discipline, it may also lead to increased stress and academic pressure (Brown et al., 2018). Scholarly articles also explore the economics of university sports, including revenue generation, funding models, and the allocation of resources (Garcia, 2021). **Engagement and Motivation:** Games can engage students and motivate them to participate actively in the learning process. According to research by Gee (2003), games provide a context where learners can explore, experiment, and fail without fear of real-life consequences, thus fostering intrinsic motivation. **Enhanced Learning:** Games can facilitate deeper learning by providing interactive and immersive experiences. Studies by Shaffer (2006) and Squire (2005) suggest that well-designed educational games can promote critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and knowledge retention. **Collaboration and Social Learning:** Many games involve collaboration and teamwork, which can promote social interaction and peer learning. Research by Steinkuehler and Duncan (2008) highlights the importance of social networks within gaming communities and their potential for knowledge sharing and construction. **Skill Development:** Games often require players to develop a range of skills, including cognitive, strategic, and interpersonal skills. For example, simulation games can help students develop decision-making and time-management skills relevant to their field of study (Gredler, 2004). **Assessment and Feedback:** Games can be used as assessment tools to evaluate students' knowledge and skills dynamically and engagingly. By collecting data on players' interactions and performance,

educators can gain insights into students' learning processes and provide personalized feedback (Garris et al., 2002). Creativity and Innovation: Some games encourage creativity and innovation by allowing players to customize their experiences or create their content. Research by Kafai and Resnick (1996) emphasizes the role of game design and modding activities in fostering creative expression and problem-solving skills.

Sports Talent

Sports Talent refers to innate or acquired athletic abilities (Cote and Viermaa, 2014). Discipline, Commitment, Resilience, and Social Support are the psycho-social competencies of the players and social support is the ability to use emotional, informational, and tangible support (Holt & Dunn, 2004). The Psycho-social talent of the players comprises four main competencies which are discipline, commitment, social support, and resilience. These four competencies are correlated with each other and these all have a direct link with the players' active participation and consequent sports performances (Khaskheli and Ansari, 2023). Players' Discipline towards sports; Discipline of the Players - is characterized by self-control and adherence to rules (Duckworth, et al., 2017). Players' commitment towards Sports Commitment of the Players - representing dedication and effort invested in sports pursuits (Scanlon, 1993). Players' resilience towards sports; Resilience of the Players - the ability to bounce back from setbacks (Fletcher and Sarkar, 2012). Social Support to the Players; Social Support to the Players - surrounding support networks including coaches, teammates, and family (Holt and Hoar, 2006).

Talent Management

Strategies employed by sports organizations for athlete development are considered talent management (Sotiriadou et al., 2008). With a variety of skills in one another, every child is born unique. For a child to become an athlete, his teacher or coach has to be aware of this uniqueness. Achieving sports performance in a child cannot be easy: it will take an extended period, starting from the earliest childhood years. Thus, it is necessary to know the child's personality, development, and movement patterns that are used as a signal in identifying his talent which will be acquired by teachers and trainers (Visalim, et al., 2018). Good players don't grow overnight, but for them to be able to fulfill their potential, they need to develop natural talent and ability. The player's response to several environmental interactions and stimuli, which are present daily, will influence the processes shaping his or her success in any sport. Therefore, the player must be regarded as a multi-factorial entity and assessed whether or not it can adapt to the situation in which he is exposed (Pruna, et al., 2018). A sports organization's succession and talent management approach should be shaped by its strategic objectives, the context in which it finds itself, and its talent requirements. Although each organization has different requirements for succession and talent management policies and processes, there are some basic elements to developing the right processes. Succession and management talent planning instructions begin with the managing director and extend to all levels of managers without obvious failure of development plans (Barbu & Diaconescu, 2018).

Objective of the study

To examine the association of managing the sports talent at the Universities of Sindh and Punjab.

H⁰: There is no association in the athletes' talent management provisions in the Universities of Sindh and Punjab.

Statement of the Problem

All Pakistan Intersports Championship of different games is organized by the different Universities of Pakistan in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad-Pakistan every year. During competitions, the selection committee constituted by HEC selects the player for its representation to participate in national games. In the national games, there is also the probability of the players being selected for international competitions. It has been observed that the majority of selected players to represent HEC belong to the Universities of Punjab whereas, on the contrary, the least number of players belong to the Universities of Sindh. This phenomenon raises a question of how athletic talent is developed and managed at the Universities of Punjab and Sindh. According to the review of the literature, there has not been conducted this type of research before. This study will contribute a filling of gap in the literature and the methods of talent management being adopted in the Universities of the Punjab can be utilized in the rest of the provinces or wherever required.

Methods and Material Research Design

This study consists of a mixed methodology (qualitative and quantitative) in which a comparative analysis of talent management methods has been ensured.

Population of the study

The Sports officials and the student-players belonging to the different HEC participating Universities of Sindh and Punjab are the population of the study.

Sampling Technique

The quantitative data was collected while applying the convenience sampling technique from the players and the qualitative data was collected using the systematic sampling technique.

Size of the sample

For Quantitative data

- From the Universities of Sindh 28 and from Universities of the Punjab 54 Director/Incharge Sports of Intersports participating Universities for the quantitative data N=83 as one from each University.

For Qualitative data

- From the Universities of Sindh 56 and the Universities of the Punjab 108 players N= 164 as 02 players from each University for qualitative data.

Data collection tool

- A close-ended self-administered survey questionnaire recommended by an expert committee was used to collect quantitative data from the Directors/charge sports working in different Universities of Sindh and Punjab.
- An open-ended questionnaire comprising 07 different questions covering the main

objectives of the study recommended by the expert committee was used to collect qualitative data from the players representing different Universities of Sindh and Punjab in the HEC Sports events.

Study limitation

This research is limited only to the Sports Directors/ Incharges and players of the HEC participating Universities of Sindh and Punjab to comparatively analyze the administrative and managerial procedures for sports talent development and its management.

Data Analysis

After the collection of the data, the same was edited, coded, entered, analyzed, and interpreted. The analysis of the quantitative part of the data was ensured through the SPSS, whereas, the qualitative part of the data was analyzed through thematic analysis.

Results (quantitative data)

Table 4.1 The Qualification of the Respondents

Item	Province	Option	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Qualification of the respondents	Sindh	Bachelor	3	10.7	10.7
		Master	20	70.2	70.2
		M. Phil	5	17.9	17.9
		Total	28	100.0	100.0
	Punjab	Bachelor	1	1.9	1.9
		Master	24	44.1	45.9

		M. Phil	26	47.3	47.3
		Ph. D	3	5.7	5.7
		Total	54	100.0	100.0

Source: Self-Survey Data-2023-24

Table 4.1 shows the frequencies, percentages, valid percent, and cumulative percentage of the responses given by the respondents of two provinces while comparing the responses, from Sindh, 10.7% with frequency 3 have their bachelor's degrees. 70.2% with frequency 20 have their master's degrees. 17.9% with frequency 5 have their M. Phil Degrees. Whereas, from Punjab, 1.9% with frequency 1 has a bachelor's degree. 44.9% with a frequency of 24 have their Master's Degree, 47.3% with a frequency of 26 have their M. Phil Degrees, and 5.7% with a frequency of 3 have Ph. D Degrees. As per the responses given by the respondents majority of Director Sports or Incharges of sports in Sindh have their Master's/ 16 years of education whereas in Punjab majority of respondents have their M. Phil Degrees even though few have Ph.D. Degrees. Henceforth, the People belonging to the Sports Management of the Universities of the Punjab are more qualified.

Table 4.3 The maximum level of the respondents have played during student life

Item	Province	Option	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Maximum level of sports played during student life	Sindh	Intercollegiate / interclub	5	17.9	17.9
		Intervarsity	11	39.3	39.3
		Provincial	5	17.9	17.9
		National	6	21.4	21.4
		International	1	3.6	3.6
		Total	28	100.0	100.0
	Punjab	Intercollegiate / interclub	4	7.4	7.4
		Intervarsity	6	11.1	11.1
		Provincial	10	18.5	18.5
		National	26	48.1	48.1
		International	8	14.8	14.8
Total		54	100.0	100.0	

Source: Self-Survey Data-2023-24

Table 4.3, shows the comparison of frequency, percentage, valid percent, and cumulative percent of various responses given by the respondents of two provinces maximum level played by Directors/ Incharges of Sports working in the Universities. As from Sindh, 17.9% with frequency 5 have played interclub/ intercollegiate level, 39.9% with frequency 11 have played Intervarsity level. 17.9% with frequency 5 have played provincial level. 21.4% with frequency 6 have played national level. 3.6% with frequency 1 have played international level. Whereas, from Punjab,

7.4 % with frequency 4 have played intercollegiate/interclub level. 11.1% with frequency 6 have played Intervarsity. 18.5% with a frequency of 10 have played provincial level. 48.5% with a frequency of 26 have played National level and 14.8% with a frequency of 8 have played International level. As per the responses, the majority of the respondents from Sindh Province have played intervarsity level whereas the majority of the respondents from Punjab have played at the national level. Thus, responses demonstrate that the majority of respondents working in the Universities of Sindh have average portfolios as per their playing experiences. Meanwhile, in Punjab, in majority of respondents working in Universities of Punjab have good enough portfolios as per professional sports participation during student life.

Graph 1.1 shows the graphical presentation of the analyzed data for the provision of the basic facilities including indoor/outdoor grounds and gyms for the management of the athletic talent of the players.

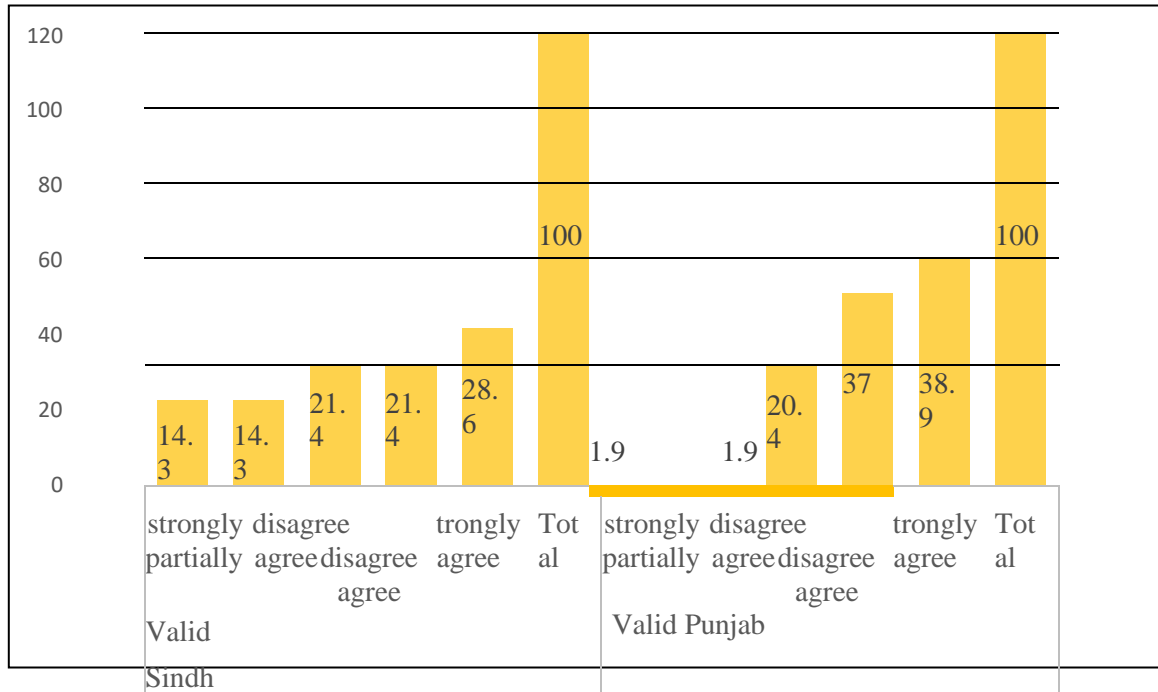


Figure 1.1 shows the graphical presentation of the data, which shows the comparison of frequency and percentage of various responses given by the respondents of two provinces, as the respondents from Sindh, strongly disagreed 14.3% with frequency 4, disagreed 14.3% with frequency 4, disagreed 14.3% with frequency 6, partially agreed, 21.4% with frequency 6, agreed 21.4% with frequency 6 and strongly agreed 28.6% with frequency 8. Whereas, from Punjab, 1.9% strongly disagreed with frequency 1, disagreed 1.9% with frequency 1, 20.4% partially agreed with frequency 11, 37% agreed with frequency 20, and 38.9% with frequency 21 strongly agreed. As per the responses from both provinces, the majority have agreed, partially agreed, and strongly agreed to the provisions of indoor/outdoor sports grounds, and gyms. Henceforth, the analysis shows that the majority of Universities have basic sports facilities available for the players' talent management.

Table 4.4 The results of talent management provisions in the Universities of Sindh and Punjab

Item	Name of Province	Option	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Frequent availability of the equipment, Proper coaches, Coaching sessions, and training programs as per	Sindh	strongly disagree	4	14.3	14.3
		disagree	16	57.2	57.2
		partially agree	5	17.9	17.9
		strongly agree	3	10.7	10.7
		Total	28	100.0	100.0
		strongly disagree	3	5.6	5.6

the specification of games are available for the talent development of the players	Punjab	disagree	7	13.0	13.0
		partially agree	14	25.9	25.9
		agree	11	20.4	20.4
		strongly agree	19	35.2	35.2
		Total	54	100.0	100.0

Source: Self-Survey Data-2023-24

Table 4.4, shows the comparison of frequency, percentage, valid percent, and cumulative percent of various responses given by the respondents of two provinces, as the respondents from Sindh, strongly disagreed, 14.3 with frequency 4, disagreed 57.2% with frequency 16, partially agreed, 17.9% with frequency 5 and strongly agreed 10.7% with frequency 3. Whereas, from Punjab, 5.6% strongly disagreed with frequency 3, 13% with frequency 7, 25.9% partially agreed with frequency 14, 20.4% agreed with frequency 11, and 35.2% with frequency 19, strongly agreed. As per the responses, a maximum number of respondents from Sindh province have disagreed with the statement. Whereas, from the Punjab, the majority of the respondents/DirectorSports have agreed and strongly agreed with the statement which depicts that the proper coaches, coaching sessions training programs, and provision of equipment for athletic talent development and management are rarely available in the Universities of Sindh, whereas in the Universities of the Punjab same are adequately available.

Results (Qualitative data)

Table 4.5 Themes Emerged from data collected from the players through an open-ended question for their talent Management provisions/ facilities/ methods towards sports.

SINDH PROVINCE						PUNJAB PROVINCE					
Theme No. 6						Theme No. 6					
Reduced Data in 1 st to 3 rd step			Reviewing Themes	Explain Data in 5 th to 6 th step		Reduced Data in 1 st to 3 rd step			Reviewing Themes	Explain Data in the 5 th to 6 th step	
Step -1	Step-2	Step-3	Step-4	Step -5	Step-6	Step-1	Step-2	Step-3	Step -4	Step-5	Step-6
Codes	Categories	Theme	Reviewing Themes	Defining and Naming Themes	Final	Codes	Categories	Theme	Reviewing Themes	Defining and Naming Themes	Final
What type of basic sports facilities are available and provided including equipment for general practice, conduct of coaching, and training camps for the talent management or promotion of the players? (Students' Sports Talent Management).											
Indoor courts available	Basic Facilities	Sports Talent	Reviewing themes in this	Direct Quote; (1) In the words of a participant (28 players) from the	Final report	Indoor courts available	Basic Facilities	Sports Talent	Reviewing themes in this	Direct Quote: (I) In the words of one participant	Final report
Outdoor						Outdoor					

Frequent availability of the equipment,	Equal variances assumed	3.493	.065	-2.383	80	.020	-.60185	.25252	-	-
Proper coaches, Coaching sessions, and training programs as per the specification of games are available for the talent development of the players	Equal variances not assumed			-2.227	45.689	.031	-.60185	.27022	-	-
									1.10439	.09932
									1.14587	.05783

Source: Self-Survey Data-2023-24

In table 4.6. the computed value of the t-statistic is -2.383 and the p-value of 0.020 indicates there is a statistically significant difference and we may conclude that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the "Sindh" and "Punjab" universities on the variable "talent management".

Discussion

Sport creates a background that supports an environment in which the participation of all students and the citizens around the institutions of education increases, helps in the development of infrastructure and resources of humans to promote accessibility, and increases the desire for physical activity. An appropriate sports policy supports especially athletes and students and general development and progress towards elite sports and thereby economic development to improve the quality of education. These policies must be adopted by institutional leaders (Viet and Hanh 2021). Exercising activities demonstrate a crucial role and are essential for students and teachers in their everyday lives. The success of good physical education for students creates a strong basis for the sustainable and long-term development of people's wellness, and physical and mental development (MOET, 2019). High schools, colleges, and universities compete in indoor and outdoor games every year. Athletics, football, and basketball are played outdoors, while badminton, volleyball, and table tennis are played indoors. The university is a large institution of learning that has to commit its students, faculty, staff, and community as well as use substantial athletic funds ((Hanks and Eckland, 1976). Participants in sports competitions are rewarded with a certificate of participation (Ashfaq et al., 2020). Some critics argue that colleges and leaders love to organize sports competitions, but different people present that programs of sports and rivalry are important elements of colleges and schools, and both estimates are correct partially. Sport has a long and lasting tradition, representing the basic structure of activity in almost every society that has institutions of higher education (Alwin and Luther, 1977). A huge number of players belong to different games who do not have a proper and regular training environment. Many colleges and universities do not have their coaches (Khaskheli et al., 2020A). The main responsibility of all sports coaches is to improve technical, tactical, and social skills and to ensure character development over time (Khaskheli et al., 2020b). In Punjab, there are enough sports facilities at the secondary school level, but they are not utilized properly. Unfortunately, Pakistan is losing its status in a sport that was once very strong and can have a major impact on sports not

only now but also in the future in almost every corner of the country (Sadiq et al., 2021). The social support to the players of Punjab is frequently available by their parents, teachers, officials, and management at an adequate level, whereas, on the contrary in the Universities of Sindh Province the players have inadequate social support (Khaskheli and Ansari, 2023). And adequate talent management's statistical analysis shows, the computed value of the t-statistic is -2.383, and the p-value of 0.020 that indicates there is a statistically significant difference and we may conclude that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the "Sindh" and "Punjab" universities on the variable "talent management" which further indicates there is a difference in the talent management approaches of sports in two provinces.

Findings

- Quantitative analysis shows that the qualifications of the majority of Director Sports or Incharges of sports in Sindh have a Master's/ 16 years of education whereas in Punjab majority of respondents have M. Phil Degrees even few have Ph.D. Degrees. Henceforth, the People belonging to the Sports Management of the Universities of the Punjab are more qualified.
- Director/ Incharges of Sports working in the Universities of Sindh have normal/ average portfolios as per their playing experiences. Meanwhile, in Punjab, they have good enough portfolios per professional sports participation during student life.
- As per the quantitative analysis Indoor/outdoor sports grounds and gyms are available in the majority of Universities of both provinces. Whereas provision of proper coaches, coaching sessions training programs for athletic talent development and management are rarely available in the Universities of Sindh and the same are adequately available in the Universities of Punjab.
- As per thematic analysis, there is provision of indoor/outdoor sports grounds and gyms in the Universities of both provinces. But there is a shortage of provision of sports equipment for the regular practice, a shortage of Coaches as per the specification of the games, there are minimum coaching camps and training sessions. Whereas, the same is adequately available for the players in the Universities of the Punjab.

Conclusion

The findings of this study describe that the Director / charge sports working in many intervarsity Sports participating Higher Education Institutions of the Punjab are more qualified and have more professional participation experience, they got during their young ages than the Director Sports/ Incharges working in the University of Sindh. In the different Universities of Punjab, the sporting talent of the players is adequately developed and managed with proper availability of indoor/outdoor grounds, gyms, equipment, Coaches, and trainers as per the specifications of the games. The Coaching camps and training sessions are appropriately arranged for developing and managing the athletic talent of the players. While in the Universities of Sindh, there is the availability of indoor/outdoor sports groups, and gyms there is an acute shortage of sports equipment, coaches, trainers, coaching, and training camps. Henceforth, the work of talent development and its management is more adequately available in the Universities of the Punjab than that of the Sindh. That's why the maximum number of players is selected for HEC teams belonging to the Universities of the Punjab.

Recommendations

It is highly recommended to concerned authorities of all those educational institutions across Pakistan who lack qualified, well-experienced, and well-backgrounded sports officials, coaches, trainers, coaching sessions, and training camps to take on a serious note to ensure the availability of this all to create easy and conducive environment for their players so that

maximum number of their player may have an opportunity of being selected for HEC teams and the Universities may contribute its adequate share in the development and promotion of Sports culture in the country.

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