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Effectiveness of Sports-Based Intervention Programs for At-Risk Youth



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Effectiveness of Sports-Based Intervention Programs for At-Risk Youth



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Abstract

Purpose: The general purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of sports- based intervention programs for at-risk youth.

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Findings: The findings reveal that there exists a contextual and methodological gap relating to the effectiveness of sports- based intervention programs for at-risk youth. Preliminary empirical review revealed that improvements in physical health, psychosocial well-being, academic achievement, and prosocial behavior among participants. Key conclusions underscored the importance of thoughtful program design, culturally tailored approaches, and comprehensive evaluation strategies to maximize effectiveness. Moreover, targeted interventions addressing diverse needs and experiences were found essential for inclusivity and equity within programs. While promising, further research is needed to explore long-term outcomes and contextual influences. Overall, these findings emphasize the significant impact of sports-based interventions in supporting the well-being and success of at-risk youth.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The Social Learning Theory, Positive Youth Development and Ecological Systems Theory may be used to anchor future studies on the effectiveness of sports- based intervention programs for at-risk youth. The study yielded recommendations that contributed significantly to theory, practice, and policy. It advised researchers to delve deeper into the mechanisms through which sports participation influences youth well-being. Practitioners were urged to design participant-centered programs tailored to the diverse needs of at-risk youth, emphasizing safe and inclusive environments and mentorship. Policy implications highlighted the need for increased funding and integration of sports-based interventions into existing youth development initiatives. Collaboration among stakeholders was recommended to enhance program reach and effectiveness, while ongoing monitoring and evaluation were deemed essential for assessing program impacts. Advocacy efforts were also emphasized to raise awareness and mobilize support for youth development initiatives.

Keywords: *Sports-Based Intervention Programs, At-Risk Youth, Positive Youth Development, Well-Being, Juvenile Delinquency*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sports-based intervention programs have gained recognition worldwide for their potential to positively impact at-risk youth by providing opportunities for physical activity, skill development, mentorship, and social inclusion. These programs aim to address various risk factors such as delinquency, substance abuse, and academic disengagement by engaging participants in structured sports activities within supportive environments. While the effectiveness of such interventions has been widely studied, it is essential to examine trends and examples across different countries to understand the global implications. In the United States, sports-based intervention programs have demonstrated promising outcomes in reducing delinquency rates and improving social skills among at-risk youth. For example, a study by Gould and Carson (2018) found that participation in after-school sports programs significantly reduced juvenile delinquency rates by 20% among disadvantaged youth in urban areas (Gould & Carson, 2018). Furthermore, the National Research Council reported that youth engagement in sports programs was associated with lower rates of substance abuse and violence (National Research Council, 2019). These statistics highlight the positive impact of sports-based interventions on mitigating risk factors and promoting positive youth development in the USA.

In the United Kingdom, sports-based intervention programs have emerged as effective strategies for addressing social inequalities and improving outcomes for at-risk youth. Coalter, Taylor & Gleeson (2017) indicated that participation in community sports programs led to a 25% increase in academic engagement and achievement among disadvantaged youth in low-income areas (Coalter et al., 2017). Additionally, a longitudinal study by Sport England revealed that youth involved in sports activities exhibited higher levels of self-esteem and resilience, contributing to improved mental well-being (Sport England, 2020). These findings underscore the importance of sports-based interventions in promoting holistic development and social inclusion among at-risk youth in the United Kingdom.

In Japan, sports-based intervention programs have gained traction as effective tools for addressing youth disengagement and promoting community cohesion. Sato and colleagues (2019) found that participation in school-based sports clubs was associated with a 15% decrease in truancy rates among at-risk adolescents in urban areas (Sato, Tachikawa, Ojima & Takagi, 2019). Moreover, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology reported that youth engagement in sports clubs fostered a sense of belonging and mutual respect, leading to reduced instances of bullying and delinquency (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2018). These statistics highlight the role of sports-based interventions in enhancing school attendance and fostering positive social relationships among at-risk youth in Japan.

In Brazil, sports-based intervention programs have been implemented as a means of empowering marginalized youth and reducing involvement in criminal activities. Participation in community sports leagues resulted in a 30% decrease in juvenile crime rates in underserved neighborhoods (Ferreira, Gasparini & Guimaraes, 2015). Additionally, a study conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics showed that sports participation was associated with higher rates of high school graduation and lower levels of unemployment among at-risk youth (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, 2020). These findings emphasize the significant impact of sports-based interventions on crime prevention and socioeconomic outcomes in Brazil.

In African countries, sports-based intervention programs have emerged as valuable tools for promoting youth development, social cohesion, and health outcomes. Participation in sports-based initiatives led to a 40% increase in community engagement and leadership skills among at-risk youth in sub-Saharan Africa (Darnell, Chawansky, Marchesseault, Holmes & Hayhurst, 2018). Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme reported that sports programs contributed to a 25% reduction in HIV/AIDS transmission rates through targeted education and awareness campaigns (United Nations

Development Programme, 2019). These statistics underscore the multifaceted benefits of sports-based interventions in addressing pressing social challenges and promoting sustainable development across African countries. Sport--based intervention programs have demonstrated considerable effectiveness in addressing various risk factors and promoting positive outcomes for at-risk youth globally. Examples from the USA, United Kingdom, Japan, Brazil, and African countries illustrate the diverse applications and significant impact of these programs on youth development, social inclusion, and community well-being. Despite variations in program design and implementation, recent research indicates consistent trends towards positive outcomes, including reduced delinquency rates, improved academic achievement, enhanced social skills, and better health outcomes among participants. Moving forward, continued investment in evidence-based sports interventions is essential to maximize their potential in supporting at-risk youth and fostering thriving communities worldwide.

Sports-based intervention programs are structured initiatives that utilize sports and physical activities as central components to achieve specific outcomes, such as promoting physical health, enhancing social skills, and reducing risky behaviors among participants, particularly at-risk youth (Coalter, Taylor, & Gleeson, 2017). These programs typically integrate elements of skill development, mentorship, and psychosocial support within a sports context to address the multifaceted needs of participants (Gould & Carson, 2018). Key components may include organized sports leagues, coaching and mentoring sessions, life skills training, and access to supportive networks and resources. Sports-based intervention programs primarily target at-risk youth, who may face various socio-economic, environmental, and personal challenges that increase their vulnerability to negative outcomes such as delinquency, substance abuse, and academic disengagement (Darnell et al., 2018). These programs aim to address underlying risk factors by providing a structured and supportive environment for youth to engage in positive activities and develop essential life skills. Common risk factors addressed include lack of access to educational opportunities, limited social support networks, exposure to violence, and low self-esteem (National Research Council, 2019).

Sports-based intervention programs are often grounded in theoretical frameworks and models that guide program design, implementation, and evaluation (Coalter, Taylor & Gleeson, 2017). The socio-ecological model, for example, emphasizes the interaction between individual, interpersonal, community, and societal factors in influencing behavior and development (Gould & Carson, 2018). Other frameworks, such as positive youth development and social learning theory, highlight the importance of fostering positive relationships, building self-efficacy, and providing opportunities for skill-building and mastery experiences within the sports context (Ferreira et al., 2015). Effective sports-based intervention programs are characterized by thoughtful program design and implementation strategies that align with the needs and interests of the target population (Sport England, 2020). This may involve collaboration with local community organizations, schools, and youth-serving agencies to ensure accessibility and cultural relevance (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). Programs may be delivered through schools, community centers, sports clubs, or alternative settings, with a focus on creating safe and inclusive environments for participation (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2018).

Evaluation of sports-based intervention programs is essential for assessing their impact and effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes (Gould & Carson, 2018). Outcome measures may include changes in physical fitness, academic performance, social skills, self-esteem, and behavioral outcomes such as reduced involvement in delinquency or substance abuse (Darnell et al., 2018). Mixed-method approaches, including quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and observational data, are often employed to capture the complex and multidimensional nature of program effects (Sato et al., 2019). One of the primary benefits of sports-based intervention programs is their effectiveness in promoting physical health and well-being among at-risk youth (Coalter et al., 2017). Regular participation in

sports activities helps improve cardiovascular fitness, motor skills, and overall physical functioning (National Research Council, 2019). Furthermore, sports engagement provides opportunities for healthy competition, skill development, and mastery experiences, which contribute to positive self-perceptions and self-efficacy beliefs (Ferreira et al., 2015).

Sports-based intervention programs have been shown to enhance social skills and relationships among at-risk youth by providing opportunities for teamwork, communication, and collaboration (Gould & Carson, 2018). Through participation in team sports and group activities, youth learn to navigate social dynamics, resolve conflicts, and build trusting relationships with peers and mentors (Sport England, 2020). These experiences foster a sense of belonging and connectedness, which are critical protective factors against social isolation and negative peer influences (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2018). Participation in sports-based intervention programs has been associated with increased resilience and coping skills among at-risk youth, enabling them to overcome adversity and challenges (Coalter et al., 2017). By setting and achieving goals, managing setbacks, and receiving support from coaches and teammates, youth develop confidence in their abilities and resilience in the face of obstacles (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). These experiences help build adaptive coping strategies and problem-solving skills that are essential for navigating life's challenges and transitions (Sato et al., 2019).

Sports-based intervention programs have demonstrated effectiveness in reducing risky behaviors such as delinquency, substance abuse, and violence among at-risk youth (Darnell et al., 2018). By providing structured and supervised activities during critical after-school hours, these programs offer a positive alternative to risky or unsupervised activities (Ferreira et al., 2015). Moreover, the positive peer influences and mentorship provided within the sports context help deter youth from engaging in delinquent or harmful behaviors (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, 2020). Sports-based intervention programs represent a valuable approach to promoting positive youth development and addressing risk factors among at-risk youth. By leveraging the power of sports to engage, empower, and support youth, these programs offer a holistic framework for fostering physical health, social skills, resilience, and positive behavior change. Through thoughtful program design, implementation, and evaluation, sports-based interventions have the potential to make a meaningful difference in the lives of at-risk youth, contributing to healthier, safer, and more inclusive communities.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

At-risk youth face a myriad of challenges that put them at increased risk of negative outcomes such as delinquency, substance abuse, and academic disengagement. In the United States alone, it is estimated that approximately 2.1 million youth under the age of 18 are arrested each year, with a disproportionate representation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system (National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2020). Despite the implementation of various intervention programs, there remains a critical gap in understanding the effectiveness of sports-based interventions specifically tailored to address the needs of at-risk youth. While existing research has highlighted the potential benefits of sports-based programs, such as improved physical health and social skills, there is limited empirical evidence examining their impact on reducing delinquency rates and promoting positive youth development outcomes among this population. This study aims to address several key research gaps in the literature on sports-based intervention programs for at-risk youth. Firstly, while previous studies have examined the effectiveness of sports interventions in general, there is a lack of comprehensive research specifically focusing on at-risk youth populations. By narrowing the focus to this demographic, the study will provide valuable insights into the unique challenges and needs of at-risk youth and how sports-based interventions can effectively address them. Secondly, existing research often lacks longitudinal data and rigorous evaluation methodologies, limiting the ability to draw causal inferences about the impact of sports-based programs on long-term outcomes. This study will employ a

longitudinal design and rigorous evaluation methods to assess the sustained effectiveness of sports-based interventions over time. The findings of this study will benefit multiple stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of programs for at-risk youth, including policymakers, educators, community organizations, and practitioners. Policymakers will gain evidence-based insights into the effectiveness of sports-based interventions as a viable strategy for addressing juvenile delinquency and promoting positive youth development. Educators and community organizations will benefit from a better understanding of how to design and implement tailored sports programs that effectively engage at-risk youth and address their unique needs. Practitioners working directly with at-risk youth will have access to empirically validated strategies and best practices for integrating sports-based interventions into their programming, ultimately enhancing the quality and impact of their services (Coalter et al., 2017; Gould & Carson, 2018). By bridging the gap between research and practice, this study has the potential to contribute to the development of more effective and sustainable interventions for at-risk youth, ultimately leading to positive outcomes for individuals, families, and communities.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory, developed by Albert Bandura in the 1960s, posits that individuals learn from observing others and the consequences of their behavior. According to this theory, behavior is influenced by the interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors (Bandura, 1977). In the context of sports-based intervention programs for at-risk youth, Social Learning Theory suggests that participation in sports activities provides opportunities for youth to observe positive role models, such as coaches and teammates, and learn desirable behaviors and skills through modeling and imitation. By engaging in structured sports activities within supportive environments, at-risk youth can develop pro-social behaviors, such as teamwork, communication, and conflict resolution, which are essential for positive youth development and reducing delinquent behaviors (Darnell et al., 2018). Social Learning Theory is relevant to this topic as it highlights the importance of social influences and observational learning in shaping behavior, underscoring the potential of sports-based interventions to provide positive role models and promote social skill development among at-risk youth.

2.1.2 Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a strengths-based approach that focuses on fostering the holistic development of young people by promoting their assets and strengths rather than solely addressing risk factors (Lerner et al., 2013). Originating in the late 20th century, PYD emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities for youth to develop competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring within supportive environments (Benson et al., 2006). In the context of sports-based intervention programs for at-risk youth, PYD suggests that participation in sports activities can contribute to positive outcomes such as enhanced self-esteem, resilience, and social competence. By creating opportunities for youth to engage in meaningful activities, build positive relationships, and develop important life skills, sports-based interventions align with the principles of PYD and have the potential to empower at-risk youth to reach their full potential and thrive despite adversity (Larson et al., 2006). PYD is relevant to this topic as it provides a framework for understanding how sports-based interventions can promote positive development and resilience among at-risk youth, ultimately leading to improved outcomes in various domains of their lives.

2.1.3 Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological Systems Theory, proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner in the 1970s, emphasizes the importance of understanding human development within the context of multiple nested environmental systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to this theory, individuals are influenced by interactions with their immediate environments, including the microsystem (e.g., family, school, peer group), mesosystem (connections between microsystems), exosystem (settings indirectly affecting the individual), and macrosystem (broader cultural context) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In the context of sports-based intervention programs for at-risk youth, Ecological Systems Theory suggests that effective interventions must consider the interconnectedness of various environmental factors and their influence on youth development. Sports programs operate within multiple ecological systems, providing opportunities for youth to engage with peers, coaches, families, schools, and communities. By fostering positive relationships and connections across these systems, sports-based interventions can promote resilience and positive youth development among at-risk youth (Lerner et al., 2013). Ecological Systems Theory is relevant to this topic as it offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex interactions between individual characteristics and environmental contexts in shaping youth outcomes, highlighting the importance of considering multiple levels of influence in designing and evaluating sports-based interventions.

2.2 Empirical Review

Fraser-Thomas, Côté & Deakin (2019) investigated the impact of a community-based sports program on the psychosocial development of at-risk youth. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with program participants. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Quantitative analysis revealed significant improvements in self-esteem, social skills, and emotional well-being among at-risk youth participating in the sports program. Qualitative findings highlighted the importance of positive relationships with coaches and peers, as well as the sense of belonging and support provided by the program. The study recommends further investment in community-based sports programs as a means of promoting positive youth development and reducing risk factors for at-risk youth.

Holt & Neely (2017) explored the experiences of at-risk youth participating in a school-based sports intervention program. The study employed a qualitative research design, conducting semi-structured interviews with program participants. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes and patterns in the data. The study found that participation in the sports intervention program provided at-risk youth with a sense of purpose, belonging, and identity. Participants reported improvements in self-confidence, social skills, and academic motivation as a result of their involvement in sports activities. The study recommends the integration of sports-based intervention programs into school curricula to support the holistic development of at-risk youth.

Ommundsen, Roberts & Lemyre (2014) assessed the effectiveness of a sports-based intervention program in reducing aggressive behavior and promoting prosocial behavior among at-risk youth. The study employed a randomized controlled trial design, with at-risk youth randomly assigned to either the intervention group (participating in the sports program) or the control group (no intervention). Pre- and post-intervention assessments were conducted using standardized measures of aggressive and prosocial behavior. The study found significant reductions in aggressive behavior and increases in prosocial behavior among participants in the intervention group compared to the control group. These changes were maintained at follow-up assessments six months after the intervention. The study recommends the implementation of sports-based intervention programs as a preventive strategy for reducing aggressive behavior and promoting prosocial behavior among at-risk youth.

Smith & Burch (2016) examined the long-term effects of a sports-based intervention program on academic achievement and school engagement among at-risk youth. The study utilized a longitudinal research design, tracking participants' academic performance and school engagement over a three-year period. Mixed-effects modeling was used to analyze changes in academic outcomes over time. The study found that participation in the sports intervention program was associated with significant improvements in academic achievement and school engagement among at-risk youth. These improvements were sustained over the three-year follow-up period. The study recommends the integration of sports-based intervention programs into educational settings to support academic success and retention among at-risk youth.

Anderson & Shields (2018) explored the role of gender in shaping the experiences and outcomes of at-risk youth participating in a sports-based intervention program. The study employed a qualitative research design, conducting focus group interviews with male and female participants. Thematic analysis was used to examine gender differences in the experiences and outcomes of program participation. The study found that gender played a significant role in shaping the experiences of at-risk youth in the sports intervention program. Male participants reported greater improvements in self-confidence and social skills, while female participants emphasized the importance of emotional support and empowerment. The study recommends the implementation of gender-sensitive approaches within sports-based intervention programs to address the unique needs and experiences of male and female participants.

Lai & Stodolska (2015) investigated the impact of a culturally tailored sports-based intervention program on the physical and psychosocial well-being of at-risk youth from immigrant backgrounds. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with program participants. Structural equation modeling was used to examine the relationships between program participation, cultural identity, and well-being outcomes. Quantitative analysis revealed significant improvements in physical fitness, self-esteem, and cultural identity among participants in the intervention group compared to the control group. Qualitative findings highlighted the importance of culturally relevant programming in promoting positive outcomes for at-risk youth from immigrant backgrounds. The study recommends the development and implementation of culturally tailored sports-based intervention programs to better serve the needs of diverse populations of at-risk youth.

Jones & Wilson (2013) evaluated the effectiveness of a sports-based intervention program in promoting resilience and positive youth development among at-risk youth living in underserved communities. The study utilized a quasi-experimental research design, with at-risk youth from intervention and control communities participating in pre- and post-intervention assessments. Resilience and positive youth development outcomes were measured using standardized scales, and statistical analysis was conducted to compare changes over time between the intervention and control groups. The study found significant improvements in resilience, self-efficacy, and future aspirations among participants in the intervention group compared to the control group. These improvements were maintained at follow-up assessments, indicating the sustained impact of the sports-based intervention program. The study recommends the expansion of sports-based intervention programs in underserved communities as a means of promoting resilience and positive youth development among at-risk youth.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied

on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

4.0 FINDINGS

This study presented both a contextual and methodological gap. A contextual gap occurs when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the topic of discussion. For instance, Fraser-Thomas, Côté & Deakin (2019) discuss the psychosocial outcomes of a community-based sports program for at-risk youth, which is a different topic compared to the other studies. While the other studies focus on various aspects such as academic achievement, aggressive behavior, gender differences, cultural identity, resilience, and positive youth development, Fraser-Thomas and colleagues specifically examine the psychosocial outcomes of the sports program. This study adds a unique perspective by exploring how participation in sports activities can impact the psychosocial well-being of at-risk youth, highlighting the multifaceted benefits of sports-based interventions in addressing the needs of this population.

Secondly, a methodological gap also presents itself, for example, in their study on investigating the impact of a community-based sports program on the psychosocial development of at-risk youth; Fraser-Thomas, Côté & Deakin (2019) employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with program participants. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. Whereas, the current study adopted a desktop research method.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Drawing from the extensive body of literature on the effectiveness of sports-based intervention programs for at-risk youth, it is evident that these programs hold significant promise in promoting positive youth development and addressing various risk factors faced by vulnerable populations. Across different studies, participation in sports activities has been consistently associated with improvements in physical health, psychosocial well-being, academic achievement, and prosocial behavior among at-risk youth. The findings suggest that sports-based interventions offer a holistic approach to youth development, providing opportunities for skill-building, socialization, and mentorship within a supportive and structured environment.

One key conclusion drawn from these studies is the importance of program design and implementation in maximizing the effectiveness of sports-based interventions. Successful programs are characterized by thoughtful planning, engagement with community stakeholders, and culturally relevant programming tailored to the unique needs of at-risk youth. Additionally, the integration of evidence-based practices and comprehensive evaluation strategies is essential for assessing program outcomes, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring the sustainability of program effects over time. By adhering to best practices in program development and evaluation, stakeholders can optimize the impact of sports-based interventions on the lives of at-risk youth.

Furthermore, the literature highlights the need for targeted interventions that address the diverse needs and experiences of at-risk youth populations. Gender-sensitive approaches, culturally tailored programming, and consideration of individual strengths and challenges are essential for promoting inclusivity and equity within sports-based intervention programs. By acknowledging and addressing intersecting social identities and contextual factors, programs can better engage and support diverse populations of at-risk youth, ultimately leading to more meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

In conclusion, while sports-based intervention programs show great promise in promoting positive youth development and addressing risk factors among at-risk youth, there is still much work to be done

to maximize their effectiveness and reach. Future research should focus on filling existing gaps in the literature, such as examining long-term outcomes, identifying mechanisms of change, and exploring the role of contextual factors in shaping program outcomes. By continuing to advance our understanding of sports-based interventions and implementing evidence-based practices, we can better support the well-being and success of at-risk youth, ultimately contributing to healthier, more resilient communities.

5.2 Recommendations

The study on the effectiveness of sports-based intervention programs for at-risk youth offers several recommendations that contribute to theory, practice, and policy in this field. Firstly, based on the findings highlighting the positive outcomes of such programs, it is recommended that researchers further explore the underlying mechanisms and processes through which sports participation influences the well-being of at-risk youth. By delving deeper into these mechanisms, researchers can contribute to the development of theoretical frameworks that elucidate the pathways through which sports-based interventions promote positive youth development and reduce risk factors.

From a practical standpoint, the study underscores the importance of designing and implementing sports-based intervention programs that are tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of at-risk youth populations. This includes considering factors such as gender, cultural background, and individual strengths and challenges when developing program content and delivery methods. Practitioners should prioritize the creation of safe and inclusive environments that foster positive relationships, provide opportunities for skill-building and mastery experiences, and offer support and mentorship to participants. By adopting a holistic and participant-centered approach, practitioners can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of sports-based interventions for at-risk youth.

In terms of policy implications, the study suggests the need for increased investment in sports-based intervention programs as a preventive strategy for addressing juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, and other risk behaviors among at-risk youth. Policymakers should prioritize funding for evidence-based programs that have demonstrated effectiveness in promoting positive youth outcomes and reducing societal costs associated with juvenile crime and delinquency. Additionally, policymakers should consider integrating sports-based interventions into existing youth development initiatives and educational programs to maximize reach and impact.

Furthermore, the study recommends collaboration and partnerships between government agencies, educational institutions, community organizations, and sports clubs to facilitate the implementation and sustainability of sports-based intervention programs. By leveraging resources and expertise from multiple sectors, stakeholders can enhance program reach, effectiveness, and sustainability. Intersectoral collaborations can also facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity-building initiatives, enabling practitioners to learn from best practices and innovations in the field and adapt them to local contexts.

Another important recommendation is the need for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of sports-based intervention programs to assess program effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and inform programmatic adjustments and adaptations. Rigorous evaluation methodologies, including both quantitative and qualitative measures, should be employed to capture the multifaceted outcomes and impacts of sports-based interventions on at-risk youth. Longitudinal studies are particularly valuable for tracking the long-term effects and sustainability of program outcomes over time.

Lastly, the study emphasizes the importance of advocacy and awareness-raising efforts to garner support for sports-based intervention programs among policymakers, funders, and the broader community. By raising awareness of the benefits and potential of sports-based interventions for at-risk youth, advocates can mobilize support, secure funding, and promote policy changes that prioritize

investment in youth development initiatives. Additionally, advocacy efforts can help challenge stigma and misconceptions surrounding at-risk youth and highlight the positive contributions they can make to society when provided with adequate support and opportunities for growth and development.

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