

# **Relationship between Sport and Social Capital: Considering by Individual Factors**

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## **Introduction**

Recently, “local development” is frequently discussed against the backdrop of decrease in Japan’s population. Therefore, sports are expected to contribute towards local development from various aspects. There are a number of different factors and indicators to measure local development. However, it proves difficult to reverse the current demographic trends and stimulate economic development due to depopulation in Japan. Moreover, it is necessary to maintain social networks among local communities while focusing on the social effects of sports as local development. Therefore, this study focused on social capital for local development and examined how sports could contribute to the development of local communities by encouraging the social capital towards the community.

## **Theoretical Background and Literature Review**

There are a number of definitions associated with social capital. In this study, we used Putnam’s theoretical framework. Putnam (1993) defined social capital as “features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of the society by facilitating coordinated actions”. Putnam pointed possibility that the trust is generated by participation in networks. Therefore, networks such as participation in sports in local districts, particularly joining sports clubs may help to enhance trust and positively influence local communities.

Previous studies considered the relationship between sports and social capital from the sports club participation aspect. Burnett (2006) attempted to assess the impact of community sports clubs as the sports development programs in Africa and concluded that participation in such programs interfaced with other normative social institutional spheres to generate social capital at an individual and community level. Walseth’s (2008) interviews with fifteen female athletes revealed that young immigrant women managed to create a bridge between social capital and sports clubs. In Japan, Okayasu et al. (2010) looked into social capital based on sports club types and found that comprehensive community sports clubs scored higher than traditional ones.

Previous studies indicated that sports are related to social capital, but most of these studies were case studies conducted by people in sports clubs and did not compare them with those who did not belong to sports clubs. Results are expected to differ based on individual factors such as gender and age of the participants. Previous studies did not adequately mention whether these differences relate to social capital level.

## **Research Design and Hypothesis**

To shed further light on this point, it is essential to use representative data sampled within the county. The data suggests a relationship between sports and social capital from a macro perspective. Furthermore, it is possible to identify who has to increase participation in sports and how it is linked with social capital based on the evidence.

Thus, this study sets a research question and hypothesis as follows:

- Who participates in sports clubs? Hypothesis 1: young adult males, elderly adult females participate in sports clubs.
- Do differences by RQ1 influence the level of trust? Hypothesis 2: There are some cases that differences in participation in sports clubs do not relate to the level of trust.

### **Method and Analysis**

We used the data gathered through “SSF National Sports-Life Survey 2012”, which has been conducted every other year since 1992 by Sasakawa Sports Foundation (SSF). The data is released in WEB as an open data. That means everybody can use the data upon application. The survey in 2012 investigated people aged 20 and over who live in Japan by quota method and gathered 2,000 samples by leaving method. The survey includes various questions related to physical activity. In 2012 survey, themes such as “generalized trust” and “activity of community” were included in the questions to measure social capital which was made by reference from a survey conducted by Cabinet Office, Government of Japan.

We will analyze the relationship between social capital as a dependent variable and individual factors (gender, age etc.) and sports activities (participation in sports clubs etc.) as independent variables.

### **Results**

We will precisely present the results and include discussion and conclusion sections in the poster.

### **References**

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