

A Study of Psychological Characteristics of Sports Performer-With Reference to Intermediate and Advanced Level

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study is to compare the psychological characteristics of intermediate and advanced sports performers (levels). Psychological characteristics were the dependent variables of the study. They were motivation, confidence, mental preparation, anxiety control, concentration and team emphasis. The second purpose of the study was to compare the psychological characteristics of various types of games like body contact versus non-body conduct, racket versus free hand games. The third purpose of the study was to compare the psychological characteristics of male and female sports performers. The fourth purpose of the study was to determine the interaction effect of game level, game sex, level and sex and finally game x level and x sex. Hence the independent variables are game (Ball Badminton, Cricket and Kabaddi) level, (intermediate and advanced) and sex (male and female). To accomplish this, collected data on the selected dependent variables were compared for any significant difference

KEYWORDS: Psychological Characteristics, Sports Performers, Intermediate, Advanced etc.

1 INTRODUCTION

The search for a possible personality profile of high-level athletes has been one of the main goals of scientists, which has contributed to the study and correlation of this group with non-athlete samples. In this regard, Auweele et al. (2001) claims that distinguishing, recognizing and evaluating athlete's repetitive behavioral functioning is extremely important throughout sport psychology, supporting experiments that aim to differentiate athletes from other groups. Several concepts of personality are found on the topic in the scientific literature.

Sports Psychology

Sports psychology is that area of psychology that is intimately linked to human behavior on the field of play, both in action and in competitive situations, with a view to bringing about incremental performance improvements and preserving the same even during the pressures of competition. It is the study of human activity in sports contexts, with focus on behavioral mental aspect. Sports psychology is an important ingredient of sports training programme and deals with the way in which various psychological states and traits influence sports performance.

Psychological Characteristics

- Motivation

The word motivation comes from the Latin root 'movers,' which mean to move. We may conclude that inspiration is the cycle of waking motion in the body in its literal meanings. According to various subject scholars the movement is produced and regulated through the release of the energy within the tissues.

- Confidence

Confidence is commonly related as an emotion or state of mind to athletic success. Indeed, the following quote from tennis champion Jimmy Connors provides a great insight into the level of confidence of an elite athlete. The whole thing about you is never going to get negative. Sure, the other guy you're playing may be tough, and maybe he's beat you the last time you've played, and all right, maybe you haven't played all that well on your own.

- Confidence and Anxiety

While the research focused on mental anxiety and self-confidence provides some insight into their impact on athletic performance, the relationship of these factors with somatic anxiety provides a better understanding of the true results. Clearly, anxiety exerts a variety of effects on athletic performance. These effects vary based on sport, gender and level of experience. Sport psychologists will understand the three different facts of depression in order to facilitate athletes 'peak performance: cognitive anxiety, somatic anxiety, and self-confidence. High scores on self-

confidence and low scores on somatic and cognitive anxiety are characterized by the research that shows that successful athletes who interpret their anxiety as facilitative.

- Anxiety

The connection between anxiety and performance in sport has long been known. Stories exist of athletes or teams who performed poorly when their adversary was misunderstood (below optimum levels of anxiety) or scared out of the match (above optimum levels of anxiety).

- Mental Preparation

Mental preparation is a very wide term. It includes many factors which constitute mental (or) intellectual development. Mental or intellectual development starts with the birth of the individual. Include so many factors, Important among them are Progress in intelligence

- Group Cohesion in Sports

The social psychological variable most often thought to influence competitive athletic team success is that of cohesion. In his book, 'In pursuit of excellence' Orlick (1986) states that one of the most gravitating experience a coach or athlete can have is to be a member of a team that gets along well and work together efficiently and cohesively. In a recent survey, investigating what coaches want to learn from the field of sports psychology, the most frequent and critical factor mentioned was the issue of how to build and sustain group cohesion in sports team.

- Concentration

Effective concentration is considered to be a critical condition for optimal performance by athletes (Moran, 2004). Wilson, Schmid, and Peper (2006) have identified concentration as the ability to focus on specific tasks while avoiding distractions, and are considered an important component of focus. Researchers have found positive performance results as a result of manipulating the focus of attention of athletes in competitive situations (Mallet and Hanrahan, 1997; Morgan, 2000).

Selected Games

Kabaddi, cricket, and ball badminton are popular games in India. In international arena Indian teams are also performing well in these games. Hence, the investigator motivated to choose these games for investigation. A brief out line of these games is presented in the following sections.

Hank Hung and Chiawen Lee (2013) examined the relationships between ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic status of the household, recreation activity and psychological well-being. A total of 827 accurate pencil-and-paper surveys were returned. There was no link between the socioeconomic status of their communities and the leisure engagement or psychological well-being of the student-athletes

Miroljub Ivanovic and Ugljesa Ivanovic (2013) The teenage population's functional and motor skills are prerequisites for maintaining and enhancing their psychophysical wellbeing, as well as for obtaining successful results in physical education courses and sports training. The findings of this selective analysis offer a wide range of knowledge which can have practical application with $p < .005$ in identifying functional-motor model principles, offering higher quality program and work schedule creation in both physical education and teaching, as well as in operationalizing transformational actions of eight-grade elementary schoolboys.

Singh (2014) contrasted interuniversity level athletes with Somatic Tension, Cognitive Worry, and Self-Confidence. The study findings revealed that sprinters and jumpers did not differ greatly from their portion of competition anxiety, including somatic stress, cognitive concern and self-confidence

Bera and Banerjee(2014) contrasted different psychological criteria between male football players at university level and athletes at State level. Results revealed that the intervarsity football player is better than state-level athlete in case of achievement motivation and anxiety metric (state and trait), and vice-versa in case of interest.

Bala Krishna et al. (2015) compared the selected psychological variables such as anxiety, among university men sprinters, throwers, jumpers and long distance runners. It was concluded that there were significant differences on psychological variable, such as anxiety among University men sprinters, jumpers, throwers and long distance runners and it was found that long distance

runners were more anxious than jumpers and throwers.

Singh and Singh (2015) compared self-concept between Player and non-player University students. The target population of this study was all male player and nonplayer university students in Patiala city of Punjab. The Self-Concept score of the players was observed as 18.52 and Non-player as 14.60. These differences were found significant. The Player students have more Self-Concept than Non-players students.

Ahmad et al, (2016) investigated the “comparative analysis of selected psychological variables among inter university level of Basketball, Cricket and Volleyball players”. The results were evaluated systematically using one-way variance analysis to determine the discrepancy between the psychological variables. It was found that there was a significant difference between inter-university school, football, cricket and volleyball participants in the cognitive distress. It was concluded that basketball players have more cognitive anxiety than volleyball and cricket players. It was concluded that there was significant difference in somatic anxiety among inter-university level basketball, cricket and volleyball players. It was concluded that basketball players have more somatic anxiety than volleyball and cricket players. It was concluded that there was significant difference in self confidence among inter-university level basketball, cricket and volleyball players. It was concluded that cricket players have more self-confidence than volleyball and basketball players.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Under this part of the research method, subjects/tools, variables, design and statistical techniques used are described in view of testing the formulated hypothesis.

The purpose of the study was to make a comparative analysis of motivation, confidence, mental preparation, anxiety control, concentration and team emphasis among university team men and women ball badminton, cricket and kabaddi players and college team men and women ball badminton, cricket and kabaddi players.

Subjects

To perform the purpose of the study, a total of 240 talented youth athletes aged 18 to 25 years were utilized in this present study. The participants were divided into 120 intermediary and 120 advanced sports performer based on their performance level as well as participation level.

120 athletes both men and women, who participated in the Inter-Collegiate Tournaments (ICGT) 2015-16 Competition organized and conducted by University Of Mumbai who reached the quarter finals in Ball Badminton, Cricket and Kabaddi games were utilized as intermediary sportsmen (women and men). For each game 20 players from each sex formed the subjects for intermediary sports person. The best players at quarter final stage were identified by three senior NSNIS qualified coaches by subject evaluation during the actual competition.

120 athletes both men and women who participated in All India Inter University competitions were utilized as advanced sports performer – women and men players, who reached the quarter final stage at All India level in Ball Badminton, Cricket, Kabaddi games were utilized. For each game 20 players from each set formed the subject for advanced sports performers. The best players were identified by three senior NSNIS qualified coaches by subjects' evaluation during the actual competition.

All India Women cricket tournament 2015-2016 was organized by Mumbai University, Mumbai, All India Inter University Ball Badminton (Women) Tournament 2015 – 2016, organized by SRM Institute of Science and Technology (formerly known as SRM University) Campus, Kattankulathur. All India Inter-University Ball Badminton (Men) Championship for the year 2015-16 organized by Mangalore University, Mangalore. All India Inter-University Kabaddi Badminton (Men) Championship for the year 2015-16 were organized by BHU Varanasi. All India Inter-University Kabaddi Badminton (Women) Championship for the year 2015-16 were organized by Sri Venkateshwara, Tirupati.

Selection Of Variables

➤ Independent Variables

Ball Badminton, Cricket, Kabaddi, Sex, Level of Sports performance

The author selected Ball Badminton, Cricket, Kabaddi games for the investigation. All these three games are popular in India. The level of playing ability in these games are also comparable

with international standard. The investigator also wanted to compare body contact and non-body contact games apart from comparing men and women and intermediary and advanced sports performers.

➤ **Dependent Variables**

Motivation, Confidence, Mental preparation, Anxiety Control, Concentration, Team emphasis

Procedure

All athletes gave their informal consent prior to participation and completed the inventory individually in group setting. Instructions were standardized, since obtained scores may be influenced by changing test instructions (Nideffer, 1987 and Greenspen et al., 1988). To avoid socially desirable answers athletes were told that the results were being used solely for research purposes.

Instrumentation Used

The psychological skills inventory for sports consists of five point Likert type items that are distributed over six scales (Mahoney et al. 1987). It contains 44, five point Likert type items distributed over the same 6 scales: motivation (8 items), confidence (8 items), mental preparation (6 items), Anxiety control (8 items), concentration (7 items) and team emphasis (7 items). The answer almost never equates to 1, and almost always to 5. Items worded negatively (indicating a problem or concern) are transformed by reversing the afore mentioned 1-5 format. In this sense, a high score on each scale correlates throughout large measure to the psychological skills provided.

Psychometric Characteristics

In a research center on the PSIS-youth psychometric characteristic. 381 youth field hockey players and soccer players (age 14.7 years, $sd = 1.7$; 32% Female 68% male) filled out the questionnaire (Elferink-Gemser et al. internal publication, 2002). The correlations between scales as a measure of six relatively independent constructs did not exceed 0.42 supporting the

PSIS-youth. Internal consistency figures were acceptably large for each measure, from 0.68 on the scale of team focus to 0.81 on the scale of trust. Alpha was above 0.70 in comparison to the team concentration scale, which is the minimum recommended level for research purposes (Nunnally, 1978). Such internal consistency figures are compatible with other research using PSIS – White (1993) also showed good internal consistency with alpha coefficients varying from 0.67 to 0.84, while Meyers et al (1994) effectively categorized 84 per cent of chosen athletes into rank order using the findings of the questionnaire using discriminant analysis. In comparison, with the exception of the trust element, Chartand et al. (1992) discussed the question of internal consistency. Nevertheless, this was an unusual event that seems to contradict most of the proof (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Data Analysis

As per the six types of psychological skills (motivation, confidence, mental preparation, anxiety control, concentration and team emphasis), mean scores and standard deviations were determined on the basis of performance level for the 8 different subgroups (elite youth athletes and sub-elite youth athletes) Sport category (team sports and individual sports) and class. Scores on each of the six measures are also viewed as mean on the 5-point Likert scale (minimum score = 1; maximum score = 5 standard deviation) to allow reciprocal comparisons between scales feasible.

Data were analyzing the general linear model (GLM) technique of multivariate variance analysis (MANOVA). least square means was determined as part of the GLM method. The performance level, sport type and gender served as the independent variables for the MANOVA, while the psychological skill types acted as the multivariate dependent variable.

1.3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study was to compare the psychological characteristics of intermediate and advanced sports performers (levels). Psychological characteristics were the dependent variables of the study. They were motivation, confidence, mental preparation, anxiety control, concentration and team emphasis. The second purpose of the study was to compare the psychological characteristics of various types of games like body contact versus non-body

conduct, racket versus free hand games. The third purpose of the study was to compare the psychological characteristics of male and female sports performers. The fourth purpose of the study was to determine the interaction effect of game level, game sex, level and sex and finally game x level and x sex. Hence the independent variables are game (Ball Badminton, Cricket and Kabaddi) level, (intermediate and advanced) and sex (male and female).

One of the primary goals of researchers was always a possible psychological profile for high-level athletes. This reality led to research and comparison of this population among elite, sub-elite athletes. Also, researchers are interested in comparing men and women athletes. The scientific literature includes many theories of personality (Butt, 1987; Cox, 1994 and Weinberg and Gouldt, 1995). It is observed that some personality similarities altogether compose the single character of each individual.

To accomplish this, collected data on the selected dependent variables were compared for any significant difference. The comparisons of scores were done using SPSS 10.5 software package and the statistical analysis used was general liner model multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA).

To determine the multiple comparisons, Schiff's Post Hoc test of significance was used. To determine the statistical significance an alpha of 0.05 was used. The results of the analysis are presented.

The present study considered Indian youth athletes as the population for this study. Motivation, confidence, mental preparation, anxiety management, Team Emphasis and concentration are important for young athletes for positive psychological characteristics.

Elite athletes have to perform regularly under high pressure, so it is not shocking that this psychological trait separates those performing from their less successful peers at the highest standard (Morris, 2000). There are connections between psychological and athletic performance (Morgan and Pollock, 1977; Morgan, 1979 and May et al., 1985). Research also focuses on the identification of sport-related psychological abilities (Meyers et al., 1996; Grossarth – Maticek et al., 1990; Cox et al., 1996; Feltz and Ewing, 1987; Mahoney et al., 1987; Cox and Kuym 1993)

and gender (White, 1993; Chantal et al., 1996; Sewell and Edmondson, 1996; MacIntyre et al., 1998).

- **Motivation**

There are eight items in the psychological skills inventory for sports (PSIS) to assess motivation level. It assesses both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the population under investigation.

Motivation is certainly one of the utmost important psychological concept in elite sports performance. Individual have a need to feel self-determined and competent when dealing with the environment (Bec and Ryan, 1985; 1991). The motivation of elite athletes highlighted a positive relationship between improved performance and increased motivation (Bakker et al., 1993; Mahoney, 1989; Mahoney et al., 1987; Morgan et al., 1988).

The present study also supported the findings of these studies. It was found significant difference between games, levels, sex, game x level, game x sex, level x sex and game x level x sex.

- **Confidence**

Confidence is a widely correlated emotion or mindset with athletic success (Weinberg, 1998). The Tones and Hardy (1990) and Hemery (1986) studies emphasize the importance of high levels of confidence in elite athletics. The expected outcome of an athlete is the biggest measure of confidence. This expectation of success may be on the basis of athlete's self-confidence, teammates, emotional readiness, physical ability, opponent knowledge, goals, strategies, physical condition, or coaching (Kauss, 1980). Elite athletes appeared to have high levels of confidence (Tones and Hardy, 1990). In PSIS inventory to assess confidence eight items are listed. All the eight items assess self- confidence of the athlete. It has been found that the amount of self-confidence a person possesses varies between elite and inexperienced athletes (Perry and Williams, 1998; Bejek and Hagyet, 1996; Jones et al., 1994). Research conducted to compare athletes competing in team sports with those competing in individual sports has shown that participants competing in individual sports express substantially less confidence in themselves (Kirby and Liu, 1999; Martin and Halls, 1997).

In the current study significant difference was found at game x level x sex dimension. The lack of evidence at other dimensions may be attributed to the age level of the population. Further it was suggested by experts that confidence should be studied in relation to cognitive and somatic anxiety (Jones, Swain and Cale, 1991). No attempt was made in this study in this regard.

- **Anxiety Control**

For a long time, the connection between anxiety and sports success has been known. Research has demonstrated that the ability to cope with anxiety pressure is an integral part of sports, especially among elite athletes (Hardy et al., 1996 and Orlick and Partington, 1988). More than 50% of athlete appointments at an Olympic festival are linked to problems related to stress or anxiety (Murphy, 1988). As a result of this strong connection between performance and anxiety, anxiety among athletes has become one of the most common topics in sport psychology research. (Broad Hurst, 1957; Hebb, 1955; Hanin, 1980, 1986; Jones et al., 1993; Swain and Jones, 1996; Gould et al., 1984; Mayers et al., 1982; Holm et al., 1996). From these reports, confidence level and anxiety level are closely related. The higher an athlete confident, the less the athlete will worry about the competition.

Anxiety also plays a vital role in motivation. Fear, failure, success and social rewards are factors that influence the behaviour and can affect the motivational state of a person. In the PSIS inventory there are eight items to assess anxiety control of the population under study. It was found that a significant difference between intermediary and advanced sports performers and in other levels there was no significant difference. This finding supports the finding of Hardy et al., (1996) Orlick and Partington (1988), Broadhurst (1957), Hebb (1955), Hanin (1980, 1986), Jones et al., (1993), Swain and Jones (1996), Gould et al., (1984) and Meyers et al., (1982).

- **Mental Preparation**

Mental preparation is a very wide term. Mental developments start with the birth of the individual. Proper use of time, logical questions, sense of distinguishing what is bad and what is good, ability to concentrate on object idea, think or action, plan making ability are some of the factors associated with mental preparations. In sports settings, often dream about competition, mental rehearsal about performance, mental practice just like watching a videotape, imaging and

feeling about performance, imaging with closed eyes about how muscles feel like and mental representation of once performance are the ingredients of mental preparation. In PSIS inventory six items are included to assess mental preparation.

In the present study significant difference were found between advanced and intermediate players and advanced and intermediate men and women players.

- **Team Emphasis**

Team Emphasis is a social psychological variable, most of thought to influence competitive athletic team success. It is to be a member of a team that gets along well and work together efficiently and cohesively (Terry Orlick, 1996). In PSIS inventory seven items are included to assess team emphasis. In the present context of the study how one gets frustrated when a teammate is performing poorly, approaching competition for the players sack or team sack, team spirit, approaching team win/loss and ignoring individual performance, thinking about team performance rather than individual performance, anger mood of the player when teammates perform poorly, and unwilling to allow replacement when a player perform poorly are the manifestation of team emphasis in team games.

In the present study significant differences are observed at game x level x sex dimension.

- **Concentration**

Effective concentration is assumed to be a critical requirement for optimal performance by athletes (Mora, 2004). Concentration, while avoiding distractions, is the ability to focus on specific tasks. As a result of manipulating the attention of athletes in competitive situations, researchers found favorable performance results (Mallet and Hanrahan, 1997 and Morgan, 2000). The ability of the individual to concentrate depends on the motivation of the individual to sustain them (Porter, 2003). Research findings have indicated that the effects of physical exertion on the ability to concentrate and to be attentive differ significantly and depend mainly on the intensity and the duration of the exercise (Davey, 1973).

In the PSIS inventory seven items are devoted to assess concentration. An athletes ability, to ignore comments of people surrounding, to forgot things that are done before, to ignore others distraction, to concentrate better during a difficult competition than on an easy one are the basic ingredients of concentration.

It was found significant different between games, sex, level x game, level x sex and game x level and sex dimensions.

1.4 CONCLUSIONS

Intermediate and advanced level sports performers are different on psychological characteristics motivation and anxiety control. Ball Badminton, Cricket and Kabaddi players are different on psychological characteristics motivation, mental preparation and concentration. Men and Women players are different on psychological characteristics motivation, mental preparation and concentration. Interactively intermediate and advanced level men and women players are different in motivation. Interactively intermediate and advanced level Ball Badminton, Cricket and Kabaddi players are different in motivation and concentration. Interactively men and women, Ball Badminton, Cricket and Kabaddi players are different in motivation. Interactively intermediate and advanced men and women Ball Badminton, Cricket and Kabaddi players are significant in motivation, mental preparation, concentration and team emphasis.

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