PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF MANAGING PERFORMANCE IN SPORTS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

Sport is a psycho-social activity. It has both psychological and social dimensions, besides physical, physiological and technical aspects. In this modern era of competition, the psychological preparation of a team is as much important as teaching the different skills of a game on the scientific lines. The teams are prepared not only to play the games, but to win the games. And for winning the games, it is not only the proficiency in the skills which bring victory but more important is the psychological makeup of the players which enable to play and perform best in the competition. The application of psychological principles to the improvement of performance in sport has received greater attention in these days. There are certain accepted psychological principles which have to be applied so that the athletes and players should be able to show their best in performance. It is important to know about the role of emotional phenomenon like incentive motivation, achievement motivation, state and trait anxiety and sport competition anxiety of the players during training as well as competitive situations. In order to achieve high sport performance at international level, all the physical, psychological and physiological abilities and capacities of the sportsman has to be developed to the extreme limits, which is only possible through scientific and systematic training. Hence a need was felt to identify and profile the psychological variables which account for managing the performance of sports personnel. The present study profiles the characteristics of four psychological factors which bears significance in modern high tech era of managing sports personnel performance. An effort has been made to pinpoint the conceptual frame work imbibed with these psychological factors and characterize them as the psychological variables. These four the most relevant variables considered in this study are – Competitive Anxiety, Aggression, Self Concept, and Social Adjustment. Theoretical and conceptual back-ground of these variables have been given in this study which suffice to bridge the observed gap in the related literature pertaining to the domain of physical education linked with optimal sports performance in the games like soccer, kabaddi, etc.

Key Words: Aggression, Competitive Anxiety, Psychological Variables, Self Concept, Social Adjustment

I. INTRODUCTION

Modern competitive sports of today’s demand more emphasis on the training of psychological aspects of sports. The high level performance seen in competition is nothing but perfect optimum harmonious relationship between one psychological preparedness and technical preparation. It is that psycho-physical condition of the organism which causes an individual to work and strive to fulfill his needs. In the field of physical education and sports, no athlete can win or even show better performance without optimum anxiety level and motivation. However the need of these factors will vary from sports to sports depending upon the nature and demand of the sports. The application of psychological principles to the improvement of performance in sports has received greater attention in these days. There are certain accepted psychological principles which have to be applied so that the athletes and players are able to show their performances. The psychological aspect of sport is gaining attention among sports administrators and coaches who can communicate efficiently with athletes and can provide an environment that is conducive to motivate performances and develop favorable self-concept. Sports psychology has emerged as a great blessing for the modern science, within a short span of time. Sports psychology has made its impact in sports world also. In the sphere of sports training an athlete is incomplete without psychological...
training. The application of psychological principles in performance sports has received greater attention in these days. Coaches, Physical Educationists and Sports Scientists have always expressed a great need to know more about those psychological principles, which are helpful in improving the motor skills of the players.

1.1 Physical Education and Sports Psychology

Physical education and sports have emerged from a long historical background. It is a process that has taken place, and is still taking place in various informal and formal ways. It has become one of the most persuasive social institutions in the contemporary societies. Today sports cannot develop without direct scientific assistance provided by various scientific disciplines. Sports psychology can help a lot in assessing the personality and self-concept of the players or individuals. Performance in physical education activity or sports not only demands systematic training to develop physical and physiological variables but also demands training and consideration of psychological characteristics for success in the field of sports.

In order to achieve high sport performance at international level, all the physical, psychological and physiological abilities and capacities of the sportsman has to be developed to the extreme limits, which is only possible through scientific and systematic training. But improvement at international level performance may well be on the basis of improvement in the quality of training and not so much from increase in the scope of training. The potential point which can be stressed when viewing athletic performance in this manner is that, regardless of how much ability, skill or fitness a person possesses for a particular task or sport, the success or quality of his performances will probably depend on his particular psychological makeup. It will depend to a large extent on his personality structure that how much he is motivated to succeed and how much emotional control he possesses. The premise here is that without an understanding of behavioral structure of the individual; the teacher or the coach cannot help him or her to achieve those basic objectives which impel the boy or girl to participate in sport. The psychological makeup of an athlete will also vary according to the nature of sports in which he/she participates.

II. PSYCHOLOGICAL VARIABLES IN SPORTS PERFORMANCE

Sports provide learning situation in formal and informal ways in which the participants learn to modify certain qualities in a unique way. Sport activity is determined by four sub-systems, i.e. the cultural, social, personal and organic systems. Sports play a vital role in developing individual’s character and desirable personality traits. With art, religion and normal values, sports share a value system, which is always an important part of human society.

In today’s world competition has become fierce and every sports person is in a race to strive for excellence. Competition has become a fundamental or basic mode of human expression. Competitive sport has become a vital factor for national and international unity, integrity and recognition.

Today sports cannot develop without direct scientific assistance provided by various scientific disciplines. Sports psychology can help a lot in assessing the personality and self-concept of the players or individuals. Performance in physical education activity or sports not only demands systematic training to develop physical and physiological variables but also demands training and consideration of psychological characteristics for success in the field of sports.

There are certain accepted psychological principles which have to be applied so that the athletes and players are able to show their best in their performance. It is important to know about the role of emotional phenomenon like incentive motivation, achievement motivation, state and trait anxiety and sport competition anxiety of the players during training as well as competitive situations. Psychology has been accepted as the science of behavior and experience. Behavior includes all manifestation of life as a pure science. According to Fred Wilt [1] sports psychology is an area, which attempts to apply psychological factors and principles of learning, performance and associated human behavior in the whole field of sports. In this modern era of competition the psychological preparation of a team is as much important as teaching the different skills of a game on the scientific lines. The teams are prepared not only to play but to win the games. And for winning the games it is not only the skills proficiency which brings victory in the competition but the psychological characteristics possessed by the individual as well. Hence, study of the psychological characteristics of sports persons is being given due attention by sports psychologists. All those interested in the development of sports are keenly analyzing the psychological profiles, which are used for selection and preparation of sports person for competition.
Psychological variables like Anxiety, Aggression, Self Concept, Locus of Control, Self Perception and Stress etc., determine the performance of individual. Sports psychology supplies psychology theories and concept to be accepted by sports psychologists for psychological assessments techniques and intervention strategies in an effort to help individuals to achieve their optimal performance. While sports psychology is concerned with analyzing human behavior in various types of sports setting it focuses on the mental aspects of performance.

III. DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION OF TERMS

3.1 Anxiety
Anxiety is the state of mind in which the individual respond with discomfort to some event that has occurred or is going to occur. The person worries about the event. Their occurrence and consequences in general are the sources of anxiety how even the anxiety can be either somatic or cognitive in nature. (Keith Bell, 1983) [2].

Anxiety is a subjective feeling of apprehension accompanied by a heightened level of physiological arousal (Levits, 1985) [3].

A Tendency to perceive competitive situation threatening and to respond to these situations with feeling of apprehension or tension is sports competition anxiety. (R. D. Master, 1982) [4].

Anxiety is an uneasiness and feeling of foreboding often when person is about to embark on a hazardous venture. It is often accompanied by a strong desire to excel. (Agyajit Singh, 1982) [5].

3.2 Aggression
Aggression is defined as the deliberate intent to harm another person. This includes physical psychological and social harm which is primary focus. On the other hand highly robust behavior within the rules of the game is not aggression. (Glyn C. Robers, 1981) [6].

Aggression is behavior and actions that usually seek to inflict psychological and physical harm other another person or on and individual’s possessions or there one’s. (Cratty, 1989) [7].

3.3 Self concept
Self-concept is defined as organized configuration of perception of the self which are admissible to awareness. It is compared of such elements as the perception of one’s characteristics and abilities the percept and concept of the self in relation to other and to the environment. (Young M. L., 1981) [8]

Self-concept is the totality of attitudes, judgment and values of an individual’s relating to this abilities and qualities, “Self-concept” embraces awareness of these variables and evaluation. (Singh G & Debnath K., 1986) [9]

3.4 Adjustment
Adjustment is how one reacts to his surroundings, people and situation to get the maximum possible satisfaction. Since one’s surrounding, situation are never static, one continuously goes on findings new ways and means of reacting to various types of environments, people and situations.

Singh says “Adjustment involves achievement whether we do thing badly or well Second Adjustment can be thought of as the process of reacting to circumstances and being aware of our feelings”, Singh A. K. (1983) [10].

Singh’s definition of adjustment is the “Outcome of the individual’s efforts to deal with distress and meet his need.” [10]

Singh G. has defined “Adjustment is a harmonious relationship with the environment in which most individual needs are satisfied in socially acceptable ways and resulting in forms of behavior which may range from passive conformity to vigorous action.” Singh G. (1990) [11].

According to Gates and Jersfield “Adjustment is a continuous process by which a person varies his behavior to produce a more harmonious relationship between himself and environment”.

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Anxiety may be positive motivating force or it may interfere with successful athletic performance. As positive motivating force it can be instrumental in motivating the athlete to work harder to find new and better way to improve performance and help set goals the athlete who uses his anxiety in this way will seek out ways to improve himself. This not only reduces his anxiety but help him increase his athletic skills and his self-confidence. As a negative motivator anxiety may interfere with productive as well as constructive thinking. Athletes may attempt to handle anxiety by denying their mistakes, denying their weakness and thus denying the need to work hard. This can lead to the development of poor work habits or athletic techniques. These often lead to failure and in turn lack of confidence and increased anxiety. (Encyclopedia, 1971) [12].

Dauthwaite et al. (1984) indicated the theory of competitive stress is to predict levels of state anxiety among different people in various competitive settings. The theory is based on an individual’s perception of threat (those psychological and physical dangers which may be present). The degree of threat in a competitive setting is theorized to be a function of the uncertainty of the outcome and the importance of the outcome. Uncertainty is determined by the probability of success; and uncertainty decreases as the probability of success deviates from an intermediate range. The probability of success is determined on the basis of content and the availability of information, as perceived by the competitors, about the discrepancy between the standard in the comparison process and the competitors’ ability and the actual performance outcome [13].

Buston, elsie Carter (1976) utilized boy’s high school basketball teams and designed this investigation as a test of inverted-U hypothesis. State anxiety was measured prior to each game and performance ascertained by coaches’ ratings, for each athlete, across eight to 14 games. State anxiety scores ranged from 10 to 40, while performance was categorized by coaches as outstanding, average or poor. Tabulation procedures resulted in average anxiety scores for five points along the horizontal (anxiety) axis. A configuration of means strongly supportive of a bell shaped curve was displayed [14].

Mayward I. W. (1988) utilized a design incorporating repeated state anxiety measures on the same people. Subjects were female college basketball players from eight teams who participated in a double elimination tournament. Pre competitive state anxiety was measured for each athlete 20-30 meters before each game of tournament. Basketball performance was assessed as total points (T.P.) scored and an overall performance measured as a function of shooting percentage total points, rebounds, assists, steals, turn-over and personal fouls. Resultant SA scores for each athlete were ranked from low to high. Thus three categorical levels of pre-competitive SA were formed (low, moderate and high) performance scores associated with each anxiety score were than averaged according to anxiety level orthogonal polynomials were employed to test the within subject SA variance for trend. The results showed that both linear and quadratic trends components contributed significantly to total point variances across the three SA levels. For over-all performance, a significant quadratic component was obtained. Thus in terms of over-all performance, the results provide support for the inverted U relationship between pre-competitive anxiety and Basketball performance [15].

‘Psyche’ of an athlete is one of the determinant factors to the performance. Research has been done on sports psychology for improvement of performance. Aggression among human is as old as human race. Aggression has directional components some aggressions are directed in word and in its extreme form many culminate in self-destructive behaviors including suicide. The idea that aggression and performance are through to be positively related in sports setting is not surprising.

Aggression could have positive influence on the performance outcome of an individual of team if the aggressive behavior harmed the opposition either physically or psychologically therapy weakening their resources (i.e., input). Aggression could also improve a team’s performance outcome by improving the process of that group. Aggressive behavior is quite visible in sports. To observer aggressive sports behavior we could attend a basketball game and watch player fights for rebounds or we could watch runners throw elbows and Jostle of Position in 1500 mitts race.

Silva & Robert (1984) [16] demonstrated that aggressive behavior is a physical act that can psychologically or physically injure another person or one self. Aggressive behavior against another person is called extropunitive behavior. However, aggression against the self is often labeled as introductive behavior. Aggressive behavior is non-accidental, the aggressor intends an injury and the behavior selected for this is under his or her control.
aggressor has selected the behavior from various alternatives available in the situation including non-aggressive response.

Sports may be arranged in a scale according to the intensity and type of aggression inherent in each. Some sports require that a great deal of physical force be directed against one's opponent. However, others require forceful actions against the environment instead of direct aggression. Many sports however required that individual aggress with in structured rules and specific conditions stressful in the fact that in many sport all out aggression is alternated with periods of total absence of action. Thus, in sport as in life, one problem is to encourage an optimum amount of aggression when called for and to enable athlete to suspend aggression when that is called for.

The self-concept is a highly complex component of behavior, composed of both cognitive and effective dimension and has at least four orientations: The real self, the perceived self, and the ideas self and the self as perceived by others. The type of behavior depends upon what one feel is capable of and appropriate to his need. Thus self-concept and unique behavior pattern of an individual resembles the relationship between egg and chick.

The concept of adjustment is as old as human race on earth. From the very beginning of the period of Darwin the concept was used purely in biological sense, but man as a social animal not only is to adapt to physical demands but also adjust to social pressures. Thus, the concept of adjustment is not simple as adaptation. Psychologists and scholars differ considerably in interpreting its meaning and nature and defined adjustment as "life consist of series of such sequences in which needs are aroused and then satisfied. This familiar pattern is the basic of adjustment."

Life is a continuous process of adjustment. Psychology is defined as the science of human behavior and behavior can be better understood if we know the process of adjustment. In fact, people by making adjustment to the different spheres of life, try to cope or solve the problems of everyday life (Singh, 1986) [17]. Some persons are well adjusted and some are less adjusted. Of the various types of adjustment psychologists have considered five major types of adjustment, such as home, health, social, emotional and school to be the most important ones.

In another words adjustment is a change or adaptation made in response to a new situation or a new perception of a situation. Adjustment originally was regarded as little more than the avoidance of maladjustment but then became a goal for therapy with the emergence of the humanistic approaches to psychotherapy. Modern therapists accept that many forms of adjustment are possible thus avoiding value judgment about Life style. Broadly speaking adjustment refers to the individuals achieving a harmonious balance with the demands of both environment and cognitions.

Adjustment will depend to a large extent upon the type of environment one has and the understanding, guidance he receives from his parents and other adults with whom he is associated (Warrel) [18]. If he learns to be secured in relationships with his family, the child can tolerate the insecurity that comes when he tries to adjust to the world outside the home (Martin, 1951). The processes that generate normal behavior lead to what we have referred to as adjustment. The idea of adjustment stems from the biological concept of adaptation, a building block, in fact, concern stone in Darwin's theory of evolution.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Scientific Research has revolutionized the standard of sporting performance all over the world in different sports and games. Coaches and scientists are more dependent on more modern and scientific technology to derive top quality performance from their athletes. Based on the conceptual framework of psychology in sports performance and the viewpoints of earlier studies presented above, it can be concluded that the potential point which can be stressed when viewing athletic performance is that, regardless of how much ability, skill or fitness a person possesses for a particular task or sport, the success or quality of his performances will probably depend on his particular psychological makeup. It will depend to a large extent on his personality structure that how much he is motivated to succeed and how much emotional control he possesses. The premise here is that without an understanding of behavioral structure of the individual, the teacher or the coach cannot help him or her to achieve those basic objectives which impel the boy or girl to participate in sport. The psychological makeup of an athlete will also vary according to the nature of sports in which he/she participates.

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