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An analysis of anxiety and worry management, concentration ability and relaxation ability among national level sprinters and long distance runners

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to find out the mental skills between national level sprinters and long distance runners. The total number of 50 subjects selected as samples from Punjabi University, Patiala in which 25 are sprinters and 25 are long distance runners. The age group of the subjects ranged from 18-25 years. All the samples were selected on random basis. To assess anxiety and worry management, concentration ability and relaxation ability of selected subjects, Mental Skills inventory developed by Nelson & Hardy was used. This inventory measures Imagery Ability, Mental Preparation, Self-Confidence. This inventory is highly reliable & valid to assess mental skills of selected subjects. The scoring was done according to rule led down by the authors. The 't' test was used to find out significant difference among two groups i.e. male sprinters and long distance runners. Results found that there is no significant difference has been found between sprinters & long distance runners on the basis of mental skills.

Keywords: anxiety and worry management, concentration ability and relaxation ability, Male Sprinters and Long distance runners etc.

Introduction

Psychology is very important for students, a popular area in now days, and a part of our everyday lives. Psychology is very helpful to study a variety of human experiences. It tries to investigate the activities happening in the mind which are non-physiological in nature. Mental process includes perception, learning, memory and thinking. These are internal activities which are not directly observed. We can observe these things through behavior of the person. In behavior of person includes simple reflexes, way of talking etc.

Sports psychology is the important branch of psychology. Sports psychology is the very important in now days in the field of sports. Many researches show that sports psychologist is much beneficial for any player or sports team. Psychological skills are critical for athletes at the elite level. They can play a critical role in learning and in sports performance. No champion athlete or sports team gets to be a champion these days without a healthy dose of sport psychology included in their training program. Sport psychology is a well-established and constantly growing field, and one that brings great value to athletes of all levels. The field of sports psychology has developed rapidly in recent years. The role of sports psychologists is very important in now days. It can teach skills to help athletes improve their learning process and motor skills, cope with competitive pressure, fine tune the level of awareness needed for optimal performance, and stay focused on the target. We can say that sports psychology is much useful to enhancement of sports performance. It is the study of the psychological basis, processes and effects of sport. Mental skill (also known as psychological skill) is internal capabilities that help athletes control their minds efficiently and consistently as they execute sports related goals. It has long been acknowledged that psychological skills are critical for athletes at the elite level. Mental skills are useful to improve attention control, emotional control, setting goals, planning for mental preparation. The basic mental skills include concentration, goal setting, and relaxation and self-talk. It is also known as cognitive and psychological skills.

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Mental skills training has developed from the necessity of the athlete to learn more about their individual mental life to allow a degree of control in coordinating effective movement through various psychological states of performance. There are many different methods used to develop mental skills in task performance, but most can be separated into two basic approaches, cognitive and somatic, even though there is much overlap between the two. Underlying both systems is the aim and motivation of the individual to attain self-mastery, that is, a desire to control their individual psychological world skills. Competition means contest between two persons or teams. The term competition derived from Latin language word 'competere' means seek together. In competition a person or a team to assess their physical prowess, ability or mental strength on the basis of some comparable performance given. A competitive situation is created when there are two or more opponents desirous of contesting for something to attest their supremacy in it. In competition two individuals or sides face each other's as in athletics, soccer, judo, badminton etc. Anxiety is emotional state, represented by a sense of alarm or fear. Sport anxiety is simply mind-body state that is marked by nervousness, fear or worry. Some signs of competitive anxiety are urge to urinate, too much yawning, foolish mistakes, belying coach's hopes, lack of attention, general weakness, feeling of fatigue, aggression playing dirty tricks etc. There are many causes of competitive anxiety such as: stress and uncertainty motivate some athletes, they induce anxiety in most athletes, less experienced and those practicing sport below pre-elite level. Several factors like untested equipment, unfamiliar playing field, varying environmental conditions, competition officials, opponent etc. can increase competitive anxiety. The more important the contest the greater the stress and the more likely it is that a competitor will be prone to anxiety. Participants in individual game have been shown more anxiety before, during and after competition than participants in team sports. For players in high body contact sports such as boxing, wrestling judo etc. the possibility of getting injured is a much greater source of anxiety than anything else. Expectation of success is other main cause of competitive anxiety.

Concentration Ability

It is the act or process of concentrating. The state of being concentrated; especially: direction of attention to a single object. The student chose law as his concentration. It is a concentrated mass or thing. Concentration is the capability to direct one's attention in accordance with one's will. It means control of the attention. It is the ability to focus the mind on one subject, object or thought and at the same time exclude from the mind every other unrelated thoughts, ideas, feelings and sensations. It also means the ability to do one thing at a time, instead of jumping from one subject to another and losing attention, time, and energy. Concentration is a state, in which one's whole attention is engrossed in one thing only, and being oblivious to everything else. During concentration, the mind focuses on the object of concentration, and only one thought occupies the mind. The whole energy of the mind becomes concentrated on this one thought.

The ability to command the mind and control the attention is not common, and requires training. Most people lack the ability to control their attention and focus the mind exclusively on one subject for any length of time. They can't command their mind to concentrate, whenever they want to. However, concentration is not uncommon activity. It happens

almost every day, to almost everyone, but it is more of a spontaneous and uncontrolled ability. One important aspect of concentration is being able to stay focused on what you are doing. When athletes stop focusing on themselves and instead begin to think too much about the competition, then choking and performance problems are the end result. If concentration is the key to athletic excellence, then mistakes in concentration are the primary reason that athletes struggle performance-wise. Choking, slumps, performance problems, fears and lack of self-confidence can all be traced to the athlete's mental mistakes in focusing. If you want to develop mental toughness and start performing more to your potential, then you have to begin to learn how to better control your focus of concentration. In particular, you had better learn how to keep your concentration squarely focused on you and what you're doing.

Relaxation ability

Relaxation is a natural skill that you can increase through simple relaxation and meditation methods. With training you can remain relaxed during both the good times and the bad. If you do not exercise some form of relaxation tension builds up. On-going tension and anxiety generates a negative spiral of increasing distress and illness, making it harder and harder to relax and recuperate. It is a brainy strategy to aim to stay as relaxed as possible under all conditions.

Relaxation is both an art and a science. The science of relaxation is based on learning how to control our nervous system. When you turn on relaxation you automatically turn off the part of the brain that deals with stress and tension and turn on the part that creates relaxation and wellbeing (*the parasympathetic nervous system*). The art of relaxation is known how to relax and how to meditate, and to use the relaxation gained from these methods to get the most out of your lifetime. This means being able to relax during both the good times and the bad, and especially when you are facing tough times with lots of stresses and examinations. When you know how to relax you have the energy to deal with stress and the ability to relax and refresh after the stress has been managed. Once you have the skill of relaxation you can learn to turn on relaxation whenever and wherever you need it. The key to good health is your ability to relax and recharge when your body tells you that it needs to do this.

Many people are ignoring themselves or are unable to read their body's inner signals. This is resulting in an epidemic of chronic degenerative diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity, and in poor relationships and a generally reduced quality of life. Medical research is showing us that relaxation can help people better manage these conditions and improve quality of life. Learning relaxation techniques has become extremely important as more and more people are working longer hours and at the same time are facing greater financial and job insecurity.

Methodology

The study was conducted on mental skills of male sprinters & male long distance runners of Punjabi University, Patiala. A total of fifty subjects in which 25 male sprinters & 25 male long distance runners were randomly selected as samples from Punjabi University, Patiala. All the selected samples were participated at National level. The age group of subjects ranged from 18-25 years and all the samples were selected from random basis.

Tools

To assess mental skills of selected male sprinters & male long distance runners, Mental Skill inventory developed by Nelson & Hardy was used. This inventory measures Anxiety, Concentration Ability & Relaxation Ability. This inventory is highly reliable & valid to assess mental skills of selected male subjects. The 't' test was used to find out significant difference among male sprinters and male long distance runners

Table 1: Shows mean and standard deviation of anxiety and worry management between sprinters and long distance runners

Groups	Mean	SD	MD	't' value
Sprinters (N=25)	16.08	6.56	0.36	0.85
Long distance runners (N=25)	15.72	6.00		

't' _{0.05(48)} = 2.01

From table 1, results deficits that sprinters have high level of anxiety & worry management (M= 16.08, SD= 6.56) as compared to long distance runners (M= 15.72, SD= 6.00). The calculated 't'- value is 0.85. which is less than the tabulated 't'- value, So therefore their exists insignificant difference between sprinters and long distance runners for their anxiety and worry management ability.

Table 2: Shows mean and standard deviation of concentration ability between sprinters and long distance runners

Groups	Mean	SD	MD	't' value
Sprinters (N=25)	15.64	7.34	0.84	0.64
Long distance runners (N=25)	16.48	4.59		

't' _{0.05(48)} = 2.01

From table no. 2, results indicated that long distance runners have more concentration ability (M= 16.48, SD= 4.59) as compared to sprinters (M= 15.64, SD= 7.34). The calculated 't'- value is 0.64, i.e. which is less than the tabulated 't'-value, So there is insignificant difference between sprinters and long distance runners for their concentration ability.

Table 3: Shows mean and standard deviation of relaxation ability between sprinters and long distance runners

Groups	Mean	SD	MD	't' value
Sprinters (N=25)	9.56	1.15	0.44	0.53
Long distance runners (N=25)	10	2.91		

't' _{0.05(48)} = 2.01

From table 3, results showed that sprinters have poor relaxation ability (M= 9.56, SD= 1.15) as compared to long distance runners (M= 10, SD= 2.91). The calculated 't'- value is 0.53, i.e. which is less than the tabulated 't'- value, So there is insignificant difference between sprinters and long distance runners for their relaxation ability.

Conclusion

1. There is no significant difference between the sprinters & long distance runners in there score of anxiety and worry management.
2. There is no significant difference between the sprinters & long distance runners in there score of concentration ability.
3. There is no significant difference between the sprinters & long distance runners in there score of relaxation ability.
4. There is no significant difference has been found between sprinters & long distance runners on the basis of

overall mental skills.

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