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A comparative study of psychological characteristics and socio-economic status of volleyball players of high and low levels

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to make a comparative study of the psychological characteristics and socio-economic status of volleyball players of high and low levels. The current study comprised of sixty (60) female volleyball players of Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra. These subjects were classified into high and low level groups. Thirty players out of these 60 players who had participated in the national volleyball championships and other major tournaments constituted the high level group. The remaining thirty players who had played in the inter-university and inter-collegiate tournaments constituted the low level group of volleyball players.

Keywords: Psychological and socio-economic status of high and low levels, volleyball, Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra

Introduction

Man has always inclined to excel and to attain the ultimate aim in our lives. There is only one way to excel is through sports. Hence, people have switched to sport for the attainment of greatness apart from other benefits. Sports, therefore, have become an ever-expanding avenue of human life and today sports in its various formations have played a vital role in the everybody life.

Sports and games played a vital and important role in the life of mankind. Sports and games used to keep every individual's mind healthy and fresh and drove away negative energy and positive energy takes in all the space. They make people strong-headed, confident and efficient. Sports and games are competitive in nature and meant for a specific age group. The participation is mainly enjoyed by the talented and gifted youngsters. So the process of channelization of athletes into various sports and games should be according to their ability and interest. To reach the international competitive sports standard, one has to be well-equipped in every aspects of a particular game. So each sportsman has to be physiologically, physically and psychologically fit and well.

All the motor performances, regardless of a person's ability level, is a function of the massing of these dimensions—fitness, skill, physical endowment and sport at high level of competition. Various studies by the researchers have shown that athletes, who have dedicated much of their lives to their chosen sport, choke or clutch when the long sought goals are within their reach. In various books, pages are full of stories about well-trained athlete with magnificent physical fitness who faster at the moment of victory. Psychological readiness thus play an important role as to determine whether or not an athlete in competition and in training responds to his/her best potentials.

Generally, the term “personality” refers to more or less conceived human quality which everyone recognises as a special importance in inter-personal relations. In general, personality refers to the pattern of thoughts, feelings and behaviours, consistently exhibited by an individual over a long period of time, that strongly influences the way that individual perceives the world and himself or herself. Personality assessment has been used now in the selection of athletes and also serves as a toll to evaluate sport gifted individuals and to acquaint the child to specific sport activities.

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Recently, psychologists and physical educationist have become increasingly interested in assessing the personality of athletes. There have been general promises that athletes possess unique and definable personality, dominance, persistence, drive, confidence have been found to go most often with success in the field of sports. Hence, when child performs well in socially sanctioned activity, such as sport, he/she usually will receive reinforcement in the form of support from parents and others. The career of most athletes reveals that they are strongly reinforced early in life and encouraged to devote their energies to sports.

Today, volleyball occupies an important place among all other sports and games. It is considered to be an ideal sport for all, given engagement, pleasure and at the same time demanding fitness and dedication. It demands physical and mental traits to be in top gear to tackle all eventualities when playing the match. The match is won by a perfect combination of physical conditions, mental attitude, intelligence experience and skills of the players.

Volleyball is a fastest growing team sport which is being played by both male and female. It is becoming speedily popular all over the world and therefore has further scope of development. Volleyball is a team ball game consisting of six players on each team. In volleyball, the players need to score points by grounding the ball on the opposing team's court. Volleyball was originally called "mintonette" because of its similarity to the game of badminton. The top class world and national level players today requires power, speed, unlimited endurance and absolutely top mental and physical fitness of withstand the strains and stress of the competitions.

Hence, in volleyball only physical fitness at one hand and psychological at the other are equally significant in order to maintain equilibrium of the individual. It is strictly so far the top level players because for high level of achievement in competition. They need to be physically and mentally well balanced. Swami Nityananda, a wise man from India once said, "a strong mind is more important than a strong body as it will know that when you train so intensively yet your mind into competing, you usually don't do so well".

The research scholar has thus made a sincere attempt by undertaking parent investigation to find out whether high and low level players in this game are characterized by specific psychological dimension and socio-economic conditions.

The aim of the present study was to make a comparative analysis of the psychological characteristics and socio-economic status of volleyball players of high and low levels.

Psychological Characteristics: Psychological characteristics are a broad personality factor that governs the way one thinks, feels or behaves.

Socio-Economic Status: Socio-economic status in terms of primary conditions and characteristics is determined through vocation, income and wealth, home and its location, education, activities and association.

High Level Volleyball Player: A high level volleyball player is one who has participated in the National Championship and other major tournaments.

Low Level Volleyball Player: A low level volleyball player is one who has participated only up to the university and inter-collegiate level of volleyball competition.

For the present study, sixty (60) female volleyball players of Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra have served as the subjects.

These subjects were divided into high and low level groups. 30 players out of these 60 players who had participated in the national volleyball championship and other major tournaments constituted the high level group. The remaining 30 players who had played in the inter-university and intercollegiate tournaments constituted the low level group of volleyball players.

Procedure

Criterion Measures - Dimensions of personality as measured by Eysenck's Maudsley Personality

Inventory (M.P.I.), Questionnaire prepared by Jalota and Kapoor, Anxiety level as measured by SCAT (Sport Competition Anxiety Test, Inventory (Illinois Competition Questionnaire) of Rainer Martens and Socioeconomic status as measured by socio-economic status scale questionnaire were the criterion measures adopted in the present study.

M.P.I. Questionnaire standardized by Jalota and Kapoor and supplied by the Psycho Centre, New Delhi was employed to investigate the Neuroticism Stability and Introversion - Extroversion dimensions of personality of the subjects. M.P.I. is a brief but standard as well as an easily administered and scored inventory. It is suitable for normal and abnormal adults and also for adolescents. This test can be used as a group of an individual test for persons of ages 15 to 16 years and above. The vocabulary required is that of the average newspaper.

Although the time limit is enforced in the testing, but the short scale takes about 3 to 5 minutes, while the long scale takes about 15 to 20 minutes. Items from 1 to 12 given on the front page of the test booklet make the short scale, while all the 48 items of the booklet constitute the long scale. Each of these items is answerable by making a tick-mark into one of the three boxes.

Socio-Economic Status Scale Questionnaire for determining the socio-economic status of the subjects, a survey of available questionnaires for Indian subjects revealed few questionnaires. The questionnaire was selected as it would be easy for the subjects to give their response on each item of the question under occupation, education etc., and contained specific choices for each selection. The final form of the scale seeks information's about the following components variables:

Education; Occupation; Income; Cultural living or Cultural Standard; Social Participation

The categories of socio-economic status based on the data collected on education level of father/guardian/ self, occupation status, monthly income of father/guardian/self, cultural living, and social participation through this socio-economic status scale questionnaire are upper class, upper middle class, lower class and lower class. Although this scale can be used for individual testing, it is primarily a group test. The instructions are printed on the test form and the respondents must answer every item and check at the end so that no item is left unanswered.

Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) Inventory

In order to determine the anxiety level of the subjects, the Sport Competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) Inventory labelled as the Illinois Competition Questionnaire developed by Rainer Martens was employed. This questionnaire was selected as it is an objective test and employs simple means to investigate anxiety levels in hypothetical sport situations. This Questionnaire comprised of 15 questions and five questions (Items) as 1, 4, 7, 10 and 13 are to be scrapped as these are

used only as “dummy” variables to disguise the questionnaire. The score ranges from 10 (low competitive trait anxiety) to 30 (high competitive trait anxiety).

The volleyball players of Vidarbha Region of Maharashtra who had represented the State in the National Volleyball Championship and other major Volleyball Tournaments were contacted and requested to serve as the subjects for the present study. The researcher made sincere efforts to get the true responses. Subjects were contacted personally and their cooperation was solicited. All the respondents were called to the indoor stadium, when they were not busy and had enough time to answer the questionnaire.

All the essential instructions to be followed during the test was given. The researcher at the same time motivated the respondents by promising to send a separate abstract of his conclusions of his study to each of them. It was assured to them that their responses would be kept confidential and would not be used for any other purpose than the present research study, and therefore, they could give honest responses without any sense of fear or apprehension.

A similar procedure was adopted at a different time for administering the questionnaires of personality, anxiety and socio-economic status to the volleyball players who had played in the inter-university and intercollegiate level, who constituted the low level group. For this group also the questionnaires were administered at the indoor stadium.

M.P.I. - The test was scored directly from the test booklet. The scoring stencil was placed along the anchoring points made on the test booklet. The raw scores were read off and added to give a total of neuroticism and extraversion scores respectively. All the items answerable in category “Yes” were assigned with a weight age of 2 scores (except 8 items Nos. = 14, 16, 18, 22, 24, 30, 36 and 40 which belongs to extraversion dimension and reassigning 2 scores only when answered in the category “No”): and all “2” answers were assigned with one score when the testers marked them in the middle category. The raw scores were then converted into standard scores to compare the degree of neuroticism and extraversion.

S.C.A.T. - This inventory consisted of 15 items and the subjects were to give response to all these 15 items. Then 5 items such as items 1, 4, 7, 10 and 13 were not scored as these items are “dummy” variables, used on questionnaires to disguise the questionnaire somewhat. Items 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 12, 14 and 15 were scored as:

1 = hardly ever; 1 = sometimes; 3 = often Items 6 and 11 were scored as:

1 = often; 2 = sometimes; 3 = hardly ever

Socio-Economic Status - The score obtained by a subject in various questions of the socio-economic status scale questionnaire, were added to get a total score. This socio-economic status was read out from the Tables of Norms appended to the Manual of the questionnaire. The comparative analysis of the psychological characteristics of volleyball players of high and low groups was done by employing the ‘t’ test. The percentages of the subjects falling under the various categories of socio-economic status in high and low level volleyball players were tabulated by using the descriptive technique of percentages.

Results

In order to determine the significance of difference in the mean scores of the personality dimension (Neuroticism and Extraversion), anxiety level and the socio-economic status

among high and low level volleyball players, the ‘t’ test employed. The analysis of data pertaining to this is presented in Table 1 to 3. The percentage analysis of socio-economy status of female volleyball players of high and low level group is given in Table 4.

Table 1: Significance of Difference of Mean Scores of High and Low Volleyball players in Eysenck’s Maudsley Personality Inventory (M.P.I.)

S.No.	Dimension	Group	Mean ± S.D.	Mean S.E.	t
1.	Neuroticism in Short Scale	High level	44.67 ± 14.53	12.8	3.194.018
		Low Level	31.87 ± 9.72		
2.	Neuroticism in Long Scale	High Level	43.83 ± 5.88	7.13	1.434.986
		Low Level	36.7 ± 5.88		
3.	Extraversion in Short Scale	High Level	48.73 ± 11.40	2.54	2.45
		Low Level	51.27 ± 7.05		
4.	Extraversion in Long Scale	High Level	33.8 ± 5.77	0.87	1.650.527
		Low Level	34.67 ± 6.97		

Significance at .05 level of confidence. “t” value needed for significance at .05 level with 58 degrees of freedom is 2.00.

Table 2: Significance of Difference of Mean Scores of High and Low Level Volleyball Groups in Sports Competition Anxiety Test (S.C.A.T.)

Group	Mean ± S.D.	Mean Difference	S.E.	t
High Level	13.97 ± 2.24	7.07	0.828	8.526
Low Level	21.03 ± 3.97			

Significance at .05 level of confidence. “t” value needed for significance at .05 level with 58 degrees of freedom is 2.00.

Table 3: Significance of Difference of Mean Scores of High and Low Level Volleyball Players in Socio-Economic Status Scale

Group	Mean ± S.D.	Mean Difference	S.E.	t
High Level	38.43 ± 7.29	23.67	1.997	7.417
Low Level	23.67 ± 8.14			

Significance at .05 level of confidence. “t” value needed for significance at .05 level with 58 degrees of freedom is 2.00.

Table 4: Percentage Analysis of Socio-Economic Status of Volleyball Players of High and Low Level Groups

S.No.	Group	Prequencies		Percentage	
		High Level	Low Level	High Level	Low Level
1.	Upper Class	25	4	83.33	13.33
2.	Upper Middle Class	2	9	6.66	30
3.	Lower Middle Class	3	11	10	36.66
4.	Lower Class	-	6	-	20

The findings of the analysis with respect to Neuroticism (short and long scale) shows that the high level volleyball players are more reserved, emotionally stable and conservative. The low level volleyball players are emotionally instable and are predispose to neurotic breakdown. The findings of the analysis also reveal that with respect to extraversion (short and long scale). There was no significance difference among the high and low level volleyball players.

The findings of the Sport Anxiety Test Questionnaire exhibit that volleyball players of low level group possess higher anxiety level than high level volleyball players. The high level group were tough minded, self-confident and emotionally more stable than low level volleyball players. The findings also reveal that the low level volleyball players get easily excited and nervous before a competition.

The findings of the analysis show that the socio-economic status of the high and low level volleyball players were

significantly different.

The findings of the analysis of the percentages of socio-economic status of volleyball players of high and low levels groups show that 83.33% of the high level volleyball players belongs to upper class status. 6.66 of the high level group also belong to upper middle class and 10% belong to lower middle class.

The findings further indicate that 36.66% of the low level group belongs to lower middle class status. 30% of the low level volleyball player's fall in the category of upper middle class and 10% belong to lower class.

Hence, the findings reveals that the majority of the high level volleyball players belongs to upper class and majority of the low level volleyball players belongs to lower and upper middle class.

Conclusion

Within the limitations and on the basis of the findings of the present study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. High level volleyball players are emotionally stable and more conservative. The low level volleyball players are emotionally unstable and suffers from neurotic breakdown under stress and pressure of the two groups, which one tends to be more outgoing, sociable etc., could not be differentiated significantly.
2. Volleyball players of low level have higher level of anxiety than the high level group. High level volleyball players are found to be tough-minded, self-confident, tender, and emotionally stable and are hard to fool as compared to the low level group. High level players are also free thinkers and selfreliant.
3. An overwhelming majority of the volleyball players of high level belongs to upper class or rich families. Almost all the low level volleyball players belong to upper middle and lower middle classes with a few exceptions in low class and upper class.

Recommendations

In the light of conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are met for the physical educators, coaches and volleyball players:

1. While screening and selecting team members the coaches may identify the players with desirable and suitable personality dimensions along with an appropriate level of anxiety besides category of socioeconomic status for training.
2. It is also recommended to undertake studies concerning personality dimension, anxiety level and socio-economic status of high and low level players of other games and sports.
3. Similar studies may be conducted with sportsmen of levels other than those employed in the present study.

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