

Sport Psychology, Sports Sociology and Athletic Performance

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Abstract

Athletic performance is a dependable factor that exclusively depends on psychological and sociological factors beside higher level of physical fitness. Sports Psychology is an interdisciplinary subject that draws on knowledge from the fields of Kinesiology and Psychology. It involves with the study of how psychological factors like interest, attention, motivation, instinct, emotion, talent, intelligence affect performance and how participation in sport and exercise affect psychological and physical factors. In addition to instruction and training of psychological skills for performance improvement, applied sport psychology may include work with athletes, coaches, and parents regarding injury, rehabilitation, communication, team building, and career transitions. Thus the subject has become the key factor of success or defeat in the sports. However, the birth of sports psychology in Europe happened largely in Germany. The first sports psychology laboratory was founded by Dr. Carl Diem in Berlin, in the early 1920s. In Russia, sport psychology experiments began as early as 1925 at institutes of physical culture in Moscow and Leningrad, and formal sport psychology departments were formed around 1930. In North America, early years of sport psychology included isolated studies of motor behavior, social facilitation, and habit formation. Moreover, there are many aspects of Sports Psychology. Sports Sociology on the other hand deals with the influential factors of the society such as behavior of the athlete, coach, trainer, supporters, spectators, people of the nation, government, journalist etc. basically those who are involved with the increase and decrease of performance. Hence both the sports psychology and sports sociology are important considerable factors in sports. The World Athletic Competition-2011 in Daegu, South Korea and some other sports expresses a lot of psychological factors how affected athletic performance beside this it has also been seen that sociological factors like presence of family, friends and supporters in game situation affects performance of an athlete.

Key words: Sports Psychology, Sports Sociology, Athletic Performance

Introduction: Athletic performance is a dependable factor that depends on psychological, sociological factors beside the level of physical fitness of an individual. For that Sport psychology now a day is one of the most important branches of study which is related to athletic performance. Sports psychology draws on knowledge from the fields of Kinesiology and Psychology. Sports psychology involves the study of how psychological factors affect performance and how participation in sports and exercises affects psychological and physical factors of an athlete. In addition to instruction and training of psychological skills for performance improvement, applied sport psychology may include work with athletes, coaches, and parents regarding injury, rehabilitation, communication, team building, and career

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transitions. Thus the subject has become the key factor of success or defeat in the sports competitions as we know that best performance depends on two aspects, physical fitness and mental readiness. However, the birth of sports psychology in Europe happened largely in Germany. The first sport psychology laboratory was founded by Dr. Carl Diem in Berlin, in the early 1920s. The early years of sport psychology were also highlighted by the formation of the College of Physical Education by Robert Werner Schulte in 1920. The lab measured physical abilities and aptitude in sport, and in 1921, Schulte published *Body and Mind in Sport*. In Russia, sport psychology experiments began as early as 1925 at institutes of physical culture in Moscow and Leningrad, and formal sport psychology departments were formed around 1930. In North America, early years of sport psychology included isolated studies of motor behavior, social facilitation, and habit formation. Coleman Griffith worked as an American professor of educational psychology at the University of Illinois where he first performed comprehensive research and applied sport psychology. He performed casual studies on vision and attention of basketball and soccer players, and was interested in their reaction times, muscular tension and relaxation, and mental awareness. Sports Sociology on the other hand deals with the influential factors of the society such as behavior of the athlete, coach, trainer, supporters, spectators, country people, government, journalists etc. those who are involved with the performance of an athletic for success or defeat in sports arena. Hence both the sports psychology and sports sociology are important considerable factors for success in sports with the level and status of physical fitness. However, the World Athletic Competition-2011 in Daegu, South Korea and some other sports expresses a lot of psychological factors how affected athletic performance beside this it has also been seen that presence of family, friends and supporters in the game situation affects performance of an athlete.

Aim and objectives of the study: The aim and objectives of the study is to analyze how psychological and sociological factors affect sports performance and sports performance affects society and psyche factors.

Hypothesis of the study: It is hypothesized that psychological and sociological factors affect sports performance.

Methodology: Some sports personality and events have been taken from different sports competition even from world Athletic Competition-2011 in Daegu, South Korea, Olympic and tennis competition to measure effect of psychological and sociological factors on sports performance.

Observation: It is seen that sports performance is being influenced by psychological and sociological factors. Sports psychology a branch of psychology consists of instructing athletes, coaches, teams, exercisers, parents, fitness professionals, groups, and other performers on the psychological aspects of their sport or activity. The goal of applied practice is to optimize

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performance and enjoyment through the use of psychological skills. Exercise psychology draws on several different scientific fields, ranging from psychology to physiology to neuroscience. Major topics of study are the relationship between exercise and mental health (e.g., stress, affect, self-esteem), interventions that promote physical activity, exploring exercise patterns in different populations (e.g., the elderly, the obese), theories of behavior change, and problems associated with exercise (e.g., injury, eating disorders, exercise addiction).

There are a number of different topics that are of special interest to sports psychologists. Some professionals focus on a specific area, while others study a wide range of techniques. **Imagery:** Involves visualizing performing a task, such as participating in an athletic event or successfully performing a particular skill. **Motivation:** A major subject within sports psychology, the study of motivation looks at both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. Extrinsic motivators are external rewards, such as trophies, money, medals or social recognition. Intrinsic motivators arise from within, such as a personal desire to win or the sense of pride that comes from performing a skill. **Attention Focus:** Involves the ability to tune out distractions, such as a crowd of screaming fans, and focus attention on the task at hand.

The commonly used techniques in Sports Psychology are Arousal regulation, Goal setting, Imagery, Pre performance routines & Self-talk. **Arousal regulation:** Arousal regulation refers to entering into and maintaining an optimal level of cognitive and physiological activation in order to maximize performance. **Goal setting** is the process of systematically planning ways to achieve specific accomplishments within a certain amount of time. **Imagery:** Imagery can be defined as using multiple senses to create or recreate experiences in one's mind. This is a concept commonly used by coaches and athletes the day before an event. **Pre performance routines:** Pre performance routines refer to the actions and behaviors athletes use to prepare for a game or performance. This includes pregame routines, warm up routines, and actions an athlete will regularly do, mentally and physically, before they execute the performance. **Self-talk** phrases are used to direct attention towards a particular thing in order to improve focus or are used alongside other techniques to facilitate their effectiveness. Research suggests either positive or negative self-talk may improve performance.

Discussion: It has long been established from many international studies that there is a positive direct relationship among psychology, sociology and sports performance. Now a day Psychology has become a key part of modern elite sport. It is now common place for top level teams and athletes to regularly use psychologists and psychological techniques to obtain their optimal performance. There are short and long-term effects from the psychological factors on training and performance. The intention is to develop the psychological skills so they achieve the optimum performance, giving benefit to the individual. By using techniques such as performance profiling, we can assess why each one of these factors is important in our sport, how important it is and our current level of competence in using these factors to positively improve our performance.

Psychological techniques such as goal setting, visualization, and mental rehearsal, have shown to have both short and long term effects on sports training and performance.

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Once Roger Black, 400m Silver Medalist, 1996 Olympics Spoke that for the Olympic Games, he walked around the stadium four months prior and he kept that picture his mind every day for his psychological preparation.

Psychological factors can also be well explained with the following examples. The recent World Athletics Championships in 2011 in Daegu, South Korea, provided some acute examples of how the various psychological impacts of previous performances had a major impact on results. The highest profile of these was the 100m men's final. Usain Bolt, the world record holder in 100m sprint was very much confident that no one can beat him. However, in the 12 months prior to the championships he had not been at his best due to some injury problems, and had not run the fastest time that year. Later on he was confident about his performance. He had also said he is weaker on his starts and had been working to improve. Again, this was evident in the heats where he got great starts to his races. However, come the final, he false started and disqualified and his ambitions of retaining world and Olympic gold smashed. It was an excellent example of how previous domination over ones rivals can lead to failure. Because Bolt is so far ahead of his rivals in terms of his fastest time and previous victories, his focus shifted from just winning the race to producing a special performance. His focus shifted too far from the requirements of winning the race and ultimately led to failure. His false start also had a key psychological impact on the race that followed. Now the rest of the field were in a race they thought they had a chance to win, whereas previously it was unlikely they could snatch the gold. The winner, Yohan Blake, clocked a time of 9.92 seconds to win, one of his fastest ever times. If Bolt had still been in the race he perhaps would not have performed as well. Further, only a week later Blake ran his fastest ever time of 9.82 seconds, Failure can have a positive impact on performance. The negative effects of losing can be a strong psychological motivation to succeed, to make sure that it doesn't happen again. It can also be a source of confidence.

Also in Daegu there was an interesting competition in the triple jump while Christian Taylor's was the best jumper time of the year would likely take the gold, Phillips Idowu, the reigning world champion, had the best competition record, a greater personal best and had beaten Taylor in their last meeting shortly before the championships. Idowu put in a very far early jump of 17.70m, his best of the season and good enough to win most championships. It seemed that once again it would be Idowu who would come out on top when it really matters and retain his title. However, Taylor produced one of the best jumps of all time, 17.96m, to go way in front and having this confidence Taylor beat Idowu.

In some events the measurement of success and failure is more definitive, for example in Athletics if a person can run the 400m in under 44s he knows he can win gold, whereas if he can't run it in under 45s it is unlikely he will take a medal.

However, in team sports like hockey judging an athlete's ability to be successful at an Olympics is much more complex. Therefore, success and failure in competition in the lead up to an Olympics is much more important psychologically.

A clear example of the psychological importance of success and failure in relation to athletics can also be seen in the Men's tennis events throughout 2011. In 2010, Rafael Nadal was

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the dominant force in men's tennis, rounding off the years major tournaments with a win over Novak Djokovic in the final of the US open. However, at the start of 2011, Djokovic won the Australian Open, beating Rodger Federer in the semi-final and Andy Murray in the final, both in straight sets. This was Novak's first major win since his debut title at the same event in 2008, and it clearly gave him the confidence to match his ability to go on and be the dominant force in the men's game. He continued to win every tournament thereafter, including several finals victories over Nadal along the way, until a narrow semi-final defeat to Federer at the French Open, an incredible winning streak that gave him the confidence to finally win a grand slam final against Nadal, dominating a slightly under par defending champion in the Wimbledon Final. By the time of the US final, the same two men took to the court that had done so a year before but this time the psychological advantage had switched. Djokovic now had the belief that he could beat Nadal at any time, having won all five of their finals they played that year. Nadal, by contrast, for the first time looked like he thought he was the underdog, a man playing catch-up. While Nadal produced a stunning display of tennis in the final, Djokovic dominated most of the match and won in four sets. Through the year, Djokovic grew more and more in confidence with every win, while Nadal visibly lost belief in his ability to beat a man he previously did so regularly as the year wore on. After the final, Djokovic pointed to his new belief that he could win as the main reason for his amazing advancement in 2011.

It highlights just how powerful the psychological effects of previous success and failure can be at the top of professional sport when the margin of victory is so tight, particularly relative to the competition.

Daniel Gould, Ph.D., CC-AASP, Department of Kinesiology, Michigan State University said physical, psychological and environmental factors associated with performance success.”

Sociology of sport, alternately referred to as sports sociology, is a sub-discipline of sociology which focuses on sports as social phenomena. It is an area of study concerned with various socio-cultural structures, patterns, and organizations or groups involved with sport. There are many perspectives through which sport can be viewed. Sports are sometimes studied as contested activities, i.e. as activities in the centre of various people/groups interests (connection of sports and gender, mass media, or state-politics). In 1970, sports sociology gained significant attention as an organized, legitimate field of study. The North American Society for the Sociology of Sport was formed in 1978 with the objective of studying the field. Its research outlet, the *Sociology of Sport Journal*, was formed in 1984. Sports sociology is also defined as "the systematic study of human society and social behavior that interacts to produce social action". It examines how culture and values influence sports, how sports influences culture and values, and the relationship between sports and media, politics, economics, religion, race, gender, youth, etc. It also looks at the relationship between sports and social inequality and social mobility. Besides, for many athletes having their parents and friends at the Games is a tremendous source of enjoyment and a form of social support that helps them performs as social phenomena,” said Dr. Gould Department of Kinesiology, Michigan State University.

Conclusion: it is concluded that Athletic performance highly depends on psychological and sociological factors. In sports key factor of winning a competition of an athlete is possible while

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there is mental readiness with favourable sociological factors and having higher level of physical fitness. A knowledgeable person of Sports Psychology with the knowledge of sports sociology can properly handle his or her athlete to bring success in the sports competition and justify the title sports psychology, sports sociology and athletic performance in true sense.

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