STUDY OF SELF-CONCEPT, BODY IMAGE, ADJUSTMENT AND PERFORMANCE OF HOCKEY PLAYERS

ABSTRACT

Sports performance is not merely confined to acquisition of certain skills and motor abilities rather it is widely believed that host of variables influence it. Much emphasis is laid on methods and procedures for determining abilities and maximising them through training.

Sports scientists have pointed out that athletes are affected not merely by their physical, technical and tactical abilities but also by their psychological make-up (Singer and Kane, 1975; Wein, 1973; Tutko and Tosi, 1976; Vallarand, 1983). Mahoney and others (1983) suggested that within the constraints of the ability, an athlete's performance is significantly related to his or her psychological functioning. Thus performance is considered to be the product of total personality of an individual.

Overview of researches conducted during the last four decades indicate that certain personality aspects such as self-concept, body image and adjustment have not been extensively investigated with regard to the performance of hockey players. Rapidly changing scenario pertaining to the changes in rules, equipments and infrastructure have immensely influenced the performance of our hockey team at international level. Thus, it necessitates that we should take into consideration the influence of psychological variables and personality characteristics of hockey players in order to enhance their performance.

Much time and energy is spent on investigating the parameters of sports performance. It is considered as “Unity of execution and result of sports actions or a complex sequence of sports actions measured and evaluated according to agreed and socially determined norms” (Thiess and Schnabel, 1987). Sports performance of hockey players has not been studied properly in our country, probably, due to the complexities associated with its measurement. An attempt
has been made in this regard in our study.

In the present study self-concept, body image and adjustment have been included as independent variables whereas the performance of the subjects considered as the dependant variable.

Self-concept is the way in which the individual reacts to himself (Symonds, 1951). Self-concept has been defined as individual's perception, attitude and feeling about himself (Guilford, 1966). Alderman (1974) has defined self-concept in terms of personality traits such as self-confidence, self-assurance, self-consistency, self-assertiveness, self esteem, self-regard, self-enhancement and self-respect.

Many researchers have studied self-concept in a variety of sport settings and on athletes of various individual and team sports. Research findings in the field of sports indicate that there exists a relationship between positive self concept and high performance (Hamachek, 1978; Shaw, 1960; Campbell, 1966, Riley, 1983). Sharma, Shukla and Dwivedi (1990) obtained significant correlation between competitive performance and self-concept.

Traditionally, body image refers to the mental image we form of our own bodies. But critical evaluation of body image reflects that body image represents the manner in which a person has learned to organise and integrate his body experiences (Witkin, 1965; Fisher, 1968; Harre & Lamb, 1986). According to Dosamantes (1992) body image is individual's own attitudes as well as those of others towards his/her embodied self.

A few physical health scientists and sports psychologists have attempted to investigate the effect of body-image on athlete's performance (Davis, 1992; Dinucci and Others, 1994; Belogun and others, 1992). Snyder and Kivlin (1975) suggested that athletes have more positive body image as compared to non-athletes.

Sloan (1963) reported that subjects having a positive body image scored higher on motor abilities as compared to those who had a negative attitudes towards their body. Thomas (1972) found that failure in sports activities caused
athletes to view their body as significantly less active.

Adjustment is the condition of harmony between the individual and his environment. It is believed to be a continuous process by which a person varies his behaviour to produce a more harmonious relationship between himself and his environment. Arkoff (1968) opines that adjustment is a person's interaction with environment. Adjustment is commonly defined in terms of freedom from tensions and conflicts and adapting oneself to the needs of other individuals. According to Bordin and others (1943) adjustment is a process by which a living organism maintains a balance between its needs and circumstances that influence the satisfaction of these needs.

Adjustment is an important component of sports performance. In team as well as individual games one has to adjust according to the exigency of situation and game plan of the team and opponents.

It could easily be inferred that adjustment and success, particularly in team games, go hand in hand. Mann (1988) and Sharma (1984) found that successful athletes are better adjusted as compared to unsuccessful and non-athletes.

It is also reported that superior athletes showed higher levels of personal and social adjustment than those of less skilled athletes (Biddulph, 1954).

The present study was conducted on a sample of 224 hockey players of 14 Universities of Uttar Pradesh. The characteristics of the sample were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>19-25 Yrs.</td>
<td>22 Yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Training</td>
<td>5-8 Yrs.</td>
<td>6 Yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Participation</td>
<td>University-State</td>
<td>Zonal Intervarsity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's Income (Per month)</td>
<td>Rs. 2000-6000</td>
<td>Rs. 4000/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The objective of the present empirical investigation was to find out the predictors of performance of hockey players.

A list of each team, on the basis of eligibility proforma submitted by them, was prepared. The players were approached through the Managers and Coaches of the participating teams for obtaining their responses on Self-concept Scale (Rastogi, 1979), Adjustment Inventory for College Students (Sinha and Singh, 1980) and Body Image Q-Sort Statements (Singh, 1991). The performance of the players was gauged by a panel of three experts on the playground during the matches using a ten points rating scale.

Product moment coefficient of correlation was calculated to determine the relationship between self-concept, body image and adjustment. Multiple regression analysis was then used for determining the predictors of high performance.

The major findings are listed below:

1. Self-concept, body-image, adjustment and performance of hockey players were found to be significantly correlated.

2. Self-concept, body image and adjustment emerged as predictors of high performance. The subjects having high self-concept, positive attitude towards their body and proper adjustment tended to excel, and perform significantly better.

The results have been discussed and interpreted in the light of the researches conducted in the field. It has been concluded that the players who have achieved high level of performance, scored higher on self-concept, body image and adjustment than the players with a low level performance. It was thus assumed that the high performing hockey players possess high self-concept, have positive attitude towards their body and are well adjusted. Thus it may be reiterated that high self-concept, positive body image and proper adjustment of hockey players are indispensable for good performance. Hence due
consideration should be given to the psychological make-up of athletes along with
the motor abilities and techno-tactical skills during the selection and training
process.

It has been suggested that to reinforce the findings the study may be
extended to other Indian Universities on both male and female subjects. It is also
suggested that the replicative and longitudinal studies should be undertaken in
different disciplines of games and sports with reference to gender and age group
differences.

* * *