Introduction

Rajitha Menon A. “Psychological correlates of mental health of sport persons: An analytical study” Thesis. Department of Psychology, University of Calicut, 2005
Psychologists from all over the world are critically and enthusiastically examining psychological aspects of sport, applying research from related areas to athletic situations, and attempting to make sense out of sparse factual material. Considering the popularity of sport, its length of existence and its impact on society, relatively little research has been done with athletes. Consequently, not much is really known about aspects of psychology as they related to sport.

On the other hand, we are by no means still in the Dark Ages. Orderly laws of behaviour can be applied to the athletically gifted so as to understand and predict performance. Studies in athletic environment, with athletes, can and are occurring more frequently now than ever before.

Sport psychology as an area of study involves many individuals of diverse backgrounds with a common interest that of knowing more about athlete and sport. Newspaper accounts reflect psychology employed prior to or during competition, and radio and television sports announcers and analysts delve into the mysteries of explaining unexpected athletic performances. Coaches and athletes do likewise, as do sports fans. But the major direction of the intellectual ferment, sport psychology has led to the recognition of the science of "human behaviours" as a replacement for practices, heretofore based on common sense, popular beliefs and half-truths.

Historically, the coaching of athletes has largely emphasized the development of technical ability and physical fitness to the neglect of critical psychological factors. Although it is widely appreciated that mental and emotional states can make the difference between winning and losing, the role of psychology in sport has largely been restricted to pre-match advice and instruction. This is likely to be of little value. The demands of competition are such that the psychological preparation of sport people needs to be carried out over a prolonged period of time for it to be effective. Sports psychology is a
relatively young discipline, and sport psychologists are only beginning to provide answers to some of the many questions about sports and exercise behaviour.

A short history of sport psychology

A precise date for the beginning of sport psychology cannot be easily pinpointed. Different aspects of the field emerged at different times.

In 1898, Triplett's experiment on the motor performance of individuals acting alone and in pairs has been widely sighted as the first laboratory experiment in social psychology and represents an important benchmark for sport psychology. The experiment was promoted by Triplett's observations of competitive cyclists. Triplett, a cycling enthusiast, noted that cyclists perform faster with a pacing machine (with other cyclists in tandem) than when alone and that they performed even faster when competing against other cyclists. Triplett reasoned that the presence of others aroused a competitive drive in the cyclists that elicited better performance.

During the early 20th century, a few farsighted individuals recognized the importance of psychological factors in sport and initiated sport psychology research. Coleman Griffith was a highly respected psychologist at University of Illinois in the early 1900s and the first person to pursue sport psychology issues in the United States. In 1923 Griffith taught a course entitled "Psychology and Athletics" and in 1924 he established the athletic research laboratory at University of Illinois. Griffith wrote two textbooks, "Psychology of Coaching" and "Psychology of athletics. While Griffith was initiating Psychology research in the United States, sport psychology was also emerging in other countries.

In discussing the emergence of sport psychology after World War-1, Cratty (1983) specifically sighted the groundbreaking works of Schulte in Germany and Roudik in Russia. Dr. Uri Hannin, a senior researcher in sport...
psychology at the research institute of physical culture in Lenin Grad, reports that sport psychology emerged as a discipline of study in the former Soviet Union during the year 1945-1957. He suggests that Soviet sport psychology had two ‘fathers’, Peter Roudik and A.C.Puni. In the 1960s some individuals such as William Morgan at Wisconsin and Daniel Landers and Rainer Martens at Illinois began to identify sport psychology or the social psychology of physical activity as their primary interest. Simultaneously some individuals became active sport psychologists in other countries particularly in Europe and sport psychology became an established area of sport and exercise science and practice.

In 1965, the international society of sport psychology formed and held its first international congress of sports psychology in Rome. Organizational meetings were held in 1965 and 1966, and in 1967, the North American Society for the Psychology of Sports and Physical Activity was officially incorporated.

In India, following the inclusion of ‘physical education’ as co-curricular subject at the secondary educational level around 1950, importance of psychological studies for sport and coaching were recognized at the training colleges for physical education teachers. Psychology for sport and sport persons became gradually well recognized by 1970 through the planned efforts of ministry of education and later ministry of sports, government of India. For the development of sport sciences in our country, Indian professionals have formed distinguished national bodies viz. Indian Association of Sport Medicine, Sports Psychology Association of India (1985), National Association of Physical Education and Sport Sciences (1992), Sport Sciences Research Foundation (1993) etc. (Sahni, 2005).
What is Sport Psychology?

Sport Psychology is defined as the primarily scientific study of the behavioural, affective and cognitive reactions to sport settings including reactions of both participants and spectators (Wann, 1997).

What sport psychology specialists do?

Contemporary sport psychologists perceive varied carriers. They serve three primary roles in professional activities, consulting, teaching, and conducting research. A brief description of these roles is as follows.

a. The teaching role

Many sport and exercise psychology specialists teach university students’ courses such as exercise psychology, applied sport psychology and social psychology of sport. They may also teach courses such as personality psychology or developmental psychology if they work in a psychology department or courses such as motor learning and control or sport sociology or if they work in a sport science programme.

b. Consulting role

A second important role is consulting with individual athletes or athletic teams to develop psychological skills for enhancing competitive performance and training. Hundreds of teams and athletes use sport psychology consultants for psychological skill training.

c. The research role

The primary function of participants in any scholarly field is to advance the knowledge within the field. They do this by conducting research. They might for example, study what motivates children to be involved in youth sport, how
imagery influences proficiency in golf putting or what the relationship is between sport performance and self-efficacy. Sport psychologists then share their findings with participants and colleagues in the field. This sharing produces advances, discussions and healthy debates at professional meetings and in journals.

In any area of science, the researchers' choice of topics to investigate, the methods they employed and the perspective they take, are not freely and logically determined. Rather, they are heavily influenced by the sociological forces both within and outside the discipline. Sport psychology is no exception, because trends in sport psychology have tended to parallel those in general psychology. The research that was conducted in sport psychology during the 1950-1965 time period was characterised by empiricism, the most of the studies investigated personality. This perspective was consistent with the trait approach that was very vogue in the general area of psychology. In contrast, the time period 1966-1976 was characterised by social analysis approach. Research during this decade consisted of selecting one theory at a time from main stream psychology and testing that theory in the area of sport and motor performance. Such topics as social facilitation, achievement motivation, social reinforcement and arousal, and motor performance were investigated. Research conducted from the late 1970s to the present has also been influenced by cognitive approaches including causal attributions, intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy/self-confidence (Pachauri, 1999).

Sports and games are gaining importance in human life day by day. Participation in sporting events is related to bodily balance and psychological stability. The impact of sport and exercise on mental health is a longstanding issue, which became clearly identified in 1980s. Just as physical health means something more than the absence of disturbing symptoms, mental health also has a positive aspect.

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**Personality** is the overall pattern of psychological characteristics that makes each person a unique individual. Individual differences are obvious in sport and understanding such personality factors can help to explain sport and exercise behaviour. The goal of sport personality research is to provide accurate and reliable information about individual differences in sport and implications of such personality differences for sport performance and behaviour. Historically, one of the most popular issues in sport psychology concerns relationship between personality and sport participation.

After an expedition through the 13 major theories of personality, Hall et al. (1998) authentically make the conclusion that none of the theories is completely right or wrong, each of which has different strengths and weaknesses. Researchers in the field adhere to any one of them, which suits the task at hand.

Much evidence testifies that people who are emotionally adept – who know and manage their own feelings well and who read and deal effectively with other people's feelings – at an advantage in any domain of life, whether romance and intimate relationships or picking up the unspoken rules that govern success in organisation politics (Goleman, 1995). The world of sport is not except from this fact.

Moreover, emotions are tremendously important in physical education and in the realm of sport. Emotional arousal is necessary for peak performance. Frustrations and disappointments are inevitable in competitive activities. Anxiety and stress, as well as joy and fun, are a part of athletics. Anger and fear do rear their heads as people clash in combative and body contact activities. General emotional excitement surrounds and is part of almost every sport situations. The cheering of the spectators, the music of the bands, the barking of the vendors, and the partisanship of parents and friends, all add to the aura of excitement and stimulate in most individuals’ emotional response.
Emotions are involved in healthful living, in self-expression, in leadership and in the development of values (Frost, 1971). People with well developed emotional skills are also more likely to be content and effective in their lives, mastering the habits of mind that foster their own productivity, people who cannot marshal some control over their emotional life, fight inner battles that sabotage their ability for focused work and clear thought. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Goleman, 1995). In exploring the ingredients of superb job performance, Goleman emphasises a common core of personal and social abilities – emotional intelligence.

There are many who advocate that sportsmen are generally intellectually inferior though they might be physically super-fit. It has taken a good deal of effort and energy for the sport psychologists and physical educators to remove this misconception from the minds of the people at large. Whether participation in highly competitive sport and games and physical activity sharpens intellect, has been a controversial subject (Kamlesh, 1983).

A child who plays vigorously manifests his intelligence in many ways, a sickly child is less capable of showing intelligent behaviour. As Kamlesh (1983) cites, Getman, Kehpart, Newell etc. have univocally shown that 'movement' is the basis for intelligence.

Vigorous physical activity is a powerful inducement to the stabilising emotions and strengthening nerves – the apparatus of our intelligence. There is dearth of studies that throw light on the relationship and correlation between motor activity and intellectual activity of sportsmen, non-sportsmen and even handicapped population. Thinking is very much affected by the psychological
functioning of the body. Karnlesh (1983) suggests that sportsmen should not be expected to be less intelligent than an average individual. They may have lesser academic achievement because they devote more time to hard physical labour and it leaves them little time for hard study. Performing movement intelligently means using the powers of body and mind to accomplish observable tasks in a skilful manner. The more skilful the player, the better tactics and strategies he or she should be able to adopt in achieving success in his sport events. Almost all the team games require every player of the team to think intelligently and act intelligently. Rather to act at the spur of the moment and make use of the opportunity at a given moment scoring a point or making a good move during practice and competition. Whether the intelligence in sporting situation has something to do with general intelligence of an individual is yet to be decided.

1.1 Relevance of the present study

No training in the sport field is complete without reference to the psychological study and the psychological training of athletes. All other factors – biological and sociological being equal, psychological conditioning of an athlete decidedly determines his/her success or failure in competition. Moreover, there may be a plethora of psychological factors that can hinder sport performance (Rajitha, 2004).

An overview of the studies conducted in the arena of sport psychology makes the sense that majority of the studies on the primary goal of the discipline – performance enhancement. Very few studies are concerned with the athlete as a 'whole' person. An in-depth psychological analysis of an athlete considering cognitive, affective and behavioural perspectives seems to be more logical and demanding. All the above, a study inquiring how these variables are interrelated with the athletes’ mental health would help to balance the outweighed performance oriented research tradition, to a certain extent.

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The study of *personality* traits and their relationships to sport can assist the coach and the teacher in the selection of players, in the guidance of those who seek help in choosing a sport, in teaching effectively, and in understanding the behaviour of those who come under their leadership.

Sport has always been a passionate phenomenon requiring tremendous emotional investment and focussed to excel. The highly charged realm of sport is identified as an excellent place to study the phenomenon of emotion and perspective. Commenting on 'emotion and perspective in sport' Botterill and Brown, (2002) suggest that Dr. Daniel Goleman's book "Emotional Intelligence", sensitise us to how dramatically the topic of emotions, emotional development, emotional management, and emotional health has been neglected in a variety of fields. Clearly as a field in which emotion and perspective play – such a large part, we have major responsibility in studying the phenomena and identifying important practical implications.

Goleman describes the emotional advantage that top performers tend to share. The 'master aptitude' includes the ability to marshal feelings of enthusiasm, zeal, and confidence; persisting in the face of setbacks. Studies of Olympic athletes, world-class musicians, and chess grandmasters identify one unifying trait: the ability to motivate oneself to pursue relentless training routines. Hope, optimism and belief were also found to be predictive of success (Goleman, 1995).

Our emotions can be both facilitating and debilitating. Many people feel the need to maximise and appropriately direct the energy that emotion provides. It is important that we respect the power that our emotions can have on us, but equally important are the effects that we can have on them. Emotions are a vital part of the human experience and should neither be feared nor ignored (Botteril and Brown, 2002).
In fact, *intelligence* and motor activity is the basic ingredient of the harmonious development leading to the 'wholeness' of man. The results of most of the studies conducted on motor and intellectual aspects of athletes “are more suggestive than substantial”. The studies are often based upon clinical observations rather than ‘hard data’ while the data that have been collected, have not always been accorded acceptable statistical treatment (Kamlesh, 1983).

The information assimilated from the research can be utilised by the coaches, clinicians and the athletes themselves to enhance mental health and maintain psychological well being.

1.2 **Statement of the problem**

The present study is entitled as “Psychological Correlates of Mental Health of Sport Persons: An Analytical Study”

1.3 **Definition of the key terms**

Operational definitions of the key terms involved in the present investigation are explained below

1.3.1 **Correlate**

A variable related in some way to another variable is called a correlate. In the present investigation, ‘correlates’ refers to the variables related to mental health of sport persons.

1.3.2 **Mental health**

The variable mental health has been used generally in two ways: 1. Absence of mental illness, and 2. positive mental health. In the clinical/medical set up, mentally healthy person is an individual free from mental illness. The positive mental health refers to behaviours, attitudes, the feelings that represent
an individual's level of personal effectiveness, success and satisfaction. In this sense, it has no direct connection with the mental illness (Jahoda, 1958).

Different theoreticians have suggested a multitude of criteria for defining mental health. A quick overview of related literature makes to say Johoda (1958) as most comprehensive among them. She summarises a set of criteria in current use are given below:

1. Attitude towards the self
2. Self-actualisation
3. Integration
4. Autonomy
5. Perception of reality, and
6. Environmental mastery

The total score in the Mental Health Status Scale (Gireesan and Sam Sanandaraj, 1988) considered as the mental health score of an individual sport person.

1.3.3 Personality

Type-A and Type-B personality patterns represent two ends of a continuum representing the temperamental pattern of individuals. The Type-A personality pattern is found to show behavioral dispositions such as ambitiousness, aggressiveness, competitiveness, impatience, sense of time urgency, goal directedness without proper planning, and polyphasic behavior. Specific behaviors like muscle tenseness, alertness, rapid and emphatic vocal stylistics, accelerated pace of activities, and emotional responses such as irritation, hostility and increased potential for anger are also associated with Type-A personality pattern. The Type-B’s in contrast to the Type-A’s are more placid, patient, relaxed and better able to deal with stresses. A person with a
score of 5 or above on ‘A scale of Type—A personality Pattern’ (Robert et. al, 1998) is considered to be a Type—A individual. The major characteristics of Type-A individuals are as follow.

a. An intense sense of time urgency:
b. Inappropriate aggression hostility:
c. Polyphasic behaviour:
d. Goal directedness without proper planning

1.3.4 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence refers “to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships” (Goleman, 1998). It has five domains:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-regulation
3. Motivation
4. Empathy, and
5. Social skills

The total score of ‘Emotional Intelligence Scale for Sport Persons (EISS)’ is considered to be the emotional intelligence score of a sport person.

1.3.5 Intelligence

According to Spearman, all intellectual activity is dependent primarily upon, and is an expression of, a general factor to all mental activity. This factor designated by the symbol ‘g’ is possessed by all individuals, but in varying degrees, of course, since people differ in mental ability; and it(g) operates in all mental activity, though in varying amounts, since mental tasks differ in respect to their demands upon general intelligence. The general factor can be observed
and known only through its specific manifestations- in this instance through psychological tests. The best available measure of 'g' factor is the Progressive Matrices developed by J.C.Raven (1989). Raven’s Progressive Matrices is a test of observations, capacity for clear thinking and accurate intellectual work. The total score on the Advanced Progressive Matrices (APM) gives the index of intelligence of sport person.

1.4 Objectives

The following are the objectives set for the present investigation:

1. To find out whether there exist any relationship among mental health, Type-A personality pattern, emotional intelligence and intelligence of sport persons.

2. To find out whether there exist any relationship among mental health, emotional intelligence and intelligence of Type-A sport persons.

3. To find out whether there exist any relationship among mental health, emotional intelligence and intelligence of Type-B sport persons.

4. To predict mental health of sport persons by means of predictor variables, Type-A personality pattern, emotional intelligence and intelligence.

5. To find out the influence of selected sport related variables such as, levels of participation, experience, family sport status, punctuality, self-practice, and perceived self-competence on mental health, Type-A personality pattern, emotional intelligence and intelligence of sport persons.

6. To find out the difference between male and female sport persons on mental health, Type-A personality pattern, emotional intelligence and intelligence.
To find out the difference between open and closed skill category sport persons on mental health, Type-A personality pattern, emotional intelligence and intelligence.

To find out the difference between Type-A and Type-B sport persons on mental health, emotional intelligence and intelligence.

To find out the main and interaction effects for the variables sex, Type-A personality pattern and selected sport related variables such as, levels of participation, experience, family sport status, punctuality, self-practice, and perceived self-competence on mental health of sport persons.

1.5 Hypotheses

The following are the hypotheses set for the present investigation:

1. Significant relationships exist among mental health, Type-A personality pattern, emotional intelligence and intelligence of sport persons.

2. Significant relationships exist among mental health, emotional intelligence and intelligence of Type-A sport persons.

3. Significant relationships exist among mental health, emotional intelligence and intelligence of Type-B sport persons.

4. Mental health of sport persons can be predicted by means of predictor variables, Type-A personality pattern, emotional intelligence and intelligence.

5. Significant differences exist among the groups based on sport related variables such as, levels of participation, experience, family sport status, punctuality, self-practice, and perceived self-competence on the variables mental health, Type-A personality pattern, emotional intelligence and intelligence.
Significant differences exist between male and female sport persons on mental health, Type-A personality pattern, emotional intelligence and intelligence.

Significant differences exist between open and closed skill category sport persons on mental health, Type-A personality pattern, emotional intelligence and intelligence.

Significant differences exist between Type-A and Type-B sport persons on mental health, emotional intelligence and intelligence.

Significant main and interaction effects exist for the variables sex, and Type-A personality pattern and selected sport related variables such as, levels of participation, experience, family sport status, punctuality, self-practice, and perceived self-competence on mental health of sport persons.

1.6 Scope of the study

The results from this attempt could be widely used in the following ways:

1. To enhance the mental health of sport persons as a professional group.

2. To enhance sport performance by facilitating mental health, and emotional intelligence.

3. The information yielded from the investigation could be used for selection of sport persons.

4. To check the applicability of the emerging construct in general psychology - emotional intelligence- in the realm of sport.

5. Based on the results of the inquiry novel training modules can be developed.

6. To enhance further research in the related fields.
1.7 Limitations of the study

The present study is an attempt to understand correlates of mental health of sport persons. Any study, which has such a wide scope, may have some limitations too. Even though utmost care has been taken to make the study perfect, the investigator feels that many limitations are there, some of them are as follows:

1. The scope of the study includes all sport persons of Kerala. But the data was collected from Sports Authority of India's (SAI) sports training centres (STC) in Kerala. Future studies may be conducted in other sport institutions located in the state.

2. A comparison with non-sport persons was avoided.

3. The concept of emotional intelligence in the present investigation is based on Goldman's definitions. As an emerging construct the definition of the variable may vary in future.

1.8 Organization of the report


The first chapter narrates almost all the important aspects of the study viz.,

1.1 Need and significance of the study
1.2 Statement of the problem
1.3 Definition of the key terms
1.4 Objectives of the study
1.5 Hypotheses
1.6 Scope of the study and
1.7 Limitations of the study, and
1.8 Organization of the report

In the second chapter ‘Review of the Related Literature’ are summarized as follows:

2.1 Mental health
2.2 Personality
2.3 Emotional intelligence, and
2.4 Intelligence

‘Method’, the third chapter describes the various steps followed by the investigator to conduct the research. The method devised for the same consists mainly of the following four sections.

3.1 Sample
3.2 Measures
3.3 Procedures, and
3.4 Statistical analysis


Chapter five, ‘Results and Discussion’ presents the results found out by the investigator through statistical analysis of the data collected. The different statistical designs used in the study to unravel the psychological aspects of sport persons and the results of these statistical procedures are discussed under the following sections.

5.1 Correlational Analysis
5.2 Multiple Regression Analysis
5.3 Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)
5.4 't'-Test Analysis, and
5.5 Three-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The last chapter, "Summary, Conclusions and Suggestions" offers a short version of the work along with major findings, conclusion, and suggestions for further research.