

Effect of Psychological Skills Training on Mental Toughness and Mental Health among Athletes

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to find out the effect of psychological skills training on mental toughness and mental health among athletes. For achieving the purposes of the study, total of 30 subjects were selected as samples from the college; those who participated inter collegiate athletics competitions. Their age group between 18 to 25 years and the selected subjects were divided into two groups equally, with 15 each as control and experimental group. All the selected subjects were under graduate men students studying various courses in arts and science college and they used to take training in an athletics academy. In addition to the athletic training the experimental group underwent psychological skills training for eight weeks, in a schedule of weekly three days, with one hour session each. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used as a statistical tool. The statistical findings of the study revealed that the experimental group that had done the psychological skills training significantly improved the mental toughness and mental health qualities of athletes.

Keys words: *Mental Toughness, Mental Health, Psychological Skills Training*

INTRODUCTION

Psychological skills training (PST) is an important training as like physical training to enhance psychological qualities. Research has proved that PST can contribute 50-90% of athletics performance. PST methods include goal-setting, self-talk, imagery, mental rehearsal, and relaxation.

‘Psychological skills training (PST) refers to the systematic and consistent practice of mental or psychological skills for the purpose of enhancing performance, increasing enjoyment, or achieving greater sport and physical activity self-satisfaction’ (Weinberg & Gould, 2007). Psychological skills are

learned and developed through using PST methods (Weinberg & Gould, 1999).

PST is as important to the athlete as physical training; and in most sports, success comes from utilizing and maximizing a combination of technical, tactical, physical, and psychological abilities (Orlick, 2000). Mental toughness is having the psychological edge that allows one to perform at peak maximum effort and efficiency during the demands that are placed on them during training, practice, or competition. Specifically, when the demands are greatest or the conditions become adverse. Mentally tough

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athletes are self-confident, self-assured, and they are unaffected by competition or adversity. These athletes have the strong belief that they control their own destiny (Clough, P. J. et. al, 2002). Mental toughness is described as the ability to achieve personal goals in the face of pressure from a wide range of different stressors (Hardy, L. Bell, & Beattie, 2014). Goldberg (1998) defined 'Mental toughness is an ability to cope with or handle pressure'. Dennis, P.W. (1981) defined 'Mental toughness is an ability to overcome or rebound from failure'.

Mental health refers to the overall well-being of an individual. It is about the balance of the social, physical, spiritual and emotional aspects of life. Our mental health is characterized by our personal growth, sense of purpose, self-acceptance, and positive relationship with other people. It is the psychological state of well-being.

Golby, J. and Wood, P. (2016) found out psychological skills training significantly improved the mental toughness and psychological well-being of student-athletes. Well-planned psychological skills training (PST) programme are an opportunity to nurture positively young athletes' personal development in competitive sport and to facilitate their growth in other areas of their life by generalizing the use of mental skills (Tremayne & Tremayne, 2004). Michael Sheard & Jim Golby (2006) found that psychological

skills training can be effective in enhancing athletes' performance and positively influencing cognitive and affective states including mental toughness. Rasti, Mohammad Ali, et. al, (2015) found that mental training programme was effective in changing the mental toughness in Tehran High School student athletes. Mike Gross (2016) found that PST is an effective intervention for the mental health and sport performance needs of female collegiate athletes. Bulent Okan Miçoogullari (2017) found out the effectiveness of psychological skills training (PST) in enhancing mental toughness among Turkish professional Soccer team.

Goal setting, positive self-talk, mental imagery and mental rehearsal, attention focus and relaxation are the proven PST methods to improve the psychological skills as well as improving athletics performance. Everybody accepts that psychological skill training is useful to make ones mental fitness, as like physical fitness, through physical training. In all fields of endeavor, those who would achieve outstanding results must develop mental toughness and mental health through psychological skill training. Developing mental toughness and mental health are just one aspect in improving the overall quality of life.

The individual is mentally tough can face any challenges in any field. Psychic powers are great need to have a

sound mind. It requires certain psychological training. The present study is also with the sole aim to find out the effect of psychological skill training on mental toughness and mental health among inter-collegiate athletes.

METHODOLOGY

The selection of subjects, training, testing and statistical procedure are explained below.

Selection of subjects

For achieving the purpose of the study total of 30 inter-collegiate level athletes were selected as samples, from Chennai city colleges. Their age group between 18 to 25 years and the selected subjects were divided into two groups equally with 15 each as control and experimental group. All the selected subjects were under graduate men student's participated athletics in the inter-collegiate level.

Training Procedure

The experimental and control groups underwent routine athletic training; and in addition to the athletic training the experimental group underwent psychological skills training for eight weeks in a schedule of weekly three days with one hour session each. The one hour

Psychological Skills Training includes goal setting, positive self-talk, mental imagery and mental rehearsal, and relaxation.

Testing procedure

The pre and posttest were conducted on selected psychological variables of mental toughness by using Dr. Alan Goldberg Mental Toughness Questionnaire (MTQ). It consisted 30 statements and it measure five dimensions of rebound ability, ability to handle pressure, concentration ability, level of confidence and motivation. Score ranges from 0 to 30 and in overall it indicated higher the score higher the mental toughness. Mental health was assessed through mental health inventory constructed by Jagadish and Srivatsav (1983). It consists of 55 statements with 4 point rating scale. The score ranges from 55 to 220.

Statistical Procedure

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used as a statistical tool to determine the significant difference, if any exciting between pre and post test data on selected variable of mental toughness and mental health, which were presented in Table 1 and 2. The level of significance was fixed at 0.05 levels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was observed from the Table 1 that

Table-1: Computation of Analysis of co-variance on Mental Toughness

TEST	Group		SV	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F ratio
	Con.	Exp.					
Pre test Mean	18.13	18.66	B	2.133	1	2.133	0.390
			W	153.066	28	5.466	
Post test Mean	18.6	20.86	B	38.533	1	38.533	6.687*
			W	161.333	28	5.761	
Adjusted Mean	18.78	20.67	B	26.420	1	26.419	8.397*
			W	84.943	27	3.146	

*Significant at 0.05 level. Table F- ratio 2 and 28 (df) = 4.20 and 1 and 27 (df) = 4.21

there was no significant difference in the pretest (0.390). The significant difference was observed in post test (6.687) for df and 28 at 0.05 level of confidence and also in adjusted post test (8.397) for df1 and

27 with df 1 and 27. The result of the study indicated that there was a significant improvement on mental toughness due to eight weeks psychological skills training among inter collegiate athletes.

Table-2: Computation of Analysis of co-variance on Mental Health

TEST	Group		SV	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F ratio
	Con.	Exp.					
Pre test Mean	142.2	140.86	B	13.33	1	13.33	0.012
			W	29904.13	28	1068	
Post test Mean	151.53	174.8	B	4060.03	1	4060.03	4.26*
			W	26680.13	28	952.86	
Adjusted Mean	151.04	175.29	B	4408.53	1	4408.53	11.43*
			W	10412.55	27	385.65	

*Significant at 0.05 level. Table F- ratio 2 and 28 (df) = 4.20 and 1 and 27 (df) = 4.21

It was observed from the Table 2 that there was no significant difference in the pretest (0.012). The significant difference was observed in post test (4.26) for df1 and 28 and adjusted post test (11.43) for df 1 and 27. The result of the study indicated that there was a significant improvement on mental health due to eight weeks psychological skills training among inter collegiate athletes.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis and discussions of the present study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- There was a significant differences among the experimental group and control group on mental toughness and mental health of the athletes due to eight weeks psychological skill training
- Psychological skill training is enhances the mental toughness and mental health of the athletes.
- The psychological skills training is also given to the athletes as like physical training in order to make the athletes psychologically sound mental fitness.

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