

# Self-concept in Relation to Male and Female Athletes

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## ABSTRACT

We are all well aware that self-concept regulates the behaviour of every individual and hence everyone must have higher self-concept of oneself. It is the higher self-concept which generates the feeling of confidence and courage. So, one must keep in mind the importance of self-concept as it can play an effective role for performance enhancement. An attempt was made to compare male and female athletes on various dimensions of self-concept.

Total two hundred forty (N=240) athletes (males=120 and female=120), from various disciplines such as Handball, Volleyball, Kho-Kho and Kabaddi, from different colleges like physical education, engineering, teacher education, architecture and arts and science group of colleges of Sri Remugambal Education trust of Polur Thiruvannamalai district (TN), were selected randomly to act as subjects. Self-concept questionnaire developed by Saraswat (1984) was applied for the collection of data. The t-test was applied to find out significant differences between the mean scores of male and female athletes.

The results revealed that there has been significant difference between male and female athletes on different dimensions of self-concept. However, male athletes registered their upper hand on the variable social self-concept. No significant differences were found on physical, temperamental and self-concept (total).

## Key Words

Sports, Attitude, Traits, Behaviour, Confidence, Performance.

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## INTRODUCTION

In modern scientific era it is believed that sports psychology plays an important role to achieve excellence in sports. Since psychology help us to know and understand the reality about man in general, it also enables us to develop an approximate understanding about athletes and their behaviour, in stress provoking situations in particular. This is conducive to prepare the sportsperson and ensure effective performance enhancement. Along with the other psychological factors, self-concept also plays an important role in achieving excellence in sports. Self-concept implies what an individual thinks about himself. Believing in oneself is the most vital part while performing in the actual competition. A player may have devoted considerable time in training to enhance the performance but even then may find it difficult to display better if he does not believe in himself. Symonda (1951) defines the self as the way in which the individual reacts to himself. The *Self* consists of four aspects:

1. How a person perceives himself,
2. What he thinks of himself,
3. How he values himself and
4. How he attempts through various actions to enhance or defend himself.

Hall and Lindsey (1957) say that self-concept has two different meanings. It usually refers to a person's attitude and feelings about himself. Smith (1961) explains, "We all own traits and our behavior is organized in layers, like those of an onion, some being external

and peripheral and some being internal and central". Sutherland (1956) defines self-concept as the attitudes, perceptions, traits, thoughts, feelings and other characteristics which an individual perceives to be a part of himself. Since the *self* changes gradually, integration of the self is, a slow, long and difficult process.

The self is not a finished product at birth but is something, which develops. According to Sage (1977), the scientists studying motor behavior have a two-fold purpose in seeking to understand the behavioral development of human movement: predication and behavioral control. As a result of this understanding, and being able to predict behavior, the present study is in line with the above thinking since competitive behavior of an athlete, to a large extent, is associated with his self-concept.

Ibrahim and Morrison (1975), the other two authors have found that athletes were average in their self-actualizing traits and less than average in self-concept. Male high school athletes differed from non-athlete, in both self-concept and actualization while female athletes differ in self actualization only. Longford, in 1981, has compared self perceived physical abilities, attitudes towards activities selected measures of physical fitness and self-concept. Fifteen female and fifteen male physical education majors, along with 15 female and 15 male non-majors, served as subjects for the study. He found female majors possessed higher values of self-concept as compared to female non majors

and female and male majors and male non majors were not different on the subscales of self-concept.

## METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objective of study, total two hundred forty (N=240) athletes males=120 and females=120) from various disciplines such as Handball, Volleyball, Kho-Khno and Kabaddi, from different colleges of Sri Remugambal Education trust of Polur, from Thiruvannamalai District (TN) were randomly selected to act as subjects. Self-concept questionnaire developed by

Saraswat, in 1984, was considered to be most appropriate tool to be applied on the selected subjects for the collection of data. The collected data was tabulated, which was subsequently subjected to statistical treatment. The t-test was applied to analyze and interpret the data. The calculations were obtained through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The obtained results, through statistical application, have been presented in the following Table and graphical representation.

**Table 1: Mean values of male and female athletes on different dimintions of self-concept**

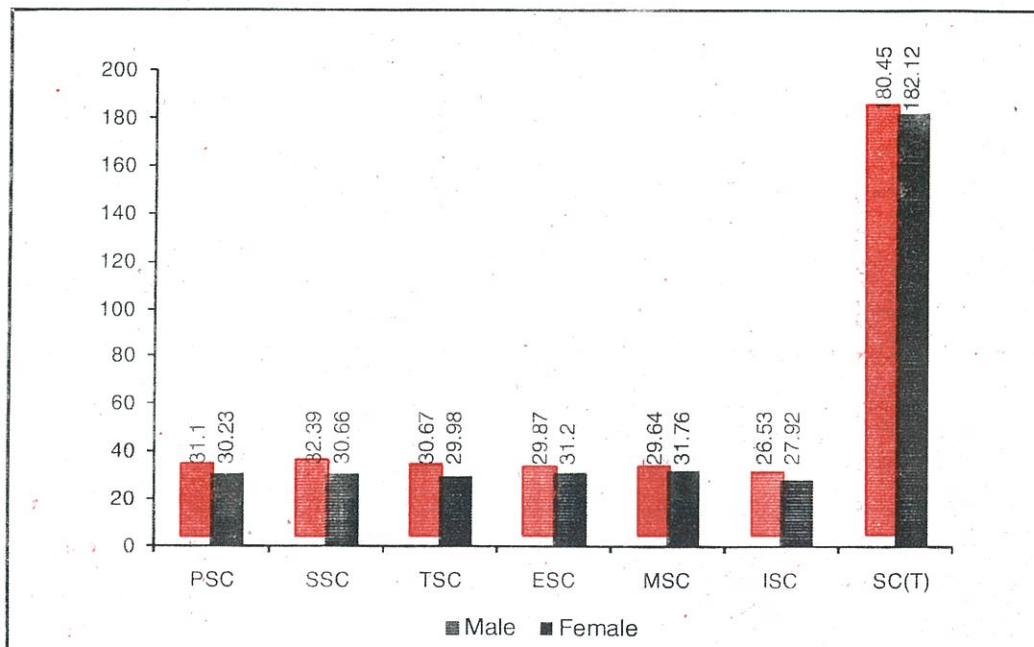
S. No.	VARIBALES	Male= 120		Female=120		MEAN DIFF.	SED M	T-VALUE
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D.			
1.	Physical Self-Concept	31.10	3.33	30.23	4.41	.87	.50	1.74
2.	Social Self Concept	32.39	3.22	30.66	4.30	1.73	.49	3.53*
3.	Temperamental rational Self-Concept	30.67	3.68	29.98	3.11	.68	.44	1.55
4.	Educational Self-Concept	29.87	4.24	31.20	3.60	-1.33	.51	2.63*
5.	Moral Self-Concept	29.64	3.3	31.76	3.12	-2.12	.41	5.10
6.	Intellectual Self-Concept	26.53	3.35	27.92	3.84	-1.39	.47	2.99*
7.	Self-Concept (Total)	180.45	11.43	182.12	12.59	-1.67	1.55	- 1.07

\*Significant at .01 level t.2.60 (df=238)

The results presented in Table 1 revealed that there was significant difference between the mean scores of male and female athletes, in four of the seven dimensions of self-concept variables. These differences were

pertaining to educational, moral, intellectual, and social self-concept. The obtained t-values were found greater than the Table value of 2.60, required to be significant at .01 level of confidence.





**Fig 1 : Mean values of male and female athletes on different dimensions of self-concept**

PSC = Physical Self-Concept  
 SSC = Social Self-Concept  
 TSC = Temperamental Self-Concept  
 ESC = Educational Self-Concept  
 MSC = Moral Self-Concept  
 ISC = Intellectual Self-Concept  
 SC(T) = Self-Concept (Total)

It was further observed that female athletes registered significantly better on educational, moral and intellectual self-concept; whereas, male athletes registered their upper hand on social self-concept. However, no significant differences were observed, between both categories of athletes, on physical, temperamental and self-concept (total).

Female athletes have registered significantly upper hand on educational, moral, and intellectual self-concept. The results signify that ability of female being more attentive, conscious, and vigilant at given task. Male athletes were found to be significantly more social than their counterparts. The outcome may be due to the peculiarity of Indian society and its social norms.

As the Indian society quietly open up for both sexes but still the underlying social process restricts the pace for females becoming more social. The males were enjoying certain privileges in the erstwhile norms of Indian society like freedom of movement, interaction and exchange of thoughts. Longford (1981) found that female

majors possessed higher values of self concept.

It can be safely surmised, from the above study, that self-concept, the confidence an individual perceives in himself, is the most critical factor in taking up, challenges or exhibiting increased efforts in any given task.

### IMPLICATIONS

Since female athletes were found significantly better on educational, moral, and intellectual self-concept vis-a-vis their male counterparts. Male athletes were found significantly more social than their counterpart

female athletes. No significant differences were observed between both categories of athletes on physical, temperamental and self-concept (total). It implies that the females perceive themselves high intellectually, educationally and morally. However, the female, in sports, need more emphasis on physical training; more social competitive exposure and positive reinforcement for their strengths which may help them in perceiving themselves as fully confident. Similarly male athletes need to be worked upon particularly on those dimensions where they were found inadequate.

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