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Self-handicapping and self-esteem: A study of gender differences among individual sports personnel

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Abstract

Aim: The aim of the present research was to study the gender differences among individual sports personnel with self-handicapping and self-esteem.

Introduction: Self-handicapping is also associated with a variety of stable characteristics that may contribute to self-handicapping behavior such as low self-esteem, low perceptions of control, high self-consciousness and a belief that intelligence is a fixed trait. Self-evaluation is important because the subject is able to assess what they know, what they do not know, what they would like to know. To eradicate the self-handicapping behavior because it is associated with lower achievement self-esteem need to grow and enhance.

Sample: For this purpose a data of 100 (50 males and 50 females) players aged 18-23 years was collected. The sample was selected on the basis of individual sport.

Tools Used

- Self-Handicapping Scale by Jones & Rhodewalt (1982)
- Self-Esteem Scale by Rosenberg (1982):

Results and Conclusion: It was concluded that there exist gender differences in self-handicapping and the t value was 2.840 which was significant. The t value for self-esteem among individual sports personnel was 1.996 which was significant at 0.01 level. It was also found that there was negative and significant association ($r = -0.480$) between self-handicapping and self-esteem among individual sports personnel.

Keywords: Self-handicapping, self-esteem, sports personnel, individual games

Introduction

Self-handicapping refers to the undermining of one's own performance, usually for the sake of impression management (Kolditz & Arkin, 1982) [4]. When individuals feel panic they may fail at tasks that are important to them, they often engage in practices that may actually increase the probability of failure. So, they have an excuse, other than lack of ability, for the failure. Self-handicapping has been conceptualized as a trait-like tendency (Jones & Rhodewalt, 1982) [3] and as a situationally induced behavior (Tice, 1991) [8]. Those who have described it as a trait argue that some individuals are simply more inclined to self-handicap than others and this inclination is present across situations. Self-handicapping is also associated with a variety of stable characteristics that may contribute to self-handicapping behavior such as low self-esteem, low perceptions of control, high self-consciousness and a belief that intelligence is a fixed trait. Self-esteem requires a self-evaluation process in which individuals compare their description of themselves as they are (real self) with their description of themselves as they would like to become (ideal self) and as they fear becoming (dreaded self). Self-evaluation is important because the subject is able to assess what they know, what they do not know, what they would like to know. They begin to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses and will be able to set goals that they know they can attain with the new knowledge they have about themselves.

McCrea & Hirt (2001) [6] studied the effect of self-handicapping on ability judgments and self-esteem and explained that while a lot of research was done on self-handicapping, it was not clear whether global self-esteem affected ability judgments or vice versa, which was the basis of this study. Most self-handicappers apparently handicap themselves as a protective but not as an aggrandizing measure.

It would be dangerous for a self-handicapper to have more expected of her or him. According to past research, there are two reaction chains of relationships between self-handicapping, self-esteem and personal beliefs of ability. As stated earlier, attributions of ability either lead directly to self-esteem or to ability beliefs. In other words, people will attribute their success/failure on a test to either their personal abilities or external things. The researchers' hypothesis was that self-handicapping would have consequences on specific and global ability judgments which judgments were related to overall self-esteem.

Kimble, Kimble and Croy (2014) in their study on sixth graders found that individuals resorted to self-handicapping strategies regardless of how high their self-esteem was. Self-handicapping protects and enhances self-esteem. It has been reported in the literature that self-handicapping is driven more by self-enhancement in case of high self-esteem and self-protection in the case of low self-esteem. Ciarrochi, Heaven & Fiona (2007) [2] studied the impact of hope, self-esteem and attributional style on adolescents' school grades and emotional well-being: A longitudinal study. They examined the distinctiveness of three "positive thinking" variables (self-esteem, trait hope and positive attributional style) in predicting future high school grades, teacher-rated adjustment and students' reports of their affective states. Seven hundred eighty four high school students (382 males and 394 females; 8 did not indicate their gender) completed Time 1 measures of verbal and numerical ability, positive thinking and indices of emotional well-being (positive affect, sadness, fear and hostility) and Time 2 measures of hope, self-esteem and emotional well-being. Multi-level random coefficient modeling revealed that each positive thinking variable was distinctive in some contexts but not others. Hope was a predictor of positive affect and the best predictor of grades; negative attribution style was the best predictor of increase in hostility and fear and low self-esteem was the best predictor of increase in sadness. We also found that sadness at Time 1 predicted decrease in self-esteem at Time 2. The results are discussed with reference to the importance of positive thinking for building resilience.

Rationale of the Study

Self-handicapping is a negative phenomenon but a very significant aspect to study because it aids a person to predict negative and self-harmed behavior. It is a behavior in which person represents a reduction or withdrawal of effort towards a given task simultaneously self-esteem means the negative cognitive process about self. These two aspects are very important among sports personnel and a dire need to eradicate the self-handicapping if they want to achieve success. To eradicate the self-handicapping behavior because it is associated with lower achievement self-esteem need to grow and enhance. In the light of insufficient research review, taking together the variables of self-handicapping and self-esteem, there is an urgent need to explore more on these variables. The investigator finds a prominent gap to conduct a study among sport persons. One may be wondering why it is so important to build a child's self-esteem. A child's self-esteem begins to be formed very early and continues being created day by day.

Methodology

Sample

The aim of the present research was to study the gender differences among sports personnel with self-handicapping and self-esteem. For this purpose a data of 100 (50 males and

50 females) players aged 18-23 years was collected. The sample was selected on the basis of individual sport only for the maintenance of homogeneity (swimming, cycling, athletic events, badminton, archery) from Chandigarh.

Tools Used

1. Self-Handicapping Scale by Jones & Rhodewalt (1982) [3]: The Self-handicapping Scale is a 25-item scale and each item ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher the score higher will be the self-handicapping.
2. Self-Esteem Scale by Rosenberg (1985) [7]: Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) includes 10 items and based on 4-point likert type scale. Higher score indicates higher self-esteem.

Procedure

First of all rapport was build up with subjects and after that self-handicapping scale and self-esteem scale was administered on the sample followed by instructions.

Results and Discussion

Table I: Mean, standard deviation and t value of the self-handicapping and self-esteem among sports personnel

Variables	Gender	Descriptive statistics		t value
Self-Handicapping	Male	Mean	64.92	2.84**
		SD	10.535	
	Female	Mean	71.20	
		SD	8.544	
Self-esteem	Male	Mean	29.32	1.99*
		SD	2.594	
	Female	Mean	22.40	
		SD	3.53	

**Significant at 0.01 level

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table I describes the mean, SD and t value of the self-handicapping and self-esteem among sports personnel. The mean±SD of the self-handicapping found to be 64.92±10.535 for the males and for the females the mean±SD was 71.20±8.544. The corresponding t value found to be 2.84 which was significant at 0.01 level. The mean±SD of the self-esteem found to be 29.32±2.594 for the males and for the females the mean±SD was 22.40±3.53. The corresponding t value found to be 1.99 which was significant at 0.05 level. The above calculated value simply reveals that there exist significant gender differences in self-handicapping and self-esteem among sports personnel. Further it was also revealed that females scored higher in self-handicapping and simultaneously scored lower in self-esteem as compare to males. Kimble, Kimble and Croy (2014) reported in the literature that self-handicapping is driven more by self-enhancement in case of high self-esteem and self-protection in the case of low self-esteem.

Table 2: Correlation between self-handicapping and self-esteem among sports personnel

Variables	Self-Handicapping	Self-esteem
Self-Handicapping	1	-0.480
Self-esteem		1

Correlation between self-handicapping and self-esteem was -0.480 and it was revealed from table II. The value of correlation was significant at 0.01 level and the value clearly depicts that there exist negative relationship between self-

handicapping and self-esteem. Higher the self-handicapping lower will be the self-esteem among sports personnel or vice versa. Berglas (1988) ^[1] suggested that people self-handicap in order to protect self-esteem whereas Leary and Shepperd (1986) ^[5] argued that the prime motive for self-handicapping is to preserve or enhance self-concept.

Conclusions and Implications

It was concluded that there exist gender differences in self-handicapping and self-esteem among individual sports personnel. It was also found that there was negative and significant association between self-handicapping and self-esteem among individual sports personnel. This study will be very helpful for the sports person and they can improve their self-esteem. For trainers this study will play an important role because trainers from different sports or games are the part and parcel for their students. Trainers or coaches can increase the self-esteem which further can automatically decrease the self-handicapping. Self-handicapping lead the person towards failure or make the person towards low achievers. If anybody have the self-confidence and the self-assurance that person can achieve their goal easily.

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