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Ashish Pachaury
Research Scholar, Department of
Physical Education and Sports
Sciences, Kalinga University,
Chhattisgarh, India

Dr. Atul Shukla
Guide, Department of Physical
Education, Kalinga University,
Chhattisgarh, India

Corresponding Author:
Ashish Pachaury
Research Scholar, Department of
Physical Education and Sports
Sciences, Kalinga University,
Chhattisgarh, India

Assessment of mental toughness of junior and senior state level sports persons of Chhattisgarh

Ashish Pachaury and Dr. Atul Shukla

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Abstract

Mental toughness (MT) is often referred to as one of the most important psychological attributes underpinning the success of athletes. Although selected studies have examined this common supposition, research in this area has yet to be synthesized. The purpose of the study was to study the mental toughness and team cohesion among the senior, junior and sub-junior national level Sports persons of Chhattisgarh.

Keywords: Mental toughness, junior and senior state level sports persons

Introduction

The term mental toughness has been described by various psychologists generously and in positive way as they say that mental toughness is the ability which help us to cope with complicated and difficult situation. In this way it is an extremely controversial term. In Sports, we use to say that the athlete who keeps on trying to achieve his or her goal in any favourable or unfavourable condition or circumstances are termed as mentally tough athlete. Hence, in sporting terms it describes the mental state of a sportsperson. Sports scientist working on this field worked hard scientifically and more precisely to define mental toughness as a psychological construct.

Fourie and Potgieter (2001) ^[17] definition of mental toughness comprise of motivation level, coping skills, confidence maintenance, cognitive skill, discipline and goal directedness, competitiveness, possession of prerequisite physical and mental requirements, team unity, preparation skills, psychological hardiness and ethics. Jones, Hanton, and Connaughton (2002) ^[1] defined mental toughness as “having the natural or developed psychological edge that enables an athlete generally, to cope better than your opponents with the many demands (competition, training, lifestyle) that sport places on a performer; specifically, be more consistent and better than the opponents in remaining determined, focused, confident, and in control under pressure.”

Mental toughness in general terms encompasses some positive psychological attributes that absorbs the effect of stressful situations so that one can perform at its best with consistency (Clough, Earle, & Sewell, 2002) ^[7]. “A set of personal characteristics which is used to guard against life pressure constitutes mental toughness” (According to White 2001), According to Jones (2002) ^[1] defined mental toughness as developed mental edge that enables an athlete to maintain focus, confidence, determination and control consistently.

Mental toughness

Mental toughness is a measure of individual resilience and confidence that may predict success in sport, education and the workplace. As a broad concept, it emerged in the context of sports training, in the context of a set of attributes that allow a person to become a better athlete and able to cope difficult training and difficult competitive situations and emerge without losing confidence. In recent decades, the term has been commonly used by coaches, sport psychologists, sports commentators, and business leaders.

There are several factors as to why a positive mentality or mental toughness is a huge benefactor to success. An elite athlete must be able to handle pressure, have self-belief and avoid any lifestyle distractions. They must have that urge to win and know that they have all the capabilities to do anything they desire. This separates the good athletes from the elite athletes (Jones *et al.*, 2002)^[1].

"Mental toughness" is frequently used colloquially to refer to any set of positive attributes that helps a person to cope with difficult situations. Coaches and sport commentators freely use the term mental toughness to describe the mental state of athletes who persevere through difficult sport circumstances to succeed. In support of this, a number of studies have linked mental toughness to sporting success or achievement. However, it is often simply applied as a default explanation for any victory, which is highly problematic as an attribution. Criticisms about the use of this imprecise approach abound (for example, Moran (2012).

What is mental toughness and why do you need it?

Mental Toughness was a 'big cliché' within the sporting world. Numerous researchers have pondered over how broadly applied the term Mental Toughness is, coupled with it being one of the least understood phrases in sport. The situation today is somewhat different. The concept of Mental Toughness is no longer new, and for some time now there have existed many applied texts devoted solely to the development and conceptualization of Mental Toughness. The increased flow of academic interest in the Mental Toughness phenomenon clearly indicates the significance and importance that sport psychologists, coaches and athletes themselves place on Mental Toughness. The influence that psychological factors have on athletic performance is becoming increasingly important and prominent today, so much so that coaches, athletes and sport administrators recognize that success cannot be guaranteed by raw physical talent alone. In fact many researchers have attributed Mental Toughness as being a significant influencing factor contributing to successful performance excellence as well as a performance enhancer. Although this view is endorsed by various researchers, within certain contexts such as in South Africa there is still a concerning lack of belief in the influence of psychological intervention and the impact it has on performance. Researchers conducting studies using Mental Toughness and psychological intervention frameworks are still trying to capture the faith of a somewhat stubborn audience.

Review of Literature

A research done by Holland. *et al.* (2010) on the psychological characteristics of elite performers has primarily focused on Olympic and World champions; however, the mental attributes of young developing and talented athletes have received less attention. Addressing this, the current study had two aims: (a) to examine the perceptions held by youth athletes regarding the mental qualities they need to facilitate their development and (b) to investigate the mental techniques used by these athletes. Forty-three male youth rugby players participated in a series of focus groups. Inductive content analysis revealed 11 categories of psychological qualities, including enjoyment, responsibility, adaptability, squad spirit, self-aware learner, determination, confidence, optimal performance state, game sense, attention focus, and mental toughness. Techniques employed included personal performance strategies, reflection on action, taking advantage of a supportive climate, and team-based strategies. Findings

are discussed in relation to their implications for mental skills training program development and evaluation in the case of youth elite team sport athletes.

Thomas *et al.* (1996) Although the previous studies provide insights into the mentally tough performer, there are none that attempt to define mental toughness, while also stating sufficiently all the characteristics associated with mental toughness. It has been found that only 9% of coaches have been successful in developing or changing mental toughness in performers they worked with, therefore Jones *et al.* (2002)^[1], and Gould *et al.* (2002) attempted to clarify how to achieve such goals, and did so with relative success. Through using participants that had achieved full honors and represented their country in the Olympics or commonwealth games, Jones *et al.* (2002)^[1] implemented interviews to try and complete a profile of the mentally tough performer. The procedure was carried out in three stages. In stage 1 the athletes were drawn into a focus group and asked to discuss (a) a definition of mental toughness, and (b) a list of qualities and attributes of the 84 ideal mentally tough performer. In stage 2, individual interviews were carried out on each athlete where they were asked for their definition of mental toughness, views on the focus group definition, and sentiments regarding the attributes associated with mental toughness. Stage 3 involved the researchers independently then collectively reviewing the participants' comments. The definition and attributes of the ideal mentally tough performer were presented to all participants in the form of questionnaires for agreement rating of definitions and rank orders of the attributes.

Fourier and Potgieter (2001) investigated the components of mental toughness as reported by 131 expert coaches and 160 elite athletes from 31 sport codes. The written statements of coaches and athletes were analyzed by means of an inductive content analysis. This resulted in the identification of 12 components of mental toughness. These are: motivation level, coping skills, confidence maintenance, cognitive skill, discipline and goal-directedness, competitiveness, possession of prerequisite physical and mental requirements, team unity, preparation skills, psychological hardiness, religious convictions and ethics. The coaches regarded concentration as the most important characteristic, while the athletes regarded perseverance as most important. The coaches rated the effectiveness of coaches and sport psychologists in strengthening the characteristics of mental toughness more highly than athletes did.

Levy *et al.* (2006) to investigate the relationship between mental toughness, sport injury beliefs, pain, and adherence toward a sport injury rehabilitation program. A prospective design was employed that evaluated adherence over the entire rehabilitation period. 70 patients undertaking a sport injury rehabilitation program for a tendonitis related injury. Adherence was measured using self-report measures of clinic and home-based rehabilitation alongside attendance. No association was found between mental toughness and coping appraisals, although high mentally tough individuals displayed more positive threat appraisals and were better able to cope with pain than their less mentally tough counterparts. Greater attendance at rehabilitation sessions was displayed by more mentally tough individuals; however, more positive behavior during clinic rehabilitation was characterized by low mental toughness. Despite the benefits of being mentally tough, sports medicine providers need to be aware that a high degree of mental toughness may have negative consequences upon rehabilitation behavior and subsequently recovery

outcomes.

Crust (2007), presented a study on mental toughness. Athletes, coaches, and applied sports psychologists have consistently referred to mental toughness as one of the most important psychological characteristics related to outcomes and success in elite sport, although researchers have, until recently, devoted little time to studying this concept. This review considers some of the emerging definitions and conceptualizations, and examines how mental toughness might be developed in performers. Qualitative and quantitative approaches to the study of mental toughness are evaluated, and developments in measuring this important concept are discussed. Research that has examined the relationship between mental toughness, performance, and perception are also reviewed. Future directions for research are offered.

Gucciardi *et al.* (2009) evaluated the effectiveness of two different psychological skills training (PST) packages in enhancing mental toughness among three youth-aged (under 15 years old) Australian football teams. We compared a program targeting the keys to mental toughness identified previously (Gucciardi, Gordon, & Dimmock, 2008) with a more traditional PST program targeting self-regulation, arousal regulation, mental rehearsal, attentional control, self-efficacy, and ideal performance state as well as a control group. Overall, both intervention groups reported more positive changes in subjective ratings of mental toughness, resilience, and flow than the control group. Similar ratings for mental toughness were reported by the parents and coaches. Both PST packages appeared to be equally effective in enhancing mental toughness.

Perry *et al.* (2013) the purpose of this study was to assess the factorial validity of the Mental Toughness Questionnaire-48 (Clough, Earle, & Sewell, 2002). In total, 8207 participants (male $n=4019$, female $n=3922$, unspecified= 266) aged between 16 and 68 years ($M=37.00$, $SD=12.09$) completed the MTQ48. Model fit was assessed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and exploratory structural equation modeling, in addition to the robust maximum likelihood estimator. Overall, our results support the factorial validity of the MTQ48 and indicate that the MTQ48 is a robust psychometric measure of mental toughness. Along with previous data, which supports the internal validity of the MTQ48 in addition to results of this study, it would appear that the MTQ48 is an acceptable method of assessing mental toughness.

Jesudassbalaji (2011) tested the mental force volleyball player different age groups. To achieve this objective, the age groups 10-21 page volleyball players and the ninety years later, the selected Chennai, regularly, for the various games and competitions. "Mental toughness" standardized psychological questionnaire has been developed by Dr. often sport as The Goldberg Variations is commonly regarded as the "he replied. Simple analysis of the collected data (ANOVA). The results of that study showed that there was no great difference between the players mental force volleyball different age groups: 0.05 I trust. This age group volleyball players mental strength it was substantially higher than the 18th-21st 18-21 was 18-21 18-21 was also pointed out the two years ago was 18-21 age. This is because of the own experience.

Definitions of the Terms

- **Mental Toughness:** The variable mental toughness has been used in generally two ways: absence of mental illness, and positive mental toughness. In the clinical

medical setup, mentally healthy person is an individual free from medical illness. The positive mental toughness refers to behaviors, attitudes, the feelings that represent an individual's level of person effectiveness, success and satisfaction. In this sense, it has no direct connection with the mental illness (Jhoda, 1958).

- **Self-Confidence:** Albert Bandura has defined as a "belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task" and therefore is the term that more accurately refers to specific self-confidence.
- **Attention Control:** Attention control refers to an individual's capacity to choose what they pay attention to and what they ignore. It is also known as endogenous attention or executive attention. In lay terms, attentional control can be described as an individual's ability to concentrate.
- **Motivation:** Motivation is defined as the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behavior. Motivation is what causes you to act, whether it is getting a glass of water to reduce thirst or reading a book to gain knowledge.
- **Imagery and Visualization:** Imagery is also called visualization or mental rehearsal. Imagery means using all of your senses (e.g., see, feel, hear, taste, smell) to rehearse your sport in your mind.
- **Attitude Control:** Attitudes are evaluations people make about objects, ideas, events, or other people. Attitudes can be positive or negative. Explicit attitudes are conscious beliefs that can guide decisions and behavior. Implicit attitudes are unconscious beliefs that can still influence decisions and behavior.

Aims of the Study

The present study was conducted with the following aims and objectives

- To compare mental toughness and its sub-variables between high and low achiever male sportspersons.
- To compare mental toughness and its sub-variables between high and low achiever male sportspersons participating in team sport. 109
- To compare mental toughness and its sub-variables between high and low achiever male sportspersons participating in individual sport.
- To compare mental toughness and its sub-variables between high and low achiever male sportspersons participating in indigenous sports.
- To compare mental toughness and its sub-variables between high and low achiever male sportspersons participating in non-indigenous sports.
- To find out the joint effect of sports achievement (High and low achievement in sports) and participation in team and individual sports on mental toughness and its sub variables in a group of male sportsperson.
- To find out the joint effect of sports achievement (High and low achievement in sports) and participation in indigenous and non-indigenous Indian sport on mental toughness and its sub variables in a group of male sportsperson.

Conclusion

There are several factors as to why a positive mentality or mental toughness is a huge benefactor to success. An elite athlete must be able to handle pressure, have self-belief and avoid any lifestyle distractions. They must have that urge to

win and know that they have all the capabilities to do anything they desire. This separates the good athletes from the elite athletes. "Mental toughness" is frequently used colloquially to refer to any set of positive attributes that helps a person to cope with difficult situations. Coaches and sport commentators freely use the term mental toughness to describe the mental state of athletes who persevere through difficult sport circumstances to succeed. In support of this, a number of studies have linked mental toughness to sporting success or achievement. However, it is often simply applied as a default explanation for any victory, which is highly problematic as an attribution. Criticisms about the use of this imprecise approach abound.

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