

Measurement of Self-Concept of Athletes in Selected Sports in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the level of self-concept/self-esteem of some athletes in selected sports in Rivers State. The study utilized the Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) a 25 item questionnaire design to measure self-esteem/self-concept. A total of 97 subject samples were utilized in the study. Four sports were involved viz: Athletics (Track and Field), Basketball, Handball and Tennis. Mean, standard and t-test statistical techniques were used in analyzing the data. It was found that sportsmen and women involved in the study had a high level of self-esteem/self-concept. Male Tennis players had the highest level of self-esteem/self-concept. Significant differences was found between male and female tennis players on self-esteem/self-concept. The study recommended that in recruiting athletes the level of self-concept/self-esteem should be taken into consideration.

Keywords: Self-Esteem, Self-Concept, Sporting Ability, Interpersonal.

Introduction

Several psychological factors have been associated with peak performance in competitive sports, of the various factors namely: physical self-efficacy motivation, perception self-concept/self-esteem etc.

Self-esteem/self-concept is identified as an important factor that affects sport performance at the competitive level.

According to Engler (1991) referring to the work of Rogers “out of the interaction of the organization and the environment, and in particular the interaction with significant others, there gradually emerges a structure of self, or concept of who I am” (p. 347).

She further commented that self-concept which is an object of perception is the person as he or she perceives himself/herself.

Akinade (2001) said self-concept is regarded as an individual’s view of himself. While he defined self-esteem as a sense of self worth which an individual develops, which is a part of self-concept.

The historical background of self-concept however can be traced to Carl Rogers where he claims that everyone strives to reach an “ideal self”.

As Weitin, Dunn and Hammar (2012) put it, a self-concept is said to be a collection of beliefs about one’s own nature, unique qualities and typical behaviour, yourself-concept is your mental picture of yourself. It is a collection of self-perceptions. For example that a self-concept might include such beliefs as “I am going easy” or “I am pretty” or I am hard working”.

Cohn (2006) argues that self-esteem is the regard a person hold of himself. With regards to this, he further argued that self-esteem should be based on who you are as a person instead of thinking of how well you can perform in your sport or how high you can go in a sporting career.

Sports has several ways of developing an individual’s self-concept because of the interaction with peers on the field of play especially at an early stage in life. Within your peers when you compare yourself with others you will be able to form an opinion about yourself concerning your self-concept.

In a study by Alfermann and Stoll (2000) it was found that exercise though not the only factor improved mental health of those involved in the study. The study utilized running or mixed-sports programme on participants. However the study concentrated on self-concept and self-esteem.

Legrand (2014) carried out a study in which exercise was used on some female subjects with symptoms of depression and found significant changes due to exercise on depression, self-esteem, physical self worth and self-perceived physical condition.

In a study carried out by Gotwals and Wayment (2002). They found higher self-esteem to be associated with better athletic performance using a sample of 103 sample subject who were inter-collegiate athletes.

Studies carried out by some researchers reveal that persons who participate in sport have a higher levels of self-esteem (Taylor, 1995).

Mahoney (1989). In a study found out that individuals higher in self-esteem perform better athletically than athletes lower in self-esteem.

A very strong positive relation was found between global physical self-concept and self-esteem and a moderate inverse relation between self-esteem and depression among 12th grade girls (Dishman, Hales, Pfeiffer, Felton, Saunders, Ward, Dowda & Pate. 2006).

It is said, Team sports has a greater effect on the athletes self-esteem because of the amount of time spent in team sports provide a sort of clear information on the individual's sporting abilities. Slutzky and Simpkins (2009). However this position is not in agreement with that of Zaccaro, Peterson and Walker (1987) who suggested that individual sports rather provides clearer information about a person's sporting ability than does team sports because the results obtained cannot be credited to team effort as the case may be.

Brown (1998) argued that person's with high self-esteem were happier in their life styles which results into fewer interpersonal problems and in a higher consistency of achievements. He further commented that those with high self-esteem are more capable of forming satisfying love relationships as well.

Purpose of Study

Self-Concept/self-esteem as a psychological concept is a major determinant in the attainment of an individual's goal in sport. Self-concept/self-esteem not necessarily a new phenomenon in the sport psychology literature. The study of self-concept/self-esteem have been carried out in various studies in most part of the world. However, there seems to be a dearth of literature on self-concept/self-esteem with regards to athletes based in Rivers State, Nigeria, who train and compete in both National and International competitions.

It also becomes necessary to get empirical information that will add to the body of existing knowledge about athletes in Rivers State, to enable coaches, trainers and psychologists to use scientific techniques in training athletes based on this psychological construct of self-concept/self-esteem.

The selected sports involved in this study are Athletics, (Tract & Field), Basketball, Handball and Tennis.

Apart from soccer, basketball and handball are the next most popular team sports. Athletics and tennis are also the most popular individual sports that persons are involved in for purposes of competition in the State.

The study therefore hypothesized; that there will be no significant differences between male and female athletes on self-concept/self-esteem.

Method

Subject

A total of 97 subject samples were randomly drawn from four selected sports namely: Athletics (Track & Field), Basketball, Handball and Tennis as follows:

Sport	Males	Female
Athletics	15	12
Basketball	14	14
Handball	14	14
Tennis	7	7
	50	47

The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample subjects.

The age range of all participants was 18 – 25 years with a mean age of 21.5 years.

All the athletes involved in the study have participated in their various sport for at least a period of 5 years.

The selected sports were categorized into team and individual sports as follows:

Team sports – Basketball and Handball

Individual sports – Athletics (Track & Field) and Handball

Instrument

The instrument used for the study is in the Index of Self-Esteem (ISE) a 25 item inventory which is designed to measure self-esteem/ self-concept. The instrument though developed out of the shores of Nigeria, Onighaiye (1996) provided the psychometric properties for Nigerian samples.

Norms

The norms obtained for the Nigerian subjects as established by Onighaiye (1996) is as follows:

Males (n = 80)	Females (n = 80)
30.89	32.04

Scoring

In scoring the subject samples, the norms or mean scores is the basis for the interpretation of the scores. Scores higher than the norm indicates that the individual or group studied have low self-esteem/ self-concept while higher scores indicate that the individual or groups have high self-esteem or self-concept.

Procedure

The instrument was administered on the subject samples individually by the researcher with the aid of an assistant. The instrument was scored using the instructions provided by the author.

The data collected was analysed using the mean, standard deviation and the t-test statistical techniques.

Results

Table 1: Showing mean and standard deviation scores of males and females

Sport	Males		Female	
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD
Athletics (Track & Field)	28	5.80	30	6.05
Basketball	29	5.50	31	5.75
Handball	31	4.82	30	4.02
Tennis	26	3.56	29	4.27

Results in table 1 show that males in Athletics (track & field) obtained a mean score of 28 and SD 5.80 while their female counterpart obtained a mean of 30 and SD6.05.

Basketball players obtained a mean score of 29 and SD5.50 for males and females a mean score of 31 and SD5.75.

Male Handball players obtained a mean score of 31 and SD4.82 while their female counterparts obtained a mean score of 30 and SD4.02.

In Tennis, male players obtained a mean score of 26 and SD3.56 while females obtained a mean score of 29 and SD4.27.

Table 2: Showing the t-test scores for males and females

Sport	Males		Female		
	n = 50		n = 47		
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	
Athletics (Track & Field)	28	5.80	30	6.05	1.64
Basketball	29	5.50	31	5.75	1.73
Handball	31	4.82	30	4.02	1.12
Tennis	26	3.56	29	4.27	4.27

* Significant $P < 0.05$, df 95, t -critical 1.98

Results in table 2 show the t-test scores for males and females. The t-test scores are Athletics (track & field) 1.64, Basketball 1.73, Handball 1.12 and Tennis 4.27.

Significant difference occurred between male and female tennis players.

Discussion

Results obtained in table 1 shows that male tennis players with a mean score of 26 probably possess the highest level of self-esteem. They were followed by Athletics (track & field) with a mean score of 28. The two sports are individual sports so probably the nature of the sports may be responsible for the result obtained. In these two sports, the athlete does not need the support of team mates to win their individual events. They must depend on their personal capabilities and the confidence that they have. While in the team sports winning usually depends on the co-operation of others to win. However even if the players of Basketball and Handball had lower self-concept/self-esteem than those in Tennis and Athletics. They still scored well generally on self-concept/self-esteem as no score is above the national norm of the test.

Significant difference was found between male and female tennis players on self-concept.

Results obtained in the study is in agreement with Zaccaro, Peterson and Walker (1987) & Slutzky and Simpkin (2009) who variously found sports participants to be high in self-esteem.

Conclusion

This study concludes that male and female athletes studied are high on self-concept/self-esteem which may probably be the reason why they participate in sports generally.

It is recommended that in recruiting sportsmen and women they should be tested on their level of self-concept/self-esteem to determine their success in sports.

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