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Investigation of Self-Perception of Players in Sports in Meru Technical Training Institute in Kenya.

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Abstract
Technical Institutions like all other institutions of Learning in Kenya take sport as an important component of their educational programmes. The Kenya Colleges Sports Association organizes annual sports competitions in which all colleges participate. The Meru Technical Training Institute has been a regular participant in the annual sports events. During the years 2000 to 2004, the Institute continuously excelled in football, handball and women's volleyball at zonal and national competitions. However, in spite of thorough training and technical preparation, performance in men's volleyball, netball and hockey has been dismal. The current study was therefore carried out to establish the self-perception of players in sports in Meru Technical Training institute by considering perception in volleyball and football. Self-perception is viewed as an important determinant of a player's performance. A sample of 24 players participated, where 12 were from each team. Volleyball had 14 players and football 22. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. A majority of footballers and volleyball players perceived themselves positive as fit, active and healthy. But, volleyball players perceived themselves negative in being attractive, happy, relaxed, optimistic, successful and confident while football players perceived themselves positive in all these attributes. Arising from the results, it was recommended to have regular self-perception tests for sports participants to enhance their positive self-perception.
Key Words- Technical, Self-perception, Sports

Introduction

In sports, excellence is commonly attributed to practice, interest and observable abilities of players, however despite these, Koopman and Newtson (1981) points out that individual perception may also influence performance. Koopman and Newtson (1981) noted:-

Individuals differ in their perceptions of ongoing events and differences in perception may be partly responsible for differences in performance outcomes.

Differences in perception among students and players may affect their performance; Mulumbula (1985) echoes this by saying that the nature of perception can affect individuals' achievements. He observes that:-

If perceptional organization is understood, it can help in improving group performance and problem solving.

Kleiber and Robers (1981) points out that "success in sports comes only to those who already are mentally fit resilient and strong". Self-perception represents the conviction or beliefs that one can successfully execute a course of action to produce certain behaviour (Bandura, 1977 & 1986). Self-perception provides a common mechanism through which people demonstrate control over their own motivation and behaviour. Self-perception has been consistently shown to be an important determinant of physical activity and sport behaviour (Feltz, 1988), exercise behaviour (McAuley, 1992) as well as social clinical and health-related behaviour (O'leary, 1985), these portray self-perception as having a key role to play in sport performance.

Exercise and sport performance appears to have a positive relationship with self-confidence (Biddle, 1995; Marsh & Redmayne, 1994; Sonstroem, Harlow & Joseph, 1994). Sonstroem (1984) suggest that changes in self-concept might be associated with the perception of improved fitness rather than with actual changes in physical fitness.

Roberts et al (2001) points out that, confident sportsmen believe in themselves. Most important, they belief in their ability to acquire the necessary skills and competences, both physical and mental to reach their potential. Less confident players doubt whether they are good enough to have what it takes to be successful. He further explains that when you doubt your ability to succeed or expect something to go wrong you are creating what is called self-fulfilling prophesy, which means that expecting something to happen actually helps cause it happen. The expectation of failure leads to actual failure, which lowers self-image and increases expectations of failure.

Like in the Kenyan situation the Department of Health in the United States has acknowledged the health benefits of an active life style by listing an extensive range of physical fitness and wellness objectives in its "Health people 2000" (Greenberg & Oakes, 1995). Furthermore the health benefits of exercise have been recognized by the Committee on Sports Medicine and the Committee on School Health of the American Academy of pediatrics in their policy statements which urges pediatricians to appeal to their local school boards to maintain, if not

increase, the schools physical Education programmes (Nelson, 1991). This shows how highly sport is regarded in the American schools.

Technical Institutions like all other learning institutions take sports as a co-curricular activity alongside teaching and learning. Annual sporting competitions are organized between institutions across the republic. Competitions are organized from local levels referred to as zones where Tertiary colleges in the same geographical region are hosted in one institution for one or two days to identify their representatives in the National competitions. These help in determining the best institution in each sporting activity.

Meru Technical Training Institute (Meru T.T.I.) is situated in Meru Central District, Eastern Province, Kenya. It is a mixed Institution participating in a varied category of sporting activities which include: Football (both girls and boys), volleyball, basketball, netball, handball, badminton, table tennis among others. Meru T.T.I. participates annually in inter-college sports hosted under the Mount Kenya region at the zonal level. Meru T.T.I has remained a consistent participant excelling in a number of activities, especially in football, handball, basketball, volleyball women in which it has continuously represented the zone at National level between 2000 and 2004. In spite of the thorough training that the teams undergo, performance in some other sports has been dismal. Volleyball men is one of the main sporting activity in which the college has not excelled. According to the available information from the institutions sports desk, over the five years they have won only four matches out of. This is despite the enthusiasm they have consistently shown in practice and general preparation. Therefore it becomes necessary to investigate this contradiction by carrying out self-perception tests on players in the two teams. This study sought to explain the phenomena, by analyzing the perception of players with a view of finding out differing opinions on how each felt about their Fitness, Activeness, Attractiveness, Happiness, Health, Relaxation, Optimism, Success, and Self-confidence. This information will enhance positive self-perception among players.

Methodology

The *ex-posto facto* research design was used in this study. The men's volleyball and football teams of Meru T.T.I. were targeted in the study. The teams comprised 14 volleyball players and 22 football players. Out of these an equal number of **t**welve members from each team were randomly sampled for the study. A self perception questionnaire whose reliability index was determined to be 0.92 was used to collect data from both groups. The researcher personally administered the instruments to all the respondents.

All completed Instruments were assembled and information organized. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Correlation co-efficient obtained through the product moments (Pearsons method) was computed and compared against the theoretical co-efficient of correlation of 0.9 to help in drawing conclusions.

Results

The results obtained after analyzing the data is represented in tables 1 and 2 below for each item.

Table1: Results of perception of football and volleyball players.

ITEM	RESPONDENTS	*MOSTLY*	*SOMETIMES*	*RARELY*	CORRELATION COEFFICIENT
Fit	Footballers	9 = 75%	3 = 25%	-	0.99
	Volleyballers	10 = 83%	2 = 17%	-	
Active	Footballers	11 = 92%	1 = 8%		0.98
	Volleyballers	8 = 67%	3 = 25%	1 = 8%	
Attractive	Footballers	12= 100%	-	-	0.33
	Volleyballers	5 = 42%	6 = 50%	1 = 8%	
Happy	Footballers	8 = 67%	4 = 33%	-	0.5
	Volleyballers	4 = 33%	6 = 50%	2 = 17%	
Healthy	Footballers	11 = 92%	1 = 8%	-	0.98
	Volleyballers	8 = 67%	3 = 25%	1 = 8%	
Relaxed	Footballers	8 = 67%	3 = 25%	1 = 8%	0.69
	Volleyballers	4 = 33%	6 = 50%	2 = 17%	
Optimistic	Footballers	7 = 58%	5 = 42%	-	0.57
	Volleyballers	7 = 58%	2 = 17%	3 = 25%	
Successful	Footballers	10 = 83%	2 = 17%	-	0.19
	Volleyballers	4 = 33%	5 = 42%	3 = 25%	
Self Confidence	Footballers	10 = 83%	2 = 17%	-	0.28
	Volleyballers	5 =42%	4 = 33%	3 = 25%	

Table 2: Frequency of Practice/ Exercised per Week

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Footballers	-	-	1=8%	3= 25%	2 =17%	3= 25%	3= 25%	1= 8%
Volleyballers	-	-	1=8%	2= 17%	1 =8%	3 =25%	3 =25%	2=17%

For a good correlation a co-efficient of at least 0.9 is needed (Elhance & Elhance, 1992, pp 119)

Discussions

1. Fitness Test

Players were asked to indicate how they perceived themselves as regards to their-personal Fitness. At a response rate of 75 % football players perceived themselves as fit mostly while eighty three percent (83%) of the volleyball player perceived themselves mostly fit. At a response rate of twenty five (25%) percent and seventeen (17%) percent football and volleyball players indicated that they perceived themselves fit sometimes whereas no respondents perceived themselves as rarely fit. The computed correlation co-efficient of 0.99 was obtained. This computed correlation co-efficient of 0.99 is greater than the theoretical correlation co-efficient of 0.9. This denotes significant correlation between teams as relates to players' fitness perception with more than ¾ of players in both teams perceiving them selves as mostly fit.

2. Active Test

Respondents were asked to indicate how they perceived themselves whether mostly active sometimes active or rarely active. At a response rate of 92% football players perceived themselves as mostly active while sixty seven (67%) percent of the volleyball respondents perceived themselves as mostly active. Only eight (8%) percent of football players perceived themselves as sometimes active, whereas twenty five percent of the volleyball players perceived themselves as only active sometimes. Eight percent of the volleyball players perceived themselves as rarely active while none of the football players perceived themselves as rarely active. The computed correlation co-efficient of 0.98 was obtained between the two groups which is greater than theoretical correlation co-efficient of 0.9. The teams compare positively with regard to players' perceived activeness opinion. Over ¾ of players perceived themselves mostly active.

3. Attractiveness Test

Respondents were asked to rate how they perceived themselves as mostly attractive, sometimes attractive or rarely attractive. One hundred (100%) percent of all the football players perceived themselves as mostly attractive while only forty two (42%) percent of the volleyball players perceived themselves as attractive mostly. Fifty (50%) percent and eight (8%) percent of the volleyball players perceived themselves as attractive sometimes and rarely respectively. A correlation co-efficient of 0.33 was obtained. With a co-efficient of 0.33 there is no significant correlation between the players in the two teams. Whereas 100% of football players perceived themselves mostly attractive only 42% of the volleyball players perceived them selves mostly attractive.

4. Happiness Test

Respondents were asked to rate how they perceived themselves as mostly happy, sometimes happy or rarely happy. At a response rate of sixty seven (67%) percent and thirty three (33%) percent football players and volleyball play respectively felt mostly happy. Whereas at a response rate of thirty three (33%) and fifty (50%) percent football and volleyball players respectively felt happy sometimes. At a response rate of seventeen (17%) percent only volleyball prayers perceived themselves as being rarely happy. A correlation co-efficient of 0.5 was obtained which shows no significant correlation between players of the two teams. Whereas a majority of football players perceived themselves as mostly happy only a small fraction of volleyball players perceived themselves mostly happy.

5. Health Test

At a response rate of ninety two (92%) percent and sixty seven (67%) percent football and volleyball players respectively perceived themselves as healthy mostly, while eight (8%) percent and twenty five (25%) percent of football and volleyball players respectively perceived themselves Healthy only sometimes. Only volleyball players at a response rate of eight (8%) percent perceived themselves as rarely health. A computed correlation co-efficient of 0.98 was obtained. This denotes good correlation between players of both teams. A majority of players of both teams perceived themselves as mostly healthy.

6. Relaxed

Sixty seven (67%) percent and thirty three percent of the football and volleyball players respectively indicated that they perceived themselves as relaxed mostly. Twenty five (25%) percent of the football players and fifty (50%) percent of the volleyball players perceived themselves as relaxed only sometimes while eight (8%) percent and seventeen (17%) percent of the football and volleyball players respectively indicated that they rarely perceived themselves to be relaxed. A computed correlation co-efficient of 0.69 was obtained. The computed

correlation co-efficient denotes there is no significant correlation between the players of the two teams. Whereas 67% of football players perceived themselves as mostly relaxed only 33% of volleyball players perceived themselves as mostly relaxed. This reveals a poor relationship in perceived opinions between the two teams.

7. Optimistic

Fifty eight (58%) percent of footballers and volleyball players indicated they were optimistic mostly while forty two (42%) percent and seventeen (17%) percent of footballers and volleyball players respectively perceived themselves optimistic sometimes only. Only volleyball players at twenty five (25%) percent perceived themselves rarely optimistic. A correlation co-efficient of 0.57 was obtained, which shows there is no significant correlation between players of the two teams with a quarter of the volleyball players were only rarely optimistic. These findings concur with findings of another study where two groups of subjects were told that they were lifting either more weight or less weight than they really were (Ness and patton,1979). Subjects lifted the most weight when they believed and expected they could lift the weight.

8. Successful

Eighty three (83%) percent and thirty three percent of the football player and volleyball players respectively perceived themselves as successful most times. Seventeen (17%) percent and forty two (42%) percent of footballers and volleyball players perceived themselves as successful only sometimes. Only the volleyball players at twenty five (25%) percent perceived themselves to be rarely successful. A computed correlation co-efficient of 0.19 was obtained, showing there is no significant correlation between the two teams. Whereas more than 3/4 of football players held a positive opinion on success less than ¼ of volleyball players held a similar opinion.

9. Self Confidence

Eighty three (83%) and forty two (42%) of the football players and volleyball players respectively indicated to have self confidence mostly. At seventeen (17%) percent and thirty three (33%) percent respectively football players and volleyball players perceived themselves to have self confidence sometimes only. Only the volleyball players indicated that they rarely had self-confidence at twenty (25%) response rate. A computed correlation of 0.28 was obtained, showing there was no significant correlation between the parties with a quarter of the volleyball players having self-confidence only rarely.

The findings agree with those of a study conducted on 1976 U.S. men Olympic gymnastics team (Mahoney and Avener 1977). Researchers interviewed gymnasts to assess their level of confidence. The findings revealed that gymnasts with self-doubt tend to perform worse during the qualifying meet than those who expressed no self-doubts. More resent studies have also found that self-confidence was a critical factor in discriminating between successful and less successful performers (Jones, Hanton and Swain, 1994; Mahoney, Gabriel and Perkins, 1987).

10. Rate of Practice

The respondents were asked to indicate the number of times they exercised per week. One percent of the football players and volleyball players each indicated they practice twice a week. Twenty five (25%) percent and seventeen (17%) percent of the footballers and volley balers respectively indicated that they exercised three times a week. Seventeen (17%) percent and eight (8%) percent of football players and volleyball players respectively indicated that they practiced four times a week, twenty five percent each indicated that they practiced five time and six times per week. Only eight (8%) and seventeen (17%) of the football players and volleyball players respectively exercised seven times a week. A computed correlation co-efficient of 0.90 greater than theoretic correlation co-efficient of 0.9 was obtained. There is significant correlation between the computed correlation co-efficient and theoretical correlation co-efficient. Exercise/ practice habits of players in both are the same or they compare reasonably.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study:-

i) There is significant correlation between football and volleyball players on their personal perception of fitness, activeness and health. Players from the two teams perceive themselves as fit, active and healthy.

ii) There is no significant correlation between football players and volleyball player as to their personal perception of attractiveness, happiness, relaxation, optimistic attitude, success and self-confidence. Football players perceived themselves mostly positively, compared to volleyball in each of the test items.

iii) There is significant correlation on the number of times that volleyball and football players practiced per week. Players of both teams practice/ exercise regularly.

iv) The main causes or reasons of differing performance of volleyball and football players in performance is the low/poor self-perception of volleyball players as regards to self confidence,

success, optimism, relaxation, happiness and attractiveness. In summary this study demonstrates the critical role that perception plays in sport performance.

Recommendations

Besides the training and practice team, leaders and trainers should do the following to enhance performance:-

(i) Regularly carry out perception tests for students to identify negative traits that need his attention.

(ii) Enhance positive self-perception among players. This can be done through counseling and psychological- support.

(iii) Similar studies should be carried out in other institutions of the same level to establish self-perception influence their teams" in sport performance.

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