

Role of Mental Toughness in mediating performance of a female athlete

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ABSTRACT

Sports can encourage young athletes to be outgoing and build social skills. Females having essential characteristic such as time management, team work and discipline to participate in sports. For an athlete to be as successful as possible, they must work to developmental toughness. This paper highlights the role of mental toughness in mediating the performance of a female athlete. Mental toughness in females is influenced by fitness, coping effectiveness, and individual spirit. However, most people define mental toughness as producing consistent practices and games regardless of the situation.

1. Introduction

Mental toughness is a test of individual spirit and determination that may predict success in sport, education, and the workplace. In more general terms, it has emerged in sports training, in the context of a set of properties that allows a person to become a better athlete and cope with strict training and competitive situations, to rise without falling confidence. It has been experienced by coaches, sports psychologists, sports analysts, and business leaders that strengthening and enhancing one's mental side of performance by no means decries the crucial role of creating and sustaining physical or technical abilities. The period being emphasized here is that an athlete who has physical talent, skill, and potential can become an even more incredible athlete and increase their chance of more successful performance and career if they begin to train mentally. An athlete who does not share an equal physical ability as other athletes are considered slightly weaker in this regard and may become a better athlete if they learn to engage in mental toughness development, improvement, and maintenance.

In sports, athletes often refer to the term fitness as a desired physical condition suitable for performing at the most potent level possible for their particular role in a specific sporting environment. In modern-day sporting contests, athletes require to concentrate their energies on converting mentally fit and essentially getting themselves to a situation of optimal mental fitness. Moreover, talent alone does not translate into success. There have been situations where highly talented athletes have undergone 'burn out' because of a mental toughness breakdown. The seemingly, less talented athletes have succeeded at professional levels because of their mental power.

2. Reflections from Reviews

The idea of Mental Toughness is no significant new, and for some time now, there have been many applied texts devoted solely to the development and conceptualization of Mental Toughness. The extended flow of academic interest in the Mental Toughness event clearly shows the importance and that sports psychologist, coaches, and athletes themselves a position on Mental Toughness. The influence that

psychological determinants have on athletic performance is shifting increasingly essential and prominent today, so much so that coaches, athletes, and sports administrators understand that success cannot be guaranteed by raw physical ability alone.

In fact, many researchers have attributed Mental Toughness as a significant influencing factor contributing to successful performance excellence and a performance enhancer. According to Gould and Dieffenbach (2002), mental toughness was described as one of the Olympic champions' highest-ranked psychological characteristics. Previous studies also reported that it reflects an athlete's ability to remain resilient by effectively coping with training and competition demands. (Bull et al., 2005; Jones, Hanton, & Connaughton, 2002, 2007). The relationship between mental toughness and peak performance has been established from the athletic experiences, and skills used to achieve such peak experiences must be learned from those who have experienced them. A study conducted by Boroujeni et al. (2012) assessed the association between mental toughness, emotional intelligence, and competitive anxiety in a group of female basketball players with high and low levels of sports achievements. Further, Schutte (1998) suggested that an emotional intelligence questionnaire, CSAI-2 prepared by Marten et al. (1990), indicates that statistically significant differences in emotional intelligence between high and low achiever female basketball players. It was also concluded that mental toughness and competitive anxiety as a psychological variable did not influence the performance of female basketball players, whereas the role of emotional intelligence was significantly observed as far as sports achievement of female basketball players is concerned.

A study reported by Patil and Pasodi (2012) compared male and female university athletes' mental toughness. The participants of the study were male and female athletes who took part in the All India Inter-University Athletic Meet at Guntur. Goldberg's mental toughness questionnaire prepared by Kumar was used in this study. The result showed that mental toughness was found to be significantly higher in male athletes as compared to female athletes. It was further concluded that gender influence mental toughness among university athletes.

Elemiri and Aly (2014) established the relationship between mental toughness and achievement of wrestlers. The sample comprised of 14 elite and 14 non-elite Egyptian male wrestlers as well as 09 elite and 09 non-elite Egyptian female wrestlers. It was found that the mental toughness of elite wrestlers was significantly higher as compared to non-elite wrestlers. Another sub variable focus on resilience and competitive desire was also increased in elite wrestlers. The correlation coefficient between mental toughness and achievement level was also significant for both male and female wrestlers. It was concluded that high mental toughness assists the integration of psychological training with physical training in such an effective manner that it enables sportspersons to perform to the best of their abilities. Shin and Lee (1994) discovered Mental toughness between elite and non-elite Korean female athletes. The elite athletes were more mentally challenging than their non-elite counterparts.

Mariana et al. (2009) investigated the relationship between mental toughness, stressor appraisal, coping strategies, and coping effectiveness among a sample of athletes. In support of priority predictions, mental toughness was associated with stress intensity and control appraisal, but not the type of stressor experienced by athletes. Total mental toughness and its six components predicted coping and coping effectiveness concerning the self-selected stressor. In particular, higher levels of mental toughness were associated with more problem-focused coping, but less emotion-focused and avoidance coping. Coping effectiveness was also influenced by the coping strategy employed by the athlete.

Adam et al., (2008) explored the relationship between: (a) mental toughness and coping, (b) mental toughness and optimism, and (c) coping and optimism. The results showed a higher level of mental toughness was associated with more problems or approach coping strategies (mental imagery, effort expenditure, thought control, and logical analysis) but less use of avoidance coping strategies (distancing, mental distraction, and resignation). Eight coping subscales were significantly correlated with optimism and pessimism. In conclusion, the relationships observed in this study emphasize the need for the inclusion of coping and optimism training in mental toughness interventions.

Kazim et al. (2019) studied the mental toughness levels of the female student-athletes who participated in the hockey super league competitions held in Konya. In order to determine the mental toughness levels of athletes, the Mental Toughness Inventory at Sports developed by Sheard "et al." (2009) was used. Histogram technique was used to test whether the data showed normal distribution. And at the end of this, all sub-dimensions of the mental resilience scale were found to have a normal distribution. According to this, t-test and One-Way ANOVA tests were used to determine the t-test was used to see the difference between the two sets of variables. As a result, the athletes participating in the study were found to be healthy and durable. It was concluded that there was a meaningful relationship between mental toughness levels and age and also difficulty in leisure time variables.

Nicholls, Polman, Levy, and Backhouse (2008) suggested a relationship between achievement level and mental toughness, and the findings are equivocal. In a study of Korean female athletes, Shin and Lee (1994) reported that elite athletes were more mentally challenging than their non-elite

counterparts, whereas Mazaulan and Rahim (2014) showed a significant negative relationship between mental toughness and sports performance among contact and non-contact Malaysian athletes. Newland, Newton, Finch, Harbke, and Podlog (2013) explored the relationship between mental toughness and college basketball players' performance. Their findings indicated that basketball performance was partially predicted by mental toughness and starting status. Surprisingly, mental toughness helped explain the variance in the male players' basketball performance but not the female players, for whom only starter status predicted performance. Furthermore, in Nicholls, Polman, Levy, and Backhouse's (2009) study, which included a comprehensive range of sports, athletes at higher achievement levels were not mentally more challenging; this finding seems to support the conclusion of Golby and Sheard (2004) that other factors such as physical attributes, skills, and psychological variables predict achievement level more accurately. Jaskaran Singh Sidhu (2018) studied the mental toughness level between male and female players to find out the differences between males and females using a t-test. No significant difference exists in the variable of confidence, constancy, and control between male and female players. The results also reveal no significant difference between male and female players regarding mental toughness.

Gucciardi, Gordon, and Dimmock (2009) used the concept of 'Mental Toughness' as an umbrella term for athletes who are considered to possess superior mental characteristics, and they believe that it is the mental game that will differentiate the performers. It can be put that "Mental Toughness sets apart good and great athletes when physical, technical and tactical skills are equal."

Previous studies concluded that mentally more challenging athletes generally produce better performances than their mentally weaker counterparts. Despite the promising athletic performance-enhancing benefits associated with being mentally more challenging, the findings in this review indicated that little consideration had been given to M.T.'s role while controlling for the physical, e.g., anthropometry technical, and tactical abilities of athletes or the opponents they compete against. Several researchers have proposed athletes' skills or physical abilities may be more robust determinants of their achievements or performance outcomes, and it is likely that M.T. is less relevant during competitive engagements in which competitors' physical abilities and skill levels are unbalanced. Thus, more accurately ascertaining M.T.'s influence on performance outcomes should involve measuring and statistically controlling for such factors.

3. Conclusion

In my opinion, women with much personal experience defend this opinion that female athletes play too much with their emotions; however, men do suffer more from aggression in contact sports. Women develop stress easier during sports, but they also let their emotions dictate their actions much more than men. It is important to note that developing and improving one's mental side of performance by no means trivializes the critical role of developing and maintaining physical or technical abilities. The point being stressed here is that an athlete who has physical talent, skill, and capacity can become an even more outstanding athlete and increase their chances of more successful performance and career if they begin to train

mentally. In modern day sporting contests, athletes need to concentrate their efforts on becoming mentally fit and essentially getting themselves to a state of optimal mental fitness. Moreover, talent alone does not translate into success, and there have been situations where highly talented athletes have experienced 'burn out' because of a breakdown in mental toughness, and the seemingly less talented athletes have succeeded at professional levels because of their mental strength.

Therefore, when it comes to sports, having mental strength is nearly as important for players as physical fitness. Thus,

pressure can get to the best sports stars, and mental training is a vital skill to possess. "When the going gets tough, the tough get going" is one way to say it. Or, as one sports psychologist put it, mental toughness is "the ability to consistently perform toward the upper range of your talent and skill regardless of competitive circumstances." A few factors influence female's achievements in sports that include their voice and body language, socializing, and teamwork. It is reported that men and women are equally mentally tough, although women tend to be more resilient. And yet men and women have a different mindset about so many things.

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