

Gender, Athletic Self-Efficacy and Athletic Performance

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Abstract:

The study examines moderating role of gender in the relationship between athletics' self-efficacy and their athletic performance. The sample comprised adolescent 30 male athletes and 30 female athletes aged between 16 to 18 years. Research tools included Self-efficacy measure and athletic performance measure. Results revealed significant moderating effect of gender influencing relationship between self-efficacy and athletic performance, favouring male superiority. Boosting morale of female athletes is needed disregarding cultural restrictions.

Keywords: self-efficacy, athletic performance

Sports activities in India date back as far as 8000 years, deriving from the Bronze Age. Records suggest the birth of sports in India during the Indus Valley Civilisation, 3300-1300 BCE (Before Common Era). During the period of the British Raj (1858-1947=89 years) sports were popularized and systematized for the entertainment of British Officers appointed in India. Sport are governed at national level in India by the Athletics Federation of India, formed before the independence of India in 1946.

It may be known that psychological characteristic of self-efficacy, meaning by specific belief, feeling competent and able to deal with the problems that arise in athletic competition seems to be an important contributor to athletic performance. In a relationship between athletic self-efficacy and athletic performance gender of athletes may play as a moderating factor. Credit goes to Albert Bandura (1977), a Canadian-American psychologist and a professor at Stanford University for first coining the concept of self-efficacy as a person's particular set of beliefs in his/her ability to succeed in a particular situation. It is the confidence person has in his/her own abilities, particularly hi/her capacity to overcome obstacles and successfully complete a task (Akhtar, 2008). After Bandura's initiation for bringing the term self-efficacy to light, psychologists studied self-efficacy from several perspectives. To give an example of another perspective, Kathy Kolbe (2009), educator and best-selling author, thinks that believing in one's own abilities can be vital in measuring cognitive strength. She believes that self-efficacy also involves determination and perseverance – seeing as how it helps one overcome obstacles that would interfere with utilizing those innate abilities to achieve goals. One's sense of self-efficacy can provide the foundation for motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment. High self-efficacy has numerous benefits to daily life, such as resilience to adversity and stress, healthy lifestyle habits, improved employee performance, and educational achievement.

Feltz, Landers, and Raeder (1979) were among the first researchers to test the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and athletic performance. In a meta-analysis Moritz et al. (2000) examined the relationship between self-efficacy and performance in sports and found average moderate correlation of .38 (considered to be the moderate).

Following Bandura and Adams (1977) model, Weinberg, Gould, and Jackson (1979) reported a correlation of + .68 ($p < .001$) between self-efficacy and performance, while in their second study using the same task, Weinberg, Yukelson, and Jackson (1980) obtained a correlation of only +.19 ($p < .001$) between self-efficacy and performance. Bandura (1978) argued that if self-efficacy judgments and performance are not measured closely in time, self-efficacy may be altered by new experiences that occur during the interim.

In an effort to predict performance on a simple test of motor skill accuracy (putting a golf ball), Woolfolk, Murphy, Gottesfeld, and Aitken (1985) considered both self-efficacy expectancies and previous putting performance. Self-efficacy was measured by asking subjects how many successful putts they would make from a standard distance, and how confident they were of making a putt. Self-efficacy and performance were significantly correlated ($r = + .26$, $p < .05$), but when the effects of prior performance were taken into account, the resulting self-efficacy performance correlation was not significant (+ .09). Thus, self-efficacy proved to be a less powerful predictor than prior performance. Based on results of the studies published between 1979 and 1985, it appears that there is a relationship between self-efficacy and athletic performance, as researchers has consistently obtained significant correlations between the two variables. However, the strength of that relationship has been relatively weak, accounting for between 4% and 46% of the variance. The more pertinent question for future research to address would seem to be "Is self-efficacy the best predictor of sport performance?" Whereas early studies limited their testing to determining the strength of the self-efficacy-performance relationship, more recent studies have considered a number of potential predictors of performance, and results have not always been consistent with Bandura's (1977) theory.

In a meta-analysis on the relationship between self-efficacy and performance in sport, consisting of 45 studies (102 correlations), Moritz et al, (2013) found an average correlation between self-efficacy and sport performance as .38 emphasizing a strong belief in one's own abilities (self-efficacy) has the potential to improve athletic performance. In a study experimentally manipulating self-efficacy expectancies on subjects' motor performance (Weinberg et al., 1979, 1980, 1981) positive association was found between them. Barling and Abel (1983) found that self-efficacy beliefs improved tennis performance. Feltz (1984) also indicated self-efficacy as a cognitive mediator of athletic performance.

Douglas et al, (2005) in their study clearly indicated that age and gender of an exercise model influenced the self-efficacy of elderly persons. It was concluded that matching the gender of model and observer when the observer is an elderly woman may support the observer's belief that she can perform the exercises well. Shoval et al. (2021) examined, through the lens of gender, whether engagement in sports, self-efficacy and grade level affect academic achievements and found girls engaged with the competitive sports showed better academic achievements than the boys and girls in the other groups, while boys engaged with competitive sports demonstrated the lowest academic achievements. In an empirical study Nwankwo

and Onyishi (2012) investigated the role of self-efficacy, gender and category of athletes in coping with sports stress among 236 athletes from secondary (high) schools in Enugu, South-east, Nigeria. They were aged 10-20 years, with a mean age of 15.46 years. Using a three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), results showed that self-efficacy is a significant variable in coping with sports stress. Athletes with high self-efficacy reported the use of more adaptive coping strategies than athletes with low self-efficacy. Also, female athletes used more adaptive coping strategies than their male counterparts. Athletes' category (senior versus junior) did not play any significant role in participants' coping strategies during sports stress. There was significant interaction effect of self-efficacy and gender on coping with sports stress. Shoval et al. (2020) report gender also matters when sports engagement and self-efficacy interact with academic achievement. In this context Spencer et al. (2015) report that inappropriate gender norms hampers physical activities of adult girls.

Research on gender differences in beliefs regarding self-efficacy and participation in physical activity among children also suggests the possibility that movement problems may impact boys and girls differently. Girls, in general, tend to report lower self-perceptions of competence in athletic domains than do boys in the same age range (e.g., Causgrove Dunn & Watkinson, 1994; Harter, 1985). Girls have also been found to report lower levels of generalized self-efficacy toward physical activity than boys do (Hay, 1992; Klentrou, Hay, & Plyley, 2003). Since girls without motor impairments are already less likely to perceive themselves as adequate and/or competent with regard to physical activity, it stands to reason that girls with DCD may have even lower perceptions of efficacy and competence (Rose et al., 1997). Differences in socialization experiences may also explain gender differences in the impact of DCD on play and physical activity. For example, it has been suggested that girls are taught to be dependent on, and focus more on the needs of others (Coakley, 1994). This external orientation may explain why girls are less internally motivated toward sport/activity than boys are (Rose et al., 1998). Moreover, the fear of social disapproval may steer girls away from competitive games and play (Figler & Whitaker, 1991). Girls are also more likely to be taught to avoid challenging and adventurous situations and instead seek safe, secure play environments (Greendorfer, Lewko, & Rosengren, 1996). As a result, girls will be less likely to engage in vigorous active play than will boys. The lack of participation in these activities likely also explains why their efficacy beliefs regarding physical activity are apt to be lower than their male peers. Girls and boys also assign differing priorities to sports and athletic abilities in relation to self-definition. In one study, boys rated being a good athlete as the most important aspect of social status for males (Chase & Dummer, 1992). If boys place more value on sports and physical activity than girls do to define themselves, it may be that girls with DCD are more likely to be hypoactive than boys are with the condition because the consequences for not engaging in such activities is much less threatening to their identities. Finally, it is already well established that physical activity patterns do differ by gender—boys appear more active than girls (Hay, 1992; Best, Blackhurst, & Makosky, 1992; Klentrou et al., 2003). It seems reasonable to hypothesize that the gender would moderate the relationship between athletic self-efficacy and athletic performance. In the present study mediating role of gender and athletic self-efficacy in athletic performance was empirically studied.

Research Methodology:

Research Design- A 2x2 Factorial research design (gender-2, athletic self-efficacy-2) was adhered to verify the working hypothesis formulated for this investigation.

Sample – The sample consisted of 30 adolescent boys and 30 adolescent girls aged between 16 to 18 years, reading in +2 high schools of Bihar, India. They had been selected through purposive method of sampling.

Research Tool- A 10 items Athletic Self Efficacy Test was developed by the authors in Hindi language which got sufficient reliability and validity for the purpose of measuring Athletic Self Efficacy. Athletic performance measure - Athletes’ performance was measured through two competent Physical Teachers of the school.

Results: According to research hypothesis and research design firstly product moment correlations among the selected variables were estimated as presented in Table-1 below-

TABLE-1

Product Moment Correlations among Gender, Athletic Self efficacy, and Athletic Performance

| Variables | r | Level of Significance |
|--|-----|-----------------------|
| Athletic Self efficacy- Athletic performance | .79 | <.01 |
| Gender - Athletic Self efficacy | .58 | <.01 |
| Gender - Athletic performance | .47 | <.01 |

It is appears from the above Table that all the three variables in consideration appear to be significantly positively inter-related, but when the contribution of gender factor was partial led out the magnitude of product moment correlation between self-efficacy and athletic performance was decreased to .61 which signifies the mediating role of gender in the relationship between Athletic Self efficacy and Athletic performance.

In order to specify the mediating role of gender a Two-Way ANOVA was calculated, the result of which is presented in TABLE- 2 below:

TABLE- 2

A Two-way ANOVA between the Relationship of Gender, Self- Efficacy, and Athletic Performance.

| Variables | df | Mean Sum of Square | F-ratio | Level of significance |
|-------------------|----|--------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Gender (A) | 1 | 37.58 | 2.79 | <.01 |
| Self-Efficacy (B) | 1 | 40.26 | 3.07 | <.01 |
| Interaction (AxB) | 1 | 52.51 | 2.86 | <.01 |
| Residual | 56 | 13.48 | | |

It is evident from the statistical facts contained in above mentioned Table -2 that contribution of interaction of gender and self-efficacy to the athletic performance was significant beyond chance. This finding indicates that if equal treatment and opportunity be given to athletes irrespective of gender consideration there might be parity in in athletic performance of males and females.

In India female children are not generally empowered by participation in sports and physical exercise. Most often girls are, in fact, disempowered, discouraged from participating and prevented from attaining psychological health that comes from pride and pleasure in their physically active bodies.

Women are not empowered by participation in sport and physical exercise due to cultural conservatism in most parts of India. Women athletes are, in fact, disempowered, discouraged from participating and prevented from attaining psychological health that come from pride and pleasure in their physically active bodies. An Indian Study on Gender issues in conducted by Dr Bhalerao in 2003 about gender issues in sport. The title of which is Analysis of problems faced by women players who participate in interuniversity sport competitions. This thesis analyses the problems specific of girl players in at the university level. There are quite a lot of similarities in the factors that she has analysed and the factors that we are dealing with in the present study. But there are basic differences in the sample. Dr Bhalerao sample is limited to inter-university players, hence the girls are basically playing at one level and also they are in the similar age group. In the present study the sample that we have selected is varied in many ways including their age and playing experiences also the games that they are playing. Dr Bhalerao has used three methods of data collection, a questionnaire, interviews and observations. In the first part of the questionnaire she asks about the factual information of the player like information about her family, financial status, playing experience, education etc. In the second part she has divided the problems faced by the girl players in nine groups and asked questions about them. The problems are classified in the following groups, 1. Family 2. Social 3. Psychological 4. Physiological 5. Sport equipment and facilities 6. Financial problems 7. Problems arising because of the government 8. Physical education and coaching related problems 9. Problems developed due to selection committees. The players selected for this study were from four universities in Maharashtra state. They were from Pune, Nagpur, Aurangabad and Amravati universities. All these cities are comparatively developed areas in India and also in Maharashtra.

Recently since last week of April 2023 seven top women wrestlers of India including a minor one are protesting against harassment by the Wrestling Federation of India. Although a case has been registered police but no arrest has been made till date. Such instances lower the morale of women sport persons, and image of Indian culture. .

Conclusion: Keeping in view the findings of this study it can be concluded that athlete's gender affects the relationship between generalized sense of self-efficacy and athletic performance.

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